

Hope for Peaceful Nigerian Elections Seen in Unified Football

Raphael Ogar Oko
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Okpoma, Nigeria - Two archrival Nigerian football clubs united into one as a demonstration of hope for upcoming national elections to be peaceful.

The Peace Soccer Tournament for Peaceful Elections in Nigeria, organized by UPF-Nigeria, took place on Dec. 26, 2014, at Christ the King School in the village of Okpoma in the southeastern Cross River State.

The two Okpoma teams, Kings FC and Young Kings FC, agreed to participate in the tournament after attending an introductory UPF seminar in which they gained a vision of the Peace Kingdom while reading *As a Peace-Loving Global Citizen*, the autobiography of UPF Founder Dr. Sun Myung Moon.

The two teams, which often have competed against each other, were nicknamed the “Cain and Abel teams.” As a special condition to resolve the historic rivalry between Cain and Abel, and also to create harmony during the February 2015 general elections, the two teams agreed to play together in peace and pledged that the winning team would embrace the losing team. In addition, the players agreed to join the campaign for national unification by becoming one unified team after the tournament.

Before the tournament started, a general introduction to UPF was given which emphasized the efforts of UPF-Nigeria to support the upcoming elections. Then Ambassador for Peace certificates were awarded to five VIPs from the nation’s two major political parties, after which they came together as Match Ambassadors for Peace. The team captains took turns introducing each of the players to the new Ambassadors for Peace with a message of “peaceful plays always.” The players were told that the peace tournament would be based not only on the number of goals scored but also on the players’ conduct, teamwork and creativity. Also, a violent play would be considered as a negative point against not only the player but also the team.

Ambassador for Peace Joseph Ogar Odey declared the tournament open with his opening kick of the ball and urged all participants to play peacefully for the sake of peace in Nigeria and the world, emphasizing that the tournament was taking place a day after the commemoration of the birth of Jesus, who came as the Prince of Peace.

The first half of the game ended with the Young Kings FC scoring two goals to the Kings FC’s zero. The second half ended with the Young Kings FC’s three goals to the Kings FC’s one goal. However, although

the Young Kings FC won the tournament based on goals scored, the Kings FC also was awarded a trophy for being the most peaceful team of the tournament.



After presentation of the trophies, it was resolved that the two teams from then on would become one, to be known as the Peace King Soccer Team. Several Ambassadors for Peace offered to become sponsors of the newly formed team. The former rivals have adopted the new name and will be participating in future tournaments as one team.

At the end, there was no victor, no loser, as all prayed together for peaceful elections in 2015. UPF-Nigeria plans to promote similar tournaments in selected states in Nigeria before the general elections in February 2015.