



Surreal School Sports Day With African Superstars

It was like something out of very weird dream: Didier Drogba, Samuel Eto'o and Stephen Appiah holding hands in a line in goal while a bunch of 10 year olds fired footballs at their heads. But this wasn't some strange football fan's fantasy it was Puma's Africa Unity Experience in Paris. If you imagine a school sports day featuring Africa's biggest soccer stars you're on your way to getting whole surreal this event was.

With the World Cup approaching, football has been getting very seriously of late so Puma thought they'd inject some fun and invited Cameroon, Ghana and the Ivory Coast for a day of silly games when national allegiances were forgotten and Africa was celebrated. With the teams mixed up, the players giggled their way through games of keepy-uppie volleyball, football 10-pin bowling, and something that looked like a cross between soccer and curling. The results were hilarious.

We all know that Didier Drogba doesn't like to lose and apparently that even applies to keepy-uppie volley ball. Taking on Cameroon's Mohammadou Idrissou, the Drog was the first to drop the ball but refused to accept the result and demanded a rematch. Unfortunately the Chelsea striker lost the second game too and so grinning was forced to accept his defeat graciously this time.

But there was a serious message behind the japes. The event aimed to raise awareness and money for the United Nations Environment Programme and Puma's 2010 International Year of Diversity project 'Play For Life'. The idea was that the better the players performed, the more money they earned to help protect the environment. Fortunately, these stars love to compete so when they were challenged to chip a ball into a net from 60 yards to save a tree they simply refused to be beaten – promptly mobbing Ghana's Asamoah Gyan in their delirium when he finally succeeded.

The games culminated in a remarkable exhibition match between two all-star African teams. The African All Stars led by Ghana's manager Milovan Rajevac starring the likes of Rigobert Song, Asamoah Gyan and Kolo Toure took on the likes of Samuel Eto'o, Sulley Muntari and Yaya Toure who wore Puma's new Africa Unity kit - the world's very first continental strip. The highlight of the game was a magnificent dribble and chipped goal by Idrissou which made the final result 2-1 to the Africa Unity kit team. No one minded who came out on top though – after all, either way Africa was the winner.

So what better way to celebrate than with a party? Fans, players and celebrities - including Oswald Boateng, Salma Hayek and Gladiator star Djimon Hounsou - strutted their stuff to Damon Albarn's band Africa Express. Next stop for this Africa express – the World Cup.