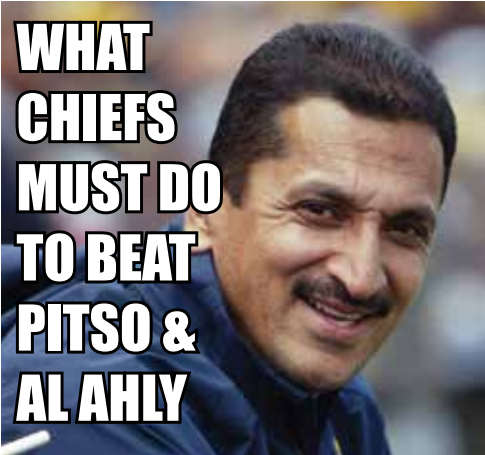


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In this edition of iDiski Times:

- 3 - Junior vs Tso
- 4 - In the news
- 5 - Austin Dube
- 6 to 7 - Pitso Mosimane
- 8 to 9 - Fixtures
- 10 to 11 - Monnapule Saleng
- 12 to 13 - Stanton Fredericks
- 14 to 15 - Farouk Khan
- 16 - Arthur Zwane

What you may have missed



Chiefs Announce New Signings

After being unable to sign players last season due to their FIFA transfer ban, Kaizer Chiefs began to announce their new signings ahead of the 2021/2022 season. Many names were expected, as they had been expected to sign last season if the ban was overturned, including former Bidvest Wits players Brandon Petersen, Sifiso Hlanti, Phathutshedzo Nange and Kgaogelo Sekgota. They have also signed Njabulo Ngcobo from Swallows, while after leaving AmaZulu, Sibusiso Mabiliso joins as a free agent. Given Thibedi has also been recalled from his loan at Swallows.



Pirates Unveil Players

Last week Orlando Pirates announced the signing of Goodman Mosele from Baroka, Monnapule Saleng from Free State Stars, while the former Maritzburg United pair of Bandile Shandu and Kwanda Mngonyama joined on free agents. Pirates have also brought in former Golden Arrows head coach Mandla Ncikazi into their technical team, as the team who finished third in last season's DStv Premiership race, look to become title contenders.



Chippa United Bring In Hunt

Gavin Hunt is back. After being sacked at the end of May by Kaizer Chiefs, the four time league winning coach was unveiled as the new head coach of Chippa United last week.

Chippa were coach-less after Lehlohonolo Seema had left the club after the playoffs, to take over at Golden Arrows. Hunt's appointment took many by surprise, especially at a club like Chippa who have had five coaching changes last season. Joining Hunt at Chippa is former Bidvest Wits colleague Roy Limongelli, who is the club's new technical director.



Champions Confirm Four New Players

Not to be outdone, DStv Premiership Mamelodi Sundowns announced new signings at the end of last week. In April iDiski Times broke the news that Pavol Šafranko was set to join Masandawana from Romanian Liga I outfit Sepsi OSK SF, and his transfer as well as Divine Lunga (from Golden Arrows), Neo Maema (from Bloemfontein Celtic), while Grant Kekana has joined from neighbours SuperSport United.

Argentina Lift Messi

In the early hours of Sunday morning, South African time, Argentina won a football match against Brazil. It was a game like many others. A game of 90 minutes, 22 players on the pitch officiated by a match official, two coaches shouting from the sidelines, one ball, two penalty boxes... And yet, it was a game like no other! It was the game that many football fans around the world and in history will remember for Lionel Messi. It was the game many will remember for Messi's teammates racing off to their national captain, who had fallen down on his knees, overwhelmed by emotions after the final whistle. Teammates racing off to Messi to celebrate with him, to hug him in this moment of pure joy and in this moment where so much weight and pain had fallen off his shoulders. Teammates, who sang Messi's name, teammates who lifted him. Teammates who celebrated what they had just achieved more for Messi than themselves. Teammates who had won the Copa America final for Messi.

Over the past 16 years since his Argentina debut, Messi had tried to carry his nation, try to live up to expectations of his home country, who desperately wanted another hero like Diego Maradona. Messi had helped Argentina to reach four major finals: the 2007 Copa America, the 2014 FIFA World Cup as well as the 2015 and 2016 Copa Americas, but fallen short at the final hurdle all those four times. It hurt Messi more than anyone, it hurt him so much that he had even announced his international retirement from Argentina after the 2016 final, the fourth one he had lost.

However, he came back. He helped a visibly struggling Argentine team to qualify for the 2018 FIFA World



Cup, he led Argentina to a third-place finish at the 2019 Copa America. But he wanted more, he wasn't finished. He wanted that one international trophy in senior football - remember he already won the 2005 FIFA U20 World Cup and the 2008 Olympics. He wanted that monkey off his back, of people telling him he is not among the greatest players in history because he never won a trophy with Argentina. He gave it his all, he scored four goals and assisted five more in Argentina's run to this year's final. But in the final, something different happened. It wasn't Messi, who carried Argentina and his teammates, it was the other way around. His teammates fought bravely for 90 minutes and more. They tackled, they fouled, they prevented Brazil from getting into their stride and they scored. They scored that one goal that ensured Lionel Messi will not retire without an international trophy - a superb lob from Angel Di Maria following a fine long ball from Rodrigo De Paul. Messi, meanwhile, didn't have a great game, it wasn't poor by any means, but he just wasn't in the game and even missed a brilliant chance to make 2-0.

But Argentina lifted Messi! His teammate, Emiliano Martinez, who had saved three penalties in the semi-final shootout victory against Colombia, explained the mood within the Albiceleste camp perfectly, saying "I said that I preferred that we win it (for Messi) before me. Today we could give it to him. It was what he wanted most in his life."



Football Didn't Come Home - Again!

Football didn't come home, instead it went to Rome. Meanwhile, England's 55 years of hurt and pain without a major trophy in international football continue. Many English fans had hoped that this tournament will be different. That this young, talented and multi-cultural team had what it takes to finally lift the country's first ever UEFA European Championship. And it all started so brightly. Luke Shaw scored the fastest goal in Euro history after just 117 seconds, sending 58 000 fans inside a packed Wembley Stadium - probably more because scenes of many, many fans without tickets passing security barriers and entering the stadium made the rounds - sending those inside the stadium and millions country-wide into sheer eruption, into a party-mood they had never experienced. Probably 80% of them were not yet alive when England lifted the 1966 FIFA World Cup, their only major trophy in football to date.

However, England's party was gatecrashed. Gatecrashed not just by their own fans, but also a very resilient Italian team. An Italian team, who overcame many setbacks as the tournament progressed. An Italian team that looked tired for large parts in the semi-final against Spain as well as in the first 30 minutes against England. A team that had lost left-back Leonardo Spinazola to a serious injury, that conceded the quickest opener in a Euro final and that later also lost Federico Chiesa - arguably the Man of the Match in final until his substitution - to injury. Yet, Italy were the ones celebrating in the end. Leonardo Bonucci had equalised in the 67th minute, during a spell when this new England generation fell back



into old habits, when they showed more fear than courage, when they just focussed on defending. But their defence was breached and it almost seemed like their spirits were broken. Yes, the game still continued until the 90th minute and into extra-time, but it didn't feel like England could come back - at least not to this writer. In the end England stumbled into penalties, a huge mistake given their poor record in penalty shootouts at major tournaments. Italy, meanwhile, seemed content and believed in their own mental strength to overcome yet another obstacle on their path to glory, and they did. Italy lifted their second European crown, when many fans inside the stadium had long left. Italy are taking the trophy to Rome, while England's years of pain continue.

But what must be highlighted is the fact that we can debate whether or not Jadon Sancho and Marcus Rashford, a 21-year-old and a 23-year-old who had just brought on to take a spot-kick, should have taken a penalty. We can debate whether Buyako Saka should have been put in a situation where a 19-year-old carries the weight of a nation, of millions of football fans on his shoulders with the final penalty. But what we can't debate is the endless hate those three players have received on social platforms since missing their attempts. The English team has taken a knee in every game of this tournament, they have made a stand against abuse and racism. Yet, the very same moment these players crack under the massive amount pressure and miss a penalty, they get abused, they get scapegoated. "They are English when they win, but they are black when they lose." It's this mentality that needs to leave our stadiums and the beautiful game as well as society overall.



Junior Khanye

I Question 3 Chiefs Signings But Ngcobo Is A Star

Kaizer Chiefs Announce Six New Players!

Last week, Kaizer Chiefs announced six new players that they have signed for the upcoming season. A lot of people have been asking me what I think of these signings. In this week's column I am going to give you my honest opinion about these players, and I hope you will enjoy my analysis of the new signings. Remember as well that Chiefs were not allowed to sign players, therefore, this is their first chance to show us how serious they are about building for the future. For those who do not know who these players are; Brandon Peterson, Sifiso Hlanti, Phathutshedzo Nange, Njabulo Ngcobo, Sibusiso Mabiliso, and Kgaogelo Sekgota.

Where Is Hlanti Going?

I do not understand why Kaizer Chiefs are signing Hlanti of all players. This player does not have tactical discipline as a defender, he spends more time on the ball and he does not have a sense of urgency. Sometimes you see him vacating his position at the back leaving his defensive partners exposed. At Bidvest Wits and Bafana Bafana he had the same problem. At Swallows FC, he did not improve on his defensive flaws. I genuinely do not understand why Hlanti is being signed by Kaizer Chiefs. Another player I have a problem with

is Nange. Nange was not getting game time at Stellenbosch FC, he was coming off the bench most of the time and I don't think he is good enough for Kaizer Chiefs. Honestly, even when he was at Wits, there was nothing special about Nange. These are the concerns I have with South African football, some of these signings are nothing but business deals, they have nothing to do with talent. Mabiliso is another one I am not convinced with, because he did not play the whole season at Amazulu..

Njabulo Ngcobo Is A Superstar.

The signing of Njabulo Ngcobo is excellent. This player is a star. I love him. He reminds me of Mbulelo Mabizela.

Defenders must play football properly, they must know how to build up from the back. This player knows how to do that. He is the reigning Defender of the Season. I would love to see him play for a team that is going to play to his strength, a team that will build up from the back. I know that Stuart Baxter does not play that kind of football. Kgaogelo Sekgota and Brandon Peterson are good players as well. We will see next season if they will add value to Kaizer Chiefs. My only feedback to Sekgota is that he needs to variate his game; he can not only rely on taking on defenders, sometimes he should play 1-2 passes to eliminate defenders.



Tso Vilakazi

How Long Will Hunt Survive At Chippa United?

Gavin Hunt Joins Chippa United!

I was really surprised to hear that Gavin Hunt had been appointed as the Head Coach of Chippa United. My first thought was "How is this going to work?" I asked myself this question because Chippa Mpengesi and Gavin Hunt are strong personalities who like imposing their will in situations. Both are like lions, and we all know that two lions cannot occupy the same space at the same time. I was actually expecting to see Gavin Hunt at Marumo Gallants, especially since we are hearing that Dylan Kerr is having contractual challenges. Chippa United was the last team on my mind particularly knowing their history with coaches.

Who Has Survived A Season At Chippa?

Chippa Mpengesi said Gavin Hunt is a long-term commitment and that he will be a manager instead of a coach. This means that he will be allowed to sign his own players and make his own decisions. We have heard all of these words before and we know that as soon as results are not forthcoming, Chippa Mpengesi will fire the coach. Gavin Hunt is a good coach, he has won four league titles and he performs really well when he is in an environment that allows him make his own decisions. At Wits and

SuperSport United he was the main man who signed his own players. If he is given all the powers, Gavin Hunt will do well at Chippa. The question perhaps should be; what does doing well at Chippa mean? Which coach has survived a season at that club? That is my worry. Hunt can do well, but what does that mean at Chippa United? Time will tell.

Mngonyama Signing Puzzling

Before I close off this week, I want to say I was really puzzled by Orlando Pirates signing Kwanda Mngonyama. His career has been going backwards recently and for him to be signed by a big team is questionable. There are other good defenders out there and Kwanda is not someone who is going to improve the defense problems at Pirates. People were asking about these signings at Pirates, Kwanda stood out as one that shocked me.



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Broos' Contract Only Starts This Week

BY VELILE MNYANDU

Bafana Bafana head coach Hugo Broos will finally see his contract commencing on 15 July and he is expected back in the country before the end of this month, in time for the 2022 FIFA World Cup qualifiers which get underway in September. This was confirmed by the South African Football Association (SAFA) technical committee chairperson Jack Maluleka, who was commenting on the side lines of the COSAFA Cup in Gqeberha where Bafana are currently playing. Broos, who signed a five-year contract to coach Bafana back in May, is yet to officially start in his new position as he had to return home to Belgium for vaccination. It's believed that he will be taking his second dose of vaccination sometime this week

before returning to South Africa to officially start his job. iDiski Times has also reliably learnt that Broos will only start getting paid from the commencement of his contract which is from this week, contrary to what many believed that he would be paid for the past two months as well. The 69year-old coach had indicated during his first press conference that he would not be in charge of the COSAFA Cup and CHAN matches and delegated that duty to his assistants Helman Mkhalele and Cedimir Javenski will handle those matches. He also missed the first international friendly against Uganda in June which Bafana won 1-0 with a youthful squad. Javenski tested positive for Covid19 just before the Uganda game and

its now believed that he's returned to Europe and would be back in the country when Broos also returns. Mkhalele also tested positive for Covid19, on the eve of the COSAFA Cup, leaving his assistant Morena Ramoreboli in charge of the team. "Yes, of course. The coach has also indicated that he will be going to be vaccinated and as promised, he will be here before the end of this month and to continue the preparations. Unless we would experience the issue of course, because of the lockdown that we are facing with but the coach we expect him to be here for the preparation for September qualifying games. But of course, of course he did make did mention that Helman Mkhalele will be given the opportunity to take the team through," said Maluleka.



Amakhosi Going For Gold

Kaizer Chiefs play in the biggest match of their 50 year history on Saturday when they face defending champions Al Ahly in the CAF Champions League final. The historic match is set to played at Stade Mohammed V in Casablanca, Morocco. While many had thought the 2020/2021 season would be one to forget for the Amakhosi, the team proved naysayers wrong by reaching the continental final, and it will be one they never forget if they are victorious against Pitso Mosimane's Egyptian club. Three players who have played big roles in Chiefs' progressing to the final have been Samir Nurkovic, Lebogang Manyama and Daniel Akpeyi.

Nurkovic has featured in eight matches through the competition, scoring three goals. "Amazing feeling for me honestly, to qualify for CAF Champions League final. When I was a kid, I was always dreaming to play such a big game and dreams rarely come true and I honestly can't wait to play that game. It means a lot to me and my career, because since I have started playing football, this is something that I was working hard for. And I really can't wait for that game to start. Also it means a lot for the club as well. And I'm really happy to be a part of such a big club like Kaizer Chiefs and it's just second year for me from being a part of this big club and really big achievement, and like I said I can't wait really for the game to start." - Samir Nurkovic

Manyama featured in eleven games on the road to the final, but unfortunately missed out in the semi-final win over Wydad Casablanca due to injury. "The CAF journey for us as Kaizer Chiefs, you know, there's been a lot of things, you know, it's been a lot of things. We faced obstacles, we faced different cultures, we've had to to see how other countries live, how other people are, you know, and it's been very nice, but at the same time, it's also been a bit tough, you know, but ja, I mean, it's you, you learn through the toughness, and also, to understand to be a South African, when you go to some other countries, you really realise how blessed you are and I was very grateful for that opportunity. Obviously, to get a chance to be in the final of the CAF is is a huge, huge

achievement for us, the whole club, everybody associated with Kaizer Chiefs, it's a huge, huge moment, probably the biggest moment this club has ever been in. And to be a part of it, and to have played a huge role in it, it's an honour, it's an honour and a privilege." - Lebogang Manyama Nigerian goalkeeper Akpeyi has played in six games in the CAFCL, and is yet to concede a goal in the competition. "Well, for history sake, I'm sure everyone knows Al Ahly to be a very tough side. They are solid team, and it's a team that you need to actually focus 120% and the 94th minute that you're going to be playing them. So it's not going to be an easy day. But I'm sure there's a reason why we're preparing early.

And that's the reason why we're in camp at the moment, and working out strategies, and structures and plans on how to actually face this huge game coming up on the 17th. And I'm sure that they also are expecting a lot from us. So it's just a game of being focused and, you know, each team taking their opportunity when it comes. So we are preparing for that big day, preparing for the big team, and looking at the history of the team again, you realise that they've won a lot in the Champions League, so I'm sure they have that experience with them. We are coming as underdog, but we respect them, but at the same time we'll be coming with our A game." - Daniel Akpeyi

EYETHU SONKE

YOUR SPACE, YOUR GAME



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Chiefs Have Been Tracking Me Since 2019

Following reports that Kaizer Chiefs are set to conclude the signing of Bafana Bafana's centre-back Austin Dube, he has since confirmed that the Phefeni glamour boys have been following him for the past two years. Dube, who was a member of the TS Galaxy team which shocked Chiefs, beating them 1-0 in the Nedbank Cup final in 2019, is coming a long way with his football career. One of the products of Varsity Cup football, the man who hails from Ermelo in Mpumalanga also holds Honours in Public Management from the University of Limpopo. After playing in more than 30 matches in all competitions this past season, scoring five goals and helping the team to reach the promotional play-offs and also the Nedbank Cup quarter-finals, Dube is looking forward to the next chapter in his career. In this interview with iDiski Times senior writer Velile Mnyandu at the COSAFA Cup in Gqeberha, the 28-year-old is looking forward to donning the famous gold and black colours of his childhood club.

Velile Mnyandu: Austin let's talk about how you been feeling in the past two weeks, being part of the Bafana Bafana camp, I don't think something that you thought it would come this sooner in your career...especially after seeing yourself back in the NFD (National First Division). How have you been feeling?

Austin Dube: I have been feeling great you know like being in the set-up of the national team and stuff. But then as a footballer you have to be up for anything. I knew it was going to come but when I wasn't sure, I knew anytime, it could be sooner or later but anytime. I have been feeling great, it's been a great feeling being part of the team.

VM: How confident are you in you and your abilities?

AD: Yea I'm very confident in everything I do.

VM: Where does that confidence come from?

AD: From the mind set actually and the heart. If you have the heart of a lion everything is going to be positive so mostly it comes from the mind set and from the heart.

VM: Let's go back... I think I first saw you when you were with TS Galaxy in the NFD. I went to watch one of the games in Kameelrivier. But let's track back, you and football, where are you coming from?

AD: Yoh! I started playing football when I was a young boy you know at the age of seven, eight. Obviously back then it wasn't something serious but I started being serious about it when I was doing my first year at the University of Limpopo back in 2011, that's when I actually started being serious about it, while I was a first year (student) at the University of Limpopo.

VM: What were you studying?

AD: I studied Public Administration.

VM: How important is that? Sometimes others wait until one is finished with football before studying but how important is the advantage of having finished your studies before starting to play

professional football?

AD: Look being a professional football player comes with a lot of challenges, actually, being an athlete. One, it's a short career, something that can end anytime, you know, so you need to have a back-up plan. I mean if you don't get where you want to be in football then you can have something on the side to help you proceed with life. So it is very important to have a back-up plan than just focusing on football, because we have serious injuries and stuff, your career can end at any time so you need to have a back-up plan; qualifications, educational qualifications help a lot when it comes to that.

VM: And I'm sure when you were there, because when you say in 2011 I remember in 2011 I went to the World Student Games in China in Shenzhen... And I'm sure you were looking forward to being part of the World Student Games.

AD: Yes of course, when you are at Varsity and being someone who is into sports, when big chances of proving who you are, you want to be part of that, you part of those people who go and show the world what they capable of. So yeah, I wanted to be part of it but at the same time I was more focused on my studies and stuff, so I couldn't just focus more on sports and leave my studies on the side.

VM: Very interesting. So when you were at Turfloop, this was also the time when there was an opportunity, Varsity Cup was in the picture as well. It's so interesting that you are telling me that you are one of the success stories of the Varsity Cup...

AD: Yes, yes back in 2014 I actually played all the games in 2014 for the University of Limpopo, that's where everything, this professional thing came about, in 2014.

VM: Who scouted you?

AD: Who was the scout at Thanda Royal Zulu? Actually the team manager back then, the late Thabang Gumedede. Yes it was Thabang Gumedede.

VM: So this was coinciding with the time that you were graduating as well?

AD: Yes, I was doing my honours degree in 2014 so I signed actually a pre-contract and then continued with my studies until I graduated. I left and that's when I went to join Thanda Royal Zulu.

VM: Do you feel like partly, whatever you want to do post your career, you'd like to start with it now because while you are still active and everyone is looking at you, you must take advantage?

AD: Yeah I think about it, but then now at the moment I'm permanently investing all my time in football so it becomes a bit difficult for me to do other things on the side because my main focus now is football.

VM: So you moved to KZN, for how long did you stay there?

AD: I stayed there for a season, a year, 2015, from there I went back to Mpumalanga in Witbank, that's when I started playing for Witbank Spurs.

VM: At Witbank Spurs also you didn't stay long there...

AD: I stayed for two seasons then went to TS Galaxy.



VM: You started the TS Galaxy project because in your first season you went on to win the Nedbank Cup, I had been following the story, you played against (Kaizer) Chiefs in that final, that must have been the highlight of your career?

AD: Yeah that's where everything started, that's when I started to feel like everything is coming together, actually now my dreams are starting to come true at TS Galaxy when we won the Nedbank Cup in 2019. Then we went on to play in the CAF Confed Cup, it was a big deal and being the first team obviously from the lower division to win a major trophy, a major tournament in the country; it was a big deal.

VM: What made you guys click in that tournament, especially in the final because Chiefs came in as favourites?

AD: Actually we didn't have anything to lose going to the final but we had everything to play for. We were very motivated, everyone wanted to play, we were definitely motivated. We went there and told ourselves let's just go to play, yes we had respect for them, actually we told ourselves that we didn't get to the final by mistake, we go to the final in a proper way, like having beaten the likes of Golden Arrows, so we went there motivated and hoping to win.

VM: When you look at what followed after that, an experience that maybe you look back now and the matches that you are playing now, as much as it is your first time in the national team, but what you are seeing here is something that you tasted in the CAF Confederation Cup.

AD: Yes, similar, like the experience is similar. You know when you are playing away from home, away from South Africa, you know, you

get this treatment; you feel that you know I'm somewhere in the East of Africa, I'm longer in South Africa, so you feel that. Even now during this tournament, the past two games when we were playing Botswana and Swaziland, you could feel that we are not playing against boys from South Africa. It is this feeling that when you play there, obviously there's going to be that thing you feel that now it's another level, you are longer playing with local players and stuff. So that alone, I mean playing COSAFA Cup reminded me of that experience when we played in Madagascar, Seychelles and Nigeria.

VM: What's different between this football and CAF football?

AD: They are more physical, those guys are more physical and being tactical and the treatment, they still believe in home ground advantage, you have to feel the pressure of playing away. That's what's actually different.

VM: But it was surprising at TS Galaxy, when they suddenly bought the status of Highlands Park many thought that you were going to make the step-up, but you left for Richards Bay. How did that come about?

AD: Actually that was my decision. I thought maybe it wasn't my time because everything has its own time. So I took a decision together with the chairman, he was the President of TS Galaxy, that I'm leaving the team. That was my decision in the team I hadn't decided back then where I would go, but I decided maybe it's time I go somewhere else.

VM: But you were leaving an opportunity TS was playing the Premier Division, but you were remaining in the NFD.

AD: For me it's all about being happy, wherever you are like, if there was a need for me to leave because of me being not happy anymore at the club, then I had to do that. I thought happiness has to come first, it wouldn't help if I stayed but wasn't happy. So I had to be happy first so I can perform to my full capability, so it was more of me being happy than being loyal to the fans and stuff.

VM: And you had a very good season at Richards Bay FC, helped them to the quarter-finals of the Nedbank cup and came very close to getting promotion there...

AD: Yeah and I had to play each and every match. I played all the matches actually, the league matches including the Nedbank Cup matches and then one match in the promotional playoffs. Obviously I didn't play the last match because I was suspended. Yes I played almost every match, when I got there I told myself that I want to play, it is each footballer's dream or wish to play every match. So I told myself I want to play, I don't want to just add numbers you know. I was blessed enough when I got there, they knew me already, I got coach Simo (Simo Dladla) who believed in me then I helped them, scored goals, yeah that's it.

VM: Is that one of the advantages because a modern centre-back is not just a defender, I look at yourself and I look at Happy Jele, the long pass, those diagonal balls, I mean if you look at the assist here the first game that you gave to KaltegoMalinga, is this one of your strengths?

AD: Yeah, I have this educated left foot that provides all the passes while from the centre back.

Obviously we have to be capable of passing the ball when the team has to start the ball from the back, be able to play, be able to mark, read the game, anticipate well; you have to have good anticipation, all that. That's what modern football needs from a centre-back not just defend, defend, defend. If the team has to play, you have to play. You have to be comfortable on the ball when playing, not just mark and defend.

VM: Are you looking forward to the next chapter (Kaizer Chiefs) of your career?

AD: My career...sure most definitely.

VM: You must be excited with how things went season and how it is finishing?

AD: You know, like great things happen to those who wait actually, so I had to wait for this moment and now things are starting to happen and they happen in a short space of time. The way things are happening now, the national team call-up, but I had to wait like seriously, I had to wait, I had to be patient about it.

VM: The national team and the big move...

AD: Yes the national team is a big move, you say... very exciting.

VM: But what people don't know is that this big move is not just people who are looking at you now, they have been following you long before...

AD: Yeah since 2019 if I'm not mistaken, since 2019, it's just that it had to take some time for it to happen.

VM: And you must be grateful to Richards Bay for giving you time and not holding you back?

AD: I am, I am grateful to Richards Bay, to the chairman mostly to coach Simo Dladla, you know, for believing in me and understanding my capabilities and stuff. I'm very grateful.

VM: The club that you are going to, is a club that they support at home?

AD: (Laughs) yeah man, it is, everyone at home they support it and I mean like everyone at home. It was even difficult for them, they had to choose sides when we played in the Nedbank Final in 2019, they had to choose either they support me or to support their club, so it was difficult for them, seriously. But it's actually been my club since I was growing up.

VM: I'm sure you can't wait to play the COSAFA Cup final, because Chiefs is playing the CAF Champions League final on Saturday and the following day here it's the COSAFA final. I'm sure you would like to finish what you started here.

AD: Yeah I'm looking forward to that and as things stand we are definitely going there, I think we are going to play in the final we are going to get to the final. Anything is possible with the squad that we have, we are likely to win the COSAFA Cup.

VM: So it means that you and Mapholoba (Njabulo Ngcobo), you will be starting your combination here?

AD: (Laughs) I'm not sure about that, but if things go the way we want them to go, that's what is actually going to happen.

PITSO : Why Chiefs Are More Suited To CAF CL Than Pirates & Sundowns

Pitso Mosimane has literally lifted almost every trophy there is to win - first in South Africa and now he is conquering the African continent as well as the world. He is a serial winner, probably one of the greatest coaches Africa has ever seen. However, on Saturday, he will face a different task. He will face Kaizer Chiefs, the team that he grew up supporting. He will face a team, which has reached the final against all odds and a team he himself has labelled as “awkward”. But ‘Jingles’ hasn’t shied away from the media and gone secretive about Al Ahly’s preparations for the upcoming CAF Champions League final - he has faced South African media head on, in very open, honest and insightful virtual press conference with the South African Football Journalist Association (SAFJA). He gave local journalists 90 minutes, a full game, organised by his South African representatives MT Sports Management & Marketing, to ask him anything they wanted. iDiski Times had the pleasure to be part of it and put the best content of those 90 minutes that preceded one of the biggest games in Pitso Mosimane’s coaching career and the biggest game in Kaizer Chiefs history into the interview below. Sit back and enjoy the ride!

What are thoughts on the CAF Champions League final?

Pitso Mosimane: I believe that any coach who comes to any match, he thinks he’s got an equal chance of winning. And I think Arthur Zwane thinks the same or should I say Stuart Baxter? I’m not sure. You know, in South Africa, there’s too many coaches, you don’t know who’s sometimes in the charge. (Laughs) So is it Arthur or Stuart?

Baxter is running the show.

PM: I would presume that Baxter wants to win his first Champions League. Why not? We all had our chance. And he believes the same and the same as I believe. I told the boys when we came to the quarterfinals, I said that’s when the Champions League starts to be honest. The group stages, yes, it’s a process that you have to follow to go to the quarterfinals and it determines who finishes first and second. And that’s a big story of finishing first and second, because I saw the Sundowns coach commented, he said, maybe he must be the second next year because all the people who went

to the final in the last Champions League edition were only the teams who finished second. And this year, we finished second also as Al Ahly, and we’re in the final. But as I told the boys, you know, let’s get through the group stages. The preliminaries and group stages to be honest, it’s a formality, you have to do it. And you have to respect it but the Champions League starts in the quarterfinals, to be honest and then who you get and where you play home and away. Sometimes it’s better sometimes doesn’t. Because you want to say, if you finish at home is an advantage. I don’t think it’s an advantage for my former team, because two years in a row it has been like that we didn’t go through. And Al Ahly, we can say it’s better for us to finish second because we are always in the final when we finish second. So yeah, everybody has a chance. Everybody feels, everybody believes that he can win it and we should all go for it.

Can you give us a reflection of where your mindset is going into the final knowing that your country flag is being flown on two fronts.

PM: Yeah, I understand because there’s a little bit of a conflict that I’m South African playing against my favourite team, my home team. The team I supported when I grew up. But at this point in time, it’s about me and my family and my team. Those come first. And I think it was the same thing when I met Mamelodi Sundowns, it was the same thing when I was a coach for Sundowns and I played against SuperSport United, where they gave me my break to be a coach. So when it comes to that it is either I want to give the medal to Baxter or I want to keep it. And I think you know the answer to that. But it would be nice also, to have another South African team to get the star, to be honest, if



I look from the other side. And it will be a boost for our country to have the three big teams with the star. Why not? But we are not welfare or a charitable organisation of handing out stars, we know we must earn it, everybody must earn it. Al Ahly want to make their own La Decima, they call it Al Achra here. And Chiefs want to win their first star. But I would congratulate Kaizer Chiefs for the journey that they had, what a season they had! A team that never signed anyone else. If we look back to last season with my employers, I managed to win the league in the last 18 minutes. It is unbelievable and they are the very same team

I was watching Chiefs game yesterday, watching their set pieces yesterday. Ai ai ai, big boys! There is Gonzalo Castro, Mathoho, Mathoho’s partner (Daniel Cardoso), there is Samir Nurkovic, five big boys. They score a lot of headers, and that’s one of the things that also determines Champions League football.

that one stage was laying 12th on the lock in 2020/21, losing to Black Leopards. I saw that match and I think they also lost to Chippa, if I’m not mistaken. And then they come and go to the final and come back with integrity and finish in top eight at the end. So what a story, for me, it’s an amazing story to be honest. I’d like to know what happened in that story, because it’s very awkward. I’ve never seen something like this. Probably the reason is the changing of the technical team, probably I’m not sure. And maybe this issue of not signing players, probably has affected them. Then they doubted themselves in the league. But when it came to Champions League they were a monster.

You have set the standard so high, you are the defending champions and at many big clubs around the world not winning the Champions League leads to the sacking of the coach. So could Bibo give you a red card if you don’t win the Champions League?

PM: Welcome. Welcome to the real world. I faced that in South Africa also, in terms of the league. Because I think if you don’t win the league at my former employers, you face the sack, let’s be honest. I’m not sure about the Champions League. Because Champions League is a different kettle of fish, it’s very difficult. Champions League is played different, you need to have experience, extensive experience of playing the champions. It’s not how good you are, it’s not how well you pass the ball. No this is way beyond that, it’s complex. Maybe one day we’ll unpack what Champions League is about. This is not the players. Yes, you need to have the players because you can’t win without good players. But why you don’t win it when you have only have good players? It’s a different story. And I think you

could you see when Orlando Pirates played Raja Casablanca. At home it looks like Pirates have a chance. But just go away and come to North Africa, things are totally different. So continental football you play totally different, it is a different kettle of fish. And you need to have the right players, need to have the right tactics and not be emotional. Don’t play it like in a local league. Right players, the right tactic. The weather also plays a big role. If you go to Algeria, don’t go there in winter, because it’s raining and in Algeria, nobody comes out there. It’s not easy to come out. In Tunis, you saw when we played Esperance they only allowed 5 000 supporters but the game had to stop because of fireworks. Just during the game, they light those things and in some ways, it’s like a full stadium. So to win the Champions League is totally different.

So if you don’t win the Champions League, could Al Ahly show you the exit door?

PM: Welcome to the real world. So I jumped from Mamelodi Sundowns, because I knew the DStv Premiership is sorted. Let’s be honest. Any coach should be able to win the DStv Premiership with the team that Sundowns have and remember I reinforced that team and I made sure that that team should win the DStv Premiership for the next four years. And there’s no doubt I believe that they’re winning again this year. No doubt, because I’m looking at the competition. I’m looking at the direct competition, I say maybe the personnel that is being gathered even now is not strong enough to win the DStv Premiership. So I believe Sundowns can win it again. This is another level, you know. So the win the DStv Premiership is another end. Just to cut it short, if you don’t win the Champions League, and you

PITSO *If we be given the same situations and same teams in Europe, you don’t think we will do it? I mean, you can’t tell me I can’t win one game in La Liga with one of the middle of the table teams.*

don’t win the league, you might as well try and look other way. So that’s why I’m here on the edge, because I can’t be in a comfort zone in South Africa. And then what? I’m done with comfort zone. That’s what the Eagles do, they face the storm.

Does the continental and Champions League football favour Kaizer Chiefs style?

PM: I think that Arthur Zwane wanted to give it a go, and we should give him respect for that. He has done exceptionally well. And you know how Stuart plays his game also. It suits what they have there and probably it suited Gavin in the Champions League, and maybe not in the DStv Premiership. And you can say maybe the same thing about the top three in South Africa, they might be suited for DStv Premiership, Pirates and Sundowns, but maybe not for international competitions. I think a very good example for you is when you saw Orlando Pirates, and also my former employers, and probably that’s why Kaizer Chiefs are in the final because they play different kind of football, especially away they can hold on. They are strong at set pieces. They are strong and set pieces. They are strong, they

have good good height. I mean Eric Mathoho and all those people, about five players are tall. I was watching their game yesterday, watching their set pieces yesterday. Ai ai ai, big boys! There is Gonzalo Castro, Mathoho, Mathoho’s partner (Daniel Cardoso), there is Samir Nurkovic, five big boys. So that gives them an advantage of playing in Champions League, crosses and headers. They score a lot of headers, and that’s one of the things that also determines Champions League football. I think you saw how we won, why we got the draw at Mamelodi Sundowns. I had five to six more big boys there and I know Mkhulise is short. I know Maboe is short. Tapelo is short. Sirino is short Themba Zwane is short. The Namibian (Peter Shalulile) is not short, but not a big boy for set pieces. So and then, Mothiba was playing also left back. So how many does it leave? Rivaldo will always cover the near post. And then it leaves more Mosa Lebusa and Ricardo Nascimento as the main markers. So I knew that if you bring the big boys we’ll always get something. If the delivery is good, you get some. So that’s how Champions League is played. You must never undermine that there is a goal from Kaizer Chiefs from set pieces and free-kicks and Nurko can always sneak one even it it’s not connected to a free-kick.

Do you think that you’ve earned the respect of Egyptian legends now?

PM: Al Ahly legends are Al Ahly legends, especially those who had the golden generation. We call it the golden generation. That the golden generation that once Kaizer Chiefs played with (ADD NAMES) unbelievable generation (ADD NAMES) let’s be honest. That’s what it was, a golden generation of Kaizer Chiefs. Al Ahly had generations of

I've ticked my boxes, and I've got the Champions League, where we are in the final, what am I asking for? And in the league we are still behind with the games, but if it happens, that we will all our games in hand, will should be the number one, we should be the champions, this is in our hands. So in that space, I think the legends you're also interviewing, they say whatever they say. Sometimes legends, they forget that they didn't even come to training themselves. Sometimes they missed games. Sometimes they were irresponsible. But I have one Wael Gooma, I've got I think Abou Treika spoke well about me, and the others follow. But it's not about me, I'm not in a popularity contest, you know, me, I don't even focus on it. My job was to win the next game. So as long as Al Ahly is winning the next game, as long as Al Ahly is still in the Champions League, that's it. And this generation I have, they say, if they win the Super Cup, and if they win the Champions League, that generation the golden generation of Al Ahly with a with a big coach Manuel Jose, I think he is the most successful coach Al Ahly has ever had, they have never had that record in one season. So they want to beat that record.

What was driving you to leave Sundowns and South Africa to move to Al Ahly and Egypt?

PM: I just like to jump. Honestly, I jump. like to challenge systems. I like to challenge problems. I am fidgety. I need to know why I needed to know what is this thing about North African football. It is about time somebody from South Africa knows and understands North African football. And we should change the mentality of North African football. And I made it my job to do that. That's why I left SuperSport united, I was in comfort zone there seven years. I could still be there for the next 20 years. And I left to go to Bafana to be an assistant coach. That's the whole thing, it's to jump. And I wanted to understand international football because I've played international football. But I wanted to see what is this North African dominance? What makes that, what do they do? What is happening? And you know how much I fought on my interviews post games, after losing to them being angry and you know me I'm very angry when I lose and saying whatever I say. But I wanted to move, now I know the North African football. I want my fellow South Africans to know North African football. I believe coach Gavin Hunt can coach in North Africa, no doubt, no doubt about it. But he opted for Chipipa, it is his life. North Africa, when you go to North Africa, this is not playing golf and and all that, there's no life. Forget about it. I can't go to a shopping mall. I've been to a shopping mall once, once in nine months I've been to shopping mall. And I was escorted by three bodyguards to go out to the shopping mall. Because the people look at football different. Imagine we have a team that's supported by more than the population of South Africa, 70 million. Because I can't go in a public space, I can't move. It is a bit crazy. Whether you win or lose, doesn't matter. You're in trouble.

You've conquered Africa, what about Europe?

PM: If we be given the same situations and same teams in Europe, you don't think we will do it? I mean, you can't tell me I can't win one game in La Liga with one of the middle of the table teams. I mean, the level is the same. I think you could work for publication in the UK, can't you? Yes, so the same as me.

And what's your take on the African Super League? Do you think we are ready for it, seeing African elite clubs together?

PM: You want to put me into trouble now. Do you think I should comment on the Super League of Patrice Motsepe? Not at this stage. It is a big challenge the Super League. If you ever get the buy-in in North Africa, you have a chance. But I don't know if the Egyptian league will run without Al Ahly, Zamalek? Because football in Egypt is the most important thing. This is not the DStv Premiership in South Africa, where we can do other things. Here there's nothing else but the football is football. You must make sure that the football side and the political side is proper and the country is settled. If Al Ahly fans and Zamalek fans are fidgety, and they're not happy, it's not good for the country. So I don't know if that can happen. I don't know if the DStv Premiership can survive without Pirates, Chiefs and Sundowns. So I don't know. I don't know if the sponsorship behind the DStv, all the money that is being spent, we

are ready for the exit of those top three. I don't want to answer those questions. But let's see, you know, there's also benefits on this thing. The benefits is money. You know, but I can also say that it affects the money also, what's going to happen to PSL, if those three go? What are you going to watch? Do you think, you'd still subscribe to DStv and watch and pay your bills every month? I don't know. It is a big one.

Would it mean more to you, if you would win this year's Champions League? Because last year you took over from Rene Weiler and then won it from the semi-final, while this year you were in charge the whole campaign.

PM: Ask Thomas Tuchel, ask was Jose Mourinho, ask those coaches. Every time there's talk if they're good or not



PITSO *I don't know if the DStv Premiership can survive without Pirates, Chiefs and Sundowns. So I don't know. I don't know if the sponsorship behind the DStv, all the money that is being spent, we are ready for the exit of those top three.*

good and all that. But once you play in the Champions League space, in the final, in a cup final in the league, you win or you don't win. There's always going to be somebody who likes you and who doesn't like you. And anyway, this story, why not? Why should everybody should praise you? Once you want everybody to praise you, there's a problem. We have a problem with your personality. Once everybody talks so much well about you, there's a challenge. So I don't play in that space because I've had my challenges at SuperSport United that I didn't win the league at SuperSport. I had my challenge at Bafana to say 'oh, but you you failed

They might be suited for DStv Premiership, Pirates and Sundowns, but maybe not for international competitions. I think a very good example for you is when you saw Orlando Pirates, and also my former employers, and probably that's why Kaizer Chiefs are in the final because they play different kind of football.

it'. I have my challenges at Mamelodi Sundowns and everybody was saying, 'oh, Rulani was coaching my team, oh Manqoba was coaching my team'. All those things, I moved on. I came here and when I was at SuperSport United I won two trophies, I went to the Champions League, and I think I qualified for the Champions League four years in a row or three years in a row. So there's always gonna be somebody saying 'he's been lucky'. But it's 21 years. You know, I'm happy to be lucky for 21 years. And I've moved on my life. I've left SuperSport, I went to Bafana, and I left, I went to Sundowns, I'm here now. And I am not hiding behind any head coach, or I take full responsibility when the team loses.

If you win this final, do you think people will hold you in the same regard as Manuel Jose on the continent and Pep Guardiola or Jose Mourinho abroad?

PM: As I said. Sometimes you do this and then you're unaware that you're breaking another record on the other side. I saw a journalist from from Ghana posting something yesterday of about me about breaking records. But I'm not in football to break records. If you're chasing that, you're in trouble. I mean, Pep has won so much. Alex Ferguson, so many trophies, but if you chase records, you can be in trouble. Luis Enrique had a good record with Barca, but he bombed out of the Euros the other day. There was an article that I'm in the top 10 coaches in the world. Does it mean anything? No, it doesn't mean anything. There is coach Gavin Hunt with big records, now he is at Chipipa. So what are records for? Look at my top coach, one of the coaches I respect so much. He went to Real Madrid, Carlo Ancelotti. Look at his records. He went to coach Everton, can you believe it? That guy has won the Champions League so many times. That guy has won the local leagues with Bayern, with all these big teams he has won the league. I just finished reading his book, The Silent Manager. How he dealt with the former president of AC

Milan, Berlusconi. Unbelievable. It's unbelievable. What stories are they? And I look at my stories here where I am dealing with Dr. Patrice Motsepe, unbelievable stories. Unbelievable. And I said to myself, I think dealing with Patrice Motsepe was a little bit easier than Ancelotti dealing with Berlusconi, and you got to know who's been responding. So it's our life and in future maybe I'll tell you my life with Dr. Patrice Motsepe, you'll get the shock of your life.

You think you are going to be respected more on the continent, if you win another Champions League?

PM: There was an article again, somebody from Brazil, I think. He said there are no coaches who've won more trophies like me in one year. And that's why they say why I was nominated for for FIFA Coach of the Year. Nominations are going to Europeans, winners of Champions League or European League or what? Okay, we got three at Sundowns, I've got three here. I've got six in one year. I mean, you got to understand. So records are there but they don't mean nothing. So I would like to go away from records. Whether you're being respected or not, my work must speak for me. Not what people think about me or how they are looking at me, my personality, and outspoken as I am, all the time and I stand on my ground. If I think you're shortchanging me and you're not respecting me, I speak. But sometimes I keep a little bit because there are times where I say to keep quiet for some time, because a lot of things have been happening. There's good stories behind and when you talk, you might spoil it. I think you understand what I'm trying to say, at this point in time. There's been good things that has happened for me in my last eight years, and I rather keep quiet because if I open my mouth it is going to be an issue. So I don't want.

And last words about your time at Al Ahly so far coach?

PM: It's been nine months that I've been here, it's a long way or it's a short way, it's the life of a football coach. It is a life of Carlo Ancelotti, it is a life of Tomas Tuchel to be fired at PSG and then next thing he goes on and wins the Champions League. It is a life of Jose Mourinho, it is the life of Pep not winning the Champions League with Man City. You go on and go on. And those are legends, those top Top coaches. So realize, you're gonna live through that and there'll be positive, there'll be negatives, and we move on. You know, sometimes it's always good to look back. And when you look back, you say, oh, by the way, where do I come from? And sometimes you can say, oh, okay, so many trophies, I think there's something right happening. And you should be grateful to God, the support of your family, and support of the media, because you guys have supported me. If you were writing all the negative stories it wouldn't be good. And also the continent. The continent is supporting me, Uganda, Nigeria, Ghana, Tunisia, Morocco, it is unbelievable. I'm blessed. I'm blessed as South African. I never thought that wecan have an impact to the continent. Tanzania is unbelievable. You know, so, thanks for your support. You guys put me on the platform. And I'm standing on your shoulders.

Thank you coach, we'll see you in the final.

TUESDAY 13TH JULY					HOME	X	AWAY
Argentina Primera B Nacional, Group A							
02:10	San Martin de Tucuman vs Quilmes AC	1.2	2.95	3.65			
Bolivia Liga Profesional Boliviano							
01:00	Blooming Santa Cruz vs CA Nacional Potosi	1.05	3.85	3.05			
Brazil Brasileiro Serie B							
01:00	Nautico PE vs AA Ponte Preta SP	0.6	3.6	5.5			
21:00	Vila Nova FC GO vs Gremio Esportivo Brasil	1.05	3	3.8			
Brazil Brasileiro Serie C, Group B							
01:00	Botafogo FC SP vs Criciuma EC SC	1.55	2.65	3.2			
Iceland Urvalsdeild							
20:00	Fylkir Reykjavik vs KA Akureyri	2.25	3.65	2.05			
21:15	HK Kopavogur vs Vikingur Reykjavik	3.25	3.65	1.8			
Int Clubs UEFA Champions League Qualifier							
18:00	Hibernians FC vs Flora Tallinnb	2.8	3.4	2.05			
18:00	Lincoln Red Imps FC vs CS Fola Esch	2.4	4.05	2			
18:00	Riga FC vs Malmo FF	6.5	5	1.4			
19:00	FC Sheriff Tiraspol vs KF Teuta	0.3	5.75	10.75			
20:00	FC Prishtina vs Ferencvárosi Budapest	5.25	4.55	1.5			
20:00	FK Borac Banja Luka vs FC CFR 1907 Cluj	5	3.65	1.7			
20:00	Mura Murska Sobota vs FK Shkendija	1.05	3.55	3.65			
20:30	FK Buducnost vs HJK Helsinki	2.6	3.45	2.15			
20:45	Linfield FC vs Vilnius FK Zalgiris	2.5	3.45	2.15			
21:00	Shamrock Rovers vs Slovan Bratislava	2.55	3.25	2.25			
21:30	FC Shakhter Soligorsk vs PFC Ludogorets 1945 Razgrad	3.3	3.65	1.9			
22:00	Valur Reykjavik vs GNK Dinamo Zagreb	10.25	6.25	1.25			
International CONCACAF Gold Cup, Group C							
00:30	Jamaica vs Suriname	0.55	4.1	6			
03:00	Costa Rica vs Guadeloupe	0.16	7	17.25			
Peru Segunda Division							
01:00	Deportivo Llacuabamba vs Atletico Grau	5.75	4.8	1.4			
Scotland League Cup, Group A							
20:45	Hearts vs Cove Rangers FC	0.2	6.25	12			
20:45	Inverness vs Peterhead FC	0.4	4.6	6.25			
Scotland League Cup, Group C							
20:45	FC Dundee vs Brora Rangers	0.09	8.75	19			
20:45	Forfar vs Montrose FC	1.9	3.75	2.15			
Scotland League Cup, Group D							
20:45	Alloa Athletic FC vs Cowdenbeath FC	0.5	4.2	5.5			
20:45	Raith Rovers FC vs Brechin City FC	0.18	6.75	13			
Scotland League Cup, Group E							
20:45	Ayr United FC vs Edinburgh City FC	0.3	5.25	8.5			
20:45	Falkirk FC vs Albion Rovers FC	0.2	6.25	11.75			
Scotland League Cup, Group F							
20:45	Annan Athletic FC vs Queen of The South FC	6.75	5	1.35			
Scotland League Cup, Group G							
20:30	Clyde FC vs Stranraer FC	0.65	4.05	4.6			
Scotland League Cup, Group H							
20:45	Dumbarton FC vs Stenhousemuir FC	1.05	3.5	3.25			
20:45	St Mirren FC vs Dunfermline	0.65	3.5	5.5			
USA USL, Championship							
03:30	New Mexico United vs Charleston Battery	0.85	3.65	3.95			
USA USL, League Two							
01:30	Manhattan SC vs FC Motown	0.9	4.35	3.1			
WEDNESDAY 14TH JULY							
Brazil Brasileiro Serie B							
00:00	Avai FC SC vs AD Confianca SE	0.85	3.4	4.1			
00:00	Guarani FC SP vs CR Brasil AL	0.95	3.35	3.75			
02:30	Coritiba FC PR vs CR Vasco da Gama RJ	1.4	2.95	3.1			
02:30	Londrina EC PR vs Operario Ferroviario EC PR	1.85	3.1	2.45			
02:30	EC Vitoria BA vs Sampaio Correa FC MA	1.2	2.85	3.65			
International Clubs Club Friendly Games							
17:00	FK Khimki vs PFK Sochi	2.7	3.3	2			
International Clubs Copa Libertadores							
00:15	Boca Juniors vs Atletico Mineiro MG	1	3.3	3.7			
00:15	Cerro Porteno vs Fluminense FC RJ	1.65	3.05	2.75			
02:30	Sao Paulo FC SP vs Racing Club Avellaneda	0.7	3.65	4.85			
International Clubs Copa Sudamericana							
00:15	LDU Quito vs Gremio FB Porto Alegre RS	0.7	3.85	4.65			
02:30	America de Cali vs CA Paranaense PR	1.6	3.2	2.65			
Int Clubs UEFA Champions League Qualifier							
16:00	FC Kairat Almaty vs Maccabi Haifa FC	1.3	3.75	2.95			
17:00	Alashkert vs Gap Connahs Quay	0.55	4.15	6.75			
19:00	FK Neftchi Baku vs FC Dinamo Tbilisi	1.05	3.55	3.7			
20:00	Legia Warszawa vs Bodø/Glimt	1.05	3.7	3.6			
International CONCACAF Gold Cup, Group D							
01:00	Qatar vs Panama	1.3	3.2	3.25			
03:00	Honduras vs Grenada	0.14	7.5	22			
Japan Emperor Cup							
11:00	Nagoya Grampus vs Fagiano Okayama	0.65	3.65	4.8			
Scotland League Cup, Group B							
20:45	Arbroath vs East Fife FC	0.95	3.7	3.4			
20:45	Dundee Utd vs Elgin City FC	0.2	6.25	11.25			
Scotland League Cup, Group F							
20:45	Queens Park FC vs Motherwell	6	4.8	1.35			
WEDNESDAY 14TH JULY CONT.							
	South Korea K-League Classic						
12:30	FC Seoul vs Incheon United FC	1.1	3.3	3.45			
THURSDAY 15TH JULY							
Brazil Brasileiro Serie B							
00:00	CS Alagoano AL vs Goias EC GO	1.65	2.95	2.75			
02:30	Clube Do Remo PA vs Brusque FC SC	1.7	2.9	2.75			
Chile Primera Division							
18:30	CD Palestino vs Huachipato	0.95	3.2	4.1			
Finland Ykkonen							
17:30	Musan Salama vs PK-35	1.55	3.2	2.65			
Iceland 1 deild							
20:00	Fram Reykjavik vs IBV Vestmannaeyjar	1	3.5	3.35			
21:15	Afturelding vs Vikingur Olafsvik	0.55	4.6	4.8			
21:15	Grotta vs Fjolnir	1.55	3.95	2.3			
21:15	UMF Selfoss vs Kordrengir	1.9	3.9	2.05			
International Clubs Copa Libertadores							
00:15	CD Universidad Catolica vs SE Palmeiras SP	2.7	3.5	1.95			
00:15	Velez Sarsfield vs Barcelona SC	0.85	3.45	4.05			
02:30	CA River Plate vs Argentinos Juniors	0.45	4.3	6.75			
02:30	Defensa y Justicia vs CR Flamengo RJ	2.7	3.6	1.9			
International Clubs Copa Sudamericana							
00:15	Sporting Cristal vs Arsenal de Sarandi	1.05	3.4	3.4			
02:30	CSD Independiente del Valle vs Red Bull Bragantino	1	3.4	3.6			
02:30	CD Junior FC vs Libertad Asuncion	1.1	3.3	3.45			
Int Clubs UEFA Europa Conference League							
21:00	WKS Slask Wroclaw vs Paide Linnameeskond	0.25	5.75	10			
Romania Liga I							
19:30	FC Botosani vs Fotbal Club Fcsb	2.25	3.4	2.15			
FRIDAY 16TH JULY							
Denmark Superligaen							
19:00	FC Midtjylland vs Odense BK	0.55	4.15	5.5			
Finland Veikkausliiga							
17:30	FC Lahti vs IFK Mariehamn	0.65	3.85	4.75			
17:30	Tampereen Ilves vs Seinajoen JK	1.3	3.3	3			
Finland Ykkonen							
17:30	Turun Palloseura vs KPV Kokkola	0.7	3.55	4.9			
Iceland 1 deild							
20:00	UMF Grindavik vs Thor Akureyri	1	3.4	3.55			
International Clubs Copa Libertadores							
02:30	Club Olimpia vs SC Internacional RS	2.05	3.45	2.2			
International Clubs Copa Sudamericana							
00:15	Santos FC SP vs CA Independiente	1.05	3.3	3.5			
02:30	Club Nacional de Football vs Penarol Montevideo	1.65	3.2	2.65			
02:30	Deportivo Tachira vs Club Atletico Rosario Central	2.5	3.35	2.05			
Ireland First Division							
20:30	Bray Wanderers AFC vs Galway United FC	1.25	3.3	2.9			
20:45	Athlone Town AFC vs Shelbourne FC	3.7	4.05	1.6			
20:45	Treaty United vs University College Dublin	2.15	3.6	2.05			
20:45	Wexford vs Cork City FC	3.45	3.7	1.7			
Ireland Premier Division							
20:45	Derry City FC vs Shamrock Rovers	3.25	3.4	1.85			
20:45	Saint Patricks Athletic FC vs Drogheda United FC	0.65	3.8	5.25			
Romania Liga I							
17:30	ACS Sepsi Osk Sfantu Gheorghe v Academica Clinceni	0.55	4	6			
20:30	FC CFR 1907 Cluj vs FC U Craiova 1948	0.5	3.95	6.5			
SATURDAY 17TH JULY							
Belgium Super Cup							
20:45	Club Brugge vs Racing Genk	0.7	3.95	4.25			
Brazil Brasileiro Serie B							
00:00	AD Confianca SE vs Guarani FC SP	1.6	2.9	2.85			
International Clubs CAF Champions League							
21:00	Al Ahly vs Kaizer Chiefs	1	3.2	3.9			
International Clubs Club Friendly Games							
15:00	FK Rubin Kazan vs PFK Sochi	1.45	3.3	2.8			
Japan J.League							
11:30	Shimizu S-Pulse vs Kawasaki Frontale	6.25	4.7	1.4			
11:30	Avispa Fukuoka vs Gamba Osaka	1.8	3.1	2.55			
12:00	Cerezo Osaka vs Vissel Kobe	1.4	3.1	3			
12:00	Sagan Tosu vs Nagoya Grampus	1.85	3.1	2.5			
Japan J.League 2							
11:00	JEF United Ichihara Chiba vs Zweigen Kanazawa	1.2	3.2	3.2			
11:00	Tochigi SC vs Ventforet Kofu	2.2	2.9	2.4			
11:00	Matsumoto Yamaga FC vs Mito Hollyhock	1.95	3.05	2.45			
11:30	Kyoto Sanga FC vs Niigata Albirex	1.2	3.15	3.2			
12:00	Montedio Yamagata vs Montedio Yamagata	1.2	3.05	3.4			
12:00	Renofa Yamaguchi vs Blaublitz Akita	1.75	3	2.6			
12:00	V-Varen Nagasaki vs Giravanz Kitakyushu	0.6	3.85	5.25			
Norway Eliteserien							
18:00	Odds BK vs Viking FK	1.2	3.5	3.1			
20:00	Sarpsborg 08 vs Bodø/Glimt	2.75	3.55	1.9			
Poland Super Cup							
20:00	Legia Warszawa vs RKS Rakow Czesochowa	0.9	3.5	3.95			
Romania Liga I							
17:30	CS Gaz Metan Medias vs CS Mioveni	0.9	3.35	4.1			

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	SATURDAY 17TH JULY CONT.	HOME	X	AWAY
	Romania Liga I			
20:30	CS Universitatea Craiova vs ACS Champions FC Arges	0.75	3.45	4.8
	Russia Super Cup			
18:00	Zenit vs FK Lokomotiv Moscow	0.6	3.9	5.5
	South Korea K-League Challenge			
12:00	Jeonnam Dragons vs Chungnam Asan FC	0.9	3.25	4.2
13:00	Busan I Park vs Ansan Greeners	1.1	3.2	3.5
	Sweden Allsvenskan			
15:00	Degerfors IF vs Malmo FF	4	4.05	1.6
17:30	IF Elfsborg vs Ostersunds FK	0.45	4.45	6.25
	Sweden Superettan			
13:00	Akropolis IF vs Norrby IF	1.75	3.2	2.45
15:00	Gais vs IK Brage	1.35	3.1	3
15:00	Landskrona Bois vs Trelleborgs FF	1.45	3.2	2.8
17:00	IFK Varnamo vs Osters IF	1.2	3.1	3.3
	USA Major League Soccer			
23:00	Atlanta United FC vs New England Revolution	1.75	3.75	2.35
	SUNDAY 18TH JULY			
	Denmark Superligaen			
18/07	FC Nordsjaelland vs Viborg FF	0.9	3.85	3.55
18/07	Vejle BK vs Randers FC	1.7	3.35	2.5
18/07	FC Copenhagen vs Aalborg BK	0.75	3.75	4.2
18/07	AGF Aarhus vs Broendby IF	1.65	3.45	2.5
	International Clubs Club Friendly Games			
18/07	FK Khimki vs FK Spartak Moscow	7.5	4.55	1.35
	Japan J.League 2			
18/07	Fagiano Okayama vs Thespakusatsu	1.05	3.15	3.6
18/07	Ehime FC vs Tokyo Verdy	2.45	3.2	2.1
18/07	Machida Zelvia vs SC Sagamiyara	0.6	3.7	5.5
18/07	Omiya Ardija vs FC Ryukyu	1.7	3.15	2.6
	Norway Eliteserien			
18/07	SK Brann vs Mjondalen IF	1	3.4	3.6
18/07	FK Haugesund vs Valerenga IF Oslo	1.9	3.4	2.3
18/07	Kristiansund BK vs Sandefjord Fotball	0.9	3.45	3.95
18/07	Lillestrom SK vs Molde FK	3.1	3.85	1.75
18/07	Tromsoe IL vs Rosenborg BK	1.85	3.4	2.35
18/07	Stromsgodset IF vs Stabaek IF	0.9	3.7	3.65
	Romania Liga I			
18/07	FC Uta Arad vs FC Farul Constanta	1.9	3.1	2.5
18/07	Rapid Bucuresti 1923 vs AFC Chindia Targoviste	1.95	3.05	2.45
	Sweden Allsvenskan			
18/07	IFK Norrkoping FK vs BK Hacken	1.2	3.45	3.1
18/07	Orebro SK vs Hammarby IF	3.2	3.85	1.75
18/07	AIK vs Kalmar FF	1	3.25	3.85
18/07	IFK Goteborg vs Mjallby Aif	1.05	3.3	3.55
	Sweden Superettan			
18/07	AFC Eskilstuna vs GIF Sundsvall	2.35	3.3	2.1
18/07	Vasteras SK vs Helsingborgs IF	2	3.15	2.35
	USA Major League Soccer			
18/07	New York Red Bulls vs Inter Miami CF	0.85	3.55	4.25
18/07	Columbus Crew vs New York City FC	1.4	3.4	2.85
18/07	Philadelphia Union vs DC United	0.9	3.5	3.95
18/07	CF Montreal vs FC Cincinnati	1.2	3.45	3.2
18/07	Toronto FC vs Orlando City	1.8	3.55	2.4
18/07	Nashville Soccer Club vs Chicago Fire	0.75	3.75	4.35
18/07	Colorado Rapids vs San Jose Earthquakes	0.65	3.95	4.75
18/07	Vancouver Whitecaps vs Los Angeles Galaxy	2.35	3.8	2
18/07	Los Angeles FCn vs Real Salt Lake	0.55	4.4	5.5
18/07	Portland Timbers vs FC Dallas	0.85	3.9	3.85
18/07	Minnesota United vs Seattle Sounders	1.25	3.5	3.05
	UPCOMING SOCCER			
	Denmark Superligaen			
19/07	Silkeborg IF vs Sonderjyske	1.05	3.55	3.4
	Mexico Trofeo de Campeon de Campeones			
19/07	Club Leon vs Cruz Azul	1.9	3.4	2.3
	Romania Liga I			
19/07	FC Dinamo Bucuresti 1948 vs FC Voluntari	3.5	3.5	1.8
	Sweden Allsvenskan			
19/07	Djurgardens IF vs IK Sirius	0.4	4.95	7
19/07	Halmstads BK vs Varbergs Bois	1.1	3.35	3.45
	Sweden Superettan			
19/07	Orgryte IS vs Vasalunds IF	1.25	3.25	3
	Int Clubs UEFA Champions League Qualifier			
20/07	SK Rapid Wien vs AC Sparta Prague	1.4	3.25	3.15
	South Korea K-League Classic			
20/07	FC Seoul vs Jeju United FC	1.9	3.05	2.5
20/07	Suwon Bluewings vs Suwon FC	0.85	3.45	4.25
20/07	Incheon United FC vs Seongnam Ilhwa	1.5	3	2.95
	Sweden Superettan			
20/07	Falkenbergs FF vs Jonkopings Sodra IF	1.95	3.25	2.3
	International Olympic Games Women, Group E			
21/07	Great Britain vs Chile	0.15	7	21
21/07	Japan vs Canada	0.7	3.5	5.25

	UPCOMING SOCCER	HOME	X	AWAY
	International Olympic Games Women, Group F			
21/07	China vs Brazil	4.75	3.45	1.7
21/07	Zambia vs Netherlands	59	13.75	1.03
	International Olympic Games Women, Group G			
21/07	Sweden vs USA	5.25	3.9	1.55
21/07	Australia vs New Zealand	0.35	4.9	9.25
	South Korea K-League Classic			
21/07	Jeonbuk Hyundai Motors vs Pohang Steelers FC	1.1	3.3	3.35
21/07	Ulsan Hyundai FC vs Daegu FC	0.9	3.4	4
21/07	Gwangju FC vs Gangwon FC	1.85	2.95	2.6
	International Olympic Games, Group A			
22/07	Mexico vs France	3.65	3.5	1.8
22/07	Japan vs South Africa	0.4	4.55	8
	International Olympic Games, Group B			
22/07	New Zealand vs Republic of Korea	4.75	3.5	1.65
22/07	Honduras vs Romania	2.45	3	2.3
	International Olympic Games, Group C			
22/07	Egypt vs Spain	9.25	5	1.3
22/07	Argentina vs Australia	0.55	3.95	6
	International Olympic Games, Group D			
22/07	Brazil vs Germany	1	3.35	3.9
22/07	Ivory Coast vs Saudi Arabia	0.8	3.45	4.75
	Austria Bundesliga			
23/07	SK Sturm Graz vs FC Salzburg	4	4.45	1.55
	Belgium Pro League			
23/07	Standard de Liège vs Racing Genk	1.85	3.45	2.35
	Denmark 1st Division			
23/07	FC Fredericia vs Hobro IK	1.05	3.55	3.3
23/07	FC Helsingør vs BK Fremad Amager	1.4	3.55	2.7
23/07	AC Horsens vs HB Køge	1.05	3.55	3.35
	Germany 2nd Bundesliga			
23/07	FC Schalke 04 vs Hamburger SV	1.4	3.35	2.75
	Germany 3rd Liga			
23/07	VfL 1899 Osnabrück vs MSV Duisburg	1.2	3.35	3.05
	Poland Ekstraklasa			
23/07	Bruk-Bet Termalica Nieciecza vs FKS Stal Mielec	1.4	3.2	2.95
23/07	KKS Lech Poznań vs RKS Radomiak Radom	0.55	4.15	5.5
	Russia Premier League			
23/07	FK Rostov vs FK Dinamo Moscow	2.05	3.1	2.4
	Austria Bundesliga			
24/07	SK Rapid Wien vs TSV Hartberg	0.45	4.55	6
24/07	SCR Altach vs LASK	3.8	3.9	1.65
24/07	WSG Tirol vs FC Admira Wacker Modling	0.75	3.75	4.3
	Belgium Pro League			
24/07	Oud-Heverlee Leuven vs SV Zulte Waregem	1	3.6	3.35
24/07	KV Kortrijk vs RFC Seraing	0.75	3.75	4.2
24/07	K Beerschot VA vs Cercle Brugge	1.2	3.45	3.1
24/07	KV Oostende vs Royal Charleroi SC	1.25	3.45	3
	Czech Republic 1. Liga			
24/07	FK Jablonec vs FC Banik Ostrava	1	3.4	3.6
24/07	FK Pardubice vs MFK Karvina	1.1	3.3	3.5
24/07	FC Hradec Králové vs Bohemians Prague	1.85	3.25	2.45
24/07	AC Sparta Prague vs SK Sigma Olomouc	0.35	4.9	7.75
	Denmark 1st Division			
24/07	Hvidovre IF vs Jammerbugt FC	1.05	3.45	3.35
	France Ligue 2			
24/07	Caen vs Rodez Aveyron vs Rodez Aveyron	1.4	3.05	3
24/07	USL Dunkerque vs Quevilly-Rouen Metropole	1.25	3.1	3.2
24/07	Grenoble vs Paris FC	1.4	3.05	3
24/07	Le Havre AC vs Guingamp	1.35	3.05	3
24/07	Pau FC vs Nancy	1.5	3	2.9
24/07	Toulouse vs AC Ajaccio	1	3.2	3.65
24/07	Valenciennes vs Niort	1.4	3.1	2.95
24/07	Bastia vs Nîmes Olympique	1.85	3.1	2.45
24/07	Amiens vs Auxerre	1.4	3.05	3
	Germany 2nd Bundesliga			
24/07	Darmstadt vs Jahn Regensburg	1	3.45	3.4
24/07	1. FC Heidenheim 1846 vs Paderborn	1.2	3.55	2.95
24/07	Dynamo Dresden vs FC Ingolstadt 04	1.5	3.25	2.7
24/07	Hansa Rostock vs Karlsruher SC	1.7	3.25	2.5
24/07	Werder Bremen vs Hannover	1	3.5	3.45
	Germany 3rd Liga			
24/07	FC Kaiserslautern vs Eintracht Braunschweig	1.05	3.4	3.35
24/07	Hallescher FC vs SV Meppen 1912	1.05	3.55	3.25
24/07	SV Waldhof Mannheim 07 vs 1. FC Magdeburg	1.75	3.3	2.4
24/07	TSV Havelse vs 1. FC Saarbrücken	2.45	3.45	2
24/07	FSV Zwickau vs Borussia Dortmund II	1.5	3.4	2.6
24/07	TSV 1860 Munich vs FC Würzburger Kickers	0.95	3.55	3.5
	Poland Ekstraklasa			
24/07	Gornik Leżna vs MKS Cracovia Krakow	2.4	3.3	2.1
24/07	Jagiellonia Białystok vs KS Lechia Gdansk	1.55	3.2	2.75
24/07	Legia Warszawa vs Wisła Płock	0.45	4.65	6.25
	Russia Premier League			
24/07	FK Khimki vs Zenit	5.75	4.55	1.4
24/07	FK Lokomotiv Moscow vs PFK Arsenal Tula	0.7	3.65	4.85
24/07	FK Rubin Kazan vs FK Spartak Moscow	1.95	3.3	2.3
	Austria Bundesliga			
25/07	SV Ried vs FK Austria Wien	1.95	3.6	2.2
25/07	SK Austria Klagenfurt vs Wolfsberger AC	3.2	3.7	1.8
	Belgium Pro League			
25/07	KV Mechelen vs Royal Antwerp	1.7	3.5	2.4
25/07	Club Brugge vs KAS Eupen	0.2	6.5	11.75

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My Life Is Changing

Orlando Pirates’ newly acquired attacker Monnapule Saleng has revealed how the Buccaneers fended off competition from Cape Town City to get his services from Free State Stars. Saleng who finished the GladAfrica Championship this past season as the top goal scorer with 13 goals, has now set his sights on making a big impression in the top league. Saleng, who hails from the Bloemhof in the North West, is the latest professional football product from Orbit College in Rustenburg, an academy that’s been slowly making its mark in producing talent in the local game. He will become just one of the many wingers at Pirates but one thing he is not afraid of is competition. At 23, Saleng still has a bright future ahead of him and in the past week he has shown his worth also in the colours of Bafana Bafana at Cosafa Cup tournament currently underway in Gqeberha. In this introductory interview with Velile Mnyandu, Saleng also shares the important message he got from Pirates chairman Dr Irvin Khoza.

Velile Mnyandu: Good afternoon Pule, you’ve just finished as a top goal scorer Glad Africa Championship, but let’s start with Free State Stars. How did you get there?

Monnapule Saleng: I got to Free State Stars in 2019 from Orbit. We were playing a friendly game against Free State Stars, they ended up selecting me from the friendly we played with them. So I ended up being a Free State Stars player in 2019

“To be honest I was just told what was going on but I knew that Cape Town City wanted me, even my agent told me two games before the season ends, he told me that Pirates (Orlando) want me so I have to push. I pushed and the move happened so I kept quiet, I didn’t want it to go to my head, because I’m wanted by a big team, that my job is finished and not work hard, so I kept quiet and kept it from going to my head, I’m that kind of a person.”

VM: It’s very interesting. I want us to talk more about Orbit because you are not the first professional player to come from Orbit. Who are the others?

MS: Pogiso Sanoka, Mohau Mokate, Sibusiso Hlubi.

VM: What’s special? What are they doing differently there?

MS: Orbit is a team that develops players and gets them ready to play professional.

VM: And it has an element of school as well...

MS: Yes it has an element of school, they take players to school and if you are not getting a professional contract they put you through school and when you are done with school they help you get a job.

VM: In fact at some stage I heard that there was a possibility that they were also, how can I out this, like a sort of relationship with Jomo Cosmos .

MS: It’s the first time I’m hearing that, I haven’t heard about it.

VM: So scoring is your thing...

MS: Yes definitely scoring is my thing, I love to score I’m always in the box, I like to play forward. I’m not a player that dribbles to the back, I dribble going forward but I look at the situation first. There are some situations where I have to check if there is cover at the back and I just don’t go forward.

VM: These are some of the things that are holding back our game, the last time we saw players like that, it was Jabu Pule who was forcefully going forward not just scoring but also providing assists as well...

MS: I’m one of those players, I like to play forward. I’m a goal poacher but I don’t force to score, I may not even end up scoring, however there are moments in a game, if a moment comes and I must assist, I assist so we win and progress.

VM: Now you are in the national team I’m sure you have realised that here they want players like that.

MS: Yes I have noticed and we have to play forward because we want to win, we can’t just sit back. Yes, we can play from the back but when do we get to the box? So if you have players like me getting into the box is easy stuff.

VM: Tell us more about the coaches at Orbit because if you can count the players that you counted it also means there is something special, especially from the coaching side

MS: The coaches at Orbit, coach Pogiso (Makhoye) and coach KB (Kabelo Sibiya), they are people who went to school to study coaching. There you are taught how to be a professional and how to think like a professional with the way they coach. Coach KB has coached a professional side before so he brought that thing to Orbit so that we are always think like complete professionals in when we were in the ABC Motsepe league.

VM: So you move to Free State Stars in 2019 that’s when you moved there, who was your first coach?

MS: Coach Themba Sithole.

VM: When you look at it, two seasons there and this season you

came very close to making the playoffs, how has your football grown from the time you spent there at Free State Stars?

MS: Eish, at Free State Stars we wanted to win the league but what we wanted didn’t happen because we changed coaches a lot (last season). We had Themba Sithole for five games without results, then we changed him for coach Heric (Vladislav) we got results but we were inconsistent, then came coach Milton (Dlamini) , Milton took the team higher but what happened after that we don’t know because he was fired I’m not sure for what, because he didn’t lose. Then Coach Themba Sithole finished the season. So we had a lot of coaches and we had to adapt to their different styles of play which kept pushing us back instead of moving forward. I think that could have been the reason we didn’t even reach the top, we missed it by only three points, just three points for the playoffs.

VM: You also finished as the top goal scorer, was it also a matter of this being your second season in the NFD you were getting more comfortable, you knew what to expect in the league?

MS: The season before I became top goal scorer, I didn’t enjoy a lot of game time but I kept working hard at training. I didn’t focus on the fact that I wasn’t playing or that the coaches weren’t picking me, but I worked and I was aware of my hard work. I told myself that I’m just going to continue working hard, hoping to get a chance the next season. Then the next season I got a chance and that’s when I used my opportunity, worked hard, scored goals for the team.

VM: I’m more interested... when did it become likely to you that this could be your last season at Free State Stars and that the time for a move is coming. When did you start to feel it?

MS: To be honest I was just told what was going on but I knew that Cape Town City wanted me, even my agent told me before two games before the season ends, he told me that Pirates (Orlando) want me so I have to push. I pushed and the move happened so I kept quiet, I didn’t want it to go to my head, because I’m wanted by a big team, that my job is finished and not work hard, so I kept quiet and kept it from going to my head, I’m that kind of a person. (Laughs) I felt it before the end of the season that obviously top goal scorer at Free State Stars and they love Pirates, even their players they like to take them to Pirates.

VM: The Matlabas, Makolas, the Chabalala’s they are a lot...

MS: Yes they are a lot I and I felt it. I told myself I must just push and whatever comes whether a big team or not, I wanted to be ready for anything.

VM: Did you grow up supporting Pirates?

MS: No, no, no (Laughs) I grew up supporting Chiefs (Kaizer Chiefs)

VM: You have never engaged Chiefs? Was it only Pirates also because I heard you mention Cape Town City did they also speak to you?

MS: No I have not engaged Chiefs, but Cape Town City I did speak to

them. The thing is I had a contract, so the team is the one that decided where I was going but I had a contract and Pirates approached Free State Stars, then Free State Stars was interested in me going to Pirates

so I didn’t have that chance. I wanted to go to Cape Town City, but it’s done so I’m going to Pirates.

VM: So you wanted to go to Cape Town?



SALENG *“Yes definitely scoring is my thing, I love to score. I’m always in the box, I like to play forward. I’m not a player that dribbles to the back, I dribble going forward but I look at the situation first. There are some situations where I have to check if there is cover at the back and I just don’t go forward.”*

MS: I wanted to go to Cape Town but Pirates is still okay because my style of play is suited for Pirates.

VM: Why did you want to go to Cape Town? You felt maybe you have a stronger chance of playing at Cape Town City?

MS: Yeah, because Cape Town City they keep the ball, tiki-taka, because I love tiki-taka from Orbit. I would have loved to go where they keep the ball but Pirates is still okay because they also keep the ball, it's just that they go forward so my style of play is also suitable at Pirates.

VM: They run hey... Because you are also a 'horse' yourself. You used to run 100m at school?

SM: Yes I did athletics, I was a runner back at school 100m, 200m, 400m sprints only.

VM: Did you always come first?

SM: Yes I was always number one (Laughs).

VM: Has there ever been a professional player from Bloemhof?

MS: Yes.

VM: Who?

MS: Cameroon Tshweu, but he was playing the NFD.

VM: But you are the first one to play for a big team like Orlando Pirates and Bafana Bafana...

MS: Yes I'm the first one.

VM: What's the reaction back home like after everything that has happened, they announced you at Pirates then you play for Bafana, you get man of the match at Bafana...

MS: They are happy, they are very happy the whole of Bloemhof is happy because they can see they have a player, someone from Bloemhof representing Lekwa-Teemane in the PSL. They are happy.

VM: How was the day when you signed your contract at Pirates?

MS: I was excited, I was happy my brother that me, someone from a from township haai...big achievement my brother. I was really happy, I was happy. (Laughs)

VM: It's like your life is changing hey...

MS: Yes my life is changing. It is changing and obviously I'm going to meet new people. I'm still going to adapt at Pirates and I don't even know Johannesburg I need to learn Johannesburg and how to live with other people without forgetting where I come from. And I'm a person who always remembers where I come from and I don't drink and smoke.

VM: Strong competition, there is Pule (Vincent) there...there's Hotto (Deon) there...there's Mhango (Gabadinho) there...but tell us more, what other positions can you play because sometimes I see you come central, sometimes you go wide...

MS: I'm not scared of competition I only surrender after I have failed but I'm not a player who is scared of competition. I'm going to compete, positions to play in the centre, wide or on the wing...I can play as a winger, as a number 10 I can play left wing I can play right wing left wing-back. At Orbit they played me left-back, left wing-back, number 10, wherever I play I play freely. I play like I'm originally playing in that specific position but I love left wing and right

wing a lot, that's where I'm stronger when I play there. I can also strike.

VM: Interestingly I saw you, I think it was in the first game and I thought you are going to fit in well at Pirates because especially when you come from the right wing because Pirates plays inverted wingers. So you play on the right then you come inside and you shoot and I think that's how you score most of your goals.

MS: Ja, from the right I cut then I shoot that's how I scored to become the top goal scorer but most of my goals came from the left, I attacked a lot from the left than right .They didn't play me on the right a lot but I'm strong coming from the right.

VM: When you got your call-up, you must have been surprised?

MS: Ja I was surprised, because the time I got the call I was relaxing preparing to go to preseason at Pirates. So I got the phone call and they say I'm needed at camp, I was happy but I asked myself a lot of questions. That is it really me who is going to the national team because I was with coach Pogiso, the one from Orbit at the time. They called him because he is also my agent. So they called him and I was with him and he tells me "man you are needed at the national team" and I was surprised and asked him if he was serious a lot of times and he said yes the national team needs you. I was surprised and happy at the same time.

VM: And the man of the match award that you got against Eswatini...you must have been excited...

MS: I was so pleased because I pushed, but I wasn't happy with my first half performance but not just me the whole team, we weren't happy with the first half. I'm not if its because of the pitch or our movement but we struggled first half, We didn't created spaces that coaches said we should create for ourselves to be able to penetrate. So second half we made better movements and were able to run on the space ja that's when I got into the game in the second half.

VM: I'm sure in the next few matches, whatever happens you must finish with some goals here to boost your confidence.

MS: Ja, I finished as top goal scorer (NFD) so I have to score goals

"I enjoyed the conversation (with Dr Khoza), he said I should continue being myself but here in Johannesburg there are a lot of challenges and advised to not do things that will end up killing my career, and to not get involved with dodgy characters even if they have been in Johannesburg longer than I have, as they could potentially ruin my career. He says the way I carry myself is good."

but without putting myself under pressure. I don't want to put myself under pressure to score, if it doesn't happen that I don't score, it's fine, but if I don't score I have to assist so that we can win, progress and be happy.

VM: And training, do you feel like you are playing with PSL players and even at training you can fit in and take the ball so it makes you feel ready for next season?

MS: Ja, ja, I have been learning

"I'm not scared of competition I only surrender after I have failed but I'm not a player who is scared of competition. I'm going to compete, positions to play in the centre, wide or on the wing _ I can play as a winger, as a number 10 I can play left wing I can play right wing left wing-back."



form the other players in the PSL, I have learnt but I am ready for next season. I can take them on, I can do everything with the ball, I can play with them because I understand some of them, I observe others how they play as PSL players just like Sibanyoni. Sibanyoni I know the kind of striker he is. I adjust fast here.

VM: I see that...so assists are also your thing?

MS: yes assists are my thing too, 13 goals, 10 assists so ja.

VM: 13 goals, 10 assists that's 23 direct contributions in the goals...

MS: Yes ... (laughs) I'm just happy my brother, I help a team a lot with goals and assists.

VM: I think your target now is Europe?
MS: Yes my target is to go and play in Europe.

VM: Where?

MS: England, because England they play fast football and the kind I play.

VM: You will be playing for a team that plays CAF competitions and you are here now, this prepares you to be ready for the CAF Confederations Cup with Pirates...

MS: Oh yes it is preparing to be ready because some of the players who are from other countries have been playing CAF matches so it' also preparing me mentally and I'm learning things from other players how they are playing I take pointers but I'm not sure how they prepare us at Pirates (Laughs) but I have learnt a lot by being here in camp.

VM: When you were at Pirates signing, you met the chairman?

MS: Yes I met the chairman.

VM: And how was your conversation?

MS: (Laughs) we had a good talk and he said I remind him of Lorch (Thembinkosi) and Lorch likes to eat Ting.

VM: What is Ting?

MS: (laughs) I forgot what it is but he says Lorch loves it, it's something like porridge.

VM: Oh I see it... do you also like Ting?

MS: (Laughs) I eat porridge but the chairman said Tswanas and Sothos we like Ting. When he asked if I eat, I said yes and he said I remind him of Lorch. He also said I should go on with the kind of attitude I have because he could see that I'm not much of a talker I'm quiet and shy, I'm really shy.

VM: You enjoyed the conversation with him?

MS: I enjoyed the conversation, he said I should continue being myself but here in Johannesburg there are a lot of challenges and advised to not do things that will end up killing my career, and to not get involved with dodgy characters even if they have been in Johannesburg longer than I have, as they could potentially ruin my career. He says the way I carry myself is good.

VM: Fair enough...are you looking forward to the Soweto derby?

MS: Ja, yeyi, I can't wait to play in the derby, the chairman also spoke to me about the derby

VM: What did he say about the derby?

MS: He said I'm lucky there are no fans, he says he wants to see how strong my heart is when we play with fans in the stadium, or I would be intimidated or scared to play. The he said he will check me during the Black Label Cup if I am selected.

VM: No, I'm sure now you will start checking if people are voting for you. The people are watching you here so the more you do well here the more they will vote for you for the Black label cup... I'm sure you are going to be checking from now hey...

MS: If I can just see myself playing in the derby...because I am strong enough to play anywhere. I'm not scared to play and I'm not scared of competition.

VM: What's your message to the Ghost?

MS: (Laughs) my message to the Buccaneers is that I will fight and make them proud by winning the COSAFA Cup. That's my only message.

Africa Was Never A Priority For Kaizer Chiefs - STANTON FREDERICKS

One wouldn't blame Stanton Fredericks for feeling a little nostalgic this month, with not only Kaizer Chiefs playing Al Ahly in the CAF Champions League, but also with the Tokyo Olympic Games kicking off. Fredericks was of course a key member of the first South African team to qualify for the Olympics, back for the Sydney 2000 edition. He of course was also a key Chiefs player in the team that last tasted CAF success, when they lifted the 2001 Africa Cup Winners Cup (now the CAF Confederation Cup). He also played in the last Chiefs team that met Al Ahly (in the 2002 CAF Super Cup). Rob Delpont caught up with Fredericks, now a SuperSport TV pundit and commentator, to talk about his career and some of those memories...

Rob Delpont: First of all welcome to the pages of iDiski Times Stiga, and thanks for giving us your time. Let's just start with a general catch-up. How have things been going with you lately, we obviously hear your voice on TV doing commentary with SuperSport, but what have you been up to, and how are you coping during the pandemic?

Stanton Fredericks: It's been rough. It's been difficult for everybody. But you know, I think the highlight for me is that, in the midst of a pandemic, you just realise, and it might sound selfish, but how blessed you are. You know, just to provide shelter, and food and love for your family. You know, it's so often that we just take everything for granted, Rob, and in that moment, you start trying to assist wherever else, I started a foundation with a friend of mine, a German ex player, I met this gentleman through Bradley Carnell. The gentleman's name is Lutz Pfannenstiel. And then we formed a foundation and in the midst of the pandemic, we were able to assist in different spaces. And I think for me, that was really the blessing that has come of this.

RD: Let's go back three decades, young Stanton in Joburg, that must have been an exciting time for a young kid in South Africa aspiring to be a professional, Bafana back in the international fold, winning the Afcon, how much did things like that inspire you?

SF: I tell you what, Rob, like honestly, it was never my goal to say I want to become a professional footballer, I love the game, that was it. And whenever given a chance to play, I would. Remember I come from a single parent, so the discipline was very high, and accountability, very high. It was go finish your school, finish your school, you playing soccer, but the minute the grades drop, no more soccer, so it was very rigid in that way, which is a

blessing in disguise, because I only started taking football serious after matriculating. So at the age of 18, is when I could really go to all the training sessions at Wits and really try and do something. So early on, it was all about fun, it was never about this is what you're gonna do. Only after school did I then flirt with the idea of okay, this is what I could possibly do.

RD: So, that also kind of explains how I remember young Stanton Fredericks having lots of flash and flair, and then suddenly overnight, he became a very hard worker...

SF: I tell you what, when you play the game for fun, and you play in the location, and there's very little development coaching, you play on your ability and your gift. And that is what initially I had. But I think one of my biggest attributes is I can play to instruction and coming into a Wits side that's been coached the English way with the John Latham's, with the Eddie Lewis's, it's your typical English football, back in the day, not modern England, old England, where you got to work, you play as a team, you can't just be a luxury player, and play when you have the ball, there's a role for you without the ball. So very quickly, I had to adapt to that, I had to learn how to tackle, I needed to fit in and credit to the gents that I first came into professional football with, was Gordon Ewen - till today he's a good mate of mine - Kevin Rafferty, Roan Malgue, Peter Gordon, you know,

"I remember so many injuries, we had like 13 guys on the bench in the final and ja, Brian Baloyi almost had to go play striker (laughs), because we didn't have enough players. But eventually we managed to win, actually, they brought me down in in the box, and we got a penalty and Patrick Mabedi scored that penalty, so that's a fond memory for me."

guys like that. They don't welcome you very easily into that setup, you got to work, you got to show that there's more to Stiga than just being good with the ball, you know, so that was a big learning curve. Because you can't just go in there and start dribbling and not work when you don't have the ball. (Laughs) I tell you what, my first session with the first team, I got a blood mouth from Gordon Ewen, because I nutmegged him and is it went through, he just gave me the elbow. And it loosened one of my teeth and the blood just started pouring. So that's what I came into. And if you shy away and you're scared, you never become a professional footballer.

RD: From Wits you get your first taste of international club football in Switzerland with Grasshoppers...



“The last game was against Kaizer Chiefs, I literally killed them in that game, and that is when I went to Chiefs. Having said that, you know that Chiefs is a big team from afar, but when you sign for Chiefs, that’s when you realise how big the team is.”

SF: That was just brilliant for me and there’s so many moments in my career where I felt, I want to say luck, but it’s not luck, you know. If you look back in hindsight, and the older you are, the clearer the picture is. If Wits negotiated a deal for me back then, you know, I think the path would have been so much different. But because of that stint I think that kind of prepared me for all the challenges later on in my career. The challenges when West Ham knocked on your door, and the deal doesn’t happen, you know? How do you bounce back? Because there’s so many players that when one thing goes wrong, it derails you and you never really get to have a full football career, you know, so that was amazing for me. At the time, Grasshoppers was number one or number two in Switzerland. So the level was so high, and I really enjoyed it. And it was a massive, massive learning curve for me.

RD: And then you return to South Africa, and soon join Kaizer Chiefs, as a Joburg boy, that must have been a special move.

SF: Ja, that was massive, because, you know, going to Grasshoppers and coming back to Wits, it was very difficult to adapt, you know. I won’t use the words, ‘big headed’, I would say you just want more, when you’re exposed to so much, when you’re exposed to that level of professionalism. Because remember at Wits then, it was part time professional, you know, you have Roan Malgue that has his own business and he comes and trains in the evening. There’s no full time professionals. Now I went from being part of a semi professional setup. and next playing with Stéphane Chapuisat, that was the player of the year in the Bundesliga, you know, so how do you come back? How do you change that? And then I never forget, it was a very challenging three months, where I needed to now decide, okay, where do you go to? You need to start playing, you need to focus, you need to give your all, you haven’t made it, you know, it’s not an overnight success. And then I’ll never forget, I had to pull up my socks and do what I knew what I can do when coming back to Wits. And then I had a brilliant end to the season, the last game was against Kaizer Chiefs, I literally killed them in that game, and that is when I went to Chiefs. Having said that, you know that Chiefs is a big team from afar, but when you sign for Chiefs, that’s when you realise how big the team is. I think two, three months in it, I realised that, listen, this is as good as any way in the world. Everything is set up for you, all you need to do is go out to the field, and do the business. And the rest is history. And the opportunities will come again, you know, and very soon I realised that I have an opportunity here to really arrive and announce myself in South African football, and you’re part of history. So how you going to fare at this club is gonna dictate the rest of your life. And I think I can proudly say that I’ve contributed to the team’s success, while I was there, and it was just a blessing and an opportunity that I will never forget.

RD: And of course that was also during the time, Chiefs win their first continental football. What can you remember about that CAF African Cup Winners Cup run?

SF: Can you believe it that actually a journalist from from Egypt contacted me, I think last week, and he asked me about this game because Chiefs is now playing against Al Ahly, and

the last time we played, they gave us 4-1 and he just asked me about the memories, and the atmosphere, and it’s certainly up there with one of the best games I’ve ever played. Because we we won the Mandela Cup. And that gave us an opportunity to play the Super Cup against Al Ahly and back then the winners would then go to the World Cup Champs, you know. So when you talk about history, it’s something that we really shared with the team, proud to be a member of that winning team. But it was a team that had 13 members, because then you could only register players at a certain time. , And I remember so many injuries, we had like 13 guys on the bench in the final and ja, Brian Baloyi almost had to go play striker (laughs), because we didn’t have enough players. But eventually we managed to win, actually, they brought me down in in the box, and we got a penalty and Patrick Mabedi scored that penalty, so that’s a fond memory for me.

RD: Seeing Chiefs in the CAFCL final next week, twenty years later, must be special. But are you surprised it has taken that long?

SF: It’s a touchy subject, you know, I think that when you look at the a like Kaizer Chiefs... So just to answer your question, I think it is a surprise. I am surprised, because the Chiefs I left is a team that was always evolving. A team that was always ahead of times. They had a vision, and they went after it. But it’s no secret that Africa was never a priority for them, you know, and at the same point Africa was never a priority for any South African football team. Orlando Pirates always had the appetite. Because they done well, they tasted it. And for them, it was always part of our goals. It wasn’t the goal. It was part of our goals. For Chiefs it wasn’t, and it was never. Sundowns has come in there, and credit to Pitso Mosimane, he made that his priority. And now, the rest of South African football teams are saying, okay, this is what we need to do, to achieve that continental and that global acknowledgement. But why Chiefs never needed it, is because Chiefs has a global brand without winning a Champions League. You know, I went to Europe, signed in Russia, and then you walk into a store in Paris, I’ll never forget, and then Chiefs has a range of apparel, internationally, you know. So they didn’t need to win something to be internationally globally recognised. I’ll never forget walking into Nike Town at the Olympics, myself and Brian Baloyi, we were invited, because we were sponsored athletes then, and the people at Nike saying, oh, we signed your guys up, when they say you guys they mean Kaizer Chiefs, we will be sponsoring you in 2002 or 2003, something like that, you know, so back then they were globally, and they didn’t need this success continentally. Unfortunately, times have changed, you now need it more than ever, more than ever.

RD: You mentioned it there, your second sojourn into Europe is in Russia, at a FK Moskva. What was it like in Russia back then? Because I mean, there were a few South Africans there back then, and to be to be fair, you guys also got lost a bit in the wilderness, we kind of forgot about you back home, or at least the national team seemed to.

SF: Unfortunately, times have changed. So Rob Delpont would have known how much minutes I’ve played, how much goals I scored,

the minute I signed for FC Moscow, the internet just makes the world so much smaller, but back then, there was very little and the world back then you couldn’t keep tabs, it was he says, she says, if you have my number, you can find out how I played you know, so it was so different then and unfortunately, when I signed for Russia, that was the end of my Bafana Bafana career. Which was kind of difficult for me to accept at the time, because I was a regular for Bafana for at least three years before going. Whenever I played for Chiefs, I was in the

“Orlando Pirates always had the appetite. Because they done well, they tasted it. And for them, it was always part of our goals. It wasn’t the goal. It was part of our goals. For Chiefs it wasn’t, and it was never. Sundowns has come in there, and credit to Pitso Mosimane, he made that his priority.”

national team. And you’re in the national team, but you’re part of three or four local based players and everybody else is playing in Europe. So the hunger and the thirst to play in Europe, it kind of guarantees you selection for Bafana. No matter what, and how you’re doing it your club, you will be called up for Bafana. And the minute you sign in Russia, you never get called up! So it was a bit of a puzzling fact there for me. So that was unfortunate. But I would never ever change it for anything. My experience in Russia was, I think it moulded me as a man.You need to adapt once again, you need to learn another language, you need to take on another new culture. I think footballing wise, it could have been much better if I stayed a bit longer. But my thirst for international football, and me not playing for the national team kind of took my attention away from really, really being a household name in Russian football. Man, that is why I never stayed there longer, even though I was offered a new contract.

RD: So that’s when you came back to Pirates, then Supersport before going back to Europe. But still just the 14 caps for Bafana. It didn’t make complete sense, because when you go to Greece, isn’t that arguably the best spell of your career?

SF: And not a lot of people will know that, not a lot of people will know that. Ja, so the 14 caps was

“Gavin Hunt is a serial winner. And he knows how to win and win ugly, if need be. And that’s what’s needed in the CAF Champions League, even Pitso Mosimane, he will say no, we’re playing for the result.”

probably another 14 on the bench, not coming on. It’s Muhsin Ertugral that always says you should have at least that 70 caps for Bafana. But for me, I’m just proud to have said that

I’ve don that jersey. I’ve stood in the lineup with the national anthem has played, and you realise that your boyhood dream has been realised, you know, and why I came back to Pirates is because it was the 2006 World Cup, and I really wanted to play in a World Cup for Bafana, that is the decision why I came back. And I tried to come back to Pirates, play a few games, and then qualify for the national team to play in the World Cup. Unfortunately, we never qualified for 2006. How’s that for making your own plans, you know? (Laughs) You talk about playing in Greece. And I mentioned earlier that there’s challenges, and you grow as a player, and you learn from your mistakes, and you understand how to adapt with diversity and change. And then I go to Greece, and now I become this experienced player that has tasted European football, that has played at the highest level. And now you need to continue this journey and find the fire that you once lost. And I also touched on having a full career. There’s so many great players that don’t manage that, you know, and you need to now tap into yourself and say, okay, I need to find the fire, the fight, the need to want to play at the highest level. And fortunately, because I played in Europe, now I become a player that is well rounded. I know how to keep it simple. I know when to use my flair. I know that in Europe, I am a smaller player. So I know that I can’t hold on to the ball much longer. So I take all of that. And I go to Greece, and I sign six months with a team. And in that six months, I’ve never been known for my goal scoring prowesses, but I score like 10 goals for my team. And everybody else comes knocking. And now they want to take me away from FC Pierikos, and this is where you’re now thinking that okay, if I move to Panathinaikos or PAOK or AEK Athens, that’s knocking on the door, I might just get sniff at 2010 World Cup. Because you’re playing the best football that you’ve ever played. But nobody back home sees it, all they can remember is the Stiga that played for Chiefs. And this is when maturity kicks in, Rob, and you decide okay, what do I need for Stiga? I don’t need South Africa to know how am I doing. I don’t need my friends, I don’t need the fans, I need to prove things to myself. And I need to look at my family. And I’m happy here, I’m playing the best football of my career. I don’t need to chase money, I don’t want to chase money, I don’t need recognition, I need to make a decision for myself, and this is where you make those decisions ,as a man, and you say okay, I’m happy here, I’m playing good football. I’m extending my stay here. These people really see value in me, and I want to stay here and play longer.

RD: And after three good seasons, you return back to Wits to call a close on your career, where you retire and later also do some coaching. And then of course TV came along too. Is that part of your future? Pundit or coach, or both?

SF: Well, I kind of fell into punditry. You know, when you’re deciding to to hang up your boots, you don’t know where you’re going to. And when I was at Wits, I was fortunate enough to be coached by a friend and mentor, which is Roger De Sa. And with Roger De Sa comes Eric Tinkler, somebody that loves,

down to the development. And I used to shadow him. And I almost fell into the coaching side, because he encouraged me, he says, go on this coaching course, go on that coaching course, learn the game. So I almost went into the coaching. But because of my business interests, I then decided okay, this is not going to be for me right now. Let me move on to that. And I got an opportunity to work for eNCA, and that led to working for SuperSport, and that is how it eventually fell in. So coaching for me at a high level, no, because there’s no shortcut to coaching. You can’t play the game, I need to go here, you need to pay your dues, you need to coach at the junior level, you need to do your badges. So coaching courses, yes, so in terms of coaching, I would always accredit it myself. But in terms of taking a team, that’s not a route, I’m going to take.

RD: Just back to present day, how nostalgic does this little period make you, not just with Chiefs making next week’s CAF Final, and it being Al Ahly, but also the Olympic Games around the corner? And I mean, we didn’t touch on that, but you’re an Olympian. You know, not many people can say I’m an Olympian.

SF: Wow. Ja, you know what’s so nostalgic for me every time I commentate, and then you go down to the field. And then you smell the grass. And then you see the players trying to focus, having the pitch walk. And that for me, is always nostalgic. And that’s why I love it. And yes, there’s offseason and you’re watching all this good football. And it’s 20 years last year since we were at the Olympics. Can you believe that? 20 years since the first South African football team participated in the Olympics. And it’s definitely always nostalgic. And it just gives you an opportunity to reflect back and enjoy the moments that you’ve experienced. And just understanding that and looking at these players, and you don’t understand the opportunity you having right now. An opportunity that will change your life forever. Having the opportunity to play on the world stage, at the Olympics. Ja, it is just mind blowing.

RD: My final one, with the Chiefs situation. what has surprised you more this year, Chiefs’ historical run to the final, or their disappointing league form?

SF: Ja. It just doesn’t make sense. I honestly have to say that when Gavin Hunt is coaching a team in the CAF Champions League, you always give them a chance, no matter what their league form is. Gavin Hunt is a serial winner. And he knows how to win and win ugly, if need be. And that’s what’s needed in the CAF Champions League, even Pitso Mosimane, he will say no, we’re playing for the result. You know, it’s not necessarily good football that’s going to take you to the finals of the CAF Champions League. It’s playing ugly and getting the result. And that is what Gavin Hunt can do very well. So for me, it wasn’t a surprise. But having said that, I knew that losing the league on the last day is going to have its effects. I didn’t know it would be that bad on Kaizer Chiefs, because losing it to Baroka, and after leading the league with 13 points, it definitely has a psychological effect. And it lasted longer than I assumed it would in the league, because those players, the disappointment that you endure, not every fan will understand that. And I think that really played its cause in the league form for Chiefs, surprisingly so, it had a massive impact. So for that, I was very, very surprised.

RD: Stiga, thanks so much man!

SF: An absolute pleasure Rob, any time.

Chiefs Mustn't Give Too Much Respect To Pitso And Al Ahly



Farouk Khan is well-known in the South African football fraternity and many Kaizer Chiefs fans still remember him on the sidelines next to Muhsin Ertugral and Ted Dumitru. The owner of the Stars of Africa academy was assistant to Ertugral when Chiefs won the African Cup Winners' Cup in 2001. In this exclusive interview with David Kappel, Khan recalls the heroics of the 2001 generation, advises Chiefs how they should approach Saturday's CAF Champions League final against Al Ahly, talks Stuart Baxter, Arthur Zwane, Itumeleng Khune and much more. He also reveals that Hugo Broos wanted him as Bafana Bafana assistant and why he won't get the Technical Director role at SAFA...

David Kappel: Good day Farouk, how are you? Thanks for taking your time to chat to iDiski Times. I saw you recently visited Brazil, you shared a picture at Botafogo. What was that trip all about?

Farouk Khan: Well, I have a very close relationship with the Brazilian football association and as far as the academy is concerned, you know. My late mentor Professor Espizem Neto in conjunction with Carlos Alberto Pereira and many, many other top Brazilian experts form what is called the Brazilian Football Academy, which I studied with myself and Cavin Johnson, Sam Mbatha, Junaid Mall, Zipho Dlangalala A number of our South African guys went they, we were the first to go there in 1992. And subsequently Boebie Solomons went with me as well on one occasion, so we have any close link with the academy and I often go down to catch up because I think as a third world country, we got a lot to learn from them. Sometimes you go to Europe, European standards are different. They have all the all the facilities and the infrastructure and everything. They're not really as dependent economically as the South American and African countries. And I see a great similarity in our culture, our music, our food, and everything else, in line with what's happening in Brazil. There is a very great similarity between the countries. As you know, historically, a lot of Africans were taken to Brazil. And as a consequence, they have enriched that football culture otherwise it would just basically be Portugal playing and because of Africa's influence the likes of Pele, Ronaldo (Nazario), Ronaldinho, they

all have African roots. And I think because of that similarity from a genetical perspective and everything else, that is why I go to Brazil just to get insight into what they are doing lately. And obviously, you know, the other thing is, if you look at the Champions League, every of the top teams in the world have three or four Brazilians in a match. So obviously, that says something about the development and I'm very passionate about development and I think we can aspire to reach their levels of exporting the best talent and then obviously, enriching our national teams and that is what has been the successful result.

DK: Your trip was around the time of Kaizer Chiefs' semi-final first-leg at Wydad Casablanca. Did you still manage to watch the game? What did you make of the performance of your former side over the two legs?

FK: We could only watch a little bit of whatever was happening but I was on Twitter so I was keeping up to date. What I did see, however, was obviously from a statistical point of view, I saw the fact that Wydad had the lion's share of possession, which was expected in both legs. I think Wydad left the shooting boats behind. But in all fairness we've got a compliment Chiefs for the way they defended, especially the keepers were outstanding during both legs.

So this is what we call cup football. In cup football even an underdog could come in and surprise and it is exactly what what chiefs have done. I mean they weren't that good in local league but when it came to CAF they did well and it is just poetic justice that when Wydad played Chiefs

don't have a chance'. I think they have a great chance. I think, it's cup football, they could get a Nurkovic goal, a long ball over the top and they could sit back like they did against Wydad. Although I don't know, if it is gonna be second time lucky, because they didn't both legs against Wydad.

FAROUK *I think based on what they could give back, Bernard is a leader, Khune is a leader, and based on the fact that he played in the Champions League, they didn't want to just get rid of all those players. They haven't signed long term contracts with them, if I'm not mistaken, they signed a year.*

in the second group stage match, they sent their assistant coach, they sent a lot of their reserve players because they already went through and not realizing that this team that they were throwing a lifeline could come back to bite them and that's exactly what happened. So yeah, this is knockout football. You don't take anything for granted. I mean, everybody's saying now 'No, they

But this Al Ahly team is different, they could take on any team in Africa and come up with a positive result. I just think they are too good for for the African continent. They they're very confident in Pitso and in his technical team. They have done a good job to continue where the other coach left off because the other coach, people forget about the other coach, he left a great foundation similarly to what

You see in football sometimes we have a tendency to judge people on short term achievements. And that's a big mistake. I think this is going to put undue pressure on Arthur. I think for what he has achieved in the short term, let's applaud it. But we'll only know how good Arthur is, once he's at the reins for a season or two.

Gavin did. I mean Gavin basically took this team to the semifinals, and then obviously got fired. So a lot of credit must go to him as well for what he's done. I mean, sometimes people forget his contribution.

DK: They will face another South African in the final, with Pitso Mosimane. Do you think it is an advantage to face a coach that they know from the PSL?

If you say our development is poor in the country, then you become an enemy of the state. People often ask me ‘Farouk, with your experience, with your knowledge, with your track record, why aren't you involved?’ And I say to them, ‘don’t ask me, ask SAFA’. SAFA has a problem with the way I speak, what I say and do.

FK: Well, I think it's a different ball game altogether. This is cup football, it's got nothing to do with the Premier Soccer League. Pitso has been here, he's gone for almost two seasons. It's a different team. And as Pitso rightly pointed out, Chiefs on the day, you don't know what you're going to get, the are very unpredictable. I think it's not easy to call it. Having known South African football, Pitso has a bit of an advantage. But I think even if there was a coach from North Africa, he would have stood a very good chance of competing because it's a final. And you know, in the final it's about the team on the day that is switched on, the team that is able to take their chances and in a team that has the pedigree and the experience. Both of these teams have proven beyond the doubt to have a very rich history in cup competition. It doesn't mean that Chiefs haven't won a cup in six years that they don't have that experience. I just think they haven't been at their best in this last six seasons. On the day, they were not good enough.

DK: Back in 2001, you were assistant of Muhsin Ertugral when Chiefs won African Cup Winner's Cup. What comes to mind when you think of that success?

FK: Yeah, that was a huge, huge win, because I tell you why. Because we didn't have a team. Remember, we couldn't sign players like Kenny Niemach and all those names because they came past the window. So we couldn't sign them. And it left us with a very skeletal team. I mean, we had Doctor Khumalo on the bench who was finishing his career. I think we had three subs, including Doctor on the bench. And we managed to go to the final and people think it was easy. But we played some top teams like Ismailia, in the final we played the team from Angola. So it wasn't as easy as people may see. It was a quite difficult one, you know, but we managed to do well in the end. You know, it was a historic win for us.

DK: Arthur Zwane was a player of Chiefs back then, now he is on the sidelines. How do you rate his performances as coach so far?

FK: Arthur was a player that then. He was one of those dedicated players, one of the best players to coach at the time, a very coachable guy, always doing extra. So I'm very glad that he's now being part of this historic final that's going to take place. I think, based on the fact that he hasn't had that much

experience as a coach, he hit the ground running. And as I said, everything fell into place. You see in football sometimes we have a tendency to judge people on short term achievements. And that's a big mistake. I think this is going to put undue pressure on Arthur. I think for what he has achieved in the short term, let's applaud it. But we'll only know how good Arthur is, once he's at the reins for a season or two. You know, I was an assistant with Muhsin and when Muhsin left Chiefs I became a coach. And I can tell you, it's two totally different scenarios completely. You can't equate the two. When you are in the hot seat, it's a totally different place. The players look at you differently than they would if you were an assistant or a standin coach. And with all due respect, I think you know when Gavin was fired, it just fell into place for Arthur and Dillon. The players just raised their their level, they were so motivated after the change. They themselves gave Chiefs a new lease of life.

DK: What would be your advise to Chiefs, how they should approach the CAF CL final?

FK: Well they should ensure that they don't give too much respect to Al Ahly. They should take the game to Al Ahly. They should play a game where they don't give Al Ahly the space and time because this is a team that requires lots of space and time to settle down. If you if you ruffle their feathers, if you don't allow them time on the ball, they become a little bit temperamental, because of their ego. They are the Club of the Century, they have a coach, who has won this cup before. So the pressure will be on them more than on Chiefs, they are expected to win this cup. So that is why you got to play the mental game, you got to take the game to them, you got to unravel their game plan, you got to ensure that you you punish them on set plays. You've got to play the percentages, you need to know exactly how to defend when to defend and where to defend. These are tactics that obviously the coaching staff with Baxter now they will have to come up with. They know the players better, they know the mental state of the players. They know how motivated they are. Look motivation in a final I think is overrated because the final itself is a motivation, playing for a trophy is motivation. Promising them monies and pampering them is not the secret. The secret is getting them prepared for every eventuality looking at the small details, attention to small details, looking at the opposition under a microscope and saying how do we stop certain key players from getting the service, from ensuring that we starve them of service?

DK: The club has rung the changes, Stuart Baxter, Molefi Ntseki and Kaizer Motaung Jr. all joined recently. Do you think it's a step in the right direction?

FK: Well, definitely. I think it's something that has to be done with modern day football. Gone are the days where you have... Like in the old days, I remember Clive Barker used to coach the play-ers, the infield players, he used to coach the goalkeepers. He was also in charge of certain adminis-trative things. So it was a case in those days where you could have one person with an assistant running a club. These days you can't, because there's so much that goes into it. As far as the mod-ern game is concerned, you look at your analysts. You need the best analysts to have a great un-derstanding of football itself, not just stating the obvious. I remember, when I went down to Brazil in 1992, Brazil, at that time were ahead of the time as far as analysis is concerned. Because you won't believe me, but people always thought Brazil was all

about skill and technique and samba but no their analysis was ahead of even European clubs. So you got to ensure that you are bringing the right people. I think they brought in Ntseki based on the fact that he's dealt with national team players, obviously. We'll have to wait and see how good he is in developing national team players, if you get what I'm saying. There's a huge difference between coaching them at national team level and developing them. So he hasn't had that amount of experience as far as developing players. So he's gonna have to learn on the job. As far as Baxter is concerned, we know what we're going to expect from him as a coach, who plays a certain way. And a coach who has had some success with Chiefs. So we'll have to wait and see if he can connect continue from where he left off. A breath of fresh air is Kaizer Jr. Simply because he understands the culture of Chiefs. I had him as junior, as young as 16, in the academy and he played for me in the interprovincial. He is a very coachable person, he doesn't throw around the Chiefs name, he doesn't allow that to disrespect people. He is very polite, very coachable, always respects either old and young. And I think that's important from a leadership perspective. I think there's been a huge boost. And I think, obviously, he needs to ensure that the mandate is carried out because the mandate is to produce our own homegrown talent. Introduce that homegrown talent to the first team

They should take the game to Al Ahly. They should play a game where they don't give Al Ahly the space. If you if you ruffle their feathers, if you don't allow them time on the ball, they become a little bit temperamental, because of their ego. They are the Club of the Century, they have a coach, who has won this cup before. So the pressure will be on them more than on Chiefs.

like I did. When I was there with Muhsin, I promoted the biggest number of talent from the academy and most of them were successful. So that is the yardstick, that is the bar that I set for him now to ensure that it is either eclipsed or equal.

DK: The future of the likes of Itumeleng Khune still seems uncertain. Would you keep players like him and Bernard Parker at the club?

FK: I think based on what they could give back, Bernard is a leader, Khune is a leader, and based on the fact that he played in the Champions League, they didn't want to just get rid of all those players. They haven't signed long term contracts with them, if I'm not mistaken, they signed a year. A shortterm contract is basically just to ensure that they use those players to lay a very good foundation for the ones coming in. You know, it's always good to have players who have been there for a while, just to prepare the new ones on what the do's and the don'ts are. I think I experienced when I was at Chiefs when I brought in quite a number of players, we still kept the likes of double Thabo Mooki, Dr. Kumalo and quite a few other players just to make sure that they are able to implant that experience. And a great example was John 'Shoes' Moshoeu. He was so phenomenal in ensuring that we did well. We always talked about Muhsin and what Muhsin did. But I think your

FAROUK
This is knockout football. You don't take anything for granted. I mean, everybody's saying now 'No, Chiefs don't have a chance'. I think they have a great chance. I think, it's cup football, they could get a Nurkovic goal, a long ball over the top and they could sit back like they did against Wydad.

Shoes Moshoeu was phenomenal in bridging the gap between players and technical stuff. He was so important, both to Muhsin and to Ted when I assisted both of them, because obviously, as you know, I won a lot of cups with both Muhsin and with Ted Dumitru.

DK: The transfer window is open and Chiefs ban is over. Which players would you love the club to sign?

FK: I think it's about availability. If you look at the fact that there's obviously players they earmarked... I think they player that played in Russia or somewhere, Tercious Malepe, I think he could have been a wonderful signing because of his aggression and the way he plays, but it seems like AmazZulu has beaten them to that particular player. I think up front, they are covered with the likes of Nurkovic and young Ngcobo and some of the other boys that they have. But you know, you're you're always going to look to have a goalscorer of high quality. But I don't think there's too many in the local league available. I think what they have is sufficient for now. And that is why always maintain the will that you should develop your own key players in your academy. Those players that I'm talking about, the Messis, the Xavis, the Iniestas, the Busquets. You have to do that yourself because you never gonna be able to just find them and buy them. It's very seldom that you can go to the market and get those players just very easily, you'll be lucky to get one or two. So I think that is where the development program comes into play. That they got to find a solution formula on producing the special players. And that in itself for me is not easy. You know, it's something that I've learned over all the years that I've been involved. It's a science, it's also a talent. It's also based on years of experience. To develop those special players. You know, may May Mahlangus, Tokelo Ranties, those are special players that can play anywhere, in Europe. Currently, we have a player by name of Percy Tau and he's struggling to make it in England. So it just says a lot about our development. We're not producing the special players and we are in denial. We don't want to admit that we need to do that. We want people to sugarcoat and say no, they are good enough. Yes, good enough for our league but good enough for the Premier League? No.

DK: Your former head coach Muhsin Ertugal recently told iDiski Times that he could see you as Technical Director of SAFA and you speak a lot about player development. Were you ever approached for the vacant role and is it something you would consider?

FK: If the country calls, I would. But unfortunately, if you are an outspoken, an outspoken proponent, you become blacklisted. I don't know if you realize that the national coach (Hugo Broos) wanted me to assist him. But when he brought my name forward, he was told that I have an academy, and that I have players in Europe. So I don't know what it's about is that got to do with my coaching credentials. And that is why I wasn't offered the position. And at the end of the day, you know, it's not going to change because people want you to sing from the same sheet. If you say our development is poor in the country, then you become an enemy of the state. People often ask me 'Farouk, with your experience, with your knowledge, with your track

record, why aren't you involved?' And I say to them, 'don't ask me, ask SAFA'. SAFA has a problem with the way I speak, what I say and do. I was on the technical committee and I never ever held my mouth closed. And then I wasn't too popular with them. But they obviously just tolerated me at the time. And then eventually, I said publicly, I can't go to technical meetings when we discuss things that never get implemented. I mean, the whole country can see that we talk a big game, but our development system, our development, is at that level is secondary. I mean, we obviously rave about this new generation going into Olympics. We'll have to wait and see how well they do the Olympics, to be a to be honest to ourselves and say, are we ready to take on the world because we play Japan, we playing France, and I think was in Mexico. So those will be a good indication of where we really are. When our teams go to these competitions, they come back. We applaud the fact that they've gone to the competition. They get knocked out in the first time, but we never do a proper introspection

DK: How proud does it make you feel to see former Stars of Africa players such as Luther Singh being included in the Olympics squad?

FK: Thabo Cele is another one. I know the Academy in Durban is claiming him, but he started with Stars of Africa. I'm very proud, proud for both of these boys. I think these boys have proven beyond a doubt that they come from good upbringing. I think a player like Thabang Phete should have been there as well, having done so well in Portugal, he could have been one of the overaged players. But I mean, again, the selection that we've seen in the past is questionable in most cases, and it's no fault of David. I think David is obviously being told exactly what he needs to do. I think I've done fairly well with those players but I think there is room for improvement. I think we should stop patting ourselves on the back and saying how great the players are that we develop. The minute Luther and so on are playing in the LaLiga of this world, then we can start patting ourselves on the back but we often applaud mediocrity and I'm not saying Luther, etc are mediocre, I think they are very good players.

DK: How are things going at Stars of Africa? Can we expect to see any other players make a breakthrough into professional football in future?

FK: Stars is very excited. We have a crop of players from nine years old to 15 that is so, so exciting. I mean, I watched them and I marvel at them daily. We seem to be getting into it that age group. The older boys, yes we have a few good ones. We have the captain of the U17 team, we've got a few, a handful of exceptional talent is coming through. I realize now these plays are going to actually exceed the Luther Singhs. These boys are going to be better than the Luther Singhs of this world. And I'm so over the moon. The only challenge I have is I don't have a sponsorship. But God willing, God is my sponsor, and he's helped me to produce this place. If I have a sponsorship, I promise you, I will produce the next generation of of Bafana players because with the time I have on my side, I will produce players who are now 12 and 13 in the next five or six years that will be out of this world.

DK: Wow, amazing. We have to leave it there for now until our next chat. Thanks Farouk.

Nobody Believed In Us

iDiski Times senior writer Velile Mnyandu caught up with Kaizer Chiefs assistant coach Arthur Zwane as the team prepares to head to Morocco where they will face defending champions Al Ahly in the CAF Champions League final on Saturday. Zwane, who was a player the last time Chiefs had continental success, talks about how football has progressed since those days, and also how special it will be to face countryman Pitso Mosimane on the opposing bench...

Velile Mnyandu: Okay, coach, maybe if you can just give us so far how you've been working. It's almost that big day. It's been coming, loads of good work that has been done over the past few months. How is it finally looking forward to the big day in Casablanca on Saturday?

Arthur Zwane: Ja, so far, so good, Bra V, everyone is positive, everyone is looking forward to the final. And the guys are also responding, you know, very well, with the hope that we will get it right. And nothing much to say, but seeing these guys, who are looking forward to participate in one of the biggest games in the continent, it's pleasing. And with so much energy, a higher level of concentration, focus as well, it gives one goosebumps and you begin to ask yourself questions, what is actually happening? And this is what Kaizer Chiefs is all about, it has always been a team that wins trophies, and we're happy to be in this situation that we're in now, and we embrace it. And ja, it's been very, very difficult journey for us.

VM: And also, when you look at yourself, if we were to go back, you are a member of the Kaizer Chiefs team that last played against Al Ahly, let's go back to that CAF Super Cup, how would you describe it?

AZ: I think that time, we were more on a learning curve as a team, playing against them in their backyard,

ZWANE *"I have so much respect for him, he's a big man. He has done us proud as a country, very, he has done well for himself, for the country as well, representing us in Egypt and represented us very well. But now we are going to lock horns against each other. That's the game of football. That's the nature of this game."*

obviously gave them the advantage that time and also you didn't know what to expect that time compared to now, the game now has evolved. We know what we are going to come against, we know the aggressiveness and the tactical aspects that they possess as a team, individually and collectively as a team. So, ja, we know, it's not gonna be an easy game for us, but the good thing is that

the game is gonna be at the neutral venue, compared to that time, so I think that will also play a role. You know, in our player's minds, and also us, as technical members of the team, the game favours no one, except for those who will give their best and convert their chances on the day of the game.

VM: And, interestingly, you're returning to the venue where you also beat Wydad, psychologically, does that play a part?

AZ: Big time Bra V, I have not mentioned that in your earlier question, but when you look at it, as I said, when we played them in the Super Cup, we were playing away, to them, they were hosting us, and the situation, just, you know having their supporters, it was always gonna be in their favour, playing in their home ground that they knew very well. And that time we only had maybe 45 minutes to get a feel of the field. And that was not good enough for us, you know, to prepare well for that game. And, as I said, again, that we didn't know what to expect, but we knew that we were playing against one of the best teams in the continent, but this time is gonna be a different ballgame. Because we are playing in neutral venue, we played there before. We know the size of the field, we know we know the surface as well. So it's gonna be a 50/50 situation. So it boils down to one thing, who is going to take the chances that's going to be created on the day of the game, and if you take your chances, the situation will favour you. But we know that we're playing against a good team. So I think the boys, that's one element that gives us hope and belief that we're on the right track, for the fact that we're playing in a neutral venue, and this time around, there will be no supporters as well, you know. So that might also play in our advantage.

VM: The last time, when you played the second leg of the semi-final, you had a number of players out with serious injuries as well, how's the player availability, this time?

AZ: We're almost in the same situation, Bra V, until maybe the last day, the selection, because at the moment, we don't know who's gonna be available, who's not gonna be

available. Knowing the dynamics of the pandemic, we still have to travel, so as long as we're still preparing anything can happen at any given time. But with the hope, praying as well, that we have almost everyone available for the big one.

VM: And the belief in the camp? And I can imagine that, because when the team was trying to get

in into the group stages for the first time, very few believed that can be achieved. Quarter-finals it was the same, semi-final it was the same. Is this something that is driving the team, upsetting especially, not just any champions, but record nine times champions

to plan thoroughly, and it worked for us. As much as we know that nobody believed in us because of not accumulating points in our domestic league. And we were judged based on that. But that was not the reality, for the fact that playing at home had its own dynamics, playing in Africa

results at home, but that was actually preparing us for this journey. And here we are in the final now. And it's a different ballgame altogether. It's anybody's game. And yes, we still underdogs. But we know that anything is possible. If you're going to put 11 players on the field, we'll



ARTHUR ZWANE
Kaizer Chiefs Assistant Coach

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do the same and just compete for the fact that we're good enough to compete at this level, for the fact that we're in the final says a lot about us.

VM: Also, I think it's very rare, and I don't know even the records of CAF, they can talk about this. Two sons of Soweto sitting on opposite sides of the bench. It's more than just for yourself coming up against Pitso in the final.

AZ: There's a lot in common with Jomo Cosmos, Orlando Pirates. Soweto, Kagiso, I know that coach Pitso also comes from Kagiso, I don't know whether his father or his mother comes from Kagiso. So I was also like, at some point, living in Kagiso, because my aunt lives there, so I was staying there for some time, about four to five years. You know, I still go to Kagiso because I have a lot of friends that side. So ja, we have a lot in common, and also being assistant coaches in the national team, and obviously after that coach Pitso took over as head coach, so there's a there's a lot in common. I have so much respect for him, he's a big man. He has done us proud as a country, very, he has done well for himself, for the country as well, representing us in Egypt and represented us very well. But now we are going to lock horns against each other. That's the game of football. That's the nature of this game. It unites people in a positive way, brings people together. Yes. So as you know, the best team will win on the day. And yes, we are hoping that we can win for us, for the country, for our supporters, for the chairman and for everyone that is fully behind us and supporting us throughout thick and thin.

VM: Coach, good luck and all the best for the game.

is something that can be achieved?

AZ: You know everything has a reason. There was definitely a lot of doubts in the beginning, but everyone now believes that, for the fact that we have made it this far, that means there's something right that we're doing, and you are not going to be in the final by fluke. If you plan, at some point, we had

also had its own dynamics. So we were all at a disadvantage at some point, because teams had to come to us, we had to go to them. So, yes, people, for the fact that we're not getting the desired results here at home, they thought no, we're not good enough to get to the semi-finals, or even to the quarter-finals. But some things they happen for a reason, maybe we couldn't get the

