



# ITTF AFRICA WEST REGIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS LAGOS 2025



A daily publication for the 2025 ITTF Africa West Regional Championships

July 16 – 19, 2025 (DAY 4)

## Personal Pride At Stake As All Nigeria Fields Take Centre-Stage

**W**HEN brothers in sport face off for a title, it creates a unique and emotionally charged atmosphere where personal bonds meet fierce competition.

That is exactly what is unfolding at the grand finale of the 2025 ITTF Africa West Regional Championships, as eight Nigerians dominate the men's and women's singles events.

At the quarterfinal stage, players from Côte d'Ivoire put up a spirited fight, but were ultimately outclassed by their Nigerian counterparts, turning the semifinals into all-Nigerian affairs and true battles among brothers.

In the Men's Singles, former champions Taiwo Mati (2022) and Matthew Kuti (2024) are on a potential collision course for the final – if they can navigate their semifinal matchups.

Mati, returning to the national spotlight after a two-year absence, is on a mission to reclaim his place. Despite a shaky start – losing in the team event group stage to an Ivorian opponent – he has since found his rhythm, delivering a commanding 4-1 victory over Muiz Adegoke, one of the players who had replaced him in the national team.

However, Mati faces a tough semifinal test against Abdulbasit Abdulfatai, who has remained unbeaten throughout the tournament and is in top form.

Defending champion Matthew Kuti also had a challenging quarterfinal against an Ivorian contender but emerged victorious. He now faces Kolasi Wasium, who edged out rising star Matthew Fabunmi in a tightly contested match.

In the Women's Singles, a new champion is guaranteed, with four Nigerians vying for the



Male MVP of Day 3: Taiwo Mati (right) with former Super Eagles star, Ogenyi Onazi



Female MVP of Day 3: Aishat Rabi (left) with Director of Public Affairs, Lagos State Sports Commission (LSSC), Titi Oshodi-Eko

title.

pressed with her fearless play.

Ajoke Ojomu, runner-up in 2024, is determined to go one step further as she faces promising youngster Aishat Rabi in the first semifinal. In the second semifinal, Sukurat Aiyelabegan will take on debutante Favour Ojo, who has im-

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## WTT Unveils Wildcards For 2025 Contender Lagos

THE World Table Tennis (WTT) management has announced six wildcard entries featuring players from Nigeria, Portugal, France, and South Korea for this year's edition of the annual WTT Contender Lagos, which is scheduled to hold from July 22 to 26.

Standout names from the list include French teenage sensation Rémi Betelu, a semifinalist at the 2025 WTT Feeder Havirov. The defender is set to make his mark in Lagos by going for glory at the Molade Okoya-Thomas Indoor Sports Hall venue of the tournament in the Teslim Balogun Stadium, Lagos.

In the Women's Singles category, Kim Nayeong of South Korea headlines the Host Wildcard nominations. The 19-year-old, who reached the semifinals at WTT Contender Lagos 2023, returns with her sights firmly set on capturing her first WTT Series title.

Joining her are Fu Yu of Portugal and Nigeria's Aminat Fashola. Fu, known for her lightning-fast penhold style, will look to dominate her opponents, while Fashola hopes to draw strength and inspiration from the passionate home crowd.

In the Men's Singles, Nigerian hopefuls Samuel Boboye and Taiwo Mati will be flying the flag as Host Wildcard nominees. They will be joined by France's Romain Ruiz, a flick-shot specialist known for his dynamic play.

These wildcard entries promise to add even more excitement to an already star-studded line-up, as Lagos prepares to host another thrilling edition of the WTT Contender series.

# Sounou Relishes High Standard, Lauds 'Best Regional Tournament'

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Vice President, ITTF Africa West Region, Ferdinand Sounou, has congratulated Lagos, Nigeria, for hosting what he described as the best regional tournament of the year, while acknowledging the rising competitiveness across West Africa.

The four-day tournament, held at the Molade Okoya-Thomas Hall of the Teslim Balogun Stadium in Lagos, featured 10 countries from the region. Nigeria, the host nation, dominated the team events, reaffirming its leadership in the sport.

Sounou, who officially declared the championships open on Wednesday, July 16, praised Lagos for its exceptional organisational capacity, calling it one of the best hosts on the continent. Expressing his excitement over the quality of the event and the improved standard of play, Sounou remarked: "This year's regional tournament in Lagos was a resounding success. Everyone was impressed by the quality of organisation and, more importantly, the elevated standard of play compared to previous editions, which were often dominated by just a few countries."

He continued: "I was particularly amazed by the high level of

play. There has been a remarkable improvement across the board. The players were highly motivated and determined to win medals and secure qualification for the 2025 African Senior Championships, scheduled to take place in Kigali, Rwanda, from October 12 to 19."

Sounou also noted a shift in the competitive landscape: "From what I've seen, Nigerian players are no longer the untouchables they once were. The gap is closing, and the challenge has been launched at all levels. However, Nigeria remains the top team in the West African region."

