

# KEFWA UNION VISITS FORMER HARAMBEE STARS AND AFC LEOPARDS DEFENDER ABDALLA JUMA 'MUSTAFA', SETS UP BUSINESS TO SUPPORT HIM AND MOTHER

The Kenya Footballers Welfare Association (KEFWA) paid a visit to former player Abdalla Juma, who has been battling mental health issues after an illustrious career in the Kenyan football industry. Termed as one of the best full-backs of the ages locally, Abdalla made his name known after plying trade with the national team Harambee Stars and featuring for renowned Kenyan Premier League (KPL) clubs including 'abana ba ingwe' AFC Leopards SC , Thika United and 'Batoto ba Mungu' Sofapaka Familia.

The world has its way of tempting even the best of all, and Abdalla's post-football life took a twist when he started battling mental health and depression issues, an issue that has now become a prevalent menace to Kenyan athletes.

With the situation deteriorating, KEFWA reached out to Abdalla's mother and after amicable deliberations, supported his healing journey by taking him to Port Reitz Sub-County Hospital in Mombasa, where for over six months underwent rehabilitation, guiding, and counseling sessions. Abdalla picked up fairly well, responding to treatment and sessions with the counselor, which would see him come back full of himself and be discharged. Being a father of three, the former defender was not only the beacon of hope to his young family, but also to his nuclear family including his mother and siblings, whom he was the breadwinner during the sunny days when Kenyan football made a kill.

To support him and ensure that his recovery journey continues amicably with a resounding peace of heart and mind vital for healing, the KEFWA Union recently opened up a business for the player and his mother, which will come in handy for sustainable income.

The restaurant, located in Shanzu, will serve customers ready-to-eat spicy coastal dishes, accompanied by cold healthy fruit juices to moderate the temperature. This was after special deliberations with the mother whose expertise in preparing Swahili foods and managing the business will come in handy.

She has since called on more stakeholders to come on board and support his son in this challenging journey of recovery, noting that Abdalla is always passionate about returning to play football as regularly as before.

On his part, Former Players Welfare officer and veteran striker John Baraza noted that the union is committed to looking into and supporting the welfare of retired players, who are often sidelined after hitting the limelight.

*“The case of Abdalla is just one of the many challenges our players are facing currently. We are however determined as the department focusing on matters welfare of former players that we reach out and address these predicaments, one by one, amicably. We will be going across the country with such capacity-building initiatives,”* noted Baraza.

On his part, KEFWA president Situma James has called on football stakeholders to come on board and address the mental and depression issues affecting athletes, including giving them the respect and recognition they deserve.

*“The case of Abdalla Juma is an example of the saddening ordeals our football legends are going through. I played against him, and he was one of the best fullbacks in Kenya. But where is the respect for our athletes who raise the name of this nation with their talents?”* pondered the former legend, who has called upon the government and sports stakeholders to look into the affairs of former footballers.

*“It is high time for us as stakeholders including the Ministry of Sports, clubs, and officials to re-look into our players’ welfare. For instance, they can incorporate guiding and counseling sessions touching on all spheres of their lives to ensure a seamless transition be it psychologically, financially, or professionally,”* added Situma.

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