



## **INTERVIEWS WITH IVORY COAST PLAYERS**

### **Didier Drogba ON CAN, World Cup and the Africa Unity Kit**

I don't know if we can win the Africa Cup of Nations - I hope so but there are a lot of good teams who will try to stop us.

We now have a lot of work to qualify. We were frustrated after the Burkina Faso game as they didn't attack a lot and tactically they stayed compact. We needed to score one and we didn't so now we have to win against Ghana if we want to go through.

The Africa Unity kit is a good thing as its message of a united Africa is very important as you can see by the way we supported Togo. The kit means that all the African teams can wear one colour, which will help bring us together.

It means a lot for an African nation to host the World Cup as this is the first time. It's going to be huge. African footballers are improving; there are a lot who now play for big European clubs and who are major players for those teams. I hope it's going to be our party and an African team can win it.

When it comes to the World Cup, if we listen to the press then it will be Portugal and Brazil who will qualify not us. But we'll do our best and see what we can do.

### **Emmanuel Eboué ON CAN and World Cup**

Some people say this is our chance to win this Africa Cup of Nations, but it's not going to be easy because when teams play against us they defend very well. That's why when we played against Burkina Faso it was difficult for us to score.

The fact that there are only three teams in our group also affected the way we played. We don't feel well after the draw so the next game against Ghana we have to win.

I know Essien and Muntari well, in fact I know many of the players but that is the Africa Cup of Nations; when you play you have to forget who your friends are.

We are so happy that Drogba has been named African Player of the Year by BBC Sport. I'm proud to know him so well and it makes me very happy that he comes from Africa. When I play against him for Arsenal, Drogba is very difficult to mark. He is so strong and quick and he can score every way. When I play against him he tries his best to score and I try to block him but he's so strong. I pray God for him because when I joined the Ivory Coast team he helped me settle in... he's like my brother.

Playing for Ivory Coast is very good now. Not like it was before when everyone played for themselves on the pitch. Now we play together as a team and when we go out we all go together. We are a very close team.

How did I feel when we were drawn in the Group of Death in the World Cup? For us we are happy to play in this World Cup. It doesn't matter if we play Brazil or Portugal or North Korea, we

are just so happy to participate. But some people forget if you qualify for the World Cup it's not because we gave someone money it's because we played very well. So why shouldn't the Ivory Coast win the World Cup? If you play football and don't believe then you should stop playing. It will be very significant if an African team actually wins the World Cup. It will show to the world that in Africa we have some good players and some good teams.

We were very sorry about the Togo incident. Togo are close to Ivory Coast and we are like family. I pray for the families for their loss. When I saw my friend Adebayor I feel very sad for him. It makes you think 'this could have happened to us too'. It makes me feel terrible. I thank God that the players are well but I'm so sorry that they lost two of their team.

Can Arsenal win the league? Why not? As I've said before if you play football and stop believing you can win you have to stop playing. I've been at Arsenal a long time now and I've always believed in this team. If we can carry on playing as we are now then we can do it.

**Salomon Kalou**  
**ON CAN and the Africa Unity Kit**

For us the Africa Cup of Nations is great preparation for the World Cup as it can help build our confidence as a team. Sure we have a tough group but we have nothing to lose. After all, we have the players and the belief to go far.

Now there are only three teams in our Cup of Nations group it has become more difficult. There are now just three teams fighting for two places plus Ghana gets a rest before the second game. We really have to win the match against Ghana if we want to go through. That will be the turning point of the group

The Africa Unity Kit is a great thing. It shows the world that Africa can stand as one people. And if teams can help show the way for the rest of Africa then we will have achieved something very valuable. To be part of that is amazing.

**Aruna Dindane**  
**ON CAN**

We are the favourites for the Africa Cup of Nations but it's difficult because there is so much good competition in Africa right now so we will try to do the best we can.

The Togo situation has made the tournament very complicated but what can we do? It's difficult to play football after such a tragedy but we'll try to do our best. We hope we'll never see this sort of thing again but it's been bad for Africa and bad for the tournament. I think we must now play to forget.