

Grace Chingoma Sports Reporter

ZAMBIA football technical director, Honour Janza, who was the assistant coach of the triumphant Chipolopolo at the Africa Cup of Nations early this year, believes the standard of Zimbabwean football is declining. The technical director, who was in Hwange

over the weekend with the Zambian senior women's soccer team for a date against the Mighty Warriors in an international friendly, said there was a marked decline in the standards of local football.

The veteran coach, who mentored Hwange gaffer Tennant Chilumba, said it was sad that the Warriors only have two Nations Cup appearances under their belt.

"Zimbabwe have quality players. I remember they used to give us challenges, I remember the Ndlovu brothers and that goalkeeper who used to play for Liverpool (Bruce Grobelaar)," said Janza.

"Zimbabwe were a force to reckon with but where has all that gone to? Now you want to move but you find you are ten years behind.

"I remember the team which played Cosafa in 2009 when Rene (Herve Renard) was still there before he left.

"It was a good team and then last year during the qualifiers we came with Bonneti who was now the head coach.

"They had a good team but failed to qualify for the Africa Cup.

"It is important that football should have professional people in administration and people who don't come with personal enrichment in mind. In Zambia we are fortunate to have a person like Kalusha leading FAZ.

"It is an advantage that he has played at the highest level. Zambia stands on a good platform because he has walked in the waters of football."

Janza said Bwalya's contribution to their football revolution has been priceless.

"In the crowning moment of Zambia in Equatorial Guinea, he played a big part," said Janza.

"And his contribution started way before the tournament. Even his decision to change the technical team, he faced a lot of criticism but he stood by it.

"I remember when we were playing Libya on the water-logged pitch and I was discussing with him time and again before the match and could see he wanted the match to be postponed.

"He is a member of Caf but when your country is playing you excuse yourself but he used his connections there and gave us good feedback well in time that there was no way the match was

going to be cancelled because of the television rights.

“He told us to get the players ready and not run the risk of them switching off their focus and then at the last minute realise that the match is on.”

The former Zambia Under-20 coach, who is also the highest qualified gaffer in his country, said African coaches should learn from the expatriates who come from Europe and South America.

“It is just a learning curve for African coaches, we are not saying they are the best but certain principles should be learnt,” said Janza.

“This Frenchman showed us how we can soldier on despite challenges and not to be quitters.

“And it was quite a challenge for our boys at times but our head coach had to bring in his culture as we, the Africans, tend to give up easily. I learnt a lot that a team is not only about skill but also team work, team spirit, focus and tactical discipline.”