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Gladys Lengwe, Diana Mukasa and Bernadettar Kwimbira (from the left) officiate many matches at the SV Eintracht Referee Cup. Photo: be

The large family reaches until Africa

Women's Referees are invited by the SV Eintracht at their own expense and are inspired by the atmosphere in Lueneburg

By Florian Langanke

Lueneburg. Bibiana Steinhaus will be the first female to lead professional games until the summer break. The fact that women referees are also appointed at the men is, on the other hand, for the 13th Referee Cup of SV Eintracht nothing special. But the fact that they originate from Zambia, Malawi and Uganda and have gained experience in tournaments all over the world, is special.

Just invited via Facebook

"I just added the three at Facebook and told them about the tournament. I think they just wanted to be part of this event, and like to be part of our referee family", said tournament organizer Oliver Vogt. With FIFA referee Gladys Lengwe from Zambia, Bernadettar Kwimbira from Malawi, who is also active as an assistant for FIFA, and Diana Mukasa from Uganda, who was already employed at the U17 Women's World Cup in Azerbaijan, he was able to win three prestigious referees for the tournament. DFB Referees Instructor Guenther Thielking took the part to guide them during their stay in Germany.

The Africans had to pay for the journey to Germany even from their own pocket. Accommodation, meals and a day trip to Berlin organized SV Eintracht through sponsors. "For us it is the first visit to Germany, we were very pleased to be invited by Oliver," said Lengwe, who named as highlight of her career to officiate the group match between Germany and Thailand at the 2015 World Cup in Canada. Germany won 4-0.

On the side line, she was supported by her friend Kwimbira at the World Cup, the two have now been traveling for ten years as a team. "In addition to the game Germany against England, this game was also the highlight of my career," the 35-year-old said. Lengwe, who is a candidate for the Women's World Cup 2019 in France and who is hoping to take part as a representative of Africa, was impressed by Lueneburg. "We got a guided tour and were allowed to see the city festival. It was a great experience for me." At the evening's party, the officials did not take part and were more professional than most of the players: "We went to bed early because we had to whistle again the next day", so Kwimbira.

Colorful mix at the Referee-Cup

From FIFA to the circle class

After a six-year break, Eintracht referee chairman Oliver Vogt once again set up an international tournament. A long journey took the teams from the Vienna referee's team, Lahden Erotuomarikerho from Finland and the Wielkopolskiego squad from Poland for the Cup.

"The event is designed to be more fun than success. The best thing is to have everyone together and laugh together", says organizer Oliver Vogt, who welcomed referees from all levels from FIFA to the bottom league.

The tournament won the referees from the NFV-Kreis Harburg next were the colleagues from Vienna, Uelzen and Hannover. The three teams from the NFV-Kreis Lueneburg finished in the midfield.