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## **SAF CUP 2008: Somalia, Eritrea with classic soccer but Nigeria win Cup**

A powerful goal in the dying minutes of the extra time is all that Nigeria needed to quench the scare out of the hard fighting Sylie Stars of Guinea and carry the Cup for the first time. The Guineans had lots of injuries and Nigeria had the opportunity to capitalize on this weakness but they had their early lead cancelled by the Guineans to push the game into extra time. The Guineans fighting like wounded lions punished the Nigerian side but their efforts to push the game into penalties did not materialize. Nigeria squeezed through Somalia narrowly 1-0, walloped FC Gurttragstation 5-0 and ambushed Kenya 1-0 on their way to the finals. The Sylie Stars from Guinea dismissed Kenya 2-0, walked past African Football 1-0, sent Cote d'Ivoire packing 1-0 before burying the Eritrean show boys 3-0

Ghana, the defending champions could not make it to Berne for the finals which produced many surprises. The much fancied scorpions of Gambia bowed to the pre-tournament underdogs, Harambee Stars of Kenya in the Q-finals. The much fancied elephants of Cote d'Ivoire failed to score a goal in the entire tournament. The most interesting match is the clash of the show boys from Eritrea and Somalia. These young lads displayed technical soccer artistry, with excellent ball control, good distribution and inter-positional exchanges that drew applause from the crowd. Poor finishing robbed the Somalians of the much needed victory that would have pushed them further for contention to the title. The Eritreans had the upper hand as their early goal was enough to see them through.

SAF Cup 2008 was organized as usual by the Swiss African Forum in collaboration with Sport the Bridge. According to the organizers, Sports keeps the body sound and fun services the soul. Besides the fact that it promotes healthy living and soundness of the mind, SAF and STB see sports as an important instrument in the area of integration and as a unifying force. "For us it is one of the means available to us to help the community remain fit, have fun as well as serving as a platform for integration and networking" said Abdullahi, national coordinator of SAF. Even for the over jubilant supporters who did not actively participate in the competition, jumping and running around to cheer their favourite teams provided enough fun and exercise for the body.

**Participating Teams:** The following Teams eventually registered to participate :  
Somalia Youths from Zurich, Senegal FC Berne, Nigeria, Eritrea and Kenya.  
Others are Guinea, Ethiopia, Gambia and Cote d'Ivoire. The rest are FC  
Gurtragstation, African Football, FC Tigers and FC Celtic.

**Officials:** Two FIFA Recognised Referees supported by other volunteers  
officiated the matches.

After a fiercely contested round of group matches, the first 2 teams in each group  
emerged for the Quarteri-finals

### **Preliminary Results**

GROUP A: Cote d'Ivoire 0 – 2 Gambia (Senegal arrived late and were  
disqualified, FC Tigers from the Balkans never showed up) .

GROUP B: Guinea 2 – 0 Kenya; Kenya 4 – 1 African Football;  
Guinea 1 – 0 African Football (Ethiopia did not show up)

GROUP C: Eritrea 5 – 1 FC Gurtragstation (Ghana did not show up)

GROUP D: Somali 0 – 1 Nigeria (FC Celtic did not show up)

### **Q-FINALS:**

Gambia 3 – 4 Kenya (**penalties**)

Cote d'Ivoire 0 – 1 Guinea

Gurtragstation 0 - 5 Nigeria

Somalia 0 - 1 Eritrea

### **S-FINALS**

Guinea 3 – 0 Eritrea

Nigeria 1 – 0 Kenya

### **FINALS**

Nigeria 2 – 1 Guinea (**after extra time**)

Winners received trophies and pair of boots, stockings and T-shirts presented by  
SAF and Sport the Bridge.

### **SAF-CUP 2008 Summary**

**Champions: NIGERIA, Runner up GUINEA Fair Play: ERITREA**

**Previous winners: 2006 Gambia, 2007 Ghana**