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Strategies towards the rejuvenation of Enugu Rangers International football club of Nigeria

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Abstract

The study is aimed at unmasking, ascertaining or identifying the problems with Rangers and suggesting strategies that will inform the revitalization, reinvigoration and reawakening of the deflated and diminished expectations of Enugu Rangers International football club of Nigeria. The study contends that the dwindling fortunes of Rangers were caused by poor football administration/interferences from the board and the management, inadequate government interest in the team and inadequate support from the supporters club. The study suggested appointment of prudent and effective leadership in the board, government appointment of people with track records as commissioners of sports and indoctrination of the fans to brace-up adequate support for the team. All these will inform the rejuvenation of Enugu Rangers International football club of Nigeria.

Keywords: Enugu, Rangers, Enugu Rangers International Football Club, Formation of Rangers, Football Administration in Rangers.

1. Introduction

“Rangers Spirit” - “Difficulties to the Height is the motto of the club. The players then imbibed “the out of nothing you create something” philosophy. Rangers spirit is imbibed not taught. Once a Ranger, you get used to ‘Fight to the Last Man’. Inside the field a Ranger never gives up! Like the name, a Ranger is one who stays till the end of the battle. A Ranger dies fighting and fights dying, in-fact with head full of blood, a Ranger never bows. A Ranger is evergreen and sees challenge as an inevitable obstacle that must be over-whelmed. Once beaten, then you are not a Ranger, because a Ranger is invincible ^[1].

Rangers, otherwise known as the flying antelopes is a public football club based in Enugu, capital of Enugu State, South East Nigeria. For clarity purposes, Enugu State was created or carved out from Anambra State in 1991 ^[2]. Rangers came into existence in 1970, immediately after Nigerian civil war, which according to Graf lasted between 6th July 1967 and 15th January 1970 ^[3]. Shortly after inception, the club shot to limelight, recording unprecedented victories. Rangers became an institution whose indomitable spirit for survival saw it go places and made it a dreaded club-side in the whole of African continent. Rangers won the Challenge Cup trophy in 1971, thus, became the first club-side in Nigeria to lift the trophy at the inception of the tournament. In 1974 and 1975 respectively, they repeated the feat by defeating Mighty Jets of Jos and ICC Shooting Stars of Ibadan (now Shooting Stars Sports Club) respectively in the finals ^[4]. Arinze stated that for the unfortunate interference of officialdom in the selection of the team that played the 1975 final match of the African Cup of Champion Clubs in Lagos against Hafia of Guinea; the African Champion Clubs Cup was in the pocket of Rangers that year ^[5]. Late Coach Dan Anyiam, who nurtured the team to stardom, went to his grave with the pain of the 1975 incident in his heart. He had in his possession, until his death, the obnoxious decree signed by the then Anambra State Sports Council officials compelling him to field the team that lost finally to Hafia of Guinea. In the African Cup Winners Cup competition, Rangers won the cup at its first attempt in 1977. Ngwude confirmed that the Nigerian League started in 1975 and Rangers was also the first team in Nigeria to lift the trophy. They also won the League in 1977, 1981 and 1982 respectively and finally in 1984 ^[6].

It is worthy to state at this juncture that prior to the 90's Rangers was still regarded as "Nigeria's All Time Greatest" Arinze averred that:

Rangers has since inception from 1970 to 1984 (14 years) succeeded in representing the country in more international competitions than any other team; a team that never failed in any year to emerge champions in one of the two major competitions in Nigeria; a team that is the true embodiment of the resoluteness that is the trade-mark of "Igboism". Rangers may not lay claim to have achieved a great deal in the international soccer scene. What it can lay claim to is its fighting spirit. Where skills and fancy fail resoluteness, determination and an unyielding perseverance take over [7].

From 1984 till date (31years) Rangers has remained without any major trophy and their fortunes in national and continental competitions continued to shrivel. They have continued to witness disastrous, woeful, scandalous and miserable defeats both at home and away. The regime of the then Anambra State Sports Council, which was dissolved on 6th February, 1985, will for long remain the darkest period of Rangers history. What of the record defeat of 5-0 in Cameroon? And the exodus of 16 players from the club. There was a public out-cry against the Board, and the timely intervention, by the then Military Governor, Navy Captain Alison Madueke, sent the unpopular Board packing. A new Board headed by vivacious Mr. C. O. C. Chiedozie former principal of the then all conquering (football) National Grammar School, Nike, Enugu was appointed in its place [8]. The drastic action of the Governor, which was widely acclaimed, seems to have rejuvenated the disenchanting players, or automatically re-charged the "dead battery" of Rangers' power-house, and revitalized the club to the fighting spirit, for which the club was known. In their first outing against the Shooting Stars Sports Club of Ibadan, on 16th February, 1985, Rangers confirmed this posture before their much delighted Governor by beating the Shooting Stars 2-0. Unfortunately, however, that was to be a mere fluke as their performances subsequently dwindled, and Rangers ended that football season without any remarkable impact in the national scene not to talk of winning a trophy. The management of the club had in one time or the other appointed high caliber coaches who had made remarkable marks in Nigerian football in-order for the club to experience a renaissance, local coaches like Mathew Atuegbu, Okey Emordi, John Obuh, Christian Chukwu, Kelechi Emetole etc, and foreign coaches like German born Ruddy Krunner, Janius Kowalik, Brazilian born Roberto Dias and his assistant Denilson have all managed the club, yet, the club's fortune continued to diminish. The invincibility depicted to Rangers has disappeared, Rangers can no-longer live up to their name, the center can no-longer hold and things have fallen apart. The million dollar question is "what is wrong with Rangers"? Myriad of reasons have been speculated by stake-holders as the cause for the dwindling fortunes of Rangers (the pride of the Igbo tribe of Eastern Nigeria) and they include, poor football administration/interferences from the board and the management, inadequate government interest in the team and inadequate support from the supporters club. Against this backdrop therefore, the study is aimed at unmasking,

ascertaining or identifying the problems with Rangers and suggesting strategies that will inform the revitalization, reinvigoration and reawakening of the deflated and diminished expectations of Enugu Rangers International football club of Nigeria.

2. The Study Area

The study area is Enugu, Enugu state, south-east Nigeria, is one of the thirty-six states constituting the Federal Republic of Nigeria, It came into being under the regime of the then Military President, General Ibrahim Babangida, on 27th August 1991. The State has seventeen Local Government Areas and fifty six designated Local Government Development Centres and an elected legislature, i.e. the Enugu State House of Assembly (ENHA), with 24 constituency seats. The name was derived from the capital city, Enugu (top of the hill) [9]. The state is bounded by five states and they include; Abia, Anambra, Benue, Ebonyi and Kogi States.

Enugu the state capital which the study focuses on, owes its geographical importance to the discovery of coal in 1909 by a team of British Geologists. This led to the emergence of a township status or an urban arrangement that influenced building a railway line that connected

Enugu coal fields to the sea port in Port Harcourt for onward transportation of coal to various European countries. By 1917 Enugu had become a metropolitan city paving way for different foreign companies to move into Enugu, notable among them were United Africa Company, Kingsway Store, John Holt and United Bank of West Africa. In 1929, Enugu became the capital of the former Eastern Region [10].

According to the 2006 census figure, Enugu State has a population of 3,267,837 [11]. Its people are Igbo by ethnic grouping, known to be hard-working, hospitable and resourceful. The vernacular spoken is Igbo but English is widely used and a visitor can make himself understood even in the humblest hamlet if he can speak a modicum of English. Economically, trading is the dominant occupation followed by services, mostly the public service, although there is private sector participation. Enugu and its environs are richly endowed with a lot of tourist resources, facilities and potentials. These exist in natural features such as lakes, caves, hills, falls, springs and cultural festivals as well as such man-made features like hotels, telecommunications and transportation outfits, galleries and monumental or archeological collections. Enugu State is administered at two levels of government - the State and Local Governments. At the helm of the State's administration is a popularly elected Chief Executive who runs the affairs of government with an Executive Council made up of Commissioners. The present State Chief Executive is Ifeanyi Ugwuanyi, who took over office on 29th May 2015. Before him there had been eight past Chief Executives, three elected governors and five military governors.

They are:

Colonel Herbert Obi-Eze	January 1991- January 1992
Dr. Okwesilieze Nwodo	January 1993- November 1993
Navy Captain Temi Ejoor	December, 1993- September, 1994
Colonel Mike Torey	September, 1994- August, 1996
Colonel Sule Ahman	August, 1996- August, 1998
Navy Captain Benson Agbaje	August, 1998- May 1999
Dr. Chimaroke Nnamani	May, 1999- May, 2007
Barrister Sullivan Iheanacho Chime	May, 2007- May, 2015 [12]

3. Emergence of the Name Rangers

In 1967, the Nigeria-Biafra crisis started and escalated fully to a war, as the war raged on, the Federal troops had in mind to completely over-run the Biafrans, predominantly the Ibos. Biafrans themselves saw a bleak future and opted for both Gorilla Warfare and psychological war of propaganda inside the Biafran enclave. The feeling was that when over-run by the federal troops, all the Biafrans will be decimated. It was then a case of preferring "death through resistance in the battle field, even without enough guns, to death by torture when over-ran" ^[13]. The Biafran propaganda machinery was monitored by Broadcasting Corporation of Biafra. As the Federal Troops closed in on the Biafrans, many war fronts were breached and some sectors started crumbling, then there was the need to intensify gorilla war-fare and propaganda machinery to the grass roots. Morale was low but soldiers kept shooting few bullets available. Some undergraduates who could not join their colleagues at the war fronts were assembled for the paramilitary exercise - Gorilla War-fare. A seasoned academic and Sports Administrator, Chief Jerry Enyeazu was assigned to groom the intelligentsia for the task of sustaining the war by psychological rejuvenation; the Biafran Soldier with facts and figures about location of armoury and strength of Federal Troops in their areas of operation; and addressing rallies in Biafra locations aimed at emphasizing the need to keep the spirit of the war alive. In the words of Eze: "*Mr Enyeazu who was commissioned a Lt. Colonel organized more than 2,017 undergraduates for that purpose, gave them some basic self-defense training and briefed them on their definitive operations. He later named the group - Rangers*" ^[14]. One may start to wonder why Colonel Jerry Enyeazu preferred the name Rangers, in answer to this question, Eze stated that since the Federal Troops were out for extinction or decimation of Biafrans, Colonel Jerry Enyeazu felt that Biafrans must fight to survive through the activities of the Rangers Gorilla warfare depicting invincibility or indestructibility ^[15]. The war was formally brought to an end on January 10, 1970 and Colonel Jerry Enyeazu did not feel like losing the name - Rangers. In the words of Enyeazu : "*I felt that since Rangers of war could not shoot us into International recognition, then Rangers Football Club should play us back into the Nigerian scene,... but the task would be a difficult one*" ^[16].

4. Formation of Enugu Rangers

On January 29, 1970, Rangers Football Club of Enugu was founded by Jerry Enyeazu. The nation had just come out of a civil war. The economy of former Eastern Region was badly battered, particularly what came to be known as the East Central State. The morale of the Ibo man was extremely low. The future was still uncertain, most of the footballers of Ibo origin, who played in different parts of Nigeria and who were forced to return to the East Central State during the Nigerian crisis roamed the streets of Enugu in search of new opportunities that were not there. Players like John Willer Nwosu, Chukwuma Igweonwu, Domonic Nwobodo, Godwin Achebe (captain), Cyril Okosieme,(Goal-keeper), Ben Offor, Mathias Obianika, Ernest Ufele, C. Okonji, Nwabueze Nwankwo to mention but a few. In the words of Enyeazu:

As Director of Sports of the war torn East Central State, I saw the situation of these players as a serious challenge. There was no money! But there was goodwill. And so with the help of such philanthropists as Andy Okoro, then of the UTC, Enugu, Mrs Julie Alale, Gilbert Ofodile, and Mr Iloba

of the Nigerian Police etc. I was able to organize these boys into what I christened "RANGERS FOOTBALL CLUB OF Enugu" ^[17]

The Club was inaugurated in the Sports Hall of the East Central State Sports Council, Enugu. Chief A.W. Ibe, then a business tycoon based in Enugu, supplied all the funds for running the Club, while late Dan Anyiam, Tony Nzeribe, Paulinus Nzerem and Isaac Nnado were some of the Sports Council's staff, who gave assistance either as coaches or organisers. When the success of Enugu Rangers is reckoned with today, people no longer remember how the Club was formed and the difficulties which the Club had to face in its early days. According to Jerry Enyeazu, The boys trained with their trousers folded. They had no balls, no jerseys and boots, the first set of shorts were made from 50 yards of white baft donated by Mr Ofodile and Mrs Alale from the rehabilitation stores. An initial cash gift of 500 pounds from A.W. Ibe saw the Club properly established with boots, jerseys etc. The Club settled with the famous Rangers all-white out-fit to emphasize determination for purity and love. The boys began their escapades with matches against River Valley Football Club of Warri and P& T Rockets Football Club of Benin. Their victories over these two Clubs sent warning signals and attracted the attention of other Clubs in the country. Enugu Rangers International Football Club has made history not only at home but also abroad. It rose from corrosive poverty to affluence and the players basked in the sun of national support and praise. When the Club was formed, such idols as skipper Christian Chukwu, Dominic Ezeani, Emeka Onyedika, Ogidi Ibeabuchi, Harrison Mecha, Godwin Ogbueze, Emmanuel Okalla, and Patrick Ekeji were still in school. Little did they know that they would later form the bed rock of the great Rangers Football Club of Enugu. On the aim of forming the Club, Enyeazu stated:

My remote aim of forming the Club was to provide an immediate vehicle of expression of national awareness and belonging for the Ibo-man, whose future and faith in the national course was then still uncertain. I am happy that several years after, that bold step was crystallized and the Rangers Football Club has lived up to expectation ^[18].

5. The Problem with Rangers

5.1 Poor Football Administration/Interferences

Football administration has been the problem hindering football development in Nigeria. Most club-sides in Nigeria are faced with this ugly problem and Rangers is no exception. It has been observed that poor football administration has been one of the major reasons preventing Enugu Rangers International from bouncing back to winning ways as can be seen in the discussion below.

Going down memory lane, one can quickly remember the painful way Rangers lost the African Champion Club Cup in 1976, when everybody thought that they will capture the cup. Ranger's exploit terminated at the semi-final stage. They were defeated by Molludia Challia of Algeria 3-2 aggregate, due to synthetic pitch, on which Rangers had never played before. A forward-looking management could have planned to familiarize the club with synthetic pitch, before the match in Algeria. Arinze confirmed that it was possible for Rangers to win the African Cup Winners Cup in 1977, because its affairs were managed by dedicated and, patriotic State Football Association, of late Mr. J. A. Egwu, and Chief Jim Nwobodo's committee, after the sack of management team that paraded

the team of 1976 ^[19]. In 1982, Rangers, with an effective management committee, under the able leadership of Igwe Emeka Nnaji, Nze I of Amagunze, was poised to capture the elusive cup of Champions Clubs, after a well-planned training program in Portugal. Again, a busy-body, then Anambra State Sports Council Board came poaching its finger in every pie, and set confusion ablaze in the Rangers camp, when it was successfully prosecuting that year's competition:

For no justifiable reason, the team manager was re-deployed, and the contract of the Brazilian Coach terminated. Thereafter, everything went hay-wire with the Rangers Officials being changed every other week, culminating in the 4-0 defeat of Rangers in Egypt ^[20].

In a radio interview anchored by Dream FM Enugu by Osondu Ngwude on 29th May 2015 ^[21] after Rangers coach Kelech Emetole (Caterpillar) was asked to step aside, John Sam Obuh the immediate past coach before Emetole blamed Rangers management and the board members as the problem of Rangers, not coaches as acclaimed by the management, he emphasized that Rangers has paraded the best coaches in Nigeria and nothing came out of it. He affirmed that the players welfare are neglected, sign-on fees are owned and the player's salaries are not paid regularly and as when due, most importantly, the management always sign players on free transfer. They do not go for quality players as most teams do. They concentrate on cheap players in order to pave way for embezzlement which has been institutionalized by the management team. Coaches are not carried along when they want to recruit new players and the impact will be cheap results. Sam Obuh concluded by stating that the problem of Rangers is a square peg in a round hole syndrome. In the same vein and in the same programme, veteran sports administrator and former board member of the Nigerian football Association, Barrister Ray Nnaji supported Sam Obuh, maintaining that Rangers should look inwards, that sacking the coach is not the problem, he blamed the management team for the clubs misfortune in recent times. Ray Nnaji who was a close observer in happenings in Rangers named some people who are causing the problem in Rangers international. He concluded by stating that Rangers management is in disarray and lacks the ability of providing vibrancy in the management of the club, stating that the management is insensitive to the plights of Rangers fans through-out the country, who have waited patiently for thirty one years without celebrating a trophy. Another veteran in sports administration in Nigeria Mr Ebele Amarizu, the current Enugu State Police Public Relations Officer (PPRO) also towed the same line with John Obuh and Ray Nnaji, in his words: "*Management is Rangers bane, if the best coach in the world is brought to Rangers, without carrying a drastic overhaul in the management, the situation will remain the same*".

Vibrant Felix Anyansi Agwu has been the chairman of Enyimba international football club of Aba for more than ten years running, transforming the club to all-time greatest in Nigerian history. His records are glaring for all to see. He is one of the most accomplished football administrators in Africa, this was achieved as a result of continuity coupled with competency and vibrancy ^[22].

5.2 Inadequate Government Interest in the Team

Previous governors in Enugu State have not shown enough interest in the club. It is when there is interest that one can be

able to inject enough money into the team. One cannot remember the last time governors like Chimaroke Nnamani 1999-2007 and Sullivan Chime 2007-2015 watched Rangers match, for a period of eight years each of them was governor of the state. Players are highly motivated when they observe that the governor or even the president is "life" in the stadium watching them play, they normally bring in their best. Recently in Dream FM radio programme "Political Voices" anchored on 5th September 2015 ^[23], marking 100 years in office of the present governor Hon. Ifeanyi Ugwuanyi, Enugu State Commissioner for Information Dr Udeuhele Godwin Ikpechukwu stated that one of the achievements of the present governor during the first 100 years in office was settling outstanding salaries of Rangers players, confirming that the previous governor was owing the players. Since the inception of Rangers International in 1970 till date, no governor had thought it necessary to build a club house for camping and training. It is unfortunate that as of today an up-to-date record of the history of Rangers is not available anywhere. This is what should have been obtained from the library in the club house. Super Sports while televising the match between Sunshine FC of Akure and Heartland of Owerri on Sunday 6th September 2015 brought to viewers the club house of Sunshine of Akure nearing completion ^[24]. There are lots of benefits when a club has its own club house in a secluded environment. This guarantees adequate concentration devoid of disturbances of any sort. Since the late seventies the researcher started following Rangers affairs, the researcher have never heard of sending the coaches to refresher courses, what is normally obtainable is constant sack of coaches. It has been lately observed that government has politicized appointment of commissioners for sports in Enugu State. The best of the knowledge of the researcher, the last three commissioners of sports in Enugu state are known to have no track records in sports, they include Okezie Nwanjoku, Chijoke Agu and recently Mr Ndukwe Charls Chuka. There is not even the position of special adviser to the governor on sports or specifically on Rangers matters, so as to act as a link between the governor and the management. In previous and current administrations in Enugu State, there exist special advisers (12) in the following portfolios: Project Development and Implementation; Small Medium Enterprises and Investment Promotion; Legislative Matters; Due Process and Servicom; Special Duties and Inter-governmental Affairs; Diaspora and Special Projects; Education; Political; Tourism Development; Social Development; Rural Development and Community Relations and Budget ^[25].

During the time Chief Jim Ifeanyichuku Nwobodo (1979-1983) was the governor of the state, enough interest was shown in the club as he was virtually watching almost all the matches played by Rangers culminating to four trophies won during his era. Rangers won the League back to back in 1981 and 1982, they also lifted the Challenge Cup in 1981 and 1983 respectively, becoming double champions in 1981.

Orji Uzo Kalu was the governor of Abia State between 1999-2007, he dedicated much of his time to the club and was even travelling for away games with the club, injecting adequate fund for running the club. Precisely and indisputably Enyimba is Nigeria's most successful football club of all time. Enyimba has earned the reputation as one of Africa's football power-houses. With two champions league trophies 2003 and 2004 Confederation of African Football (CAF) Super Cup 2004 and 2005 and six Nigerian Premier League titles 2001, 2002, 2003, 2005, 2007, 2010 Enyimba is currently ranked second in the CAF club rankings ^[26].

5.3 Inadequate Support from the Supporters Club

The researcher has been an ardent supporter of Rangers since infancy, having watched most of the home matches of Rangers at least since 1979, thus, have seen the good, the bad and the ugly as far as Rangers International is concerned. The researcher had watched with dismay especially when there is an oriental derby against either Enyimba of Aba or former Iwuanyanwu National now Heart Land of Owerri, the way their supporters club will come to Enugu and intimidate Rangers and their supporters. A visitor to Nnamdi Azikiwe Stadium (home ground for Rangers) who is opportuned to watch a match involving Rangers with either Enyimba of Aba or Heart Land of Owerri, will think that the home team is the away team as a result of vociferous, vehement, boisterous and insistent support of the supporters club of the away team. It is better experienced.

Apart from the efforts of about 100 Rangers supporters Club who follow the Club everywhere, thousands of Rangers fans trooping to the stadium remain mum only when a goal is scored by their team. The worst is that they become hysterical and down trodden when a goal is scored against Rangers. It is usually disastrous and catastrophic for home fans to boo the home team. That could kill a team. This is exactly the usual situation in Nnamdi Azikiwe Stadium, especially when a visiting team scores first. Support for a club during a football match begins from the blast of the referees whistle till the end of the match, there should be no breakthrough-out the duration of the game. It is a psychological 'warfare' waged by supporters to motivate their teams to better performance while stupefying their opponents. It is a way of constantly reminding their players of their commitment and patriotism to their clubs. Support for a team can be by singing, drumming, clapping of hands, rattling of objects or waving of flags. In Rangers none of these mentioned above is done. Take Egypt for instance, any day a visiting team is taking on an Egyptian side on their soil, buildings, taxis, private cars etc are bedecked with their club's colour or flag. The impact of this show alone, can have a very devastating effect to the psychology of a visiting team. A visit to "Westfalenstadion" the home ground of Borussia Dortmund of Germany will convince you of what support for a home team is meant to be. Another good example is Anfield, the home ground of Liverpool FC of England, Jose Morinho, the current coach of Chelsea of England has once said that if Chelsea fans could offer half the support accorded to Liverpool at Anfield, Chelsea will remain a team to beat, thus confirming the huge benefits of vociferous support for a team.

6. The Way Forward

Total restructuring and overhauling is what is needed in Rangers at this point in time. This should start with government's appointment of people with track records as commissioners of sports and creation of the position of a special adviser on Rangers matters, with the appointment of former Rangers players to act in that capacity, thus, establishing a direct link with the governor. Government should as matter of urgency adequately search for prudent, knowledgeable, patriotic, competent, vivacious, ebullient and sportive candidates for appointments as the chairman and board members of Rangers and a six year single tenure is recommended so that the appointed chairman/board can be able to effectively carry out their programmes to the best of their abilities. There should be no sentiments in these appointments. The membership of the board should be above board in all respect to command public confidence. They should be charged with the responsibility of managing the club

in all its ramifications, and be given a free hand to run the affairs of the club. The management should be given the mandate to set up a properly planned programme of activities which should be strictly and rigidly followed. A code of conduct for the players should be formulated by the management, in order to enforce discipline into the team. This will enable the players stick strictly to camp rules and regulations. Constant up-ward review of match bonuses of both the players and officials are advocated for, this will act as a form of motivation to both players and officials. The appointed board should shop for one of the best coaches in Nigeria, the coach when appointed should also serve for six years in the first instance, based on performance, his appointment may be renewed. In England for instance Alex Ferguson was at the helm of affairs in Manchester United for 26 years, achieving greatly for the club [27]. Arsene Wenger, the current coach of Arsenal, was named Arsenal manager in 1996, thus, putting in 19 years in the team [28]. There is the need to up-date the coaches on modern techniques of coaching through refresher courses and attachments to leading football clubs managers in the world. For instance at the close of the Nigeria Season, the coach can go and be attached to Arsene Wenger of Arsenal, Jose Morinho of Chelsea or even Pep Guardiola of Bayern Munich to mention but a few. These when followed will bring back vibrancy in the administration of Enugu Rangers International Football Club of Nigeria, which hitherto has been in shambles.

Rangers International Football Club has come of age to have permanent structure to immortalize its existence and history [29]. This was suggested by Blunt since 1985, but up-till now, there is not a modern club house for Rangers. There was Rangers games village at Awgu, Enugu State that was abandoned long ago, which is now dilapidated and had since been out of use. There is also Rangers training pitch situated at Nkpokiti Road at Enugu, just behind Enugu State Sports Council. This is not what we mean. The Club is overdue to have its club house for training and camping. The Club house should have enough modern accommodation for all the registered players, a spacious common room for indoor games, television with video, a well-equipped medical centre and a Hall of Fame with the pictures of the past players and coaches to motivate current players. A club house will save Rangers, Sports Council and Government a lot of money as well as help organize a youth side to be groomed for easy and cheaper recruitment for the club. Again, a club house will ensure more effective control of the players and also serve as the archives of the history of the club. The role of a well-equipped medical centre for Rangers can-not be over emphasized. It is the surest way of recovering injured players within the shortest possible time. Stale injuries become difficult to cure and cause players to be laid-off prematurely. An experienced physiotherapist should be appointed to work in the medical centre. Sports training have become highly scientific. All leading football clubs in the world have their private training pitches with devices for body-building, physical fitness and development of skills. These facilities have become a must for modern clubs to maintain top shape. The days of trial and error are gone.

Moreover, efforts should be made by Rangers board to try and return Enugu fans to the stadium when Rangers is playing a match. This can be achieved through constant radio announcements and introduction of one show or the other prior to kick off of any match. A bubbling and forward looking board should be able to think out more strategies of bringing fans back to the stadium. Fans should also be encouraged to always put on Rangers colours whenever Rangers have a

match. Taxi drivers should be indoctrinated towards putting Rangers flags in their vehicles whenever Rangers is playing a home match. Fans should cultivate the habit of waving flags for their team during matches. They should support the team through-out the duration of a match, not minding the score of the match. When a team loses a match, it does not mean it must be written off. Every team in the world has its off days and no team wins every match. When a team plays below expectation, it calls for massive and continuous support by its fans, which is capable of reviving the players. After a bad match, it is also the duty of the fans to find out why it happened and help the club officials to put the matter right.

7. Conclusion

The major reason that led to the unfortunate situation inherent in Rangers today is poor football administration which includes interferences from the board of the club, lack of dedicated, patriotic, competent and effective State Football Association, especially from 1985. Inadequate government interest in the team also contributed to the near collapse of Enugu Rangers, there were cases of owed salaries, politicization of appointing people without any track record in sports as commissioners for sports. Moreover, inadequate support from the supporters club was also a contributory factor, Rangers fans do not adequately support Rangers especially when a visiting team scores first in an encounter with Rangers at home.

However, Football being a unifying force and a strong factor in both national and international diplomacy, efforts should be made for the provision of wonderful innovations or strategies for football development not only in Rangers but in Nigeria as a whole. To this effect, total overhauling or restructuring of the management of the club through the provision of knowledgeable and effective leadership and government's appointment of people with track records as commissioners of sports coupled with creation of the position of a special adviser on Rangers matters, with the appointment of former Rangers players to act in that capacity will in no small way revamp the dwindled fortunes of Enugu Rangers.

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