



• Mas-Ud Didi Dramani — High expectation

# Rescue Mission!

## • Hearts bank on Dramani to restore glory

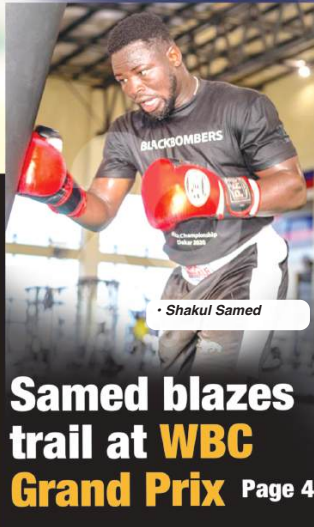
Story: Peter Sarbah

**N**EWLY-APPOINTED Accra Hearts of Oak head coach Mas-Ud Didi Dramani, faces a tough challenge of restoring the club's lost glory following a disappointing 2023/24

campaign.

The 59-year-old gaffer signed a two-year deal last Friday and is set to get down to work this week. He is scheduled to meet with the playing squad for the first time ahead of commencing training on

• Continued on Back page



• Shakul Samed

**Samed blazes trail at WBC Grand Prix** Page 4



• Mohammed Kudus

**Kudus set for £70m Tottenham**

## Voice of Graphic SPORTS

MONDAY, JUNE 23 — 29, 2025

# Bibiani Gold Stars' triumph signals new era in Ghana football

**BIBIANI** Gold Stars' remarkable victory in the 2024/25 Ghana Premier League is more than a fairy tale—it marks a seismic shift in the landscape of Ghanaian football. A club once overlooked and underestimated, Gold Stars have shattered the longstanding duopoly of Asante Kotoko and Hearts of Oak, announcing that the era of dominance by the traditional giants is under serious threat.

Coming from the Western North Region, Bibiani Gold Stars were hardly on the radar of many fans and pundits at the start of the campaign. Yet, with unwavering determination, tactical brilliance under the stewardship of Stephen Frimpong Manso, and a hardworking,

disciplined squad, they defied all expectations. Their rise from a modest team to league champions is a testament to what so-called smaller clubs—particularly those from the Western Region—can achieve when ambition, community support, and sound management align.

This victory completes a remarkable three-year trend. Medeama SC won the league in 2022/23, followed by FC Samartex's maiden title last season, and now Gold Stars have claimed their place at the summit. This run signifies a true regional renaissance, shifting power away from the traditional football capitals of Accra and Kumasi. For decades, Ghana's football narrative has been dominated by Kotoko and Hearts, who enjoyed near-monopoly over the league titles. Now, the Western Region clubs are rewriting that script with boldness and conviction, injecting fresh competition and excitement into the league.

This broader challenge to the old order is not only refreshing but crucial for the growth of Ghanaian football. Increased competition encourages better standards, innovation, and investment across the board. It also energizes fan bases, especially in regions that previously felt sidelined. The rise of Bibiani Gold Stars and their regional counterparts should be celebrated as a sign of progress and decentralisation in our football ecosystem.

However, this historic win also comes with a

clear warning to the traditional giants. Kotoko and Hearts must confront the reality that their past glories will not guarantee future success. The dominance they once enjoyed was built on legacy, fan loyalty, and superior resources—but those advantages are no longer enough. They must now adapt swiftly, reinvent their strategies, develop young talent, and strengthen their squads to meet the challenge posed by the new forces emerging around the country.

Looking ahead, the biggest test for Bibiani Gold Stars lies beyond domestic glory. As Ghana's representatives in the CAF Champions League, they face the daunting task of competing against Africa's elite clubs. Success on the continental stage requires more than passion—it demands experience, squad depth, tactical flexibility, and investment in infrastructure. The Miners must build on their current momentum by reinforcing their team and preparing meticulously to avoid falling victim to the harsh realities of African club football.

For now, Bibiani and their passionate supporters have earned the right to celebrate a dream realised. Their triumph is a beacon of hope for smaller clubs nationwide, proving that with vision and resilience, the giants can be toppled. More importantly, it heralds a new, exciting chapter for Ghana football—one where power is shared, competition is fierce, and the future is wide open.

# Will Jobe replicate Jude at Dortmund

**J**OBE Bellingham already knew the comparisons to big brother Jude were inevitable, especially after scoring on his first start for Borussia Dortmund.

Four years, nine months and one week after Jude scored on his first start for the black and yellow — a 5-0 win in the German Cup — Jobe scored on his first start.

The 19-year-old scored 45 minutes into his full debut — a 4-3 defeat of Mamelodi Sundowns in the Club World Cup — 15 minutes longer than it took Jude against Duisburg back in September 2020.

Jude went on to score 24 goals in 132 games for Dortmund before joining Real Madrid in 2023, and Jobe certainly showed signs of his sibling's knack of arriving late in the box to score.

The goal in Cincinnati showed anticipation and poise, agility and ruthlessness. After timing his run perfectly, Jobe cushioned the ball away from his marker before firing past the goalkeeper, albeit with the help of a slight deflection.

It capped a fine display on his full debut, and by his own admission, it's something the

former Sunderland midfielder has been working on.

"It's a really nice bonus. I am glad we won but there are still a lot of things for me to improve on personally and for the team. I am really pleased with it," Bellingham told DAZN.

"I practise that so many times, not that exact finish, but arriving late on the edge of the box as a midfielder is something you need to be really good at.

"If you can score, if you can contribute those kind of goals a certain amount per season then you are doing really well.

"I was really pleased because it was something I practised as a kid and at Sunderland so many times, during training, after training. So yeah, I am really proud of it."

Comparisons to Jude are no doubt tiring for Jobe, but there is a reason they are made.

In fact, the timing of his runs into the penalty area are reminiscent of another English midfielder.

"It's easy sometimes as a midfielder to just pass the ball then stand still," former Chelsea midfielder John Obi Mikel told DAZN.

"But no, he wants to arrive late

in the box. He wants to be there when the ball drops.

"He reminds me of a certain player I played with, Frank Lampard. 20-odd goals every season by being there and arriving at the right time. I think he's going to score a lot of goals for Dortmund.

"What I like about him is he's very direct. Once he has the ball he's looking up, he's passing forwards, running forwards. He wants to arrive at the box at the right time, and that's exactly what he did.

"The chest control and the volley — he wouldn't have scored this goal if he hadn't passed and then run forwards."

Former Italy and Inter Milan forward Christian Vieri said: "He's going to score a lot of goals because he's always going towards the goal — he looks like his brother, the movements are exactly the same."

Should Dortmund and Real Madrid both win their respective Club World Cup groups and win in the last 16, then the Bellingham brothers would face each other in a quarter-final clash in New Jersey. —BBC



• Jobe Bellingham