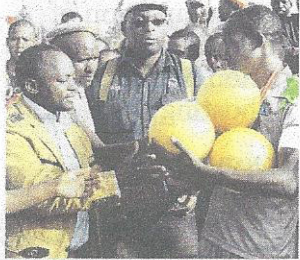


Varsity lads, Babes claim Laikipia titles



Laikipia Governor Joshua Irungu (left) presents training and match balls to Laikipia University football team captain Raymond Githinji after the final of the Laikipia Unity Cup yesterday.

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Laikipia University and Community Outreach Babes won the overall titles at the Laikipia Unity Cup finals on a weekend that coincided with the ground-breaking ceremony for the Samuel Eto'o Laikipia Unity Football Academy.

And the academy, the brainchild of Chelsea and Cameroon forward Samuel Eto'o Fils, immediately set out an ambitious target of rolling out world-class footballers off its spanking new production line in the next four years.

Speaking at the weekend ceremony, Liz Rihoy, a board member of the Samuel Eto'o Foundation, said once the academy's construction is complete, the Chelsea and Cameroon striker will send elite coaches and talent spotters to assess the students' skills and offer them opportunities to play abroad.

Top coaches

"Top coaches will come and assess the students and link them up with top European clubs including Inter Milan, Barcelona and Chelsea which have all been associated with Eto'o in his illustrious career," Rihoy said.

Besides producing football talent, the Eto'o academy - thanks to its unique architecture - will serve as a water reservoir for Laikipia with the ability to harvest over two million cubic litres of water once complete in September.

The academy and secondary school will also incorporate an environmental and outreach centre and hub for environmental activities throughout Laikipia County. Although the ground-breaking was done on Saturday, construction work at the Sh40 million academy has already started and is expected to be completed by September.

A goal by Kenya international and tournament best player Neddy Atieno saw Community Outreach Babes edge out Gatero Girls 1-0 in the women's final, while Laikipia University braved late pressure from Nanyuki Youth to win the men's title 2-1 with goals from MVP Isaac Dube and Raymond Githinji.

James Karuiru replied for the losing finalists in the match attended by Laikipia Governor Joshua Irungu, Canadian High Commissioner to Kenya David Agnell and the Eto'o Academy's lead architects, Canada-based David Turnbull and Aggrey Maganga.

"In the beginning of 2015, we will draw diagrams and operation manuals for high yielding water bank harvest schools like the one we are putting up at the Eto'o academy," Turnbull said.