



**Kenya
Rugby
Union**

PRESS RELEASE

TO : SPORTS DESK

**FROM : MWANGI MUTHEE
CHAIRMAN**

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SUBJECT : A FACT SHEET - SAFARICOM 7S 2011

The Kenya Rugby Union yesterday said they experienced several challenges, including in managing gate entry, when they hosted the Safaricom Sevens for the first time at the unfamiliar Nyayo National Stadium, but added overall success surpassed their wildest forecast.

Mwangi Muthee, the KRU chairman, said media attention in the past two days on the possibility of money having been lost through gates was informed by many erroneous facts. The Safaricom Sevens organising committee, chaired by KRU director Mike Rabar, did a commendable job, Muthee said.

“The completion of the event without a security breach was a huge national success. The committee worked long hours, daily. Then the Government ran an unprecedented security operation that showed that the country can host a world class sporting event despite any prior security fears.”

“That, and the huge support of major sponsors, is still reverberating and pointing at a good future for Kenya rugby.

“Clamour that individuals like Mike [Rabar, the organising committee chairman] acted inappropriately, may please the detractors of my Union committee but hardly anybody with an exploratory mind,” Muthee said.

Last year’s Safaricom Sevens, with ticket prices double what was being charged at Nyayo, grossed Sh17 million. Muthee, therefore posed the question: “Would you struggle hard to unearth the intention of those who claim that Sh25 million was raised last year?”

“At the RFUEA [Rugby Football Union of East Africa] ground [venue of last year’s event, a ticket went for Sh1,000. At Nyayo, under the new clarion call to bring the game to the people, a ticket went for Sh400 where the majority of spectators sat--- on the uncovered terraces.

“We had Sh1,000 tickets for the VIP stand holding vastly inferior number. On this stand we had a huge number of invited guests, and we also lavishly gave complementary tickets; obviously because the support we had received from corporate and other sponsors exceeded our expectations and we needed to invite all our benefactors.”

However, Muthee said, gate management was not flawless in an unfamiliar venue under an untested entry system.

“There were ‘leakages’ in the entry where individuals took advantage and gained entry without paying or ‘recycled’ their tickets or wrist tugs to bring in more people than were paid for. That is what appears to have happened. You may recall at some juncture, on the public address system, announcement that when one exited the stadium he or she would have to pay again before being allowed re-entry.”

“Revenue may, or was actually lost, but I know from a senior officer of a seasoned tickets management firm for the Kenyan Premier League that they had teething problems when learning the trade of running gates for top clubs in the Premiership.

“George Ochola, of Ticket Masters, whom I met at Nyayo during the Sevens gave me an insight of what challenges ‘new people’ to the stadium would naturally face.”

The Union chairman said a committee has been appointed to investigate the cause of loopholes in ticket management at the Sevens.

“Deliberately, those picked to be in the panel are individuals who served in past Safaricom Sevens organising committees – ex-treasurer, Roger Bebbington being one of them. We shall take their recommendations seriously.”

Two other directors of the KRU were also cited in media reports as coming under fire from a section of the fraternity over their performance but Muthee said allegations against those would need to be proved.

“I can vouch for director of finance Terry Adembesa and acting secretary Paul Nyamodi, it’s up to dissatisfied individual or groups to be specific about shortcomings of the two gentlemen.”

Muthee said the KRU had the intention to formulate well structured procurement procedures, which did not exist before a new committee was elected last March.

“We all know the Union’s traditional way of doing things. I can say, without batting an eyelid, and ready to show prove that KRU always did business with suppliers and service providers with cordial personal relationship with chairmen and board members. Security, insurance, travel, catering, public relations and ticket management fitted this description.

“We would like to get away from business deals with people who have personal relation with the KRU executive and impersonally sat with Senior Safaricom officials during the planning of the Safaricom Sevens to address this. As of now it would be evil to impute wrong-doing by people working with the KRU in purely good faith.”

Muthee said Companies that lobby for the KRU to acquire financial assistance was a perfectly acceptable mode of business and those involved had the right to be paid commission but he added that the percentages, quoted in recent media, the KRU is alleged to have parted with were wild and untrue.

“Everyone knows the going rate of commission in this service so it is laughable for one to claim that people get paid almost 100%.”

In our books this year no lobby company has been paid more than 7.5%.

The KRU chairman said his office was focused on pushing for a successful growth of the game in the country.

“Everything is going on very well. In fact, it has never been this good; Government, corporate and individual support is immense.

“Just two days ago, I had discussions with a senior IRB [International Rugby Board] official here in Nairobi and hopes are that we shall get a feedback in the new year over our request for technical aid.

“I suggested to the IRB that they step up funding our national player development programme, the employment of a KRU Chief Executive Officer, a Finance Officer and a Coaching director to assist our national senior, women’s and age-group coaches with the elite teams.

“If we had that kind of personnel at the Union headquarters, the KRU and the board would then be completely non-executive. Frankly the current style of running the Union’s day-to-day business heavily involving the chairman and the board is untenable and we can get away from that.”

Muthee said another focus by detractors was the intention to maintain exclusion of developing rugby outfits from the elite Kenya Cup.

“I, personally, will not back off the intention to have included in the Kenya Cup Western Bulls, Kisumu, Mombasa and University of Nairobi teams. ‘Exclusivists’

are in a campaign to maintain the 'status quo' of only Nairobi teams in our premier competition. We must change and embrace the spread of the game to the Rugby Seats in the rest of the country.

“A special general meeting, over matters such as this, as suggested by the stake holders is quite in order but I am confident that debate would settle for what is good for the game in a changing country.”