

In 2014, a group of young girls competed in a football tournament organised for pupils at the United Brethren in Christ Junior Secondary School in Mogbwemo, a small town that is also one of the host communities of Sierra Rutile's mining operations in southern Sierra Leone.

The girls, led by Theresa Tucker Konneh, a 17- year-old at the time, won the school tournament. That victory, in an unusual football tournament that was held instead of the school's annual interhouse athletics competitions, unlocked both talent and passion as Theresa and her teammates used their prize money of NLe 50, about USD 2, to buy a football so that they could continue playing. Out of this, something historic was born. Mogbewmo Queens, a football team that has come to dominate women's football in the country, winning four trophies since they made their first appearance in the maiden edition of the top league in 2022/2023.

Before they became Mogbwemo Queens, the group of girls began the hard work of building a proper football team. They went around the town everyday after training, asking for financial and in-kind donations, Theresa recalled in an interview with Engage Salone.

"I did all this because of the passion I had for football," she said.

Within a year of battling discrimination from men, lack of resources and skepticism from family members, things began to change for the girls.

With luck, Theresa and her teammates found a volunteer coach, Jonathan Samuel, who was an active footballer at the time, to help. Samuel, also known as Tevez, still works with the team as a member of the coaching staff.

"Because of the commitment I saw, I hung my boots and began working with the girls full time," he told Engage Salone.

That early retirement paid off for Samuel as the young team he helped start went on to become a success story that many could not imagine.

"What the club is doing now is making history and I feel proud to be part of it," he said.

After a few years of development, Mogbwemo Queens introduced themselves in the newly established Women's Premier League after winning the playoffs. They did not only participate. They were crowned champions after winning the title [for the first](#)

[time](#) with 55 points, six more than runners up Kahunla Queens.

That league title was not going to be a one-off, lucky affair. They went on to win more. Since their appearance on the country's sports scene, Mogbwemo Queens have won three league titles. They have just been crowned champions again, adding another title and trophy to their well-decorated cabinet.

When titles and honours started flowing in as Mogbwemo Queens went on to dominate women's football, there was one person who is no longer there. Founding player, Theresa Tucker Konneh. She was forced to make a choice between playing football and her education. She chose education as she moved to Freetown to attend university. Theresa tried to juggle, but professional football became too demanding for her new student life. She eventually dropped out of the squad.

"I wanted to play but it was difficult for me," she said.

That Theresa has to sacrifice her promising footballing career to be able to complete her education shows how hard it can be to develop sporting talents in a place like Sierra Leone. There are no talent development systems that ensure young people do not have to forgo sports for school, or the other way around.

Theresa has finished a Diploma programme in procurement and logistics and is now in her third year of a degree programme at the Institute of Public Administration and Management (IPAM), University of Sierra Leone. She has not been able to return to professional football and is no longer involved with the team she helped found.

Mogbwemo Queens' fortunes changed when Emmanuel Sahr Tondoneh, a lawyer now based in Freetown took over the club. Tondoneh was working for Sierra Rutile, the company that has operated the mines in the area for decades, when he bought the club. He first came in as a donor and subsequently became its Chief Executive Officer after the club's stakeholders, including the coaches and chairman, entrusted him with its top leadership role.

With the Tondoneh takeover, the team got a professional coach and players' welfare improved considerably, while performance was rewarded. This was just before they made their first Premier League appearance and the dividend was immediate: a league title.

Adama Paulina Suma, widely known as Adama Pele, was the head coach that delivered the Villagers first league title, becoming the first coach to win the Women's Premier League. Arriving after Tondoneh took over the team, Adama quickly became an important part of the Mogbewmo Queens project, working hard with the team and leading them to three league titles. Before she started coaching, Adama played football. "Without her the team's success would not have been possible," Tevez said. " She is the best coach in Sierra Leone; she has added so much value to the team."

In July 2026, Mogbwemo Queens will be off to The Gambia for the CAF preliminaries. Having played twice in the competition and finishing as runners up in 2025, the Queens will be looking to win the competition which guarantees progress to the CAF Women's Champions League.



Mogbwemo Queens captain Kadiatu Musa Kamara in action Photo credits: Mogbwemo Queens

“We are well-prepared for it,” Kadiatu Musa Kamara, the skipper said.

International competitions are not new to Kadiatu. She has played for Sierra Leone’s U17 women’s side. She captained the team once and was the national team’s third captain. Some of her Mogbwemo Queens teammates also get called up regularly to represent Sierra Leone in international competitions. Other two big names in the club are Fatmata T. Koroma and Musu Sengh. Koroma is the current captain of the women’s U-17 side, while Sengh plays as a left back. They are both currently on national duty in Lome, Togo for the U-17 Women’s World Cup qualifiers.

Kadiatu's football journey has been an inspiring one too. As a child, she went with her two brothers to watch them play football. She soon discovered that she too could play the game. Years later, and after spells with different clubs, including the Sierra Leone Police, she signed up for Mogbwemo Queens, where she just led the team to another Women's Premier League title.

"I felt so good winning the league," Kadiatu, an attacking midfielder, told Engage Salone. She added that the title triumph meant so much to her, especially when it came after a season she described as disappointing for both her and the club for finishing runners up after winning the title for two consecutive seasons.

"I lost my dad that season and I got an injury which kept me on the sidelines for the entire second half of the season," she recalled.

The Club's Chairman Pastor Moses K. Sheku is pleased so far with their success. "We want more, but given what they've achieved so far, I feel fulfilled," he said.

The goals, according to him, are to make the team internationally known and the players professionally well-placed.

As Mogbwemo Queens continue to achieve success and win titles, their fans back in Mogbwemo and the general Rutile area have been deprived of watching their team at home for they have not been able to play at home for two years.



The Rutile Field which used to be the home of grounds of Mogbwemo Queens/Engage Salone

They were forced to move their home matches to Bo after the Premier League Board issued a directive banning official matches from being played on a pitch that does not have a turf.

“Every now and then, community members tell me ‘you’ve taken our girls away from us’,” recounted Sheku, the club’s chairman, seated in his home with a fractured arm from an accident he was involved in on his way from watching the club’s final game of the season. He says the concerns are raised every day.

“We feel strongly that the team is no longer here,” Baimba Swarray, a tailor, told Engage Salone. “If I have the money, I’ll do what needs to be done to see the team back home.”

Swarray, who used to watch the team's matches and training sessions, was once awarded the Mogbwemo Queens fan of the year.

"I'm not the only one feeling the void left by the team; it's the entire community," he says, adding, "we'd like the team back."

Samuel, a coach and founding member of the club acknowledged the problems of being away from the team's roots, but suggests that going back is a long shot, citing cost implications. He says travelling for away matches is far more costly for the team than travelling from Bo.

For Kamara, the skipper, anywhere will do as she shoots for the stars, convinced that she's with the right club. "As long as I'm alive, I want to play football," she said. "This is something I have chosen and I want to make a life out of it."