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— Black Satellites coach

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# Winnifred our Golden Girl!

Story: Kwame Larweh

**W**RIGHTLIFTE R Winnifred Ntumi won Ghana's first gold medal at the African Games after emerging victorious in the women's 49kg event yesterday.

She beat off a strong challenge from Ny Hasina Andrimantsoa Zo Lalain of Madagascar who claimed silver, and joint bronze medallists Tasnim Ben Wada of Tunisia and Sheridan Pasnin of Mauritius. Her golden feat came

hours after she had won a silver medal in the 49kg division of the clean and jerk event in the women's weightlifting competition. It was Ghana's first medal of the competition, with the 21-year-old cutting a piece of sporting history at the GCB Hall at the University of Ghana, Legon.

She was beaten to gold by Ben Wada

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• Winnifred Ntumi proudly displays her medals

## Voice of

## Graphic SPORTS

MONDAY, MARCH 11 — 17, 2024

## 13th African Games: Celebrating unity, fairness, and sporting excellence

**T**HE rhythmic beats of unity echoed through the vibrant streets of Accra as the 13th African Games commenced at the University of Ghana Stadium.

With bated breath, nearly 3,000 athletes from 49 nations embarked on a spirited journey of competition, camaraderie, and cultural celebration. As the eyes of the sporting world converge on Ghana, it is imperative that we uphold the sanctity of fair play, embrace our shared heritage, and illuminate the continent's athletic prowess.

Ghana's President, Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo passionately articulated the significance of this momentous occasion, as he emphasized Africa's rich tapestry of diversity and urged the participants to harness the transformative power of sports to

inspire generations. Indeed, the African Games serve as a testament to the unyielding spirit that unites us, transcending borders and ideologies.

Central to this ethos is an unwavering commitment to integrity and sportsmanship. President Akufo-Addo's call for clean competition resonates deeply, echoing the sentiment that true victory lies not only in triumph but in the noble pursuit of excellence. As athletes strive to push the boundaries of their capabilities, the Graphic Sports reiterates the importance of championing the values of fairness, respect, and mutual admiration.

Echoing this sentiment, the Minister of Youth and Sports, Mustapha Ussif, affirmed the country's pledge to deliver an unforgettable spectacle. With investment in modern facilities and unwavering determination, Ghana stands poised to showcase its hospitality and organizational prowess on the global stage. The journey towards success is paved with dedication, and the country's steadfast commitment to excellence sets a shining example for the continent.

Acknowledging the pivotal role of infrastructure in nurturing sporting talent, the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, Moussa Faki Mahamat, commended Ghana's investment in sporting facilities. These investments not only bolster Ghana's sporting

infrastructure but also serve as a catalyst for regional development and cooperation.

As the curtain rises on this extraordinary event, let us embrace the spirit of inclusivity and solidarity that defines the African Games. From the bustling streets of Accra to the sun-kissed pitch of the Cape Coast Stadium, let the roar of the crowd reverberate as a symphony of hope and aspiration. Together, let us celebrate the essence of Africa — a continent united in its diversity, bound by the pursuit of greatness.

The Graphic Sports calls on all stakeholders — officials, athletes, and spectators — in the spirit of true sportsmanship to forge ahead with unwavering resolve, fuelled by the collective dream of a brighter tomorrow for the continent because in the arena of sport, we are not merely competitors, but ambassadors of a shared legacy, united in our quest for excellence.

The 13th African Games represents a testament to the indomitable spirit of Africa, where dreams take flight and boundaries dissolve. Let us seize this momentous opportunity to inspire, unite, and celebrate the boundless potential of the human spirit.

# Semenyo's unusual rise to top of career (II)

• Continued from  
last week's edition

"When you're playing U23s it's all nice ticky-tacky but going to men's football, the pitches aren't as great, you're playing against guys who are much more experienced and just want to kick you. I wasn't used to that. I took quite a few hits. But Bath was a great experience."

Semenyo returned to Bristol City and made his first-team debut at the end of that season. He went on loan again in 2018-19 at Newport in League Two, starting in their FA Cup victory over then-Premier League side Leicester.

It was in south Wales where Michael Flynn started playing him as a winger rather than a striker which has largely stuck ever since.

He is now comfortable on either side.

A handful more appearances for Bristol City followed before another loan spell, this time at Sunderland in League One until he finally broke into the first team.

Then Nigel Pearson arrived. Semenyo smiles at that name.

"I had a bit of a cagey start with him. I wasn't really playing much and as a player you're like, 'Why am I not playing?'. He just said your best ability is running and shooting so all you need to do is run and shoot!"

"There was a lot of direct football and I blossomed off that. I played in a front three with Andreas Weimann and Chris Martin and that year was one of the best of my career."

His eight goals and 12 assists led to being named in Ghana's World Cup squad and also a move to

Bournemouth in January 2023. Despite having surgery on a shin injury in pre-season, Semenyo has become one of Andoni Iraola's regulars, starting 15 times in the league, but the challenge remains the same.

"I just want to prove I am good enough to be where I'm at, that's just my mindset from when I was young," he said, with four league goals to his name this season. "I had to learn the hard way, not being able to come to nice training facilities and glamorous pitches and professional coaches.

"You learn in a different way, playing on rougher pitches against brutal players, coaches who work part-time. Both build character in different aspects but it's a lot tougher playing Sunday League."



• Antoine Semenyo  
has overcome rejection  
to rise again