

T H E C R E A T I V E C H A M P I O N S H I P



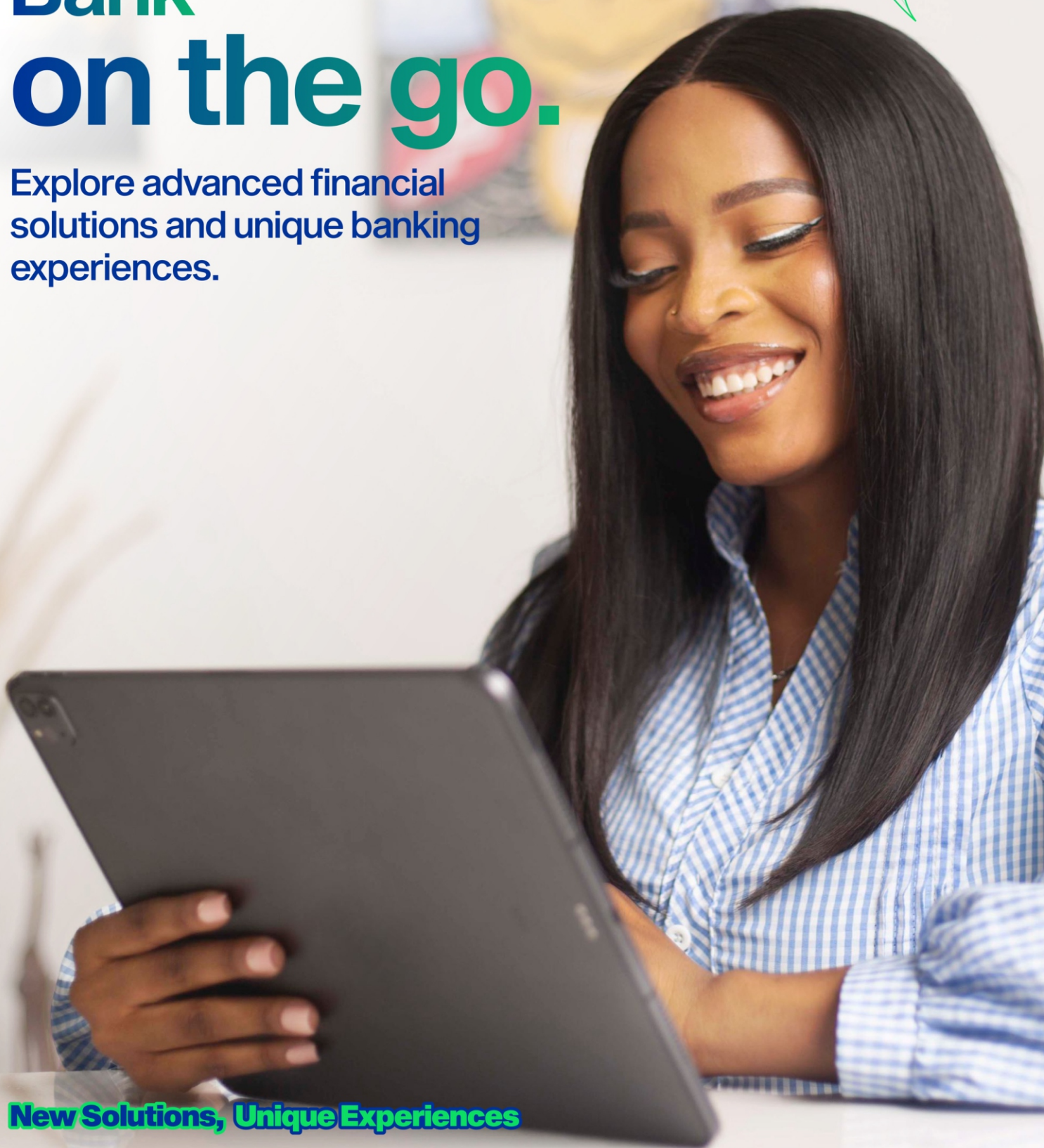
# THE RISING STARS





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# THE RISING STARS

Written by // **Adeboye Akinyelu**

The Creative Championship has been a dawn of light shown on developmental football in the country since its creation in 2020. The league, its structure and its organisation are the things that has brought freshness into the local football scene and one that brings us hope as a nation in terms of refining and moulding our home-grown talents for their professional journey ahead.

It is 2020 on the calendar, a year tagged the “pandemic year” where organisations and industries were packing up shop, individuals were wondering what their next moves were going to be, and doubts near and far about what it holds for so many businesses and nations alike. Then there were some creative minds who brought their heads and ideas together and decided to bring the best out of the worst.

The apocalypse didn’t happen after all and what was the next step to take in getting the juice from these numerous talents we have at our disposal, and getting the optimum quality out of them, making them that best and prolific version of themselves from these creative heads, the TCC was birthed during a chaotic and uncertain year.

The Creative Championship wasn’t created by mishap or wishful thinking. But by a deliberate and well-thought-out process bringing about its structured standard of operation to shed a positive light on our football community in raising hopes and fostering meaningful ideas about how football can be relatable in the most entertaining form and capitalising on the commercial value of its returns.

Under four years of running, it is indeed a testament that the TCC is one gathering pace within the industry on both the home front and internationally, giving the right atmosphere and exposure which was intended in the framework from the very beginning.

This easily ushers in the opportunities needed for the participating teams to work with their talents with the zeal and motivation of what is ahead for both parties.

Starting with eight teams who shared the same ideology and now operating with twelve teams demonstrates that the league is heading in the right direction. This expansion provides young talents with the opportunity to compete weekly and showcase their skills at a high level, preparing them for future challenges.

As you read on, you will understand that TCC has successfully created a pathway for many young people across the country to achieve their dreams. In just four years, some of these youngsters have already started realising their aspirations. We can confidently point to Europe, Africa, South America, and Asia, where some TCC graduates are now pursuing those dreams.



**Bankole Atiba**  
TCC Chairman

# CHAIRMAN'S NOTE

Let me welcome all and sundry to the maiden edition of this magazine that has been aptly named as *The Rising Stars*, a magazine which showcases the finest crop of the rising stars of Nigerian football, playing in the most exciting and internationally recognised youth league in Nigeria called The Creative Championship. The championship being the brain child of some of the most visionary club owners in Nigeria.

I promise everyone who picks up this magazine an enjoyable read into a journey that aims to showcase the great work going on behind the most successful league in Nigeria and how it has changed and is still changing the way football is viewed and run in the country. This includes the level of achievement and the highs that has brought us where we are today. A very interesting journey that has spanned 4 beautiful seasons of great football in the four years of our existence.

Of course, as is often the case, the attention is always on the football players and rightly so as they are the principal actors that are the face of football, however, the Creative championship is a completely different ball game as the flashlight is always on every aspect of the game as you will find out in the beautiful piece on the winning coach of the past four editions of the championship.

The next generation of world beaters are already coming off the production line and I ask that you make a note of the ones in this maiden edition while keeping an eye out for the ones that will also be coming off the production line in the coming seasons. I invite you all to keep supporting and following the TCC as we play in the most beautiful football facilities in the country and continue to expand the frontier of football in Nigeria.

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# TCC 2020/21 SEASON

Eight teams took part in the inaugural campaign of the Creative Championship. Remo U19, Gbagada, Valiant, Imperial, Emmydinho, Dino, Ijebu United and Iganmu Tiger. Matches were played in Ikenne (Remo Stars Stadium), Ijebu Ode (Dipo Dina Stadium), and Lagos (Agege Township Stadium).

- Lukman Ibrahim (Valiant) scored the first-ever TCC goal and TCC brace.
- First female centre referee - Ruth Okafor Iganmu v Remo U19, November 28th, 2020.
- First TCC Hat-trick - Suleiman Abdulrahman (Ijebu United) v Emmydinho on November 29th, 2020.

**TOTAL GOALS:** 162 GOALS

**TOTAL GAMES:** 56

**BIGGEST RESULT:** DINO SC 7-0 IMPERIAL

## 2020/21 SEASON TCC END OF SEASON LOG TABLE

Creative CHAMPIONSHIP		TABLE			2020/21 SEASON		
	CLUB	P	GD	PTS			
1	REMO STARS U19	14	+15	30			
2	VALIANT FC	14	+9	27			
3	DINO SPORTING	14	+13	26			
4	IJEBU UNITED	14	+10	23			
5	GBAGADA FC	14	+4	23			
6	EMMYDINHO FC	14	-19	12			
7	IGANMU FC	14	-15	8			
8	IMPERIAL FC	14	-19	6			

## AWARD WINNERS

- Golden Boot:** Lukman Ibrahim (Valiant) **18 goals**
- Assist King:** Babatunde Akinsola (Valiant) **6 assists**
- Player of the Season:** Lukman Ibrahim (Valiant)
- Coach of the season:** Olumide Ajibolade (Remo U19)
- Young player of the season:** Shola Ogundana (Remo U19)
- Goal of the season:** Afolayan Peters (Dino)
- Golden Glove:** Gideon Ede (Dino) & Ramon Kabiru (Gbagada) **5 clean sheets.**



# TCC AWARDS 2021

## LUKMAN IBRAHIM

TOTS  
POTS  
Golden Boot



## TUNDE AKINSOLA

Assist  
King



## SHOLA OGUNDANA

Young  
Player  
of the Season



### X3 HATTRICKS TCC 2020/21 LEAGUE SEASON 1

Suleiman Abdulrahman (Ijebu United) v Emmydinho November 2020.

Peter Edema (Gbagada) v Iganmu - December 2020.

Hyacinth Ogonna (Dino) v Imperial - January 2021.

Balogun Wasiu (Gbagada) v Emmydinho - February 2021.

Lukman Ibrahim scored four goals (Valiant) v Emmydinho - April 2021.

Seun Salahu (Dino) vs Emmydinho - February 2021



# THE TCC CUP 2021



Just like the league, it featured all eight teams in its inaugural edition. Games were played in home and away format, while the final was a single-leg match played at the Agege Township Stadium on May 9th, 2021.



Matches: 13



Goals: 35

- Semiu Fagbayi scored the **first-ever TCC Cup goal** vs Imperial at the Remo Stars Stadium (January 2021)
- Oladimeji Dada (Remo Stars) scored the **first-ever TCC Cup hat trick** vs Emmydinho (January 2021).
- Gbagada defeated Remo U19 to **win the trophy unbeaten**. Tomisin Alasiri scored the game's only goal.
- Dada Oladimeji (Remo U19) - **top scorer** with **4 goals**





## TCC 2020/21 TEAM OF THE SEASON

### GOALKEEPER

**Gideon Ede (Dino):** No keeper kept more clean sheets than Ede in the inaugural season of the TCC.

### DEFENDERS

**Lekan Oyedele (Remo U19):** Lekan made 10 apps in the league while also completing 91% (one of the highest in the league) of his passes. He also captained Remo U19 to the title.

**Timothy Edet (Dino)**

Edet didn't miss any league game for Dino as they kept five clean sheets during the course of the season.

**Abdulsalam Wasiu (Ijebu United)**

A regular for the Ijebu side, which finished fourth on the log.

### MIDFIELDERS

**Balogun Wasiu (Gbagada)**

The mercurial midfielder made 10 apps for the Blue Eagles, scoring three goals and assisting a further four. He also created 16 chances.

**Oluwaseun Odunsi (Remo U19)**

The versatile player made 13 appearances, creating 28 chances for his side. He also won multiple MoTM awards.

**Oscar Blessing (Dino)**

The defensive midfielder was also a regular feature for Dino,

**Ebenezer Akinsanmiro (Remo U19)**

Eben created 19 chances, competed 17 key passes, and contributed a further two assists in his side's title run.

### FORWARDS

**Oladimeji Dada (Remo U19)**

A forward per excellence - who scored six goals and assisted another three on their way to the title.

**Lukman Ibrahim (Valiant)**

Lukman scored 18 goals - a TCC record - to win the Golden Boot and the Player of the Season Award. Excellent finisher.

**Babatunde Akinsola (Valiant)**

The dribbling wizard completed more dribbles (96) and made more assists (6) than any other player in the season.

**Coach of the Season**

**Olumide Ajibolade (Remo U19)**

He led his side to become the first champion of the TCC.



# AKINSOLA

“ If I don’t work hard for the team I am not getting what I want and need. ”



Written by // Adeboye Akinyelu

**M** eet Akinsola Babatunde, an electrifying forward renowned for his dazzling displays on the football pitch. With the versatility to dominate either flank, Babatunde is a force to be reckoned with, boasting unrivalled dribbling skills, blistering pace, impeccable vision, and relentless tenacity.

His journey began with Valiant FC in the inaugural season of The Creative Championship (TCC) in 2020/21, where his splendid performances earned him multiple Man of the Match awards and clinched a spot in the inaugural team of the season. As the Assist King, he dazzled spectators with six assists and completed an astonishing, 96 dribbles, leaving opposition defenders struggling to keep pace.

Babatunde's success derives from his unwavering dedication and competitive spirit, which drive him to excel on the field. In this interview, he reflects on his developing years in the TCC League, recounting how it shaped his career and prepared him for, the transition to European football.

He shares his insights on the TCC League, memorable encounters with formidable opponents like Gbagada FC, and the exhilarating transition to playing in Europe's top leagues. His journey exemplifies the power of hard work, determination, and a relentless pursuit of excellence in the beautiful game.

**HOW WOULD YOU DEFINE BEING A PART OF THE FIRST EDITION OF THE TCC LEAGUE?**

**AKINSOLA:** “I am happy to have participated in the TCC, and I am grateful to Valiant for allowing me to play in the competition.”

**WHAT DID YOU ENJOY MOST ABOUT PLAYING IN THE TCC LEAGUE?**

**AKINSOLA:** “I enjoyed the league because it was quite different from other leagues

organised in Lagos. This is a league that recognises player of the match, player of the month, and other performance-based metrics with accolades throughout the season, and this gives all the players a sense of competition and motivation to put in our best in all the games.”

**HOW DID THE TCC LEAGUE SHAPE YOUR CAREER AND PREPARE YOU FOR THE MOVE ABROAD?**

**AKINSOLA:** “As I mentioned earlier, the league made it a competitive one for us, and this brings out the best in me because I always want to step out there and just play my very best and give it my all by working hard.

If I don't work hard for the team, I am not getting what I want and need, so the league gave me the courage to push myself to be at the top.”

**IN YOUR FIRST SEASON, WHAT TEAM WAS YOUR BIGGEST CHALLENGE ANYTIME YOU FACED THEM?**

**AKINSOLA:** “In my first season, I am always looking forward to playing against Gbagada FC, as they always pose a big challenge and competition for us, and all through my playing years with Valiant at the TCC, we didn't win any games against them.

I loved it anyway because it was always competitive and helped bring out the best in everyone.”

**BEING ONE OF THE PLAYERS WHO LEFT TCC LEAGUE TO ONE OF EUROPE'S TOP FIVE LEAGUES, TALK US THROUGH YOUR FIRST TCC GAME AND YOUR FIRST EUROPEAN GAME.**

**AKINSOLA:** “My first game at the TCC was against Imperial, in which we won the game

2-1, and I created an assist to one of the goals. It was a good game, I was getting to make my debut in the league, and I knew I could do better in terms of performance, but afterwards, I started enjoying my displays out on the pitch with the team. Getting to Europe wasn't that easy in the beginning but I thank God I was, able to go through those tough patches with my managers, Japhet, Abdul, and everyone involved with my career. They were protective and put me through everything I needed, and I appreciate them.

For the game when I came to Spain with Valladolid, I enjoyed it and everything I needed to do, and it was good.”

**YOUR FORMER TEAM, VALIANT, WON THE TCC CUP LAST SEASON. HAVE YOU BEEN FOLLOWING THE LEAGUE, AND WHAT WAS YOUR REACTION TO THE CUP WIN?**

**AKINSOLA:** “Yes, I followed the league and was very excited for Valiant winning the Championship Cup. When I returned home that day, I took a picture of the cup and used it as my display picture.

The team did well that day, as it seemed impossible, but they fought back to win it, and I was happy.”



Babatunde Akinsola is playing in the Portuguese Liga 2 with AVS on loan from Valladolid.

# OLOFINJANA



*This level of growth is not typical in our environment, but it's evidence of our commitment to advancing the brand.*

Written by // **Adeboye Akinyelu**



Seyi Olofinjana is a former professional footballer who played in top European leagues and represented Nigeria's Super Eagles. Renowned for his skills as a midfielder, he has been active in football for over two decades as a player and administrator.

Olofinjana began his career with Crown FC in Ogbomosho and Kwara United before moving to SK Brann in Norway. He then played for Wolverhampton, Stoke City, Hull City, Cardiff City, and Sheffield Wednesday in England. After retiring, he transitioned into administration, bringing his expertise to the football industry.

Recently, he completed his UEFA Pro license and holds several Football Masters course certificates, focusing on the administration and technical aspects of the sport.

*In this interview, Olofinjana discusses his role in the league, his inspiration, his evaluations, and his vision for the TCC.*

## WHAT WERE YOUR INITIAL THOUGHTS WHEN THE CONCEPT OF TCC WAS FIRST INTRODUCED TO YOU?

**OLOFINJANA:** "When TCC was introduced to me my initial thought was, "Here we go again, another venture with people who think they can run a private league without knowing what's involved."

However, after speaking to some shareholders, especially Olajide Akinyelu, I quickly discovered the league's well-thought-out plans, requirements, and financial needs.

There were doubts about whether it could succeed in our country, but after nearly five years, we've made significant progress.

Despite needing some changes and adjustments, it has been a worthwhile experience."

## HOW DID YOU COME UP WITH THE NAME "CREATIVE CHAMPIONSHIP" FOR THE BRAND?

**OLOFINJANA:** "Coming up with the name was easy because our league is essentially, creative. We focused on moving quickly and efficiently, identifying small, achievable gains and low-hanging opportunities. We wasted no time and aimed to climb rapidly, reflecting our creative approach."

## WHAT INSPIRED YOU TO JOIN THE TCC PROJECT?

**OLOFINJANA:** "My inspiration to join the TCC group comes from the people. My approach to life and business is always about the people.

If a business thrives or fails, it depends on the people.

The like-minded shareholders in TCC made it easy for me to believe in the project.

As I mentioned earlier, we are barely scratching the surface. We can do more to attract attention and grow football through player development, recruitment, media, and other necessary aspects."



## HOW DO YOU EVALUATE THE PERFORMANCE OF TCC SINCE ITS INCEPTION?

**OLOFINJANA:** "Any new project will be shaky at the start, especially without prior experience or major opportunities, to learn.

However, we've quickly grown by being creative. The group excels at coming together after each season to evaluate what worked and what didn't, consistently seeking improvement.

Every year, we see progress, which is encouraging. There are many areas to address, but we are growing as a group. As a brand and individual club.

We're now seeing dividends from our efforts, such as being on Wyscout and Eyeball.

This level of growth is not typical in our environment, but it's evidence of our commitment to advancing the brand. Long may it continue."

## WHAT IS YOUR VISION FOR THE LEAGUE'S FUTURE IN THE COMING YEARS?

**OLOFINJANA:** "My vision is not personal but for the brand. I hope to see TCC grow to develop young players and grow, nationwide.

Eventually, we aim to establish a West Africa Youth Champions League and then an Africa Youth Champions League.

We are currently in talks with several countries about expanding TCC. Though still in its infancy, we don't want to limit ourselves.

There is much to do, but we are committed to taking steady, sustainable steps to ensure growth and expansion."

*Seyi Olofinjana constantly seeks ways to improve the TCC, believing in the project's future impact. He continuously communicates the brand's ideology to prospective investors and discusses franchising the project nationally and internationally.*



Written by // Samuel Areo

# IZUCHUKWU LAWRENCE



“  
TCC helped shape my career ....”

Introducing **Izuchukwu Lawrence**, a trailblazing footballer whose journey from Iganmu to Japan for education highlights the transformative power of the TCC League. Despite his short stint in the league, Lawrence made a significant impact with his exceptional talent. Now, he is further refining his skills and knowledge in Japan, continuing to embody the spirit of excellence and ambition that defines the TCC League.

*Izuchukwu shared his thoughts in this exclusive interview about his time in the TCC League, his time in Japan, and what he thinks about his former team.*



**Can you tell us your TCC experience and your assessment of the league and its organization?**

*Izuchukwu:* "First of all, I participated in the inaugural season, and it was mind-blowing and very different from every other league competition I have played in Nigeria at the time. Thanks to TCC, I showcased my talent to the world, and I enjoyed playing on the platform. It is very different from other leagues because of its partnership as they help participants shape their future and football career at large."

You won a couple of Man of the Match awards while in the TCC. Can you remember any game where you were so special?

*Izuchukwu:* "I played a lot of games in the TCC but I will not forget the game against Gbagada where I assisted the winning goal after a struggle on the side. It was a very good game, and I was voted the man of the match. It was a tough game and I would never forget it."

**How far has your game grown from the time you first played in the TCC and when you left?**

*Izuchukwu:* "My game in Japan has improved a lot because of the experienced coaches, facilities, and the likes. There is no pressure here and there is a lot of room to learn. They try to help you and understand you. Compared with my time in Nigeria, I will say I have grown a lot as a player."

**Despite your short stint, would you say the TCC did just enough to prepare you for life abroad?**

*Izuchukwu:* "TCC helped shape my career due to its competitive nature and how it is organized. It also played a major role in how I made it here. I am grateful for its existence, and I hope it will help other players grow and move to places they want to be"

**Your former team has not been able to challenge for titles in the TCC. How do you feel about that and do you see your team mounting a challenge soon?**

*Izuchukwu:* "I believe the coaches and management are doing everything possible for the side to challenge for honours. I see us (Iganmu FC) winning the cup and league. I believe we can do it"

**Who is Iganmu FC's best player in the 2023/24 season?**

*Izuchukwu:* "I think it is between Ibrahim Ogede and Adeleke Bamidele, but I think Ibrahim has been the team's best player with a lot of goals he scored."



■ Izuchukwu is currently based in Japan where he combines education and football at Fukuchiyama Seibi High School.

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# TCC 2021/22 SEASON

Following the successful hosting of the inaugural season, the TCC League underwent slight expansion. Broad City, Dannaz, and Atlantic Business joined the league as new members. At the same time, Ijebu United left following their promotion to the Nigeria National League (NNL) - the second division of Nigerian football. In addition, Remo U19 rebranded to become Beyond Limits Football Academy. In total, 10 teams were involved in the second season. Matches were played in Ikenne (Remo Stars Stadium), Ijebu Ode (Dipo Dina Stadium), and Lagos (Legacy Pitch, National Stadium).

**END OF 2021/22 SEASON LOG TABLE**

TABLE				
MATCHWEEK 18				
	CLUB	P	GD	PTS
1	BEYOND LIMITS	18	38	45
2	DINO	18	9	34
3	GBAGADA	18	2	33
4	IMPERIAL	18	12	27
5	DANNAZ	18	-6	25
6	ATLANTIC BUSINESS	18	-2	20
7	VALIANT	18	-7	19
8	IOANMU	18	-8	18
9	BROAD CITY	18	-14	15
10	EMMYDINHO	18	-24	14

#TCCLeague22

- **Morufdeen Moshood** and **Onyebuchi Obasi** scored hat-tricks in the same game for Beyond Limits v Broad City - February 27th, 2022
- **First hat-trick** of the season - **Morufdeen Moshood** (Beyond Limits) v Emmydinho February 2022
- **Beyond Limits** went on a **15-game** unbeaten run

*Total Goals: 269 goals      Total Games: 90*

*Biggest Result:*

Beyond Limits **7-0** Emmydinho,  
Beyond Limits **7-0** Broad City





Season 2021/22

# AWARDS



Team of the Season 2021/22



Goal of the Season - Ifeanyi Nwala (Iganmu)



Assist King - Segun Alfred (Gbagada) 7 assists



Coach of the Season - Olumide Ajibolade (Beyond Limits)



Player of the Season - Bilyaminu Abdullahi (Imperial)



Golden Gloves - Okechukwu Olisa (Beyond Limits) 6 clean sheets



Golden Boot - Morufdeen Moshood (Beyond Limits) 14 goals



The 2021/22 Awardees from Gbagada FC

- Golden Boot:** Morufdeen Moshood (Beyond Limits) 14 goals
- Assist King:** Segun Alfred (Gbagada) 7 assists
- Player of the Season:** Bilyaminu Abdullahi (Imperial)
- Coach of the Season:** Olumide Ajibolade (Beyond Limits)
- Goal of the Season:** Ifeanyi Nwala (Iganmu)
- Golden Glove:** Okechukwu Olisa (Beyond Limits) 6 clean sheets.

## Hattricks TCC 2021/22 League Season 2

Morufdeen Moshood (Beyond Limits) v Emmydinho - February 2022.

Morufdeen Moshood (Beyond Limits) v Broad City - February 2022

Onyebuchi Obasi (Beyond Limits) v Broad City - February 2022



# TCC LEAGUE CUP 2021/22



With the number of teams increased to 10, the TCC Cup took a different format for the second season. Two groups, four games (two at home, two away) and straight to the semifinals where games were single legs, including the final at the Remo Stars Stadium in Ikenne on May 2nd, 2022.

Dino and Beyond Limits competed in the colourful final, and it was the Lions Den landlords that prevailed at the home of the league champions.



*Dino cup title celebrations*



*Dino players and coaching staff in picture*



*Head coach*



Matches: 19

Goals: 57



- **Elijah Adekunle** (Dino) scored the only **hat-trick of the cup** campaign against Emmydinho (December 2021).
- **Dino** defeated Beyond Limits **2-1** to win the trophy.
- **Ifeoluwa Agboola** (Valiant) - **top scorer** with 5 goals.





## TCC 2021/22 TEAM OF THE SEASON

### GOALKEEPER

#### OKECHUKWU OLISA (BEYOND LIMITS)

No keeper kept more clean sheets than Olisa (6) in the season, and he played a key role in Beyond Limits, retaining their title.

### DEFENDERS

#### AHMED AKINYELE (BEYOND LIMITS)

Ahmed made 17 apps - a regular in the side that won the title. He finished the season with a goal, 9 clean sheets and 18 tackles won.

#### BABATUNDE AKOMOLEDE (BROAD CITY)

Babatunde made a mark in his debut TCC season. The left-footed centre-back made 17 apps for the city boys.

#### STANLEY JOSEPH (BEYOND LIMITS)

Like Ahmed, he was a constant name on the team sheet. Stanley made 43 interceptions, 12 blocks, and helped his side keep 10 clean sheets.

### MIDFIELDERS

#### BALOGUN WASIU (GBAGADA)

Back-to-back appearances in the team of the season for Wasiu. The bulky midfielder made 18 apps, scoring five times and contributing another three assists.

#### SALAU YUSUF (IMPERIAL)

The midfielder was excellent for his side all through the campaign. He made 79 ball recoveries and 44 interceptions plus four assists.

#### BILYAMINU ABDULLAHI (IMPERIAL)

Top performer in the league by a mile. He led his team to a better place finish than the previous campaign, scoring 10 times in 17 appearances. He also won numerous MoTM awards.

#### AYOMIDE OGUNGBE (BEYOND LIMITS)

Ayomide completed 86% of his passes, scored two goals, made two assists, and created 26 goal scoring chances to help his side clinch the title.

### FORWARDS

#### SIXTUS ELEGALAM (VALIANT)

Although Valiant failed to challenge for the title again, Sixtus stood out in his position and was rewarded with a place in the team of the season. He scored five goals from 16 appearances for the Brave Boys.

#### ADEMOLA AKIBU (GBAGADA)

Ademola finished the season with 10 goals and 6 assists - most goal contributions by any player in the campaign.

#### ONYEBUCHI OBASI (BEYOND LIMITS)

Following an injury hit season, Obasi was a menace on the wings as the Champions staged a successful title defence. He finished the season with eight goals and six assists.

### COACH OF THE SEASON

#### OLUMIDE AJIBOLADE (BEYOND LIMITS)

He led his side to a successful title defence.



Written by // Adeboye Akinyelu

# OLUMIDE



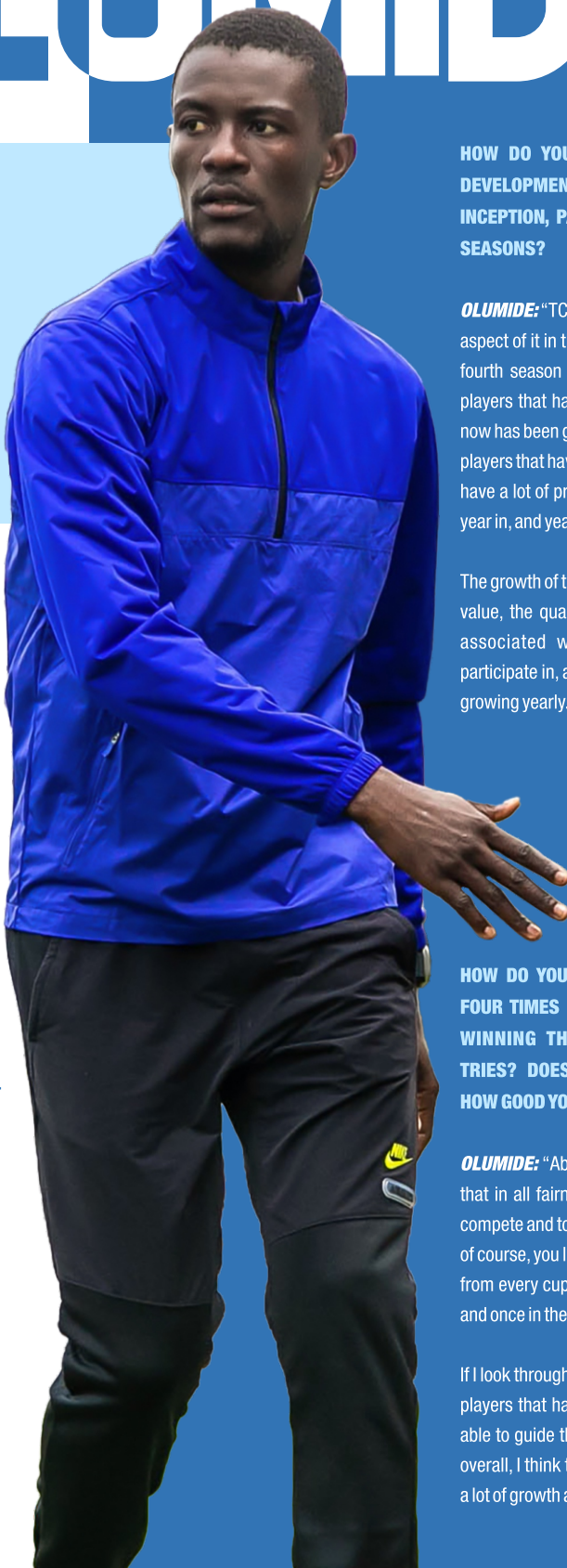
**We are always motivated we are looking forward to the fifth season already.**

Coach Olumide Ajibolade is a serial winner, known for his technical prowess, tactical awareness, and adept man-management skills. With a wealth of experience and a deep passion for nurturing talent, Coach Olumide's impact extends far beyond the field.

His impressive array of coaching badges includes; the NIS Diploma (2015), Level 1 & 2 coaching qualifications from the English FA, UEFA C & B licenses from the Irish FA, and certification from the MBP School of Coaching.

For the past five years, Coach Olumide has led Beyond Limits, a team based in Ikenne, Ogun, on a remarkable journey of growth and success. His coaching philosophy centres on discovering raw talent and refining it into polished professionals ready for the next phase of their careers.

Renowned for his direct and intense playing style, Coach Olumide's tactical brilliance shines through in every match. In this interview, we delve into his insights on coaching, the TCC league, talent development, opposition analysis, and his advice for aspiring coaches.



**HOW DO YOU ASSESS THE PROGRESSION AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE TCC LEAGUE SINCE ITS INCEPTION, PARTICULARLY OVER THE PAST FOUR SEASONS?**

**OLUMIDE:** "TCC's growth has been exponential in every aspect of it in that we begin with eight teams and in the fourth season we have twelve teams. The number of players that have participated from the first season till now has been good, the number of graduates in terms of players that have been in the league and have gone on to have a lot of progress in their careers keeps increasing year in, and year out.

The growth of the teams in terms of their media visibility, value, the quality of the football and all that they are associated with in the other tournaments they participate in, are the metrics to show that the league is growing yearly."

**HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT YOUR TEAM WINNING FOUR TIMES IN A ROW IN THE LEAGUE, BUT NOT WINNING THE CHAMPIONSHIP CUP IN THREE TRIES? DOES THIS BOTHER YOU, CONSIDERING HOW GOOD YOUR TEAM IS?**

**OLUMIDE:** "Absolutely not, it doesn't bother me I think that in all fairness of competition, we give our best to compete and to learn from the matches that we play and of course, you learn from defeats and we take the lesson from every cup defeat that we've had, twice in the final and once in the semis.

If I look through the current squad maybe it is one or two players that have been through that process and were able to guide the team to another final this season, but overall, I think there is no disappointment there it is just a lot of growth and experience."



**BEYOND LIMITS HAS BECOME MORE POPULAR AND SUCCESSFUL IN RECENT YEARS. DO YOU SEE THIS AS A REWARD FOR ALL THE HARD WORK YOU AND OTHERS HAVE PUT IN?**

**OLUMIDE:** "Yes, I think that the investment of the President in the structure of Beyond Limits is remarkable, it is enviable, and it is something that would bring returns and returns can be from the popularity and also from the value the players at the Academy are beginning to have and the work that we put in every day to ensure that we maintain the standards that the players can keep up to the level that we envisage them to be."

We must see the results, our popularity is good, yes, but it is important to see the results that we have both financially and sporting-wise."

**YOUR TEAM HAS SEEN MANY TALENTED INDIVIDUALS EMERGE DURING THE FIRST SEASON OF THE TCC. IS THERE ONE IN PARTICULAR THAT YOU MISS THE MOST?**

**OLUMIDE:** "Well, it is a lot of players I am not sure we miss them per se because the idea for us is to let them grow and leave so I don't miss the players. However, they serve as a benchmark, setting a standard for the players at the Academy. This standard must reflect the quality of progress and something aspiring individuals can strive towards. Akinsanmiro Ebenezer (Inter Milan) leads this list, playing for a club of significant stature. Additionally, we have Moshood excelling in Portugal, along with Basit, Ezekiel, Lekan, and our captain Obasi, who played this season and is now thriving in Norway."

So, these boys are all inspirations to the ones that are still in the Academy and so we don't miss them we only want them to do well."

**HOW DO YOU MAINTAIN YOUR MOTIVATION AFTER WINNING FOUR CONSECUTIVE LEAGUE TITLES?**

**OLUMIDE:** "We are always motivated we are looking forward to the fifth season already because we don't start the season to win it that is always clear from the beginning. The intention is to compete in every game and be able to measure the development of the players and because we want to compete, we are always looking for competition."

This season was very challenging because we also had to play in the>NNL, and the FA Cup and then we had to go abroad on the same calendar it was very tight, but because each game was another competitive match we took it one game at a time.

So, we are looking forward to the fifth season already and would give it the same effort, commitment, match after match and whatever happens at the end of the season we will take it."

**WHICH TEAM DO YOU FEEL HAS PRESENTED THE BIGGEST TACTICAL CHALLENGE FOR YOU IN THE TCC LEAGUE?**

**OLUMIDE:** "Every season we've got different teams and that's the beauty of the league because teams have different ways they play, for instance you play a Gbagada, they would mark you they are physical and resilient."

If you play Sporting Lagos, they are tactical and good technically, you play Imperial they have a different vibe to them, direct and intense, just a mix of everything Broad City also popped up this season with a different type of approach and the new entry Real Sapphire is like Chelsea this season sort of physical and unpredictable at what they would do, and how they would attack you."

It is a weird mix; you've got Dino who can turn up and hit you for seven. There are just a lot of teams in it and that's just the beauty of it, you go into it and have ideas of what you are going to get and that's also why it is, interesting and challenging, you can't watch TCC match and predict the scoreline before it happens because anything can happen."

The teams always challenge themselves; the players push themselves and everything is fair that's the most critical part of the TCC there is fairness in the games and every team can compete and give their best and that makes it very interesting."



**WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU OFFER TO YOUNG COACHES AIMING TO BREAK INTO THE WORLD OF FOOTBALL?**

**OLUMIDE:** "I think everyone involved in coaching, first of all, think of why they are in coaching. Why am I coaching is the first question and what are those answers make sure those answers are clear."

You need to understand that the journey to the level that you see the cameras, lights and microphones is a very difficult one, and the journey to where you think is the top to be through the development of the players and the growth of the players have to come first before any agenda in terms of you as a person or a coach."

I think the intention behind it would always drive the energy that the coach will put in if the goal is to improve a player's contribution it means that the coach will always find every way to gather knowledge to be better because he knows that he is responsible for the development and the growth of the players."

When that is the goal, you will see that the coaches will improve they will seek knowledge and they will stumble and stay grounded. They would keep looking at how to be better coaches because they want to make better players."

I think that is my mantra to be a better coach and make better players and that has kept me going and that's my only focus, how can I be better because I need my players to be better."



■ At the time of this interview, Coach Olumide and his Beyond Limits team are gearing up for their third Championship Cup final in four years, despite previous losses in the final twice. They are striving to achieve a historic league double in The Creative Championship.



# TCC 2022/23 SEASON

Following the successes of the previous two seasons, the TCC League added a new member - Sporting Lagos - after the withdrawal of Emmydinho from the league. In total, 10 teams were still involved in the third season. Matches were played in Ikenne (Remo Stars Stadium), Ijebu Ode (Dipo Dina Stadium), and Lagos (Legacy Pitch, National Stadium).

END OF 2022/23 SEASON LOG TABLE

**TABLE**  
MATCHWEEK 18

CLUB	P	GD	PTS
1 BEYOND LIMITS	18	27	42
2 SPORTING	18	17	35
3 IMPERIAL	18	15	32
4 DANNAZ	18	9	29
5 BROAD CITY	18	1	29
6 DINO SC	18	-2	23
7 IGANMU TIGER	18	-9	19
8 GBAGADA	18	-15	18
9 ATLANTIC BUSINESS	18	-18	17
10 VALIANT	18	-25	11

#TCCLeague23

- **First hat-trick of the season** - Adio Ojora (Sporting Lagos) v Valiant - October 2022.

- **Eight hattricks** were scored in the season by seven different players.

*Total Goals: 299 goals    Total Games: 90*

*Average of 3.3 goals per game*

*Biggest Results:*

Beyond Limits **6-0** Valiant  
 Iganmu **2-5** Beyond Limits  
 Gbagada **2-6** Imperial  
 Imperial **6-1** Gbagada





Season 2022/23

# AWARD WINNERS



**Bilyaminu Abdullahi** proudly showcases his Player of the Year, Goal of the Season, Golden Boot, and Team of the Season awards.



**Stanley Joseph** posing with his Team of the Season Award.



**Bilyaminu Abdullahi & Onyebuchi Obasi**, Golden Boot winners, displaying their awards for scoring **11 goals each**.



**Remilekun Kabiru** receiving his Team of the season award.



**Sola Ogundana** posing with his Assist King and Team of the Season awards.



**Bilyaminu Abdullahi** receiving his Golden Boot award.



**Onyebuchi Obasi** holding his Golden Boot and Team of the Season awards.

## Hattricks TCC 2021/22 League Season 2

**Adio Ojora** (Sporting Lagos) vs Valiant - *October 2022*

**Abiodun Toheeb** (Valiant) vs Dino - *November 2022*

**Ezekiel Samuel** (Imperial) vs Atlantic Business - *November 2022.*

**Hyacinth Ogonna** (Dino) vs Valiant - *December 2022*

**Joel Augustine** (Imperial) vs Gbagada - *December 2022*

**Bilyaminu Abdullahi** (Imperial) vs Gbagada - *December 2022.* (4 goals)

**Onyebuchi Obasi** (Beyond Limits) v Valiant - *February 2023*

**Onyebuchi Obasi** (Beyond Limits) v Iganmu - *March 2023*

- 1. **Golden Boot:** Bilyaminu Abdullahi (Imperial) & Onyebuchi Obasi (Beyond Limits) **11 goals**
- 2. **Assist King:** Shola Ogundana (Beyond Limits) **10 assists**
- 3. **Player of the Season:** Bilyaminu Abdullahi (Imperial)
- 4. **Coach of the Season:** Olumide Ajibolade (Beyond Limits)
- 5. **Goal of the Season:** Bilyaminu Abdullahi (Imperial)
- 6. **Golden Glove:** Favour Aputaziem (Beyond Limits) **7 clean sheets.**



# TCC LEAGUE CUP 2022/23



Just like the league, it featured all ten teams for this edition but with a different format. Teams were divided into two groups where they played four games in total (two at home, two away), and the top four teams from each group reached the last eight. All knock-out ties were single leg, including the final played at the Mobolaji Johnson Arena, Onikan on April 8, 2023.



*Valiant cup title celebrations*



Matches: 27



Goals: 67

- **Onyebuchi Obasi** scored the only **hat-trick** in the cup this season.
- **Valiant** came from two goals to beat Gbagada on penalties in the colourful final in Lagos to win the title for the first time.



## 2022/23 TEAM OF THE SEASON

### GOALKEEPER

#### FAVOUR APUTAZIEM (BEYOND LIMITS)

He kept the most clean sheets (7) and made beautiful steps to help his side defend their crown.

### DEFENDERS

#### MUBARAK ABDULRAHMAN (DANNAZ)

He made 13 appearances for the Cedars, keeping three clean sheets in the process.

#### STANLEY JOSEPH (BEYOND LIMITS)

Back-to-back nominations for the centre-back who made 17 appearances and helped his side to 7 clean sheets. He also made 32 interceptions and 13 blocks in the title winning campaign.

#### REMILEKUN KABIRU (IGANMU TIGER)

The Tigers didn't perform well, but Kabiru was a standout performer for his side. He made 14 appearances and helped his side keep 4 clean sheets.

### MIDFIELDERS

#### AYOMIDE OGUNGBE (BEYOND LIMITS)

Ayomide also made it back-to-back appearances in the TOTS. The midfielder. He made 15 appearances, completed 85% of his passes, and created 31 chances in the title win.

#### ERIC OLOGE (IMPERIAL)

The defensive midfielder made 17 appearances, completed 34 interceptions, and 34 tackles to help his side finish in a respectable position.

#### BILYAMINU ABDULLAHI (IMPERIAL)

Player of the season for the second successive season. Abdullahi excelled on all fronts, scoring 11 goals, made 7 assists, and also won the goal of the season award.

#### MUSA ABDULLAHI (BEYOND LIMITS)

The ball winner went about his job perfectly. He made 18 appearances, completed 90 recoveries, 23 interceptions, and 28 tackles as his side claimed the title.

### FORWARDS

#### ONYEBUCHI OBASI (BEYOND LIMITS)

Obasi is another player who was in the TOTS last term. He made 17 appearances, scored 11 goals, contributed 7 assists, and completed 42 dribbles.

#### ADELEKE BAMIDELE (IGAMU TIGER)

Bamidele made 16 appearances for the Tigers. He went on to score 7 times and made an additional two assists.

#### SHOLA OGUNDANA (BEYOND LIMITS)

Shola was a live wire on the wings for the champions. He made 14 appearances, scored 7 goals, and made 10 assists in the title win.

### COACH OF THE SEASON

#### OLUMIDE AJIBOLADE (BEYOND LIMITS)

For the third season in a row, he led his team to the title win. He also won the coach of the season award



# EBENEZER AKINSANMIRO

Written by // Samuel Areo

“ Inter move was like a dream ”

From the humble streets where football dreams are born, **Ebenezer Akinsanmiro** emerged as a beacon of talent and determination, transcending his modest beginnings to grace the global stage with the prestigious Inter Milan.

Hailing from a background where opportunities were scarce but ambitions ran high, Akinsanmiro's journey is a testament to the power of resilience and unwavering dedication. His rise to prominence was marked by sheer brilliance on the field, showcasing a rare blend of technique, class, and sheer majesty with every touch of the ball. As he honed his skills at Beyond Limits, his passion for the game burned brighter with each passing day, propelling him towards greatness.

In his inaugural TCC League campaign, Akinsanmiro's brilliance shone brightly as his team won the title, earning him the esteemed honour of being named in the Team of the Season, a recognition reserved for the best of the best. His performances were nothing short of mesmerizing, captivating audiences worldwide with his sublime skill and innate footballing intelligence.

From the TCC to the second division of Nigerian football, the Nigeria National League (NNL), to the Nigeria Premier Football League (NPFL), and the Italian top flight, it has been a remarkable journey for the young midfielder. Akinsanmiro's story serves as an inspiration to countless aspiring footballers, proving that with talent, hard work, and a relentless pursuit of excellence, dreams can indeed become reality. And now, as he dons the iconic black and blue of Inter Milan, Ebenezer stands ready to etch his name in the annals of footballing history, a true maestro of the beautiful game.

*In this exclusive interview, Ebenezer shares his thoughts on the TCC, his move abroad, and his relationship with coach Olumide Ajibolade.*

**You won the inaugural TCC League title, how does that make you feel?**

**Ebenezer:** It made me feel good, and how important it is to win games.

**Can you remember the most memorable game you played in the TCC? Talk us through it.**

**Ebenezer:** The most memorable game I played was against Valiant away from home. I think we won 3-1, I scored a goal and I made an assist.

**You made the team of the season in the inaugural edition of the TCC, would you say that pushed you to do more in the subsequent seasons?**

**Ebenezer:** Yes, the first achievement pushed me to do more. The following season I was promoted to the senior team and we played in the NNL before securing the promotion ticket to the NPFL via the playoffs.

**How would you describe the TCC in your development and transfer to Europe?**

**Ebenezer:** It really helped me because it is a competitive league for the youth. It pushed me a lot. During my time in Europe when we first came here (Italy), we came with a lot of TCC players to play in an international tournament, and it was a great memory. The TCC helped me a lot.

**Describe your feeling moving from Beyond Limits to Internazionale? How long did it take to sink in?**

**Ebenezer:** It was like a dream to me. I felt great. There was a time when my coach (Olumide Ajibolade) told me that a time would come when I would be the one to choose the team I wanted to go to. It played out just as he said, and it was nice.

**You seem to have a cordial relationship with your coach, Olumide Ajibolade, how can you describe the connection?**

**Ebenezer:** He is a coach, but he is more than a coach to me. We have been together for about six years, but it seems we have been together for so long. He is a father, a brother, and a friend to me because he knows all about me. He is an important person to me and a great person. He is family, and he has taught me a lot on the pitch and off the pitch.

**How do you feel being a Serie A champion?**

**Ebenezer:** I feel great winning the Serie A and I'm happy to be a part of the Inter family.



- Ebenezer, who won the Coppa Italia in 2023, is on the books of Serie A champions Inter Milan.



# TCC Press Briefing Unveiled:

## Major Announcements and Insights



The Creative Championship, in its quest to be in tune with the media world, has held press conferences since the league was formed in 2020. It is a testament to the fact that the TCC is deliberate in projecting the image of the league and its product.

The 2023 edition of Parley served as an avenue to introduce the new set of sponsors for the new season to the general public and to disclose the successes of the League so far. Speaking at the event, Akinyelu Olajide, one of the directors and owner of Gbagada FC, reiterated the reason behind the creation of the TCC and how it has grown over the years.

“The TCC started in the year 2020. It is a league that few privately owned clubs came together to form the initiative and the main reason is the lack of enough competitive matches for the third tier – Nigeria Nationwide League – clubs in Nigeria. We started with 8 teams, we had 10 teams in the league last season and we have expanded to 12 teams now.”

On the other hand, Olalekan Oyinlola, founder of Escola United, had this to say about why his club are associating with the TCC brand: “We wanted to connect with like-minded individuals, forward-thinking club owners and a solid platform for our talents to be developed furthermore. We did a lot of research on the tournaments in the country and the participating teams – we eventually settled for the TCC because of its organization, vision, and purpose – development.”

Speaking about their reason for working with the TCC brand, Oyinade Osobajo, Corporate Communications Head of Optimus Bank, said: “We are bringing digital technology and modalities that the young people can relate with and we are also passionate about the development of talents especially on the platform of the TCC.”

Currently, the 12 teams in the league are; Beyond Limits, Gbagada, Broad City, Valiant FC, Imperial FC, Dino SC, Atlantic Business, Dannaz, Iganmu Tigers FC, Sporting Lagos Academy, and the latest members – Real Sapphire, and Escola United. Aside from the league, the TCC Cup is also

being played by the above mentioned teams.

The TCC League has Bet9ja, Nigeria’s foremost gaming platform, as one of its sponsors, others include Value Jet, and new sponsors – Optimus Bank and Casava. Meanwhile, Wyscout is the official data partner of the TCC – the first league to utilize the platform in Nigeria.

TCC has seen many players move from the league to foreign leagues while many others made the leap to the Nigeria Premier Football League (NPFL). Some of the players that have moved include; Ebenezer Akinsanmiro (Beyond Limits) to Inter Milan, Solomon Agbalaka (Broad City) to FC Sochi, Babatunde Akinsola (Valiant) to Real Valladolid, and many more.

On the part of the clubs, Ijebu United got promoted to the Nigeria National League (NNL) after the maiden TCC season, Beyond Limits and Dannaz played in the final of the FA Cups in Ogun State and Lagos State respectively recently, while Beyond Limits also gained promotion to the NNL.

Currently, the 12 teams in the league are; Beyond Limits, Gbagada, Broad City, Valiant FC, Imperial FC, Dino SC, Atlantic Business, Dannaz, Iganmu FC, Sporting Lagos Academy, and the latest members – Real Sapphire, and Escola United. Aside from the league, the TCC Cup is also being played by the abovementioned teams.





# SOLOMON



“ I still have Beyond Limits on my mind ”

Written by // Samuel Areo

From the vibrant streets of Lagos to the prestigious stages of international football, Solomon Agbalaka's journey is a testament to passion, perseverance, and raw talent.

Since his debut in the TCC League with Broad City in the 2021/22 season, Solomon's star has continued to rise with his impressive performances on the pitch, helping his team secure a respectable finish in their inaugural campaign.

His outstanding displays earned him numerous Man of the Match awards in his second season, catapulting him onto the international stage with the national U20 team. Solomon's adaptability, grit, and determination have been on full display as he seamlessly transitioned to the next level, ultimately landing a move abroad after the age-grade tournament.

Despite leaving the TCC several months ago, Solomon's heart still has a place for the undisputed TCC champions - Beyond Limits.

In this exclusive interview, Solomon reflects fondly on his time in the TCC, his national team experience, and his current adventure abroad.



**HOW WOULD YOU SAY YOUR TIME IN THE TCC WITH BROAD CITY HELPED SHAPE YOU AS A FOOTBALLER?**

**SOLOMON:** "Yeah, it helped me a lot because the TCC League was competitive then. We always play every week and it helped my fitness level."

**YOU WON QUITE SOME MAN-OF-THE-MATCH AWARDS WITH BROAD CITY IN THE TCC LEAGUE, SO WHICH PARTICULAR GAME STOOD OUT FOR YOU?**

**SOLOMON:** "I was happy when I was told I would be going to the national team. so, I took the energy and happiness to the game and I got two goals that gave the boys high momentum in the game against Gbagada. The game ended in a 4-1 win for us."

**AS A CENTER-BACK, WHICH STRIKER OR ATTACKER GAVE YOU A TOUGH TIME WHILE PLAYING IN THE TCC?**

**SOLOMON:** "Nobody really gave me a tough time because I was a rock back then, but I can compliment Onyebuchi Obasi and Shola Ogundana (both of Beyond Limits), especially Shola because of his speed."

**APART FROM BEING A CENTER-BACK, THERE WERE GAMES YOU PLAYED IN OTHER POSITIONS AND DID THAT HELP YOU WHEN YOU MOVED ABROAD?**

**SOLOMON:** "I was playing at center-back while at

Broad City but when I got to the national team, I played as a left-back. So coming abroad, it was slightly different. Most importantly, Broad City taught me everything I needed to know."

**WOULD YOU SAY THE TCC GAVE YOU ADEQUATE PREPARATION FOR LIFE ABROAD?**

**SOLOMON:** "Yeah, it did."

**HOW DID YOU FEEL UPON HEARING YOUR NAME CALLED UP TO THE NATIONAL TEAM AT THE TIME?**

**SOLOMON:** "It was a dream come true. I was very happy. From the grassroots to the national team, I was very happy."

**WHICH TEAM DO YOU ALWAYS LOOK FORWARD TO PLAYING AGAINST IN THE TCC?**

**SOLOMON:** "I think Beyond Limits. I still have them on my mind. Because when I was playing in the TCC, I never won them as a player."



- Solomon earned a move to PFC Sochi of Russia in the summer of 2023 but he is currently on loan at Georgian side Iberia 1999 Tbilisi.



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# BLESSING EDET

“ Learn from the best, to be the best, and to beat the best. ”

From the gritty fields of Dino to the grand stage of Copa Libertadores with Caracas FC, Blessing Edet's journey epitomizes the power of relentless determination, unwavering belief, and the sheer grit of a true midfielder.

Against all odds, he's transformed challenges into stepping stones, showcasing that with perseverance, the impossible becomes possible.

Edet left the league as a champion, winning the TCC Cup in 2022 and with some breathtaking performances in midfield for the Lion's Den landlords.

In this exclusive interview with the TCC, Blessing spoke glowingly about his time in the league and how it prepared him for life abroad.



**What's the Dino TCC experience for you?**

**Edet:** For me, it was an amazing and blissful experience playing for Dino Sporting Club in the TCC. It was a process of learning and developing to improve in all aspect of my career, on and off pitch.

**Dino are such a good team at set pieces, is there a recipe?**

**Edet:** Yes of course. We practice so hard on the training ground and try to implement it on the pitch during game day. For me, it is simply constant practice.

**You won the TCC Cup with Dino, how high will you rank that achievement in your books?**

**Edet:** Of course, we won the TCC Cup, and I will say it added 50% to my achievements as a player.

**You won a couple of man of the match awards while in the TCC. Can you remember any game where you were so special?**

**Edet:** I remember I won a lot of man of the match awards. The game I remember I was so special was when we played against Ijebu United in the Cup. I scored a long-range goal to give my side the lead. The feeling was amazing, and it was a special day for me.

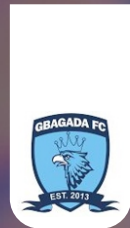
**How far has your game grown from the time you first played in the TCC and when you left?**

**Edet:** For me, it is a daily process to keep working and improving to also have the right mindset to achieve my goals. So, I keep learning, improving, and working hard.

**Would you say TCC really prepared you for life abroad?**

**Edet:** Yes, it did. The TCC prepared me - competition is the key. The league served as a platform to let me know whether I'm getting things as a player or not. I have a quote that says "Learn from the best, to be the best, and to beat the best" and that is what TCC has done. All thanks to the management of TCC for the platform given to players to succeed in their careers and to the clubs for participating and not forgetting the coaches and players for making the league interesting.





# AKIBU

*Ademola*

“It is what you take in you give out and hard work pays.”

Written by // Adeboye Akinyelu

A journey fuelled by dedication and ambition, Ademola Ibrahim Akibu's rise within the Blue Eagles of Gbagada exemplifies hard work and determination. Since joining the club in the 2021/22 season, Akibu has emerged as a formidable striker, his unswerving focus on goal matched only by his relentless pursuit of excellence.

Akibu's prowess in aerial duels makes him a daunting presence on the pitch, a trait that has consistently posed challenges for opposing defenders. His rapid development has garnered attention in just under two years since joining Gbagada FC, setting the stage for his leap to Europe. Following an impressive debut season with the Blues, Akibu's stellar performance continued into the subsequent year, solidifying his status as a rising star at the club.

In his debut season at the TCC, Akibu's exceptional performance earned him a coveted spot in the Team of The Year, underscoring his impact on the field. His ability to score crucial goals further highlighted his talent, attracting widespread attention and paving the way for his next career move.

In this interview, Akibu offers insight into his developmental years within the TCC League, acknowledging its instrumental role in moulding his path to professionalism.

Akibu firmly believes in the power of continuous learning and diligent effort in pursuit of one's goals, turning dreams into tangible reality.



### WHAT WAS IT LIKE FOR YOU TO PARTICIPATE IN THE SECOND AND THIRD SEASON OF THE TCC?

**AKIBU:** "I am happy, to have participated in the TCC League and Cup competition, the platform gave me the exposure I needed and I learnt a lot of things I didn't know before."

### WHAT DID YOU ENJOY THE MOST WHILE PLAYING IN THE TCC LEAGUE?

**AKIBU:** "I enjoyed the officiating, the atmosphere and the organisation of the competition. Everything about the league was fantastic."

### HOW WILL YOU SAY THE TCC LEAGUE SHAPED YOUR CAREER AND PREPARED YOU FOR THE MOVE TO ALBANIA?

**AKIBU:** "With the help of the TCC scouting platform and partners this gave me the exposure I needed for me, to be seen and be scouted to the Albania First Division with Bylis."

### WITH YOUR ACHIEVEMENT WITH TCC AND GETTING TO ALBANIA WHAT ARE THE DIFFERENCES OR COMPARISONS IN TERMS OF STANDARD BETWEEN THE TWO LEAGUES?

**AKIBU:** "The playing styles are a bit different and distinct as the play here in Albania is fast-paced and intense."

### WHILE PLAYING IN TCC WHICH TEAM DO YOU ALWAYS LOOK FORWARD TO PLAYING AGAINST THE MOST?

**AKIBU:** "I am always looking forward to playing against Broad City, they are a team who give us the big fight anytime we face each other."

### AS A STRIKER WHILE PLAYING IN THE TCC LEAGUE IS THERE ANY DEFENDER THAT YOU CAN MENTION WHO ALWAYS GIVE YOU A TOUGH TIME PLAYING AGAINST THEM?

**AKIBU:** "Yes, there are two of them, who always give me a hard time and they are; Victory Ibora of Beyond Limits and Joshua Abayomi of Broad City. These guys are both strong and technical on the ball, they stand out for me as a defender who will test you as a striker."

### WHAT HAS YOUR EXPERIENCE BEEN SO FAR IN ALBANIA ADAPTING TO THE WEATHER, FOOD AND THE PLAYING STYLE?

**AKIBU:** "I would like to start with the weather as it got to a point where it was too cold but I have got to adapt and cope with the change because it is what you take in you give out and hard work pays. So, I have got to adapt to the weather quickly."

About the food, I am still adjusting to their delicacies and just like the weather I would have to adapt to that also.

Lastly, talking about the playing style, here it is all about the intensity as you keep running most of the time in terms of attacking and defending."



- At the end of the interview, Akibu was already getting ready for his afternoon training session with Bylis who will be playing in the Albania First Division in the 2024/25 season.



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Written by // Adeboye Akinyelu

# Frank:

“ The Creative Championship is sustainable in the long term; I see TCC producing lots of home-grown players. ”



With a decade-long tenure in the football industry, Frank Peters, the club owner and CEO of Real Sapphire FC, personifies commitment to discovering and nurturing young talent.

His track record speaks volumes, having pushed, numerous players to stardom across Europe through his esteemed football club, Real Sapphire.

Among his notable proteges is Nigerian sensation Victor Boniface, who is currently making waves in the German Bundesliga with Bayern Leverkusen.

Frank is committed, to his mission to foster more promising talents, leveraging the platform presented by The Creative Championship (TCC).

From the moment, he learned about TCC, Frank was fascinated by its vision, recognising it as a launch pad for his club and its budding stars.

In their debut season within the league, Real Sapphire's performance has exceeded expectations, evidence of the quality of the platform and the potential it holds for the future of football locally.

### HELLO, CEO, COULD YOU ELABORATE ON THE PRIMARY FACTORS, THAT INFLUENCED YOUR DECISION TO JOIN TCC?

FRANK: "First of all, what influenced my decision is the burning desire I have for showcasing young talents; however, this is not achievable if you can't find a convincing platform, and TCC is an excellent private platform to do this.

Before making my final decision, I made my findings about the league and asked important questions while at it, and in the end, I found TCC to be the right fit that aligns with my and the club's goals.

The quality of organisation, the media coverage, and the competition itself provide what it needs for the players themselves—what they need to drive and showcase what they have."

### WHAT ARE YOUR THOUGHTS ON THE PLATFORM PROVIDED BY TCC?

FRANK: "For me, this is my first year in TCC but I know everyone involved with the league can see, the appreciation I feel about being a part of this.

I see TCC beyond what it is now as something very massive. It is not just to develop the players; it has also created the structure to prepare and market home-grown players.

Within a short time, some people came up with this idea, and now it has grown so fast in a few years that within the short time I came on board, it has further grown my business, the club, and our opportunities.

We have gained so much from TCC in the short time we've been here, and this is why I am a massive fan of TCC, and I am excited about the future and what the platform will provide."

### GIVEN THE LEAGUE'S CURRENT STRUCTURE, DO YOU BELIEVE IT IS SUSTAINABLE IN THE LONG TERM?

FRANK: "The Creative Championship is sustainable in the long term; I see TCC

producing lots of home-grown players. It will be a reference point as an organisation in the African football industry.

The league is going to go very far as what has been achieved is only about thirty percent (30%) of the vision and mission of the TCC."

### REFLECTING ON YOUR DEBUT SEASON, HOW HAS LEAGUE PARTICIPATION AFFECTED YOUR PLAYERS' DEVELOPMENT TO DATE?

FRANK: "We have one of the youngest squads in the league, and as it is our debut season, I didn't even expect what the team has been able to achieve.

The boys are mostly from our young group, and this is the first time they can play together every week in a competitive structure, and they did surpass my expectations.

However, we have seen them develop into quality players. The TCC platform has instilled in them confidence.

Experience, preparation, and exposure. All these have been achieved in a few months because they play weekly, as is done in every professional league, in the world.

I cannot stop singing the praises to TCC because we have gained a lot since joining, and I am also happy for the lad's achievement and performance in our debut season, as well as for the coaching crew and staff."





# TCC 2023/24 SEASON

The fourth season of the Creative Championship League saw the addition of two more teams, taking the total number to 12. **Real Sapphire Fc** and **Escola United** being the latest members. Matches were played in Ikenne (Remo Stars Stadium), Ijebu Ode (Dipo Dina Stadium), and Lagos (Mobolaji Johnson Arena, Onikan) with Beyond Limits claiming a fourth successive crown.

## TOP SCORERS

- Kparobo Arierhi** (Beyond Limits) 22
- Ogonna Okoro** (Dino) 16
- Joshua Obakimi** (Dannaz) 16
- Ibrahim Ogede** (Iganmu) 14
- Semiu Fagbayi** (Gbagada) 13

## MOST ASSISTS

- Rilwan Gbadamosi** (Gbagada) 8
- Onyebuchi Obasi** (Beyond Limits) 6
- Olamilekan Adegboyega** (Beyond Limits) 6
- Chidera Ezeno** (Imperial) 6

## HATTRICKS

- **11 hat-tricks** were scored in the 2023/24 season - **eight different players** scored, while **Ogonna Okoro** (Dino Sporting Club) and **Joshua Obakimi** (Dannaz) scored four goals in a game during the season.
- **Kparobo** scored **three hat-tricks** in the campaign - *the most by any player in a single TCC League campaign.*

## MOST CLEAN SHEETS

- Okoghene Isaac** (Broad City) 8
- Ebube Omah** (Atlantic Business) 5
- Remilekun Demehin** (Real Sapphire) 4
- Samson Kolo** (Valiant) 4
- David Ede** (Dino) 4

**END OF 2023/24 SEASON LOG TABLE**

CLUB	P	GD	PTS
BEYOND LIMITS	22	+33	52
DINO	22	+29	43
IMPERIAL	22	+21	42
REAL SAPPHIRE	22	+17	40
SPORTING	22	+5	35
BROADCITY	22	+2	35
ATLANTIC BUSINESS	22	+5	30
VALIANT	22	-4	27
GBAGADA	22	-11	21
DANNAZ	22	-22	20
ESCOLA	22	-39	10
IGANMU TIGER	22	-36	9

*Total Goals: 483 goals    Total Games: 132*

*Average of 3.66 goals per game*

*Biggest Results:*

- Dannaz **1-7** Beyond Limits
- Imperial **7-1** Escola
- Escola **1-7** Real Sapphire
- Dino **8-1** Iganmu
- Dino **8-0** Escola







# TCC LEAGUE CUP 2023/24



Just like the league, all the 12 teams played in this edition but with a different format. Teams were divided into two groups where they played five games in total, and the top four teams from each group reached the quarterfinals.

All knock-out ties were single legs, including the final set to be played at the Remo Stars Stadium between Beyond Limits and Sporting Lagos Academy.



Matches: 36

(pending the final)

Goals: 121



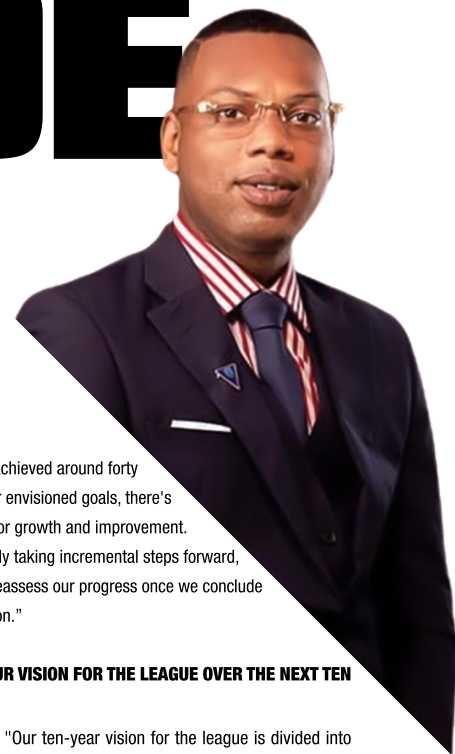
- Adeshina Ayodele became the first player to score five goals in a TCC Cup game.
- Beyond Limits reached their third final in four seasons.
- This is the first time 100+ goals will be scored in the Cup competition.



# OLAJIDE

**// We're focusing not only on performance but also on the business aspects due to the success we've seen each season.**

Written by // **Adeboye Akinyelu**



A passionate football enthusiast dedicated to the sport's growth in the country, Olajide Akinyelu is one of the youngest and brightest minds in the game. Renowned for his talent grooming and development skills, Olajide's technical abilities have made him a standout figure.

Olajide graduated from the prestigious NIS with a Diploma from the Coaching Institute. His other qualifications include CAF C, a Master's in Higher Football Performance from MBP School of Coaches, Coerver certification, and a Master's in Football Business Management from SBI.

As the owner and team manager of Gbagada FC, Olajide has been a key figure in the industry for over a decade. Off the pitch, his exceptional management skills have led to the successful organisation of numerous football events.

Olajide's long attention to detail and innovative branding initiatives reflect his philosophy of cultivating the right mentality for developing a standard football community. This ideology was instrumental in creating TCC, a collaborative effort with like-minded individuals.

*In this interview, we look into the technical aspects of establishing the league, the challenges faced, the progression made, and Olajide's vision for the future.*

## **AS ONE OF THE KEY FIGURES BEHIND THE CREATION OF TCC, WHAT WAS YOUR PRIMARY MOTIVATION DURING THE DEVELOPMENT PROCESS?**

**OLAJIDE:** "The major factor for this development was the lack of competitive games at the Third-Tier level for our teams. We needed to create something for our players to compete in every week to aid their development.

This was crucial, when, we were putting the structure together and served as our main motivator during the league's developmental phase."

## **WHAT WERE SOME OF THE MAJOR CHALLENGES**

## **FACED WHILE BRAINSTORMING AND BRINGING TCC TO REALISATION?**

**OLAJIDE:** "At the start, it was challenging to convince other clubs to join us because the league was just an idea formed among young individuals in the industry. Some doubted our ability, to initiate let alone complete, a season. However, despite these barriers, we've successfully concluded our fourth season and are gearing up for the fifth.

Securing the league license from the NFF was another obstacle. Thanks to the support of Honorable Soname and Barrister Seyi Akinwunmi, we obtained the official approval necessary to establish the league.

Additionally, naming the league was a significant task. After numerous submissions and ensuring it didn't conflict with existing leagues, we settled on The Creative Championship. Special thanks to Mr. Seyi Olofinjana, one of our Directors at TCC, for proposing the league's name."

## **OVER YOUR FOUR YEARS AS ONE OF THE TECHNICAL DIRECTORS, WHAT HAS DRIVEN YOUR PASSION AND COMMITMENT TO THE LEAGUE?**

**OLAJIDE:** "It was an idea from myself and the Co. Technical Director, Olumide Ajibolade. After the first season, we saw how organised and effective the league was for player development. Several players have since left the country and are doing well.

We needed to improve every season, within our first three seasons. We secured our first analysis partnership with Kora Stats. In the fourth season, we added Wyscout, another top-notch data platform. In the upcoming fifth season, Eyeball will join us.

We have the league on these platforms now. We're focusing not only on performance but also on the business aspects due to the success we've seen each season. We're inspired to do more, maintain high standards, and improve every season."

## **HOW DO YOU VIEW THE LEAGUE'S PROGRESSION SINCE ITS INCEPTION?**

**OLAJIDE:** "We've made some progress, though we're not yet where we aim to be. There's been significant nationwide interest, with inquiries from individuals seeking to replicate our model.

Internationally, we've received calls from places like Ghana expressing interest in establishing similar initiatives, which, is a positive sign of progress.

While we've achieved around forty percent of our envisioned goals, there's ample room for growth and improvement. We're currently taking incremental steps forward, and we can reassess our progress once we conclude the fifth season."

## **WHAT IS YOUR VISION FOR THE LEAGUE OVER THE NEXT TEN YEARS?**

**OLAJIDE:** "Our ten-year vision for the league is divided into three key aspects: sustainability, profitability, and transforming football in Nigeria.

For sustainability, we aim for every member club to own private facilities within the next decade. We hope each club will have facilities similar to the one at Ikenne, owned by Beyond Limits, which, is one of Nigeria's leading football grounds.

Regarding profitability, owning these facilities will facilitate proper player development. This will enable clubs to demand appropriate fees for their players when offers come from abroad, rather than letting them move for free. We aspire to command significant transfer fees for our talents, comparable to those of South American and European players.

Lastly, our objective is to reshape football in Nigeria. As member clubs of the TCC excel in player development and operate sustainable football businesses, it will inspire others to follow suit.

This will encourage clubs and owners to establish academies and conduct football operations in a more structured and profitable manner, ultimately revolutionising Nigerian football."

## **WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE TO THE TALENTS ADVANCING THEIR CAREERS AND THOSE EMERGING THROUGH THE TCC PLATFORM?**

**OLAJIDE:** "For players advancing from the TCC to playing abroad or in the NPFL (Nigeria Professional Football League), the advice is simple: keep working hard.

Discipline, commitment, and focus will help them reach the top ten per cent of the football industry, they need to maintain their efforts, and they will succeed."

■ *Olajide and the other directors continuously, seek ways to enhance the TCC platform, aiming to improve its overall quality. Their goal is to maximise the potential of emerging talents, making, them both high-performing and marketable for profitable opportunities.*



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