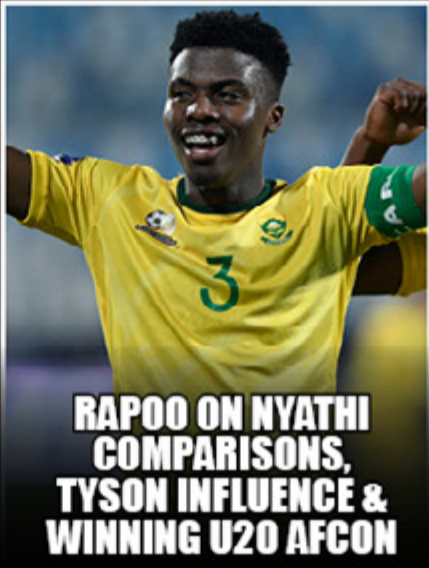




THE OUADDOU ERA BEGINS AT ORLANDO PIRATES



PAST WINNERS PICK RIBEIRO OVER RELE IN FOTS DEBATE



THE DRAWING BOARD WITH MORITZ KOSSMANN & ACE OF THE WEEK

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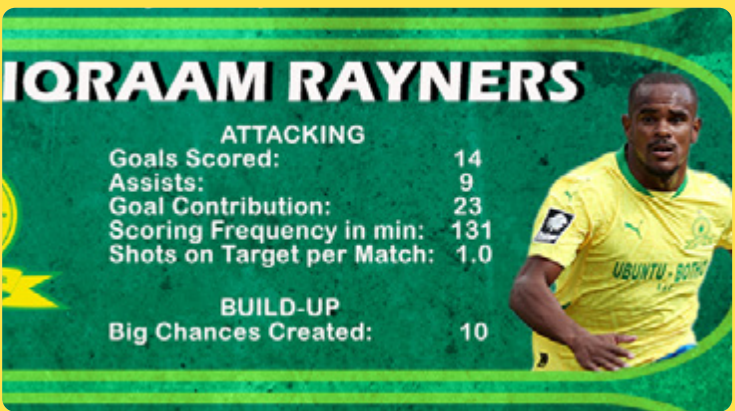
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SHALULILE EXIT IMMINENT?

Peter Shalulile, just one goal shy of equalling Siyabonga Nomvethe’s all-time PSL goal-scoring record, appears poised to bid farewell to Mamelodi Sundowns following the conclusion of the FIFA Club World Cup in the United States. The prolific Namibian striker, who is yet to feature in the tournament, sees his current contract with the Brazilians expire at the end of the month. Despite speculation around a possible extension, it now seems the 31-year-old has chosen not to renew his deal, paving the way for a potential move abroad. Shalulile, previously linked with clubs in the Middle East, may now finally take his talents beyond South African shores, closing a remarkable chapter in Sundowns colours.



FINAL WEEK AT CITY FOR KEET?

Cape Town City’s veteran goalkeeper Darren Keet is set to exit the club after four years. With his contract set to expire, and Dutch goalkeeper Mickey van der Hart set to join for the 2025/26 campaign, Keet’s final games are set to be this week’s playoff fixture against Orbit College and next week’s against Casric Stars. Keet will turn 36 in August, but will not be short of suitors, with a possible destination for the former Bafana Bafana international believed to already have been secured.



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REST IN PEACE PHUMLANI MSIBI

iDiskiTimes extends our heartfelt condolences to the family, friends, colleagues, and the wider sporting community following the sad passing of SuperSport commentator and analyst Phumlani Msibi. The 57-year-old broadcaster passed away last Friday after a brief illness, leaving behind a legacy deeply woven into the fabric of South African football coverage. For years, Msibi was a familiar and trusted voice in homes across the nation, bringing matches to life and prompting reflection with his now-iconic post-match invitation: “Thoughts, please?” His presence on screen and his calm authority will be sorely missed. South African football has lost not only a commentator but a true custodian of the game.



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WHAT NEXT FOR LORCH AFTER SENSATIONAL CWC SHOWING?

Thembinkosi Lorch's career appears to be at yet another pivotal juncture, with his next move likely to be determined in the coming weeks — and this time, the stakes may be higher than ever.

Currently on loan at Moroccan giants Wydad AC from Mamelodi Sundowns, Lorch has been one of the few bright sparks in a tough FIFA Club World Cup campaign for the Casablanca-based side.

While Wydad have suffered back-to-back defeats at the tournament in the USA, Lorch's performances have stood out for their creativity, urgency, and a touch of the old brilliance that once made him one of the most feared attackers in South Africa.

The 31-year-old winger etched his name into the history books by becoming the third South African to score at the on-going FIFA Club World Cup – joining Iqraam Rayners and Lebo Mothiba, who both found the net for Lorch's parent club, Sundowns.

For Lorch, this wasn't just a personal milestone, but a symbolic resurgence – a reminder of the prodigious talent that once captivated the country during his peak years at Orlando Pirates.

This has brought new optimism around the winger and his future, which looked bleak after being deemed surplus to requirements at Sundowns, securing a loan in January to the Botola Pro giants, lured by then-head coach Rulani Mokwena for the Casablanca giants.

And he's been consistent, going from an unknown figure in the country to one of the fan favourites with his skilful, dynamic and energetic performances, which yielded three goals in 16 games.

For a player who was offered to Kaizer



Chiefs and Wydad by Sundowns, where he scored seven goals and four assists in 27 games, after his shock transfer from Pirates, Lorch has managed to reinvigorate his career and status over the past six months.

He is expected to return to South Africa following the tournament, but his stay at Sundowns appears improbable, especially considering the club's depth in attacking options and their long-term planning focused on younger talent.

While age is no longer on his side, Lorch's recent performances on the global stage have not gone unnoticed, with murmurs of potential offers beginning to surface.

Once considered one of the brightest lights in South African football, Lorch's career has been one of dazzling highs and frustrating pauses. His unforgettable goal that sank Egypt in the last 16 of the 2019 Africa Cup of Nations remains the highlight of a Bafana Bafana journey that, at only eight caps and one goal, feels like a story unfinished.

Now, as he nears what could be his final major move, Lorch finds himself at a crossroads again – but perhaps, after everything, the best chapters may still be unwritten.

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‘SUNDOWNS WENT TOE-TO-TOE AGAINST DORTMUND’

Mamelodi Sundowns have been lighting it up in the USA at the FIFA Club World Cup, beating Ulsan 1-0 in their first game, before losing an exciting thriller 4-3 to Germany’s Borussia Dortmund.

Don’t forget to catch match reaction moments after the final whistle, and more from Junior Khanye, Tso Vilakazi, Machaka, Lindo Pep, Nkululeko Nkewu and others on iDiskiTV.

Make sure you subscribe for free on YouTube, and click the bell icon to get notified as soon as new videos are released.

Big Soweto Clubs Must Aspire for Club World Cup - Lindo Pep

“I think it’s important to emphasise that Orlando Pirates and Kaizer Chiefs must aspire to play at a big tournament such as the Club World Cup.

“I think we have too much domestic competition in South Africa. We place too much importance on small trophies. Anyone can win a cup.

“But big teams need to prioritise winning leagues and the Champions League.

“Mamelodi Sundowns went toe to toe against Borussia Dortmund. Sundowns never looked out of place.

“The players competed against the best players in the world.

“Lucas Ribeiro showed his class and quality. Teboho Mokoena showed his quality at the big stage too. I think Coach Miguel Cardoso could have read the game better and could have made better substitutions.”

“Will Mamelodi Sundowns make the Knockout stages of the Club World Cup? I think so. I think they will reach the Knockout stages.”





RIBEIRO THE FAVOURITE, BUT EVERYONE LOVES RELE

By Matshelane Mamabolo

THE Premier Soccer League’s (PSL) Footballer of the Year award is arguably the most-coveted of accolades at the annual season closing ceremony. It is a gong that says to a player, you were a cut above the rest. In the nearly three decades of the PSL, the players who have won this award continue to be revered long after they’d hung up their boots, their mark on the domestic game indelible. Mention any of their names, and no self-respecting soccer fan, no matter their age, would be unaware of them.

Raphael Chukwu, Wilfred Mugeyi, Pollen Ndlanya, Siyabonga Nomvethé and Benjamin Mwaruwaru were the initial five winners of the trophy, and even to this day, they continue to be respected. In recent years, Mamelodi Sundowns players have understandably been the dominant winners given their club’s stranglehold on the league championships.

Teboho Mokoena, Peter Shalulile, Themba Zwane and Percy Tau were victors in the last six years, with Thembinkosi Lorch then of Orlando Pirates having interrupted the domination.

As we await the 2024/25 PSL end-of-season awards, the debate as to who will add his name to that illustrious list, which includes the likes of Mbulelo Mabizela, Collins Mbesuma, Teko Modise, Itumeleng Khune and Khama Billiat.

Given their having won the championship for an eighth successive time and thus crowned the inaugural Betway Premiership kings, there’s a strong inclination towards the title going to a Sundowns player. Will it be Lucas Ribeiro? Or Iqraam Rayners? Or perhaps someone like Marcelo Allende?

Orlando Pirates were yet again the bridesmaids. Did they have a player worthy of challenging for the title? After all, there have been previous winners of the gong whose clubs were not league champions, right?

With the PSL awards postponed until after Sundowns’ participation at the FIFA Club World Cup in the United States, iDiski Times canvassed the views of former winners of the award for their choice of winner.





POLLEN NDLANYA
(Former Kaizer Chiefs – Footballer of the Year 1998/99)

I think it is a very close battle between Relebohile Mofokeng and Lucas Ribeiro because they were both very influential for their teams this past season. Ribeiro did very well for Mamelodi Sundowns, and that’s why he has to be considered. He played consistently well and was influential in most of their matches, and he even was the league’s top scorer. But I would go with Relebohile. For a player as young as he is to carry the team the way he did for Pirates this year was amazing. Pirates relied on him, and he came through for them. Every match he played, he was a key figure, as he created goals and even scored. It is very rare to have someone so young being the key player for a club, especially one as big as Pirates, where the pressure is very high. If I was a judge, my vote would go to Rele.



GODFREY SAPULA
(Former Mamelodi Sundowns – Footballer of the Year 2006/07)

For me, there’s no contest – Lucas Ribeiro deserves the award. That guy scored the goals; he was the top scorer of the season. But not only that, he also made a lot of assists. I think he must be number two, if not three, in terms of assists. Overall, his performances throughout the season were consistently of a high quality. For most of the season, Sundowns did not have Mshishi [Themba Zwane], and there was concern about how the club will do without him. But Ribeiro took charge and carried the baton and said, ‘I am the one who will carry the team,’ and he did it very well. We saw his great talent and just the way he made things happen for Sundowns, he’s a top-class player, and he delivered every week. He would be my first choice, and I don’t think there’s anyone who comes close. Yes, the youngster Rele Mofokeng played well, but if you look at the stats, Rele does not come close in terms of goals and assists.



COLLINS MBESUMA
(Former Kaizer Chiefs – Footballer of the Year 2004/05)

As a former striker, I am excited by players who score goals. And in this past season, you know who was the top scorer, right? Lucas Ribeiro is my choice. And it is not just because he scored the most goals. That guy is a complete player; he has it all. He is a great finisher, he has the skills to dribble, and he also has explosive power, on the takeoff and in shooting. I loved how he made things happen for Sundowns; he created the goals for his teammates and was a great link-up for the midfielders and attackers. He really played well this season and deserves the award. I was also impressed by the young boy from Pirates [Relebohile] Mofokeng. He also did well for someone his age. He’d be my number two, but I think he has the potential to grow into a big star.



TEFU MASHAMAITE

(Former Kaizer Chiefs – Footballer of the Year 2014/15)

There are four players who impressed me this past season. I must say Lucas Ribeiro took over - he dominated every match, he brought flair to the game, he scored goals and just had this aura of a star. He deserved to win the accolade this year. And the fact that his team won the championship should play a big role in him being Player of the Season. Relebohile [Mofokeng] has done very well and continued where he left off from his rookie season. He scored goals in some important games for Pirates, and his stock has just been rising. Iqraam Rayners is another one who really impressed me. As a country, we now have a consistent scorer in him, and there can be no denying his scoring qualities. And then there's Thabo Moloisane, who has been an ever-present and consistently high performer in the Stellenbosch defence. He was very important to Stellies having the good season that they had in finishing third yet again and reaching the semis of the Confed Cup. The others would be my finalists, but Ribeiro is my Player of the Season.



SIYABONGA NOMVETHE

(Former Kaizer Chiefs & Moroka Swallows player – Footballer of the Year 1999/00 & 2011/12)

It has to be a competition between the young boy Relebohile Mofokeng and the Brazilian [Lucas] Ribeiro. I personally would give it to Mofokeng. For someone as young as he is to be as influential at a club as big as Pirates is a big deal. The young boy gave everything on the field – he deserves to win this award. He gave top class performances all the way. Ja, he did not score a lot of goals, but he is not an outright striker and no player will score all the time. Yet he still scored the important ones and he made lots of crucial assists. I believe what he did this season is going to serve as encouragement for many young players to start believing in themselves and for the coaches to realise that age is just a number. Ribeiro would be my number two because he has really performed well – he scored goals and assisted and his performances were always top, he had an outstanding season.

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‘BANYANA SQUAD SELECTION IS A WELCOME HEADACHE’

The countdown to the 2024/25 Women’s Africa Cup of Nations (WAFCON) is on, and in Banyana Banyana head coach’s terms, just hours away as she views the countdown in training hours. The South African senior national women’s team had their farewell this week as they set out to defend the title they won in 2022, and this time they will have to see off competition from Ghana, Mali and Tanzania in Group C in Morocco. The team, who will be without star player Thembi Kgatlana, who is unavailable for personal reasons, recently won the 3-Nations series involving Botswana, whom the defending African champions beat 3-2 at the end of May in South Africa’s capital, and also reigning COSAFA Champions Zambia, who they beat 2-0. iDiski Times writer LETHABO KGANYAGO had a chat with Banyana coach DESIREE ELLIS about the importance of the series, welcoming back key players from long-term injuries, and the pressure and inspiration Banyana are drawing from the success of fellow national teams.



Lethabo Kganyago: Coach, we always appreciate your time. I was just looking at the Tri-Nations when it was announced, and thought, isn’t this overdue? Isn’t this something that we should be doing regularly, seeing how we also always play against each other, having qualified for WAFCON and World Cup before?

Dr Desiree Ellis: I think it’s a long time coming. All the countries are from the COSAFA region, so I think it’s a long time coming, where I think it could be done, and it should be done more often. We have the teams from COSAFA going to the 2024/2025 WAFCON. So, it’s an opportunity again, having two games. We wanted to make sure that we utilise every window. If you go back to last year, June, we utilised the window with the two games, October, we had Denmark and England, November, we did Jamaica two games. Then we had this new group with Lesotho. In March/April we did Malawi, two games, and now we had these two games. So, we are trying to utilise it as much as we can because it’s really important to look at players. We had different players against Senegal. We had a local based team against Denmark and we brought in a few internationals against England. Against Jamaica, we had less internationals available and against Lesotho, a very young team to make the core group bigger and then Malawi, also a different group. We wanted to look at other players as well to make sure that we give ourselves every opportunity. We all know how important this WAFCON is

as defending champions, it’s going to be a lot more difficult than winning it. Everybody has improved, everybody has picked up. We’re happy to have some players from injury also to see where they are at, how we can help to make them be better and where we are at and what we still need to work on. But we will go into a longer camp to prepare.

LK: Botswana and Zambia are familiar foes, but under new coaches this time around, and their teams have also improved. What are some of the key things that you wanted to be tested against these nations?

DE: I know Coach Alex [Malete], he was assistant coach back then when we played Botswana. We’ve been in contact way before we started playing each other, because they’ve also played other countries, and we try to share videos like we normally do and try to assist like we normally do. They have a top goalkeeper in [Sedilame] Boseja, top players playing abroad in universities in the US. We knew they’d bring the physicality. We knew they were going to bring their transitions. We knew they can bring their aerial ability. We found ways of overcoming them. Zambia, on the other hand, has got a new coach as well, a lot of players who are playing really well abroad. Their U17s have qualified for back-to-back [World Cups], no secret why they have become such a huge success. Going back-to-back to the Olympics as well, and the CAF Women’s Player of the Year in Barbara Banda. They have so many quality players in their squad, so they challenged us in a different way, with their speed up front and their transition. Coach Nora [Häuptle] was talking about how she wants to have an all-round team. And they challenged us in a different way, and then we had to find ways to overcome them. But it’s not about the



now, it's about them testing us to see what we still have to work on because we can't be perfect right now.

LK: Coach, the tournament is now just weeks away. Were those matches able to assist you in terms of consolidating the final team?

DE: Like I said, since last year, we've had different groups of sets of players. Some have come back, some haven't come back. We've had a look at more players, new players, players that have been on form, players that have been out with injury, players that have been in the team a very long time ago, like Regina Mogolola. We always say the door is never closed, that's another example. To make sure that when we finalised everything that we've given as many players an opportunity over the last year or so, to make sure that we get the things right. So, this will help us as well. We cannot choose everyone, of course, but we are having a look at players and then finalising everything. And it's not weeks, it's hours [to the WAFCON] because we measure that in training hours.

LK: I'm thinking about it from a spectator point of view.

DE: Yeah, we look at it as hours, how we can utilise it as hours.

LK: Coach, I know some players were unavailable, but how difficult was it to narrow down from the originally named 46 players and what did you consider most?

DE: It really was not easy as there have been so many players that have played really well so far this season but we are looking at versatility more than anything. The final squad is 21 players and in 2022 we had 23 players and could use any 21 on match day. We know we have to look at versatility that will give us many more options.

LK: With the domestic league back flowing and we are seeing the girls at home competing, and some of them who are at new teams, adapting and doing well, and those returning from injury and also the girls abroad have also had good seasons as well. What kind of headache are you having now?

DE: It's a headache you want to have. Like we say, we want to look at as many players as possible. You know some didn't get a call-back but we haven't forgotten about anyone. We also just want to look at others and see what they offer. A lot of versatility will help because it will give you options and you want to have that headache, but you want to make sure that you look at players, how they fit in, how you want to play, etc. All of those things you take into consideration. So, we looked at quite a number of players. I know people want results, and of course, we do because it gives confidence, it gives



"IT'S COMPLETELY DIFFERENT, THAT'S WHY THEY SAY TO WIN IT IS MUCH EASIER THAN DEFENDING IT. I MAY BE USING THE WRONG WORDS, BECAUSE NOW EVERY GAME YOU PLAY IS A FINAL, AND THEY WANT TO BRING YOU DOWN."

momentum. But when you're having these friendlies testing out players, you want to play players. You don't want to just keep them on the bench, you want to make sure you test them. But, obviously, at camp they first have to show you in training because if they are not playing in training it's difficult to play one over the other.

LK: We can't downplay Fifi's return to the team. I know when she returned to playing at her club there was a lot of conversation and questions to you why she was not in the previous camp? And you said you were going to observe her and now she's back.

DE: It's not easy to return from injury especially when it takes so long because you then think that it's never going to heal, it's never going to get better. But I think coming to the home comfort being with family and having it sorted out and by the time the Malawi game came, she had played one game after 11 months. I don't think it would have been fair on her or on anyone. And I had conversations with her to say that I needed her to have more game-time, like her coach [Sizwe Sibiyi] was saying to fall in love with the game again. And you could see that and you know the quality that Fifi has. It's just about getting more game-time and getting fitter. You know we said we were always going to call her back but not just her but also other players that have recovered from injury. I mean

Bamba [Bambanani Mbane] hasn't played for the national team since November, Karabo [Dhlamini] hasn't played since November and Fifi hasn't played since last April. Those players coming back from injury was a big welcome to us. Wendy [Shongwe] is still out and hasn't recovered fully yet. We want to make sure that we give her an opportunity to recover before she gets a recall.

LK: You've been to WAFCON as a hunter, but now you go as the hunted...

DE: Yeah, it's completely different, that's why they say to win it is much easier than defending it. I may be using the wrong words, because now every game you play is a final, and they want to bring you down. You know, when you've played Nigeria, who have won it multiple times, everybody wanted to beat Nigeria, it's going to be the same, and we have to be at our absolute best. We have to make sure we leave no stone unturned in the selection of our squad, in our preparation camp, and work on things that we know will make us better. But our players are a very resilient bunch, very committed, and it's a group that never gives up.

LK: Coach, what are your impressions so far of this Hollywoodbets League season?

DE: There's been a lot of inconsistency, to be honest. You know, some teams started really well and losing games that you'd expect them to win. For a lot of teams, a lot of new players have moved around. So, it takes a while to gel. New coaches, new players, it takes a while to get it right, and it might not happen in the season. But very interesting to see players moving around, and I did say at the beginning of the season, I'm very excited because sometimes when players move around, you see a different type of player because maybe that club suits the player's style better. I've been impressed but also been a little bit disappointed in the intensity of the game. It's not always where we want it to be, and I think when I go to some games, players are really testing themselves, but it's still early days in the league. [Mamelodi] Sundowns, I think they have more depth than



“I HAD CONVERSATIONS WITH FIFI TO SAY THAT I NEEDED HER TO HAVE MORE GAME-TIME.”

anyone else, but they haven't been that consistent, drawing some games and other games being tight. I'm a bit disappointed with Durban Ladies at the bottom of the league. I know they have a good squad and I know it will be gutting for Mary-Jane [Sokhela], who has been in women's football for so long. I'm sure she's going to pull something out of her hat. And to all the other teams, we want to wish them all the best for the rest of the season.

LK: Lastly, Coach, with the national teams doing so well across the board, are you guys inspired, are you feeling pressure?

DE: (Chuckles) When Coach Shorty [Simphiwe Dlodlu] qualified for the U17 World Cup in 2018, we were still going to WAFCON later that year. And we said, 'Oh my goodness, look at the pressure.' I think when our national teams, our youth teams, do well, it always brings pressure, but it also inspires us, because it says, if they can, we can. It brings a lot of pressure. I think just being in the national team is pressure, and we take it game by game and day by day. And that's how we've always done it; otherwise, you lose focus on the task at hand.

LK: Thank you so much, Coach, and all the best.

Banyana Banyana Final Squad for WAFCON

Goalkeepers:

Kaylin Swart - JVW FC
Andile Dlamini - Mamelodi Sundowns FC
Dineo Magagula - TS Galaxy FC
Casey Gordon - JVW FC

Defenders:

Lebohang Ramalepe - Mamelodi Sundowns FC
Fikile Magama - UWC
Gabriela Salgado - JVW FC
Tiisetso Makhubela - Sundowns
Bambanani Mbane - Sundowns
Lonathemba Mhlongo - UWC
Karabo Dlamini - Sundowns

Midfielders:

Bongeka Gamede - FC Nordsjælland

Sibulele Holweni - UWC
Linda Motlhalo - Glasgow City
Nonhlanhla Mthandi - Sundowns
Refiloe Jane - TS Galaxy FC
Amogelang Motau - Club Tijuana
Regina Mogolola - JVW FC
Noxolo Cesane - Sundowns

Forwards:

Adrielle Mibe - UJ
Kgaelebane Mohlakoana -TP Mazembe
Hildah Magaia - Club Tijuana
Jermaine Seoposenwe - CF Monterrey
Nthabiseng Majiya - Sundowns
Bonolo Mokoma - JVW FC
Ronnell Donnelly - UWC



THE OUADDOU ERA BEGINS AT ORLANDO PIRATES

Dr Irvin Khoza has never been a stranger to the unexpected. Over the decades at the helm of Orlando Pirates, the man known as The Iron Duke has built a reputation for pulling off masterstrokes in moments when few see them coming. Whether it's a bold move in the boardroom or a surprise on the sidelines, Khoza has long embraced the role of football's ultimate illusionist – a strategist who rarely shows his hand until the trick is done.

The appointment of Abdeslam Ouaddou, the former Moroccan national team captain, as Jose Riveiro's successor at the Buccaneers, is yet another testament to Khoza's ability to defy expectations with quiet precision. In typical fashion, while the local football fraternity speculated, second-guessed, and followed red herrings, Khoza worked in silence – only to unveil a move no one truly anticipated. It was classic misdirection: while the spotlight drifted toward more familiar names, Khoza reached deep into his hat and produced a left-field yet calculated choice in Ouaddou; ROB DELPORT, who did mention Ouaddou as an outsider in a feature in Edition 207, reports more.

Ouaddou will work alongside current Pirates staff – Mandla Ncikazi (assistant), Rayaan Jacobs (assistant), Helmi Gueldich (strength and conditioning coach) and Tyron Damons (goalkeeper coach)

A former defender of repute, Ouaddou is no stranger to South African football, having spent the past few months at Marumo Gallants. But few would have predicted that he would emerge as the man entrusted to lead Pirates into a new era. His arrival signals not just a new face in the dugout, but a shift in philosophy.

Once again, Dr Khoza has reminded

us that in football, as in magic, the best tricks are the ones you never see coming.

Former Orlando Pirates striker, Andries “Local is Lekker” Sebola, who is now a football analyst, believes that while Ouaddou will face several challenges, it is good that he is familiar with local football already.

“I wouldn't say I've seen that much of him during his time at Marumo Gallants, but clearly Pirates have been impressed by what he did there and maybe before then even,” Sebola told iDiski Times.

“I think the good thing is that he comes in with some knowledge of the PSL, and that is going to be an advantage, and he might do well.

“The challenge he faces is that he is taking over from a coach who has done very well at Pirates, and one who was liked by the fans, who will be expecting him to do much better.

“And if he does not start well, he will be under immense pressure, and we know how that can be at Pirates. They are big boots he is coming in to fill, and my hope is that the players quickly adapt to his ways.

“He, too, will have to be careful not to change the way Pirates play too much - Riveiro has laid a good foundation and all he has to do is build on from it.”

Ouaddou has not been far from the headlines in recent months, especially after his turbulent and ultimately dramatic exit from Gallants – the very club he had helped stabilise during a chaotic stretch earlier this year. Appointed in the midst of uncertainty, Ouaddou had stepped into a struggling side and brought a sense of direction

and structure, earning praise for steadying the ship. But his departure proved just as newsworthy as his arrival.

What followed was a public exchange that turned into something of a saga. Ouaddou announced that he had parted ways with the club, citing professional reasons – but Gallants immediately issued a statement to dispute his version of events, suggesting he was still contracted and had not formally exited. The confusion triggered a flurry of speculation and questions about internal dysfunction at the club.

Unwilling to let his narrative be reshaped, Ouaddou responded swiftly and decisively, presenting his own version of events with clarity and conviction – effectively setting the record straight. It was a rare moment of transparency in a local football scene often cloaked in behind-the-scenes opacity, and it demonstrated both the coach’s professionalism and his unwillingness to be sidelined by ambiguity.

The episode may have briefly cast a shadow over his career, but it ultimately served to illuminate Ouaddou’s defining qualities: principle, resolve, and an unwavering commitment to integrity. Rather than diminish him, the moment revealed the kind of leader he is – one who stands firm in his convictions, even when the stakes are high. In retrospect, it feels less like a misstep and more like a bold statement of intent – a fitting prelude to the next chapter in his evolving story, which now brings him to the revered corridors of Pirates, where character and conviction are as essential as tactical acumen.

It was perhaps during his brief but impactful stint at Gallants that Ouaddou truly caught the eye of the Pirates hierarchy. When Pirates first faced Gallants earlier in the 2024/25 season, they had torn them apart with ruthless efficiency – cruising to an emphatic 8-1 victory that left the Bloemfontein-based side reeling. At that point, few would have predicted that Gallants would later become the architects of one of Pirates’ rare defeats.

However, when the two sides met again later in the season, with Ouaddou now at the helm of Gallants, the narrative flipped dramatically. With tactical organisation, discipline, and a renewed sense of belief instilled by their new coach, Gallants executed a clinical game plan – stunning the Buccaneers with a 2-0 victory, one of the few blemishes in an otherwise strong campaign for the Soweto giants.

That result did more than just earn Gallants three points; it sent a message. It was a performance that spoke volumes about Ouaddou’s ability to galvanise a struggling squad, impose tactical clarity, and instil the kind of grit that wins difficult matches. In that moment, on that day, he didn’t just defeat



“MY JOB IS TO TRY TO MAKE THEM RECOGNISE THE SITUATION OF THE GAMES. TO TEACH THEM THAT THEY CAN HAVE SOME SITUATION IN THE GAME, AND THEY HAVE TO BE ABLE TO ANSWER THAT PROBLEM.”

a heavyweight – he demonstrated that, given the right tools, he could stand shoulder to shoulder with the league’s elite. And it’s likely that it was that exact impression which quietly laid the groundwork for his eventual appointment at Mayfair.

But who exactly is Ouaddou?

While he may not yet be a household name in South African football circles, Ouaddou arrives with a pedigree that commands respect. A former Moroccan national team captain with over 80 international caps, Ouaddou was not only a stalwart at the heart of defence for his country but also built a formidable professional career in Europe and beyond.

He spent the bulk of his playing days in France, where he became a mainstay at AS Nancy, admired for his composure, tactical intelligence, and leadership qualities. His performances earned him a move to Fulham in the English Premier League, where he further sharpened his craft against some of the world’s best. His journey also included stints in Greece and the Middle East, experiences that enriched his understanding of diverse footballing cultures and philosophies.

Upon hanging up his boots, Ouaddou transitioned into coaching with the same commitment he showed as a player. He began his post-playing career at grassroots level, working with youth teams at Nancy to develop the next generation of talent – an experience that grounded his philosophy in discipline, player development, and

long-term vision.

His coaching journey, however, was not without its complexities. A brief and controversial spell apprenticing in Algeria drew attention due to the strained political relationship between Morocco and Algeria, yet Ouaddou remained steadfast in his commitment to his craft. He went on to take up posts at Mouloudia Club d'Oujda in Morocco, Loto-Popo FC in Benin, and, of course, AS Vita in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

It was during his tenure at Vita that Ouaddou showed his mettle, even amidst challenging conditions. Following a CAF Confederation Cup defeat to Stellenbosch FC in Cape Town, Ouaddou made headlines by resigning during the post-match press conference, citing unmanageable off-field issues and administrative hurdles. Despite the drama, his poise and clarity in that moment were striking. In fact, I remember turning to veteran journalist Mark Gleeson after Ouaddou exited the room and saying, "Now, that's a coach I'd love to see in South Africa".

A few months later, that wish became a reality. Ouaddou was appointed at Gallants, a club in the midst of a relegation fight. Though his time there was brief – just 12 matches across all competitions – he made an instant impact. Under his guidance, Gallants experienced a resurgence, collecting five wins, four draws, and only three losses, ultimately steering the club to a respectable tenth-place finish. It was a turnaround that didn't go unnoticed – one that underlined Ouaddou's ability to steady a sinking ship, impose structure, and inspire belief in difficult times.

In an interview with iDiski Times in March, Ouaddou explained his coaching philosophy.

"My philosophy is, first of all, to give confidence to the players that they can succeed and to work on the pitch in order to help them to have a very good fitness," he told iDiski Times.

"My job is to try to make them recognise the situation of the games. To teach them that they can have some situation in the game, and they have to be able to answer that problem.

"And it's my methodology actually, to put problems on the training and to push the players to resolve the problem, because this problem, they can find it on the pitch, and I don't want to play PlayStation with them.

"My methodology is to create problems in the training in order to recognise situations in the game and to be able to resolve them themselves."

He also said he hoped to coach in South Africa for the foreseeable future.

"I have the opportunity to come as well



"I HAD A LOT OF OPPORTUNITIES TO WORK IN EUROPE, BUT SINCE I STARTED MY CAREER, I'M A BIT LIKE A PAN AFRICANIST. SO I WANTED TO BRING ALL MY KNOWLEDGE, MY EXPERIENCE, TO AFRICAN COUNTRIES."

to South Africa, and to bring some ideas and the main subject of these things, in my opinion, it's not about money, it's not about something else – it's about passion.

"Because we love football and the main thing is that we love Africa, we love our continent, and it's why we come here to work. To be honest, if I can stay in South Africa, 10 years, I will stay 10 years, because it's a wonderful country. It's a country that I love, and I love Africa.

"I had a lot of opportunities to work in Europe, but since I started my career, I'm a bit like a Pan Africanist. So I wanted to bring all my knowledge, my experience, to African countries. I already started in Benin, in DRC, and now I am in South Africa. I trained as well a little bit in Morocco but if I can stay here for 10 years, I will stay 10 years, because definitely, I love the country and its people."

Now, as he takes the reins at Pirates, one of the continent's most storied clubs, Ouaddou's journey from Alnif to Soweto enters a bold new chapter – one where he'll be expected not only to manage the pressure but to thrive under it.



RAPOO ON NYATHI COMPARISONS, TYSON INFLUENCE & WINNING U20 AFCON

The 2024/25 season has been a campaign for youngsters to stake their claim in the professional ranks. One such youngster is SuperSport United’s teenage defender NEO RAPOO. Rapoo made a return to Matsatsantsa’s first team, where he featured in 14 matches in all competitions, 12 of those in the league, where his side finished just one position away from the playoffs. In the same campaign, the 19-year-old made history with the South African national U20 side as they won the U20 Africa Cup of Nations and qualified for the 2025 FIFA U20 World Cup to be hosted in Chile later in the year. iDiski Times writer LETHABO KGANYAGO caught up with the youngster on his return from Egypt with Amajita to reflect on the tournament, where he also captained the side in some games. Rapoo also spoke about maintaining belief when things weren’t working for the club and his confidence in the side bouncing back next season.

Lethabo Kganyago: Neo, thank you for speaking to us, and congratulations once more to you and Amajita for winning the U20 AFCON. How have the last couple of days been for you?

Neo Rapoo: Thank you. The last few days have been magnificent, amazing, obviously, knowing we made South Africa proud and people telling us how great we’ve done. They were always sending us messages, telling us that we’re behind us. So it’s just amazing, and I’m honestly grateful for what I’ve achieved.

“COACH HUGO, WE HEARD WHAT HE SAID. WE JUST GOT TO KEEP GRINDING, AND WE’D REALLY PLAY FOR BAFANA BAFANA ONE DAY.”

LK: You arrived a little late at camp. How important was it for you that your club allowed you to go to the AFCON?

NR: To be honest, I’m really grateful because I knew how they really needed me, but I’m really grateful that they allowed me to go there and just show the world what I’m all about. And I promised them to come back with the trophy, and I really did. It was amazing.

LK: Arriving there and stepping into the captain’s role. Did you expect that, and how do you think you fared?

NR: To be honest, it was amazing because we were training then I told one of the Physio coaches that I really want to be captain. You know I told them I want to be captain, and I think it was a game against Tanzania, when I got to the changing room, I saw that I was captain, and I was really happy. I



really knew that from now on, I need to start leading from the front, you know, communication, showing the gents, the younger guys that we're going to go fight now and just go there fearless.

LK: What was your favourite moment of the captaincy?

NR: To be honest, just being the captain, you know, just leading the team and wearing the armband, I think that's just a highlight for me, and also scoring and assisting. Obviously, [Patrick] Autata was the main captain, so he was the one who lifted the trophy. But you know, being the skipper until the final was just amazing for me, and I'm really grateful.

LK: And the switch in positions, how was it for you?

NR: Ja, I really thought I wasn't going to do very well, and it turns out I can actually play that role. And obviously, I think coach Raymond [Mdaka] and coach Karabo [Mogudi], they know I'm good offensively and I can also defend. So they were like, 'No, we need you to go attack and also defend at the same time', which I was really tired after a few games. But it really worked for the team, and I'm willing to do that for my country.

LK: And what stood out for you, the level of opposition and even some of your teammates?

NR: I think I cannot point out anyone, just everyone in that team was just amazing, everyone. Everyone was just amazing. And obviously, our opposition, DR Congo, that was a tough game. But I think the hunger, the determination, you know, we just really went there, telling ourselves that we're not going to lose. Yeah, that really helped us.

LK: The cherry on top was qualifying for the World Cup. How happy are you guys?

NR: Yeah, I mean, the mandate was to qualify for the World Cup. As soon as we qualified for the World Cup, we could see that we can really actually win it. And when the President [Danny Jordan-SAFA] came telling us that he didn't come here for nothing, he really wanted the trophy, we knew that we had to deliver that for him, and we really kept our promise and did it for him.

LK: Did you hear the message from Coach Hugo Broos when you guys arrived home from the AFCON?

NR: Yeah, I heard him. Everyone there in that team has the potential to be in that Bafana Bafana team. But it's all through timing and waiting for God to open that door for you. And I know everyone there is monitored very well for playing for Bafana, but Coach Hugo, we heard what he said. We just got to keep grinding, and we'd really play for Bafana Bafana one day.

LK: I spoke to your club captain Tyson Hlatshwayo, and he compared you to David Nyathi. Do you know how



"TYSON HAS BEEN MY MENTOR SINCE I DON'T KNOW, I WAS YOUNG. I REMEMBER I TOOK A PICTURE WITH HIM WHEN I WAS LIKE 12 YEARS OLD, AND NOW TODAY I'M PLAYING WITH HIM."

big of a compliment that is?

NR: I didn't even know that he said that, but I'm a really grateful man. Obviously, Tyson has been my mentor since I don't know, I was young. I remember I took a picture with him when I was like 12 years old, and now today I'm playing with him. He's my captain, you know. He's not just a leader on the field but also outside, and I'm really grateful to have someone like him that I'm playing with and, you know, just being out there, calling, going out for lunches, so it's just amazing to have him around.

LK: Obviously, when you left for the AFCON, your club wasn't doing well. Does this feel like an indifferent season for you, doing great with the national team and struggling with the club?

NR: Yeah, of course, I knew that as a club, we were really down there, and I really believed that it's all going to be over soon. We just had to go through the storm, and then hopefully next season, we come back stronger, better, and we'll finish top four, hopefully.

LK: When you were promoted, did you ever think that a brand like SuperSport could find itself in this position?

NR: To be honest, you can never confirm such because it's football. I have no control over that, and the club, of course, it's just a season whereby we're just doing kind of bad. But I really believe that we can bounce back and be on the top form and finish top four again. You know the quality we have is just amazing, big names. So I really believe that we'll really bounce back.

LK: Thank you very much, Neo.

PREMIERSHIP CHART TOPPERS 24/25

As we draw the curtain on the 2024/25 Betway Premiership, our closing feature turns the spotlight on the campaign’s unsung metrics and hidden stand-outs. Everyone already knows who walked away with the Golden Boot and whose gloves remained spotless the longest – but goals scored and clean sheets are only two threads in football’s far richer tapestry. We’ve sifted through the season’s data to unveil five players who topped different categories – from chance-creation kings and pressing dynamos to duel specialists and late-game lifesavers. Together, these honours paint a fuller picture of excellence and influence, highlighting the many ways footballers can tilt a match without always finding their name on the scoreboard.

LUCAS RIBEIRO



ATTACKING	
Goals Scored:	16
Assists:	9
Goal Contribution:	26
Penalties:	2/2
Scoring Frequency in min:	129
Shots per Match:	2.7
Shots on Target per Match:	1.2
BUILD-UP	
Big Chances Created:	12
Key Passes per Match:	1.6



IQRAAM RAYNERS



ATTACKING	
Goals Scored:	14
Assists:	9
Goal Contribution:	23
Scoring Frequency in min:	131
Shots on Target per Match:	1.0
BUILD-UP	
Big Chances Created:	10



ARTHUR SALES



ATTACKING	
Goals Scored:	8
Assists:	8
Goal Contribution:	16
Penalties:	127



KELETSO MAKGALWA



ATTACKING	
Assists:	11
Goal Contribution:	15
BUILD-UP	
Big Chances Created:	17
Key Passes per Match:	2.5
Successful Dribbles per Match:	2.0 (40%)



ATTACKING

GOAL SCORERS:

1. Lucas Ribeiro	16	
2. Iqraam Rayners	14	
3. Arthur Sales	8	
4. Devin Titus	8	
5. Dzenan Zajmovic	8	

ASSISTS:

1. Keletso Makgalwa	11	
2. Lucas Ribeiro	9	
3. Iqraam Rayners	9	
4. Arthur Sales	8	
5. Relebohile Mofokeng	7	

GOAL CONTRIBUTORS:

1. Lucas Ribeiro	26	
2. Iqraam Rayners	23	
3. Arthur Sales	16	
4. Keletso Makgalwa	15	
5. Devin Titus	13	

PENALTIES:

1. Mcedi Vandala	3/3	
2. Lebohang Nkaki	3/3	
3. Edgar Manaka	3/4	
4. Lucas Ribeiro	2/2	
* 15 players with 1 penalty		

* in minutes

SCORING FREQUENCY:

1. Arthur Sales	127	
2. Lucas Ribeiro	129	
3. Iqraam Rayners	131	
4. Evidence Makgopa	184	
5. Chibuike Ohizu	184	

SHOTS PER MATCH:

1. Gabadinho Mhango	2.9	
2. Lucas Ribeiro	2.7	
3. Glody Lilepo	2.6	
4. Daniel Msendami	2.5	
5. Victor Letsoalo	2.2	

SHOTS ON TARGET PER MATCH:

1. Lucas Ribeiro	1.2	
2. Glody Lilepo	1.1	
3. Relebohile Mofokeng	1.0	
4. Iqraam Rayners	1.0	
5. Bradley Grobler + Keletso Makgalwa	0.9	





BUILD-UP

BIG CHANCES CREATED:

1. Keletso Makgalwa	17	
2. Lucas Ribeiro	12	
3. Riaan Hanamub	12	
4. Relebohile Mofokeng	11	
5. Fawaaz Basadien	10	
Iqraam Rayners	10	
Gaston Sirino	10	

BUILD-UP

ACCURATE PASSES PER MATCH:

1. Grant Kekana	67.6	
2. Malibongwe Khoza	67.3	
3. Teboho Mokoena	62.0	
4. Aubrey Modiba	53.0	
5. Taariq Fielies	52.3	

KEY PASSES PER MATCH:

1. Relebohile Mofokeng	2.7	
2. Keletso Makgalwa	2.5	
3. Gaston Sirino	1.8	
4. Lyle Lakay	1.6	
5. Lucas Ribeiro	1.6	
Mcedi Vandala	1.6	
Mduduzi Shabalala	1.6	

SUCCESSFUL DRIBBLES PER MATCH:

1. Keletso Makgalwa	2.0 (40%)	
2. Raymond Daniels	1.8 (53%)	
3. Daniel Msendami	1.7 (43%)	
4. Langelihle Phili	1.6 (56%)	
5. Mike Sebelebele	1.6 (49%)	

DEFENCE

TACKLES PER MATCH:

1. Sibongiseni Mthethwa	2.9	
2. Nkosikhona Ndaba	2.7	
3. Vuyo Letlapa	2.6	
4. Masindi Nemtajela	2.5	
5. Samukelo Kabini	2.4	

INTERCEPTION PER MATCH:

1. Ben Motshwari	1.9	
2. Lebohang Mabotja	1.7	
3. Tshepo Makgoga	1.6	
4. Makhehlene Makhuala	1.5	
5. Siphesihle Ndlovu	1.5	

CLEARANCES PER MATCH:






1. Bulelani Nikani	8.5	
2. Marvin Sikhosana	7.8	
3. Lebohang Mkaki	7.6	
4. Nathan Fasika	7.6	
5. Lorenzo Gordinho	7.6	

GOALKEEPING

CLEAN SHEETS:

1. Elvis Chipezeze	11	
2. Sipho Chaine	10	
3. Ronwen Willuams	10	
4. Darren Keet	10	
5. Stanley Nwabali	9	
Salim Magoola	9	

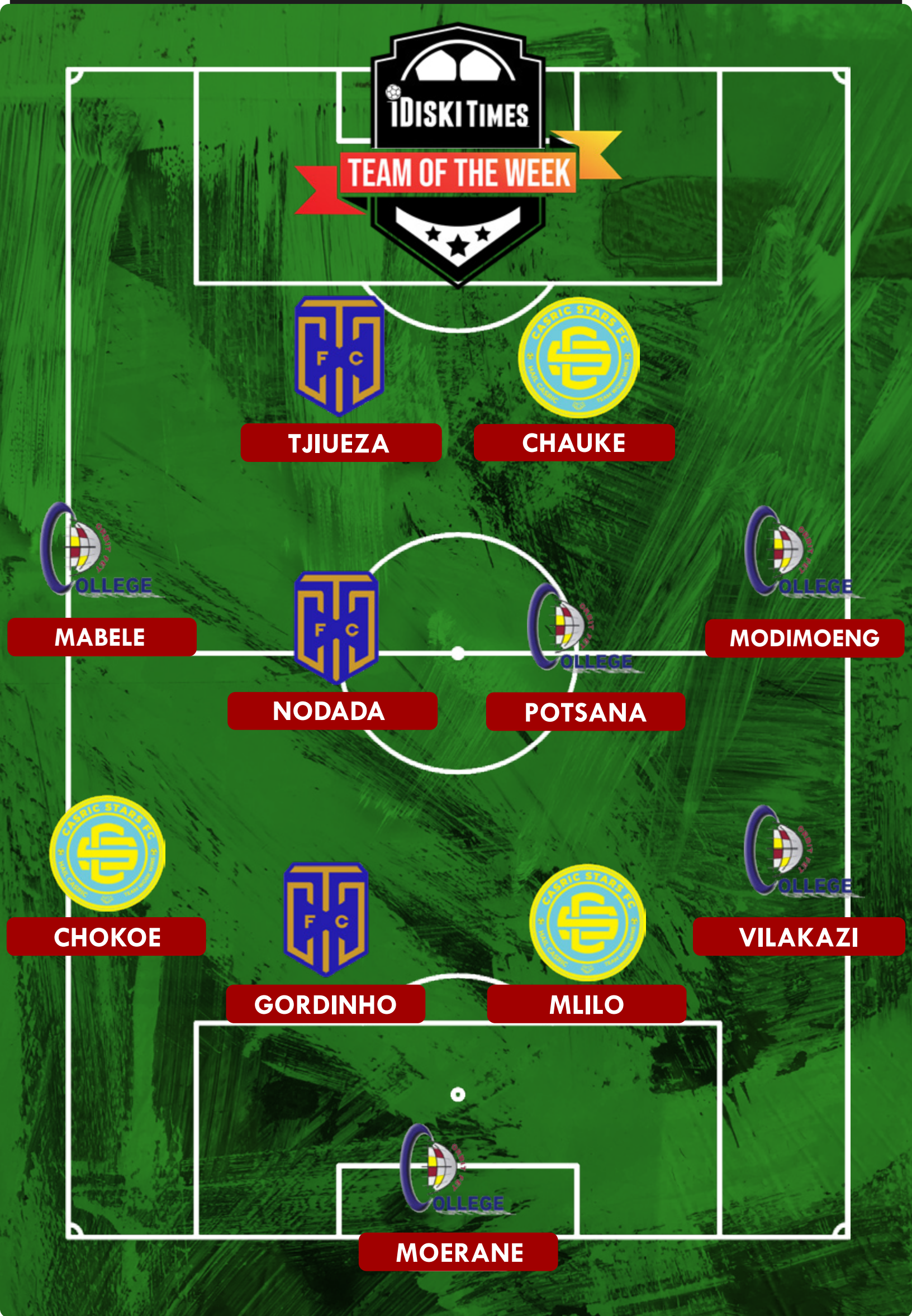
LEAST CONCEDED PER MATCH:

1. Ronwen Williams	0.4	
2. Salim Magoola	0.7	
3. Sipho Chaine	0.7	
4. Manuel Sapunga	0.8	
5. Sage Stephens	0.8	

SAVES PER MATCH:

1. Stanley Nwabali	3.6	
2. Badra Ali Sangare	3.1	
3. Ira Tape	3.0	
4. Elvis Chipezeze	2.7	
5. Washington Arubi	2.6	

PROMOTIONAL PLAYOFFS TEAM OF THE WEEK XI (18-21 JUNE 2025)



ACE OF THE WEEK:
IQRAAM RAYNERS

This week's iDiski Times Ace of the Week goes to Mamelodi Sundowns striker Iqraam Rayners after his goal scoring feats at the FIFA Club World Cup in the United States. While it was a challenging start to the tournament for African sides, Sundowns were the only team from Africa to claim victory, a 1-0 triumph over South Korea's Ulsan Hyundai in Orlando. Rayners, in particular, was electric on the night, finding the back of the net three times. Unfortunately for the in-form striker, two of his strikes were marginally chalked off by VAR, but his persistence paid off as he ultimately delivered the match-winner. He was on the scoresheet again on Saturday, this time grabbing Sundowns' second in their 4-3 defeat to German giants Borussia Dortmund.



The Drawing Board with Moritz Kossmann

This week, we continue The Drawing Board series with iDiski Times' coaching guru MORITZ KOSSMANN.

Born in Germany, but having spent most of his life in South Africa, he came to the fore while working at the Ubuntu Football Academy. Moritz was then the head coach of Cape Town City's DStv

Diski Challenge team for the 2023/24 campaign and also in charge of the club youth's department. In June 2024, Kossmann became part of the technical team at the Austrian club SV Ried.

His columns have proved increasingly popular, and have been republished (and translated) worldwide. He has also provided content for one of the world-leading tactics blogs - spielverlagerung.com.

EXPERT INTERVIEW: EDUARD BUXMANN

This week we have the great privilege to talk to my colleague at SV Ried, EDUARD BUXMANN. Buxmann is an assistant coach at SV Ried, who won the 2nd Austrian Bundesliga in 2024/2025 and gained promotion to the Austrian Bundesliga. Eduard no doubt played a key role in this success with his extremely high volume of quality hard work. A large part of this work is done preparing and conducting video analysis of various types. We will try to get some better insight and understanding of this topic through our conversation with him.

Edi, thank you for your time. Firstly, can you give us some basic insights into your work ?

EB: My role is divided into analysing activities and tasks on the pitch. Together with the coaching team, we draw up a match-plan and communicate it to the team throughout the week.

What is the basic workflow in an average work week in your life during the season?

EB: We assume a normal week. For example, we play on Saturday and Sunday. After the game, we start the analysis activity in the office. And prepare the post-match analysis for the next day. (MD+1) We compare our game with the match-plan and look for scenes that are relevant for the next game or for the whole season, for example, identity scenes. You have to see our identity in every game. (a high level of activity in the game with and without the ball)

MD+1, we start with the post-match analysis, and after that, I prepare the individual analysis. I divide the work between MD+1 and MD+2(is the off

day).

On MD-4, we have a double training day. In the morning, we start with a gym session in two groups. And this is the time for individual analyses. In the afternoon, we have the session on the pitch with small-sided games.

On MD-3, we roughly present our match-plan(we prepare this finally on MD-4) with a Team meeting before the training. In the training, we play large-sided games and play 11v11. After the training, I start to analyse the 11v11. Which topics would be implemented well and which would not. This is important for the final Match-plan, which we present on the MD-1

On MD-2, I prepare the final match-plan, with the Head Coach together.

On MD-1, the Head Coach presents the match-plan in a team meeting.

After the training on the pitch, I have a few players who want to see more clips about their opponents. What are patterns from the strikers, for example, in the box.

After the training, I start to analyse the next opponent.

Matchday: We prepare together with the coaching staff what if when. It means for example, the opponent has a red card, or we have a red card.

I spend the rest of the time until the match analysing our next opponent.

How many hours do you spend on various topics, especially when it comes to video analysis?

EB: Very difficult to say, for example, it depends on the next opponent, how many times have I seen them in the past.



Individual analyses can be calculated at around one hour per player. Prepare the scenes and the conversation. Post match analysis, with three to four hours.

Match-plan spread over the whole week, prepare the analysis, thoughts and so on, 10 until 15 hours.

The striker analysis from the opponent, one hour per player.

How do you go about preparing and conducting an individual video analysis, and how does this vary between different players?

EB: Yes, it is very different. Everyone reacts differently to pressure in the game, for example, the score in the game and so on, then you have to work out solutions together. I always look at the last game and which content is important for the next game. Then I always look at the perception of the player. The scouting feed isn't the view of the player. The referee cam is a good example of how the view of a player is. And then I work together with the player to find the best solution for him with the parameters of position, moment, direction and speed.



Every analysis includes what he does really well and why this is important for the nix opponent, so that he can use his strengths to his and our advantage.

Then we move onto post-match analysis. What is important in your opinion in a good post-match analysis on team level ?

EB: A good analysis has to be able to recognise whether we have brought our identity onto the pitch. What have we specifically planned for the opponent, and what is important for the next one.

Then we will look at pre-match analysis? How do you go about preparing for an upcoming opponent, and what is important in your opinion when it comes to this? In conjunction with this, how can we transfer the video analysis to the training pitch?

EB: I watch the last few games, how they played against opponents with a similar basic organisation. The results of the last few games are important; if they have a negative run, they may do something different. Then you have to look at whether they've ever been in a situation like this before and how they reacted.

The transfer on the pitch is important; it has to make sense for the players. What they practice on the pitch helps them in the game. For example, the opponent presses very high, so I have to put the players in pressure situations, and then I can work out solutions on the pitch. Against a passive opponent, I want the opponent to become active, for example by dribbling, which must be modelled in training.

Then, finally, we have group analysis, which is perhaps a lesser-known type of video analysis. What are, in your opinion, the advantages of this type of analysis as well as the potential pitfalls when using it?

EB: The important thing is that as a coach you have to set the frame for the topic and then lead the group to a profitable dialogue. It has many advantages; the players exchange their perceptions and come up with solutions together, gaining trust in each other.

Thank you for your time.



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