

FOOTBALL

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ETO'O SCHEME ON

Groundbreaking ceremony for Sh42m academy in Laikipia don

Photo/BOB OLU

BY JOHN MUCHANGI

CONSTRUCTION of the Sh42.5 million Samuel Eto'o football academy has kicked off officially after the groundbreaking ceremony on Sunday.

The academy features a modern football pitch, which will sit on a 1.5 million-litre water reservoir.

Laikipia governor Joshua Irungu led the groundbreaking ceremony at Endana Secondary School in the county on Sunday.

The academy, officially called the "Eto'o School and Environmental Education Centre", will be part of the Endana secondary school and will admit the first ten students this year.

"We have started expressing concern over the high number of students in Laikipia who already want to come here," said Irungu during the ceremony.

He said the county will try to replicate the complex in a few other schools.

The Chelsea striker will officially open the complex in July this year during the finals of the Laikipia and Beyond Unity Cup, when the football pitch is expected to be completed.

Eto'o personally gave Sh22 million to fund the construction of the stylish stadium.

"The playground will feature porous tiles to allow rain water seep through," said Aggrey Maganga, a Kenyan architect involved in the design.

"It's a high performance playfield that meets FIFA competition scale," he said. The stadium



READY TO RUMBLE: Nanyuki Youth football players are introduced to Laikipia Governor Joshua Irungu.

also hosts four classrooms, school administration rooms, an environmental education centre and the Laikipia Unity Cup offices. The rest of the academy comprises a girls dormitory, a kitchen a dining hall, two ablutions blocks and an extension to the existing boys dormitory.

This section is funded by Ol Pejeta ranch, Zeitz Foundation and Segera conservancy, owned by former Puma chairman and CEO Jochen Zeitz. Liz Rihoy, head of Zeitz Foundation, said all buildings are being constructed to

harvest and store water in underground tanks.

"In total approximately two million litres of rain water will be harvested every year," said yesterday.

The first students sponsored by the academy will be selected through the Laikipia league.

Endana head-teacher Senjura Leparkey said the academy will be integrated into the existing school, and all students will benefit from the facilities. "However the students sponsored by the academy will be allowed four hours of soccer training every day," he said.