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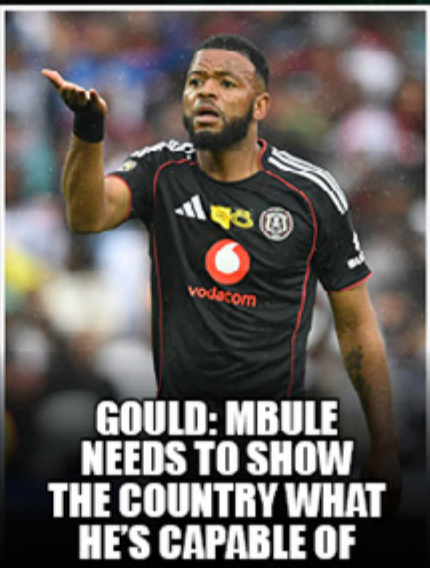
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DOLLY WANTED BY SURPRISE PSL CLUB



SIWELELE CLOSE IN ON RELEASED CHIEFS PLAYER



GOULD: MBULE NEEDS TO SHOW THE COUNTRY WHAT HE'S CAPABLE OF



MALESELA ON TRUST ISSUES, HIS BIG DREAM & GOING BACK AFTER BEING FIRED

THE DRAWING BOARD WITH MORITZ KOSSMANN & ACE OF THE WEEK

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TEAM OF THE WEEK
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MOKWANA ATTRACTS INTEREST FROM SAUDI CLUB

Saudi Pro League side Al Hazem are keen on the services of Bafana Bafana winger Elias Mokwana, who looks set to leave Esperance Sportive de Tunis. The club, which won promotion to the top-flight via the playoffs, are one of several teams that have made contact with Esperance but are said to be leading the race for his services. Mokwana has made it clear he'd like to be in a competitive league next season as he looks to retain his place in the senior national team set-up ahead of the 2025 Africa Cup of Nations and 2026 FIFA World Cup.



MAEMA SET FOR SIMBA SWITCH?

With South Africa's exit from the CHAN tournament confirmed on Monday after their dramatic 3-3 draw with hosts Uganda, Neo Maema, who captained Bafana Bafana at the tournament, looks now to complete a move to Simba in Tanzania, where he will reunite with his former Mamelodi Sundowns teammate Rushine De Reuck. Sundowns have already confirmed that the 29-year-old is leaving Chloorkop, and Maema is now set to join Fadlu Davids' team for the 2025/26 campaign.



CITY KEEN ON LURING DOLLY TO CAPE TOWN?

Cape Town City are said to be keen on luring Keagan Dolly to the club ahead of the 2025/26 season in an ambitious approach for the second-tier side. Dolly, 32, is currently with the South Africa national team at the African Nations Championship in East Africa and without a club after parting ways with TS Galaxy. The Citizens are ready to bolster their squad with the experienced winger as a potential leader for their squad-rebuild, having signed Mickey van der Hart, Sifiso Ngobeni, Njabulo Ngcobo and Simon van Duivenbooden as their new spine after a shock relegation via the playoffs last season.



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SEEMA LOOKS TO EXPERIENCE AS SIWELELE NOT DONE IN THE MARKET

Siwelele FC have endured a whirlwind off-season after the status acquisition of SuperSport United, and their transfer policy so far has been clear: add experience to an already talented, but underperforming squad.

Having finished last season narrowly avoiding the drop under interim coach Andre Arendse after the sacking of Gavin Hunt, the rebranded top-flight outfit were said to be in talks with Cavin Johnson before a more familiar name to the Bloemfontein faithful in Lehlohonolo Seema was appointed.

Seema had previously been in charge of Bloemfontein Celtic and earned major plaudits for his work at Sekhukhune United before being sacked on two separate occasions.

With the time constraints to rebuild, he went for familiarity, signing Wayde Lekay, veteran defender Buhle Mkhwanazi, to replace his former defensive partner Thulani Hlatshwayo, and two midfielders he previously worked with, Relebogile Mokhouane and Siphelele Luthuli at Sekhukhune and the now-defunct

Celtic, respectively.

After a positive start to the season, thrashing Golden Arrows 3-1, they were brought down to earth with a 1-0 away loss to ORBIT College in Soweto last week, and it appears, they are now closing in on another former Celtic star, Tebogo Potsane, who resurfaced at Eskom Megawatt Park for training after being released by Kaizer Chiefs.

The nucleus of the squad remains exciting with the likes of Siyabonga Ndebele, Siviwe Magidigidi, while the likes of junior internationals Thabang Mahlangu and Oratilwe Moloisane are pushing for places in the starting line-up.

Seema's call to experience will undoubtedly help ease the pressure on the talented emerging crop of players, who struggled to cope with the demands last season.

Of the current squad, 13 of the players are 25 and under, while their four recruits, set to be five, have an average age of 31.

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TSO VILAKAZI: BOTH SIDES ARE STILL IN THE GAME

After the first legs of the MTN8 semi-finals, Stellenbosch have a two-goal advantage over Sekhukhune United, but it's all square between Mamelodi Sundowns and Orlando Pirates after the 1-1 draw in Soweto.

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.

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Show Respect to Mofokeng - Tso Vilakazi

“Orlando Pirates management needs to show respect to Relebohile Mofokeng and his contributions at the club.

“Mofokeng won the Young Player of the Season award for two seasons in a row,

and now they want to replace him with Oswin Appollis, who has not proven himself at Orlando Pirates?

“Mofokeng cannot be sacrificed on the left wing, for a player who has not proven himself. You can't do well for two seasons and then be sacrificed for a new player.

“I thought the game was very exciting. Mamelodi Sundowns won the first half of the semi-final because Pirates decided to defend and play on the counter.

“Pirates came alive in the second half. Sipho Mbule was introduced, and he brought calm in the midfield.

“Sundowns made too many defensive changes and invited Pirates to attack them, and Pirates said, ‘Thank you very much,’ and the rest was history.

“I think the game is balanced. The second leg will be very interesting because both sides are still in the game.”

CHAINEDLAMINI READY TO FIGHT FOR EVERY TROPHY

It's been a season of change at Orlando Pirates. Abdeslam Ouaddou has stepped into the dugout, replacing Jose Riveiro; a number of familiar faces have moved on, and a wave of fresh talent has arrived to reshape the squad. Amid the turnover, two of the Buccaneers' senior figures,

SIPHO CHAINE and KABELO DLAMINI, stand as steady pillars. Far from unsettled, they've embraced the new era with open arms, setting their sights on raising the bar even higher than last season. For them, the challenge isn't just to adapt — it's to lead the charge in making this campaign one to remember. As the 2025/26 season kicked off, LORENZ KÖHLER and a few other members of the media spoke to the pair. While it hasn't been the best of starts in the league, Pirates still stand a chance of reaching the MTN8 final and defending their title, after fighting back and scoring late to draw 1-1 in the first leg against Mamelodi Sundowns.

Lorenz Köhler: Coming into the campaign as the holder of the Goalkeeper of the Season award, just what are your expectations? Do you look to try and even raise the bar further?

Sipho Chaine: Hey, man, it's going to be a very tough season. It's a new season. I think what we've done last season, what we achieved last season, is in the past. The best thing to do for myself is to maintain and get better than what I did last season. And for myself, personally, that's always the goal. Like I always say, to be better, to be a better goalkeeper, to improve different aspects that I think I can improve in the new season. I have an opportunity to do it again. That's my expectation of myself, to do it again.

LK: So what can you promise the Orlando Pirates supporters this season?

SC: As Orlando Pirates, we go into every game and play to win. And it's no different coming to this season, as to fight for every point that is available, to fight for every trophy that is available. And for us, it's just to go out there and do better than what we did last season, to make them happy, to get more victories, and to push for every game like I said.

LK: Just moving onto Bafana Bafana – the upcoming World Cup qualifiers and AFCON later this year. Are you looking to be there and to challenge Ronwen Williams for a chance to start?

SC: I think the opportunity for me is to play every domestic game. It's all I can control, to be better in every game that I play for Orlando Pirates. And without the team, there's no possibility of anything else outside that. So my full focus is to get better in each and every game that I play, to be a better goalkeeper, like I said earlier, and that is my sole aim this season, forgetting what we did last season and focusing on what else it is that I can do this season.

LK: Coach Riveiro's system is probably

CHAINE: "IT'S ALL I CAN CONTROL, TO BE BETTER IN EVERY GAME THAT I PLAY FOR ORLANDO PIRATES. AND WITHOUT THE TEAM, THERE'S NO POSSIBILITY OF ANYTHING ELSE OUTSIDE THAT."





one of the primary reasons that you fitted so well, because of the opportunity to play with the ball, but now with the new coach, are there any changes?

SC: No, not really. I think every player has his own attributes and how he plays, and nothing has changed, really, from my perspective. It's just trying to improve the small, finer things that I've always felt I can do better in. And back to your question, nothing really much has changed. It's still similar things that the coach requires from me as well.

LK: You have a few young goalkeepers playing back-up to you. How are they progressing in your opinion?

SC: Ja, I think we've made big strides as a department. You can attest to that in the award that we received now. And from ourselves, it's just to always keep working harder to get better. Yes, the individual award goes to a person, but I can put it in a group. The goalkeeping department of Pirates is doing well and we're happy to receive that award. Coach Tyrone [Damons] is doing a very good job for us, and we're in a good space, and we're working very hard to improve the different things that we feel that we need to improve.

LK: Thanks, Sipho.

KABELO DLAMINI

LK: Kabelo, new season, new coach, there are new players, new ambitions, and all the old players have a fresh start with a new coach. How are you feeling going into 2025/26?

Kabelo Dlamini: We're playing for Orlando Pirates, and I'm excited for a new season, and it's always the case here, when you're at Orlando Pirates, you don't have to relax. And ja, we come into a new season, we want to do better compared to last season.

DLAMINI: "IT HAS BEEN LIKE THAT FOR THE PAST FEW SEASONS I'VE BEEN HERE. THEY BRING A LOT OF QUALITY AND COMPETITION WILL ALWAYS BE HERE. YOU JUST HAVE TO BE ON YOUR A-GAME EVERY TIME YOU'RE GIVEN A CHANCE."

LK: Personally, in terms of how you performed as an individual, what do you want to do differently going into the new season?

KD: To be honest, I want to continue where I left off, and just want to add goals and assists and help the team reach the goals that we've set for ourselves.

LK: There's been a lot of midfield reinforcements in this window. Does it raise your motivation to work even harder to show them why you are still at this club, to perform at an even higher level?

KD: Ja, it does. Because playing for Orlando Pirates, it's not just a reinforcement right now, but it has been like that for the past few seasons I've been here. They bring a lot of quality and competition will always be here. You just have to be on your A-game every time you're given a chance.

LK: It looks like one of the things you are focusing on as a team is the short passing and interplay.

KD: Ja, we are Orlando Pirates, and we are a ball-playing team, and we have





to make our supporters happy. So yeah, with the display we showed, that's our philosophy, and ja, we practice that at training, and I'm happy, we managed to show that on the pitch.

LK: Are you happy that there are more defensive midfielders and sixes being brought into the club, because at the end of last season, it looked like Coach Riveiro was experimenting with you in a different role?

KD: Ja, me, I'm always ready to help the team. Whether the coach puts me on the six or eight or 10. I'm always ready to help the team. So ja, with the reinforcement, like I said, there's more competition. And you always have to be on your A-game to help the team.

LK: Can it be frustrating when you don't get a sustained run? There were a few times when you'd play one or two games, and then you were on the bench.

KD: To be honest, it is, because when you're a player, you always want to be on the field. But you must also keep in mind that you can be good, but maybe there's someone at the time who's doing better, and you can't change that. You just have to work hard and wait for your turn, and when it comes, you must just grab it with both hands.

LK: And you've got Sipho Mbule to play with now.

KD: Ja, I don't have to say a lot about Master Chef. Everyone knows him, and we know what qualities he has, and he showed what he can do. He's a quality player, and we're happy to have him here in this team, because we know he's going to help us and ja, we want to reach our goals.

LK: We've seen some sold-out games

DLAMINI: "I DON'T HAVE TO SAY A LOT ABOUT MASTER CHEF. EVERYONE KNOWS HIM, AND WE KNOW WHAT QUALITIES HE HAS, AND HE SHOWED WHAT HE CAN DO. HE'S A QUALITY PLAYER, AND WE'RE HAPPY TO HAVE HIM HERE."

already. Just how much does that motivate the players?

KD: Ja, it does. And we know, and we appreciate our supporters for what they are doing for us. They come to the stadium in numbers. The only thing that we have to do is to give them what they want, which is results and trophies. And we promise them that we are gonna try in our power to give them that.

LK: What's it like working with Coach Ouaddou?

KD: It's good, to be honest. He's a demanding coach, and ja, we want to win trophies with him, because he also wants to win cups with us. And ja, it's good. It's good to work with him.

LK: You wore the national colours in the COSAFA. I'm sure you'd love to see more of that, and some of the guys that you played with are playing at CHAN currently.

KD: Ja, I'd like to wish them all the best, and I know they're going to bring it home. And ja, it's always great to represent your country. And ja, I believe in them. I know they're gonna bring the cup home.

LK: Thanks, Kabelo.



ALL TO PLAY FOR IN BID TO REACH THE MTN8 FINAL

By Rob Delpont

There was plenty to unpack from the 1-1 draw in the first leg of the MTN8 semi-final between Orlando Pirates and Mamelodi Sundowns.

Both PSL giants had strolled through their quarter-finals, but recent league form cast long shadows over this clash. Pirates entered under pressure, having stumbled to back-to-back defeats in their opening matches of the Betway Premiership. Sundowns, while better placed, also carried frustrations after being held by Chippa United before steadying themselves with a win over AmaZulu.

That backdrop meant the spotlight was already scorching on Abdeslam Ouaddou, just three games into his tenure. Miguel Cardoso's Sundowns surely sensed a chance to twist the knife — and when Teboho Mokoena rose to nod home the opener, it felt as if the Buccaneers might unravel further. Only the sharp reflexes of Sipho Chaine kept the deficit from widening.

But the defending champions had a few sparks of their own, especially new recruit Kamogelo Sebelebele, who was fearless, repeatedly unsettling the Sundowns defence. Fittingly, it was he who found the late equaliser, latching onto a sublime ball from teenage skipper Mbekezeli Mbokazi, whose composure belied his age.

The draw leaves the tie finely poised, with Saturday's return leg promising all the drama and intensity befitting South Africa's biggest modern rivalry.



GOULD: "OUADDOU IS ACTUALLY MORE IN A SPOT OF BOTHER, BECAUSE HE NEEDS TO PROVE THAT THE REGIME OF JOSE IS GONE, HE'S AT THE HELM, AND HE NEEDS TO ALSO SHOW THE PIRATES FAITHFUL WHY HE WAS CHOSEN."

For former Bafana Bafana defender Morgan Gould, one of this year's MTN8 legends, the semi-final is layered with intrigue. On one side, Miguel Cardoso has quietly embedded himself at Chloorkop, nearing a year in charge and shaping Sundowns into a unit that reflects his fingerprints.

On the other hand, Abdeslam Ouaddou is still battling ghosts that are not his own. The shadow of José Riveiro, who delivered trophies and a clear identity to Pirates, looms heavily over every decision the Moroccan makes. In Gould's eyes, that contrast — one coach assured in his seat, the other still wrestling with the weight of expectation — could be the defining narrative of this tie.



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“Cardoso and Ouaddou, they’re equally as hungry,” Gould said.

“Ouaddou is actually more in a spot of bother, because he needs to prove that the regime of Jose is gone, he’s at the helm, and he needs to also show the Pirates faithful why he was chosen.

“And obviously, the board is going to expect a lot. I’d like to see what his mandate is. You know, at a big team like Orlando Pirates, a mandate is huge.”

Another MTN8 legend, Brent Carelse, is hoping for more goals in these semi-finals, and while he obviously has an affinity for one of the teams, he wasn’t willing to pick a winner.

“When it comes to cup football, especially the MTN8, you never know who’s going to be on the day, the best,” the former Mamelodi Sundowns star said.

“And that’s what we’re looking for. We’re looking for a lot of goals, a lot of exciting football for the fans, and ja, let’s see who comes out on top. I’m sitting on the fence, though, with that one.”

Gould is excited about some of Pirates’ new recruits, particularly Siphon Mbule, and believes that, given time, the former SuperSport United and Sundowns midfielder will show his class. Gould knows Mbule’s ability first-hand, having played with the 27-year-old when he was a teenager at Matsantsana.

“I think sometimes you need to refresh the minds of the players,” Gould said.

GOULD: “SIPHO MBULE. HE NEEDS TO ALSO SHOW THE COUNTRY, I KNOW PERSONALLY, WHAT HE IS CAPABLE OF.”

“If competition is good at training, it becomes better. You know, you have a good player playing, [Makhehlani] Makhaula had an awesome season, now they bring on Siphon Mbule.

“He needs to also show the country, I know personally, what he is capable of. And he’s going to show that, it’s just right now, it’s a point of muscle memory. And muscle memory is important in football. If you don’t have the match minutes in the legs, things tend to go south for the time being, but the moment he gets that sharpness and that alertness of playing at the high tempo, playing big games in front of sold-out crowds, he definitely has something.

“Because if I can take you back, his first goal that he scored for SuperSport, it was against TP Mazembe, Lubumbashi, a packed stadium, and he scored a scorcher. And you could just tell that the kid is one for the big occasions.”

Gould is also quick to caution against reading too much into Pirates’ early stumbles in the league. Back-to-back defeats may look alarming on paper, but in his view, context is everything. A new coach inevitably brings new methods, new rhythms, and with a host of fresh faces in the squad, it takes time for those moving parts to click into place. For Gould, what matters more





is how Pirates respond – whether those defeats become scars, or stepping stones towards the identity Ouaddou is trying to forge.

“It’s a brand new car,” Gould explains.

“When you’re driving a brand new Audi for the first 15,000 km, the pistons are still getting accustomed to a greater friction, where the friction is more fluid.

“So that’s where Pirates are at right now, but they need to get back to their old engine, where the VW engine was always working. It’s default settings, putting back the engine and slowly introducing the pistons, so your torque can be better.

“Also, because you want improvement in your team, you want your team to be better, but you can’t discard what you had. You had a well-oiled machine, and just changing everything at once is a bit of a tough one for them.

“But I think good coaches in a good technical team will identify that, and they’ll go back to a tactical flexibility where they introduce at the right time. They introduce when it’s needed, not just off the cuff.”

While Sundowns have only brought in Fawaaz Basadien so far this transfer window, there’s still a sense of change happening at the club with several players leaving since the end of last season, and others potentially still heading out the door.

“I think there is something happening definitely,” Carelse said.

“There was a sense of some players even being unhappy to a certain extent, which is strange for a club like Sundowns. But at the same time, I think it’s also the coach. The coach did say he wants a smaller squad.

“He wants to give some of the players more opportunities to play, especially the younger players.

“So I think they are going through a transition, but a bit of a different transition to the normal seasons, where they start off very slow and introduce quite a few players every season.

“Whereas this season, they sort of went from the Club World Cup, that squad, and now coming into the season, playing the same players.

“I think there’s still a lot of changes



CARELSE: “THERE WAS A SENSE OF SOME PLAYERS EVEN BEING UNHAPPY TO A CERTAIN EXTENT, WHICH IS STRANGE FOR A CLUB LIKE SUNDOWNS. BUT AT THE SAME TIME, I THINK IT’S ALSO THE COACH. THE COACH DID SAY HE WANTS A SMALLER SQUAD.”

that are going to come at Sundowns, but for now, I’m happy with the way they started.”

Meanwhile, last year’s beaten finalists Stellenbosch FC have placed one firm foot back in the decider after a commanding 2-0 first-leg victory over Sekhukhune United at the Danie Craven Stadium.

The match itself was hardly a spectacle – the heavy, uneven pitch turned football into a battle of balance, with players slipping and sliding throughout. Yet, Steve Barker’s side adapted best, showing grit and composure to take full advantage of their chances. Godswill Kazie and Devin Titus struck the decisive blows, while Lesiba Nku was the creative spark, laying on both assists with precision.

For Sekhukhune, and especially Eric Tinkler – the only coach in this year’s competition with an MTN8 title to his name – in 2017 with SuperSport United – it was a night of mounting frustration against a team who has frustrated him more than once. His team struggled to find rhythm, leaving them with a mountain to climb in the





second leg.

But the tie is far from over, and Sekhukhune will come out all-guns-firing at the Peter Mokaba Stadium.

Gould knows both Stellenbosch and Sekhukhune well.

“Sekhukhune, you know they signed Rolls-Royces,” Gould said.

“And if you park Rolls-Royces in your garage, I think your house’s value goes up. It’s just a matter of time before they get the right combo that wins them the elusive trophy.

“Ja, they’re the PSG, you know? And if you look at PSG, what they did, they signed a lot, signed a lot, and finally they got it right, and it could be Eric Tinkler’s time to be the one that lifts a trophy for them. I think he knows.

“He’s got big experiences. He was in the CAF Champions League final [as assistant with Pirates], he’s been [in the CAF Confederation Final] at SuperSport. He’s also helped them lift a cup. Cape Town City, too. And now is probably the time for him to reach the top of Table Mountain. And it’s the here and now. It’s how he does the here and now, and he combines his team to get that.

“Stellies, they punch way above their weight. And a lot of teams plan now for Stellenbosch, because before, if you’d say a team that was promoted five, six years ago, you don’t really plan, you just go off the cuff.

“But they know what they’re doing. They do it consistently.”

The stage is set for a dramatic Super Saturday on the 23rd of August, as both MTN8 semi-final second legs take centre stage. The afternoon curtain-raiser sees Sundowns welcoming Pirates to the Lucas Moripe Stadium at 3pm, in what promises to be a heavyweight clash dripping with tension and history.



GOULD: “THEY’RE THE PSG, YOU KNOW? AND IF YOU LOOK AT PSG, WHAT THEY DID, THEY SIGNED A LOT, SIGNED A LOT, AND FINALLY THEY GOT IT RIGHT, AND IT COULD BE ERIC TINKLER’S TIME TO BE THE ONE THAT LIFTS A TROPHY FOR THEM.”

Will Pirates make a fourth final in a row, and their fifth in six years?

Later in the evening, the spotlight shifts north to the Peter Mokaba Stadium, where Sekhukhune will look to overturn their deficit against Stellenbosch when the two sides lock horns at 6pm.

Two games, four ambitious clubs, and just potentially 90 minutes from a place in the final – the stakes could not be higher.



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‘WE DO NOT WANT TO BE WHERE WE WERE LAST SEASON’

New Betway Premiership side Siwelele FC had a flying start to the 2025/26 season, thrashing Golden Arrows 3-1 at a packed Dr Molemela Stadium in Bloemfontein. A perfect homecoming, most said after that game. Veteran attacker VINCENT PULE was also on the score sheet on the day, the first time he has scored in the league in two campaigns – last season, the 33-year-old didn’t score in his 19 league appearances for the now-defunct SuperSport United. He chats to iDiski Times writer LETHABO KGANYAGO about why they want to do better and how to redeem themselves under the new brand. Pule, who hails from the Free State, is pleased to see the resuscitation of the Siwelele brand in his home province as he believes it will inspire and give hope to young upcoming talent in the region. The former Orlando Pirates player also speaks about the impressive young talent in the squad, while keeping very close to his chest the targets of the Lehlohonolo Seema-led side.

Lethabo Kganyago: Vincent, thank you so much for your time. When you started your career and it took you to Gauteng, did you think it would take you back home?

Vincent Pule: To be honest, I grew up supporting Free State Stars and Bloemfontein Celtic in Bethlehem. Those were teams I grew up loving and wanted to be in their environment, so as my career progressed and I got to Gauteng, I didn’t think I’d come back home because the teams weren’t in existence at home anymore.

LK: The club has themed the season as a ‘homecoming’. How big was that opening game? Never mind how you played and the result, I mean, just the love from the fans?

VP: It was a top game for us as players because we saw when we arrived in Bloemfontein the Friday before the game, the passion, the love the supporters gave us. It was an amazing presentation where we were also showing them our new kit. The love they gave us, we didn’t

expect it, and we then told ourselves that come Saturday, we have to make them proud because the game was also sold out. We wanted to make them proud by winning the game with many goals.

LK: And for you personally, what does it mean to be playing in your home province?

VP: It means a lot because most players from Bloemfontein and around the Free State can see they have an opportunity to represent their home team. I serve as hope, to say, ‘Look at this guy, he’s from here at home and has been able to go have a professional career, so we also have hope that one day we can be like him, play football and enjoy a good career’. For me, I want to give people hope that they can also make it – ‘If we are focused and dedicated, we can get where he got and even have the desire to play overseas’. This is really one of the things that makes me happy about the team’s return to Bloemfontein, to give others opportunities.

LK: I spoke to coach Seema, and he told me that for him, it’s about making the fans happy. How important has it been to be able to reciprocate their energy on the pitch?

VP: Like is said, the passion and love that we saw when we arrived on Friday, it was only for us to make them happy as well and have a top opening game in their presence. It has been a while for them to watch their Siwelele playing, and most of them, they are older and have a love for the game. So we wanted to make them happy from the first game. I mean, we could feel their love from the pitch walk, entrance for the game, and I also felt like our opponents were intimidated by our fans.

LK: Well you have experienced playing in front of a packed crowd before at Orlando Pirates, how is it for some of your teammates who are experiencing this for the first time as a home team?



VP: We were actually talking about this and laughing about it on the Friday during the presentation of the kit, and there were a lot of people there. The crowd at the kit launch was bigger than most crowds we have played in front of at SuperSport. We all noticed this, and we wondered how packed it was going to be at the actual game. Our coach emphasised how much we were loved by the fans, and on the morning of the game, we heard that the game was sold out. We had to make sure that we connected with them and we had fun.

LK: A lot of people now believe that Siwelele are going to be dangerous at home. Do you, as players, share that sentiment?

VP: After having such a top game, we sat down and we said that we need to make sure that we win our home games because most of the time the stadium will be full, sold-out crowds.

LK: Obviously, most of you went through the horrors of last season, saving the status on the last day of the campaign. Would you say the good start at Siwelele is motivated by what happened last season, even though it was under a different name?

VP: To be honest, we didn't start the previous season well. So we sat down and checked our mistakes this season and spoke about the importance of starting on a good note. Last season, we opened with a loss and got eliminated from the cup. We wanted to make sure we collected maximum points in our opening game this time around. We do not want to be where we were last season.

LK: What's the biggest lesson you guys drew from that season?

VP: I think we took things for granted last season in the first round, to be honest, and when we opened our eyes, we realised how worse the situation was getting. Another thing I think made us have a slow start were the injuries to experienced players because when they returned we had better two, three games. And then they got injured again, the likes of Bradley Grobler, [Grant] Margeman and Tyson [Hlatshwayo]. I think those are some of the things that contributed to the slow start, and we realised we were in trouble when things

“AFTER THE FIRST GAME, THE CHAIRMAN CAME INTO THE DRESSING ROOM AND HE WAS EXCITED FOR THE WIN, BECAUSE THE PEOPLE OF BLOEMFONTEIN HAVE BEEN THIRSTY...”

were getting to the business end. We had to fight to save the status.

LK: So would you say this season is about redemption for a lot of you guys that came from SuperSport?

VP: I think it is about redemption. We'd like to have a better season because we wouldn't want the club to go through what it went through last season. And at least some of us still have jobs because if this was a different club, they might have said everyone must go, and they bring new players. But now we have a chance to redeem ourselves and have a better season.

LK: For you personally, a good start as well, one goal in two matches, having not scored in the league last season. I saw how you celebrated that goal. Did it mean that much to you?

VP: It was that moment where you are like 'I didn't score last season, I only scored in cup competitions'. To score again in the league and the excitement that we have of playing with young talent that listens and wants to improve is inspirational. These boys want to do better, and we have to be there for them. So whatever we do, we have to do with them, you understand me. [Siviwe] Magidigidi scored the first goal. He was excited, and we all celebrated with him, and it was the same way when I scored. And I think togetherness, unity will be key this season.

LK: Are you feeling pressure to score more, or that goal got the monkey off your back, and you can play calmly, and when the goals come, they will come?

VP: For me, there is always pressure in football. Unfortunately, one cannot relax in football, so whatever you do, there is always pressure, even for me. When I get on the pitch, there will always be



that pressure to score. These are things I have to do anyway, to either score or to assist or to even pre-assist. I have to make sure that the team plays well, and even when we are defending, I also have to defend.

LK: You spoke about young talent and Magidigidi. It's probably still early, but do you think he's one to look out for this season in his age group?

VP: We have a lot of youngsters. Magidigidi is one of them. He's a youngster who is willing to learn, he listens, and he asks questions where he doesn't understand. You can even see the energy he has on the pitch; he's eager to become a top player like Neo Rapoo. We have a lot more that you haven't seen yet. There is Thabang Makhubo, Thabang Mahlangu; we have exciting young talent who are also eager to be top players. They are also excited to have a coach who gives them confidence to play well.

LK: Sounds like you are embracing being a senior player...

VP: When I was young, playing at Wits, there were players like Daine Klate, Elias Pelembe, Chris Katongo, Steven Pienaar – I can name a lot. But they helped us a lot as youngsters. We'd go to them when we had questions. If you were out of form, they'd ask how things were at home, enquire to be able to help you to perform better in areas you were lacking in, even advise about doing extra work after training. Those are some of the things I also want to pass down to other youngsters, and hopefully they will also pass them down to others. It just makes me happy that these players are willing to listen and they want to improve.

LK: You are a new team but plenty of experienced players, is the season just about saving the status, or is there more that you think you guys can achieve?

VP: For now, we are taking one game at a time because the league has just started and a lot of things can still happen. As players, we have told ourselves to take one game at a time, and we have a target which I won't tell you what it is (chuckles). We have set some targets, like how many points we'd like from the first round, but I'm not going to spill team secrets (laughs).

LK: (Laughs) well just text me when you have ticked one of the secret boxes. Have you met your chairman? What are his words to you guys?

VP: We have met our chairman, and he is excited to have the club, the group that he has. After the first game, he came into the dressing room and he was excited for the win, for the fans as well, because people of Bloemfontein have been thirsty for professional football and that atmosphere. He was excited, and he is close with us a lot, and we like that. He's available most of the time.

LK: I want to ask you, as an attacking



“YOU WANT PEOPLE TO KILL ME? BUT LET ME SAY THE TOUGHEST DEFENDERS THAT I HAVE MET ARE TYSON HLATSHWAYO, HAPPY JELE, INNOCENT MAELA AND MTHOKOZISI DUBE.”

player, which defender or defenders have you enjoyed challenging yourself against the most?

VP: (Laughs) you want people to kill me? But let me say the toughest defenders that I have met are Tyson Hlatshwayo, Happy Jele, Innocent Maela and Mthokozisi Dube. These were tough opponents I've faced.

LK: And who is your best attacking partner/partners?

VP: (Laughs) sister, you want my friends to be mad at me? But I can tell you who some of the best attackers I have played with are: the likes of Thembinkosi Lorch, Luvuyo Memela, Justin Shonga, Augustine Mulenga, Kabelo Dlamini, Tshegofatso Mabasa, Collins Makgaka, Zakhele Lepasa, Linda Mntambo; veterans like Daine Klate, Elias Pelembe, Sifiso Myeni. There are many I have played with who are top, top attacking players.

LK: You are a diplomatic man, Vincent. My last question, do you think that maybe this season or the next, a South African-born striker can be the top goal scorer and get more than 16 goals?

VP: I think [Iqraam] Rayners can do it. He has shown every season that he is up there with the top strikers. I feel the other one is Tshegofatso Mabasa; he can do it. I think they can do it.

LK: Thank you so much, Vincent and all the best this season.

TRUST ISSUES AND UNTAPPED POTENTIAL: DAN MALESELA OPENS UP

By Matshelane Mamabolo

DAN MALESELA believes he can lead Baroka FC to promotion from the Motsepe Championship into the ‘milk and honey’ land of the Betway Premiership. Many in the local game will find that laughable, particularly given that Bakgaga treated him like a disposable razor last season, firing him during the promotional play-offs. But if ever there’s a sucker for punishment in the local game, it is Malesela – a man whose voice continues to resonate with honesty, frustration, and unwavering passion. Returning to clubs that tell him he is not good enough has become somewhat of his speciality.

Known for his tactical acumen and commitment to possession-based football, Malesela’s career has been marked by triumphs against the odds, fleeting stints at various clubs, and an enduring question – why has South Africa failed to fully entrust him with its biggest footballing projects?

In his small corner office at the Baroka Village in Lebowakgomo, some 50 kilometres southeast of Polokwane, Malesela revealed his thoughts on trust, leadership, player development, and the systemic challenges that continue to undermine South African football.

The Missed Promotions and Internal Disruptions

Malesela began by reflecting on his recent experiences with Baroka FC. Despite being on the cusp of promotion, the club faltered.

“At some stage, we were supposed to have it,” he said, recalling the missed opportunity.

But as the pressure mounted, external influences began to interfere.

“We’ve got a lot of people who really can disturb processes,” he admitted, pointing to behind-the-scenes meddling that derailed the team’s momentum.

For him, the failure was less about tactics and more about instability.

“When there’s pressure and desperation, people can make mistakes,” he said with a sigh, noting how decisions made out of panic can undo months of preparation.

On Being Overlooked by the Big Clubs

It remains baffling to many that Malesela, who has guided under-resourced teams to cup success – he led lower division side TS Galaxy to winning the Nedbank Cup final against Kaizer Chiefs – and semi-finals, has never been seriously considered by



the so-called big three clubs.

His answer is simple but layered: “Trust, sometimes.”

He elaborated, “I’ve been to semi-finals and finals, more than a lot of coaches, and I’ve done it with less. But people still aren’t convinced.”

He laments that decision-makers often rely on narratives outside of football, sometimes even rumours, instead of his proven track record.

“There’s this story that I don’t know what it means, that I’m not a good coach because I share too much or because I empower my technical team,” he said, almost bemused.

Yet for Malesela, sharing knowledge is not a weakness but a philosophy: “I don’t want to coach and not grow others. I want to empower.”

Leadership and the Lost Art of Trusting Locals

South African football, according to Malesela, suffers from a chronic lack of trust in its own people.

“I remember Jomo [Sono] used to say, ‘If it’s made in South Africa, it’s not good enough.’ That’s still the thinking today,” he reflected.

But for Malesela, true leadership is not about dominance or bullying.

“A leader has to handle themselves in press conferences, guide their teammates, and build unity,” he said, drawing from his days as one of the youngest captains at Orlando Pirates.

He fondly recalled organising social gatherings to strengthen the Buccaneers’ team spirit: “We became a unit that was unbreakable.”

This focus on collective strength is mirrored in his coaching. He believes football clubs must stop listening to too many outside voices and instead empower players and staff from within.

“We don’t identify real leaders because we’re scared of empowering people who may shine brighter than us,” he lamented.

The Branding Blindspot in South African Football

One of the more striking parts of our conversation was Malesela’s take on branding. For him, football success is not just about results on the pitch but about building an identity that players, fans, and sponsors can rally behind.

“Branding is something we don’t take care of in South Africa, and hence we fail to take care of our people,” he said.

He argued that when clubs lack stability, they sell players too quickly, undermining long-term growth.

“You can’t sell your bed before you even have a house,” he explained, drawing a vivid analogy for the ‘short-termism’ that plagues South African clubs.

Possession Football: A Philosophy, Not a Trend

Critics have often accused Malesela of overemphasising possession, sometimes dismissing it as sterile. But he remains unapologetic.

“How do you score a goal without possession?” he asked rhetorically.

For him, the issue has never been creating chances but converting them. “My biggest focus now is conversion, not creation because I’ve always been able to create.”

He sees possession as more than an aesthetic – it’s a way to dominate, dictate, and ultimately dismantle opponents.

“Even the best teams in the world play possession football; it’s about knowledge and reaction when you lose the ball,” he explained, emphasising the importance of transitions.

The License Debate and Coaching Knowledge

Another barrier Malesela has faced is the politics of coaching licenses. Despite his wealth of experience, he has not been fast-tracked the way others have.

“SAFA gave automatic licenses to some, but not to all of us,” he revealed. “Now FIFA has prior learning accreditation, and I just need a refresher. But people still want me to go back and do what I’ve already surpassed.”

For him, coaching cannot be reduced to certificates. “The course does not make you a coach. It empowers you



as a coach. You must already have it in you.”

His point is that knowledge must be applied practically, not memorised on paper.

“Sometimes you have to let players show you their way, then guide them from there. That’s coaching.”

What Keeps Him Going?

Despite the frustrations, the constant questioning, and the feeling of being undervalued, Malesela is not done yet.

“If I quit now, I would be giving up on one of my dreams – to build a team that wins the league several times, dominates, and produces players who can carry South African football forward,” he said with renewed determination.

In many ways, Malesela represents both the potential and the pain of South African football. He has the ideas, the philosophy, and the results, but the system continues to resist him. Yet, true to his nature, he carries on, building, empowering, and believing that one day trust will finally meet talent.

Close on two hours spent in Malesela’s company, one realised the man is more than just a coach. He is a custodian of a philosophy, a believer in people, and a man determined to leave a legacy despite the obstacles. South African football would do well to finally trust him – not just for his sake, but for its own future.

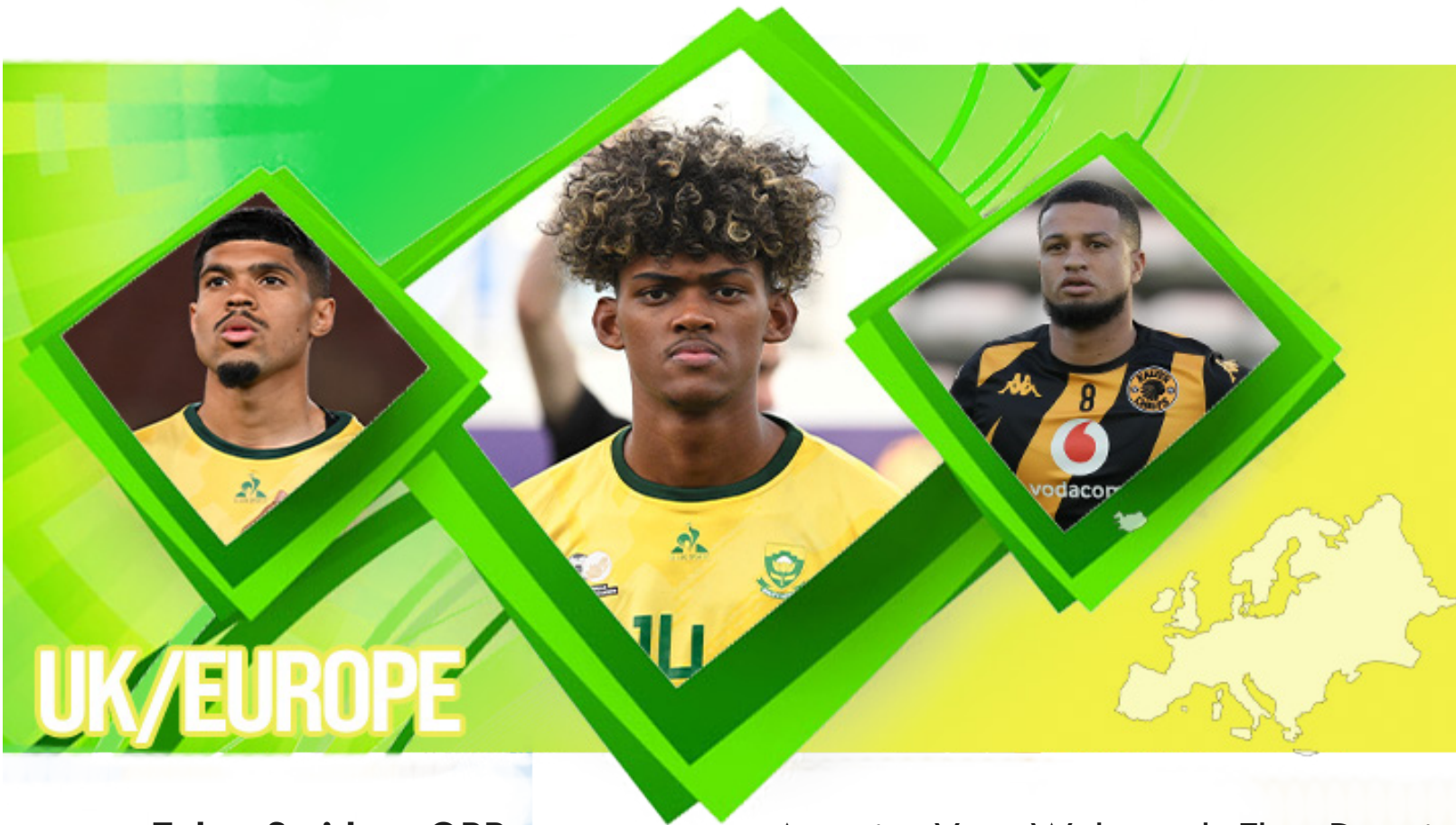
And Baroka FC will do well to allow him to pursue his goal and objective of leading them back to the elite league without succumbing to outside influences like they did last season.



THE SA STARS FACING NEW HORIZONS IN 2025

By Rob Delport

There's always a special intrigue when a South African footballer plants his boots in foreign soil. The move sparks an avalanche of questions – will he adapt to the culture and the style of play? Will he win the trust of his new coach and command regular game-time? Will this be the launchpad to an even bigger stage? For much of the last decade, with so few of our players making the leap abroad, those questions became rare, almost wistful. The global stage often felt like a distant dream, with our brightest talents shining mostly within the PSL. But 2025 has shifted the narrative. This year has been a breath of fresh air for South African football romantics, a reminder that our players still have the hunger and quality to chase their careers beyond our borders. From established stars seeking new challenges to young talents eager to test themselves against unfamiliar opponents, the list of trailblazers has grown steadily. And the year isn't done yet – before the transfer windows slam shut across the globe, there's every chance more names will join the exodus. For now, we've already seen a wave of exciting moves – journeys about more than just contracts and match minutes; they are about representing South Africa on distant pitches, about proving that our football can travel, adapt, and thrive. Here are some of the most significant South African moves to new countries in 2025 so far – a snapshot of a year when the passport stamps started coming thick and fast:



Tylon Smith to QPR

What a year it's been for Tylon Smith. COSAFA U20 champion, AFCON U20 champion, AFCON Player of the Tournament, DStv Diski Challenge Player of the Season – and now a professional debut. Surprisingly, it wasn't in Stellenbosch's maroon, but 13,000km away in QPR's blue and white. With the U20 World Cup looming, the gifted Jamestown youngster stands on the brink of an electrifying future.

Luke Le Roux to Portsmouth

Another product of Stellenbosch, Le Roux has spent the past few years honing his craft in Sweden, and briefly in Holland. Now, a new chapter awaits in England with Portsmouth, where the former SuperSport United player will follow in the footsteps of Aaron Mokoena – and look to make his own mark on the south-coast club.

Kobamelo Kodisang to AVS FS*

Kodisang heads back to Portugal after a challenging stint with Mamelodi Sundowns that stalled his momentum. Once a regular in the Portuguese top flight with Moreirense, his game-time in South Africa was limited. Now on loan at AVS, he has the perfect chance to rediscover his rhythm and reignite the form that once made him one of the country's brightest prospects.

Yusuf Maart to SV Ried

Maart's switch to Austria raised a few eyebrows, arriving in Europe later than most making their first move abroad. Yet, the former Kaizer Chiefs captain now has a golden opportunity with Ried, where he links up with fellow South African

Antonio Van Wyk and The Drawing Board columnist Moritz Kossmann, a key member of the club's technical team.

Ime Okon to Hannover 96

The former Randburg FC standout wasted no time making waves at SuperSport United and will be eager to leave a similar mark in Germany. Okon is among a new generation of thrilling defensive talents, and now firmly a Bafana Bafana international, there's no longer any debate over his allegiance – despite earlier eligibility for Nigeria. With his star on the rise, the young defender is poised to turn heads both at home and abroad.

Faiz Abrahams to Hapoel Kfar Saba*

Rewrite this with a bit more flair and style, keeping it under 100 words: An interesting opportunity for the Amajita winger in Israel that should allow Abrahams regular first-team football, something which may have been tougher at Stellenbosch. Talented, and with a knack for scoring goals, Abrahams could use this opportunity as a stepping stone to bigger chances in Europe.

Elyh Harrison to Shrewsbury Town*

While he's yet to declare himself officially, the Manchester United goalkeeper is eligible to play for South Africa, and he will now hope to gain valuable first-team experience on loan at Shrewsbury. The 19-year-old, who has represented England at U20 level, sat on the bench for United several times last season.

Rowan Human to FK Partizani

The former Amajita captain embarks on his second international adventure, five years after his first stint in Israel. Human's



departure from AmaZulu, following a solid season, raised eyebrows, but his bold decision to join Albania – a league unfamiliar to most South Africans – signals ambition and a desire to test himself on a new stage. With talent and promise on his side, he’s set to turn heads and carve out another memorable chapter in his career.

Waylon Renecke to Örgryte IS

Born in the UK but proudly representing South Africa at Amajimbos level, the young defender came through the ranks at Norwich City. That promise earned him a move to Danish champions FC Copenhagen last year. Now, he’s set to embark on the next stage of his journey with a loan spell in Sweden’s gritty second tier – a league renowned for its physical edge and unforgiving tempo. It’s here, far from the academy comfort zone, that he’ll be tested week in and week out, honing the instincts and resilience required for senior football. For the 19-year-old, this isn’t just a change of clubs; it’s a proving ground. The hope is that by the time he returns to Denmark, he’ll be battle-hardened, sharper, and ready to challenge for a first-team spot.

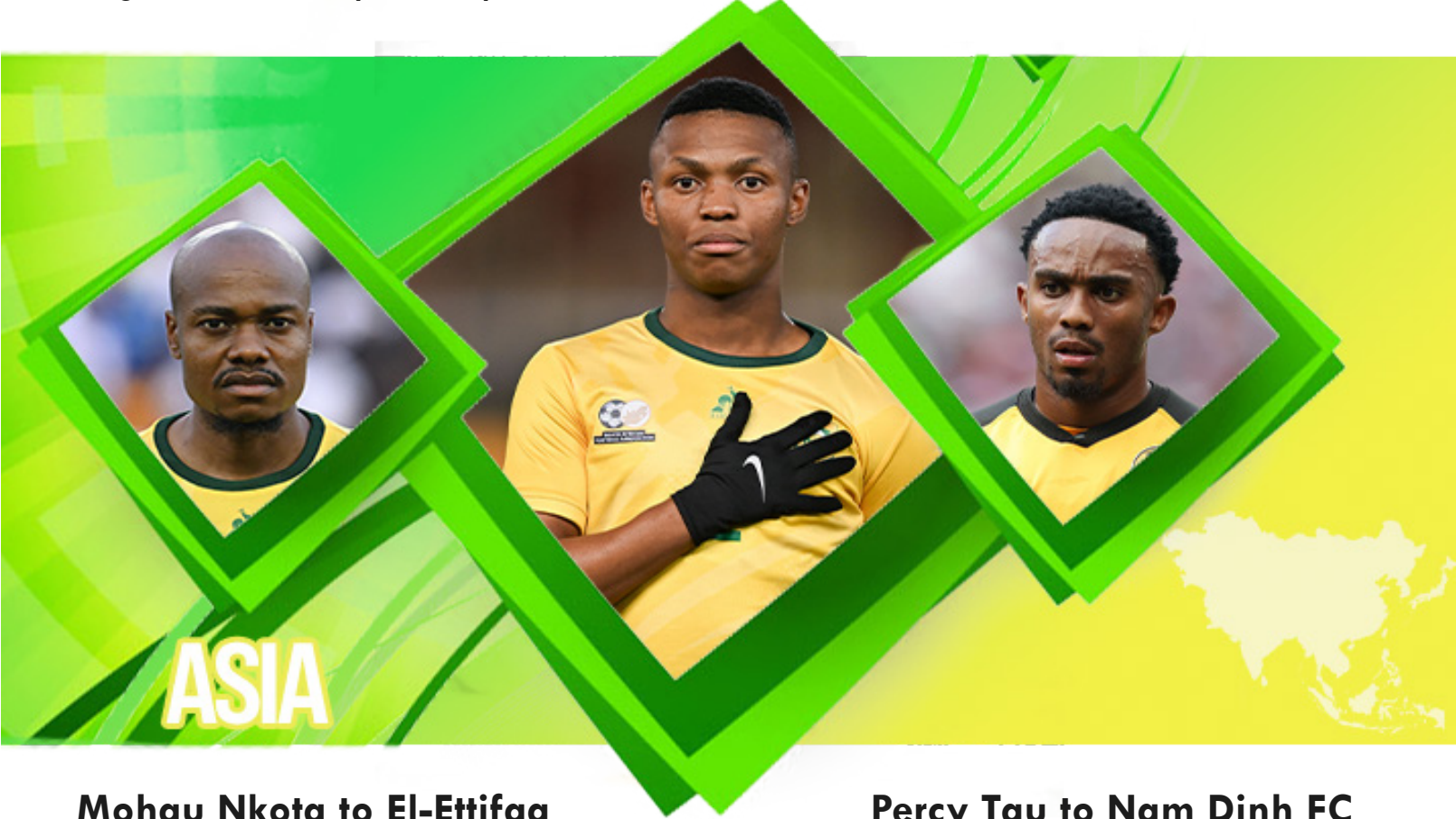
Samukelo Kabini to Molde FK

The former TS Galaxy full-back has wasted no time making his mark since arriving in Norway early in 2025.

From his very first appearance, Kabini has played with the confidence and consistency of a seasoned professional, quickly cementing himself as one of his club’s most reliable performers. Week after week, he’s delivering — and at just 21, his trajectory is pointing sharply upward. In a league that values pace, stamina, and tactical intelligence, Kabini is ticking every box, earning admiration from teammates, coaches, and fans alike. With such a rapid adaptation to European football, it’s hard not to imagine the bigger stages ahead — both in club competition and wearing the colours of Bafana Bafana.

Thibang Phete to Vestri

Another to embark on a new adventure earlier this year, Phete has taken to life in Iceland with steady assurance, adjusting well to the unique demands of football in the far north. It’s the latest chapter in a career that has largely been written in Portugal, where Phete established himself over several seasons. Yet his journey began much closer to home, graduating from the renowned Stars of Africa academy before making his senior debut with Milano United in South Africa’s second tier. While the climate may be worlds apart from the Cape, his professional adaptability remains the same – quietly making him one of South Africa’s more seasoned campaigners abroad.



Mohau Nkota to El-Ettifaq

Nkota’s move caught many off guard, but it opens a thrilling new chapter in Saudi Arabia, offering him a platform to shine internationally. From dazzling in the Diski Challenge to making his mark in his debut senior season, the winger has consistently shown flashes of brilliance. Now, with fresh opportunities ahead, he can take the next step in a career that’s already brimming with promise.

Njabulo Blom to Nam Dinh FC

Blom’s loan back to Chiefs last season fell short of expectations, leading to a return to St Louis City in the USA – only for a surprise switch to Vietnam’s Nam Dinh a few months later. Once tipped for a European move, the midfield talent now faces a different challenge in a less heralded league, though Nam Dinh boast quality in their ranks. It will be fascinating to see how Blom adapts and makes his mark at a club once known as ‘Vietnam’s Juventus’. The sleeping giant had struggled for several decades, but are currently going through a resurgence after back-to-back league titles.

Percy Tau to Nam Dinh FC

Just this past weekend, Nam Dinh made their ambitions crystal clear by pulling off a headline-grabbing coup — the signing of Bafana Bafana star Percy Tau. Fresh off his exit from Qatar SC, Tau had been a free agent weighing his next move, but instead of returning to Europe or chasing opportunities in Africa, he’s chosen to remain in Asia, where he will now link up with fellow South African Njabulo Blom at the reigning V-League champions. Tau’s pedigree speaks for itself: UEFA Champions League minutes with Club Brugge, a Premier League stint with Brighton, and trophy-laden success at Al Ahly. His arrival gives the Vietnamese champions both credibility and cutting edge as they prepare to test themselves against some of the continent’s giants in the AFC Champions League. For Blom, it means sharing a dressing room with a senior international compatriot, someone whose journey reflects both the opportunities and challenges for South Africans abroad. They carry the weight of expectation — not just for Nam Dinh fans, but from observers back home eager to see how they will shape the fortunes of a team with big dreams.



Thembinkosi Lorch to Wydad AC

After an impressive loan stint with the Moroccan giants last season, Lorch’s permanent return gives the 32-year-old the stage to shine – a talent no one has ever questioned. For ‘Nyoso,’ it’s more than a transfer; it’s a chance to make every moment count and reaffirm why he’s long been admired. Should be announced shortly by the club, though his exit from Sundowns has been confirmed

Rushine De Reuck to Simba

Not long ago, De Reuck was a fixture in the national team, but dropping down the pecking order at Mamelodi Sundowns saw him head on loan to Israel last season. Now, a reunion with former Maritzburg United coach Fadlu

Davids at Simba in Tanzania offers a chance to reignite his career. With talent and experience on his side, De Reuck is hoping this fresh chapter will turn past promise into present impact.

Neo Maema to Simba

Currently captaining the Bafana Bafana squad at the CHAN finals, the classy Maema is a great signing for the Tanzanian giants if reports are to be believed, with his arrival expected after the CHAN. Perhaps unlucky with the amount of competition at Sundowns, Maema’s ability and intelligence have never been in doubt, and he could be one of the players to watch in the CAF Champions League this season. Like Lorch, Sundowns have confirmed his departure.



Darren Smith to Detroit City

The former AmaZulu academy talent initially struggled to make his mark at home, but over the past five years, he’s built a solid career in Europe and now in the United States with Detroit City. Smith has hit the ground running, already netting seven goals in his debut season with the US Championship side, proving that perseverance and talent can turn early challenges into a thriving career abroad.

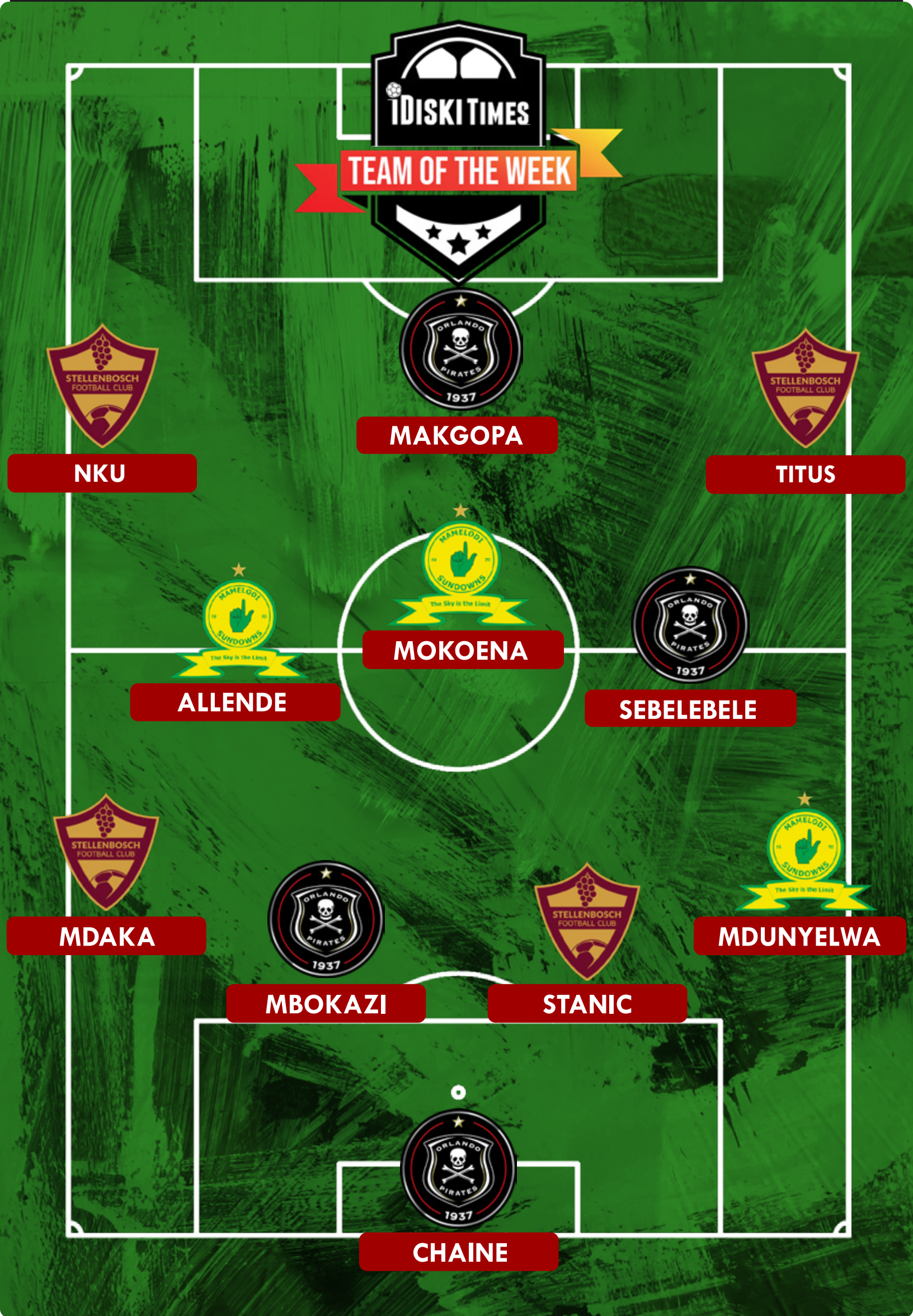
Jamie Webber to FC Tulsa

Webber is already turning heads in Tulsa, delivering standout performances since his arrival just months ago. Surprisingly sidelined in his final season at Sekhukhune, the former Stellenbosch and SuperSport United star is showing that talent and determination can’t be held back. With every game, he’s proving that setbacks are just setups for a stronger comeback.

**Loan moves.*



MTN8 SEMI-FINAL FIRST LEG TEAM OF THE WEEK



* BASED ON SOFAScore RATINGS



ACE OF THE WEEK:
SHANDRE CAMPBELL

The iDiski Times Ace of the Week shines brightly on Club Brugge and Amajita sensation Shandre Campbell, after the 20-year-old announced himself with his first senior goal this past weekend. And it wasn't just any goal — it was pure drama. With the clock ticking deep into stoppage time, Campbell stepped up in the 92nd minute to smash home a stunning winner, sealing a vital 1-0 victory over SV Zulte Waregem. The strike not only delivered three points but also a statement: Campbell has arrived. Having cut his teeth with Brugge's second team, Club NXT, last season, the youngster now looks poised to turn potential into presence as he kickstarts the 2025/26 campaign in the best possible way.



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

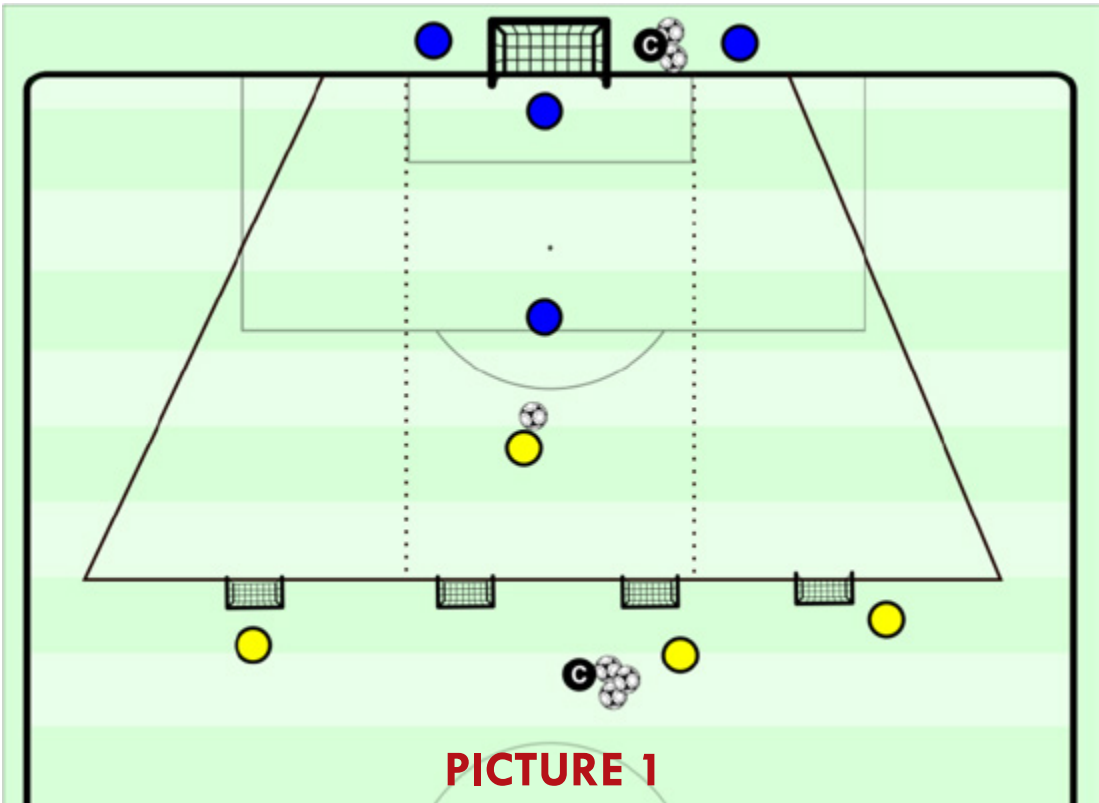
Diski Challenge team for the 2023/24 campaign and also in charge of the club youth's department. In June 2024, Kossmann became part of the technical team at the Austrian club SV Ried.

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.

Wave Attacking to Goal

Last week, we had a look at the general debate about freedom vs structure. Within this, we clearly advocated for an approach where we look at football as a complex player’s game where ultimately the players themselves have to make decisions on the field of play. Therefore, it makes sense that we as coaches attempt to guide the players and help them improve their decision-making rather than directly instruct them, like might be the case in other, less complex sports, such as, for example, American football, which, because of its stop-start nature, can be scripted much more directly. If we understand our roles as coaches more as guides rather than as conductors, it becomes extremely clear that the training sessions we design and set up are perhaps the most key tool we have at our disposal to organically support our players and teams. Thus, this week we will once again look at a practice example that has a high level of usefulness across several different moments of the game when it comes to both attacking and defending. Wave Practice 1v1 into 2v1 into 3v2 and 4v3

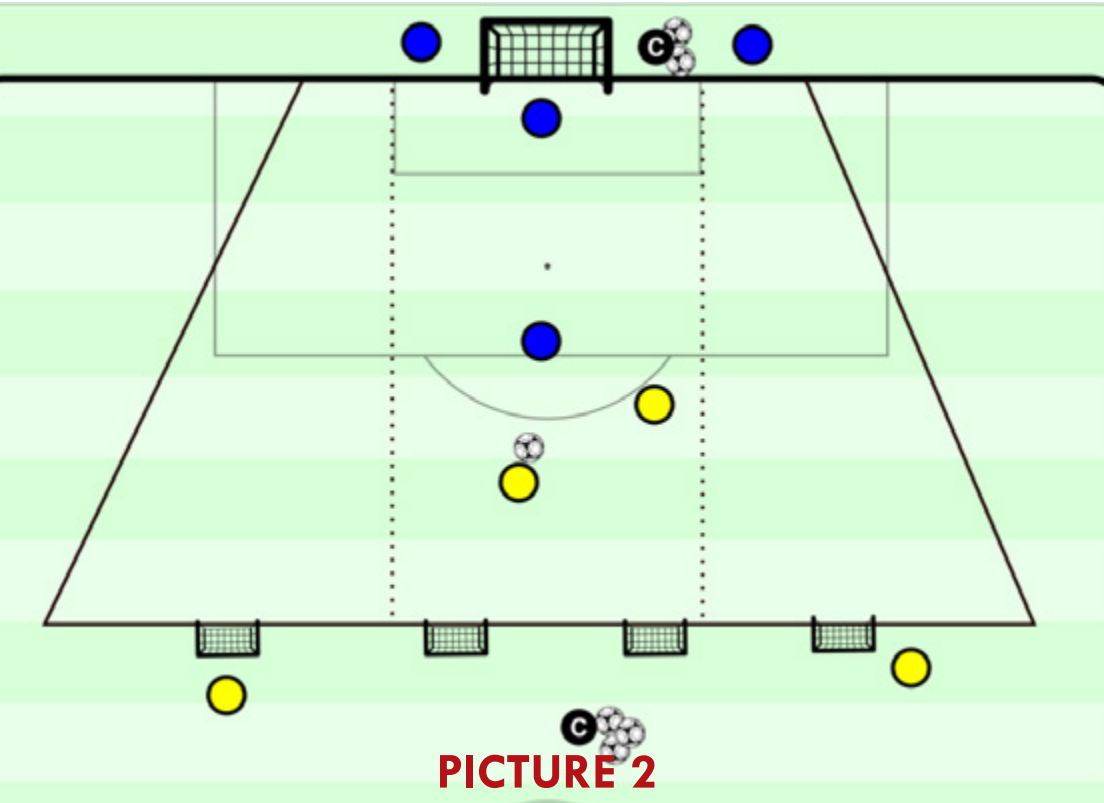
In picture 1, we can see the first moment of this wave practice. The yellow team is attacking the big goal, while the blue team is defending that goal and looks to counter-attack towards the mini goals on the other side. The game starts with the coach (labelled c) next to the big goal playing a long flighted ball towards the first yellow attacker that starts between the mini goals. This attacker controls the aerial ball and then attacks towards the big goal immediately. While the aerial ball from the coach is travelling, a blue defender closes down the yellow player at full speed. This blue defender starts next to the big goal. The 1v1 is played in the central lane of the field of which the sidelines are marked by the dotted lines. The attacker’s objective is to make space and score on the big



PICTURE 1

goal, while the defender looks to make several small steps and win the ball, in which case they look to score in the two mini goals in the central lane. This phase of the game continues until either one of these moments happens or the ball leaves the playing area.

In picture 2, we see the second phase of the game depicted. As the first ball is finished (either with a goal or with the ball leaving the playing area), a second ball is played in from the coach that starts at the top of the picture between the mini-goals. No matter who had the last touch of the ball in the previous 1 v1, this coach always passes the ball to the original yellow attacker. This attacker has to cross the box line before the coach plays them the ball, therefore ensuring that we don’t have immediate action to goal, but that we have to create space again before having a finish at goal. As this second ball is played in from the coach, a second yellow attacker joins the game, thereby creating a 2v1 against the original blue defender that previously defended the 1v1. This action is now played with the offside rule in place. The offside rule is applied from the edge of the big box of the regular 11v11 full field. The 2v1 is still played in the central channel, and in case the blue defender wins the ball, they still counter to the same 2 mini goals as before. However, the 2v1 is obviously a much different situation in terms of game-dynamic as the previous 1v1 and it is therefore critical for all the players that partook in the original 1v1 wave to quickly switch their attention towards the second moment of the practice and to adjust their playing tempo thusly so



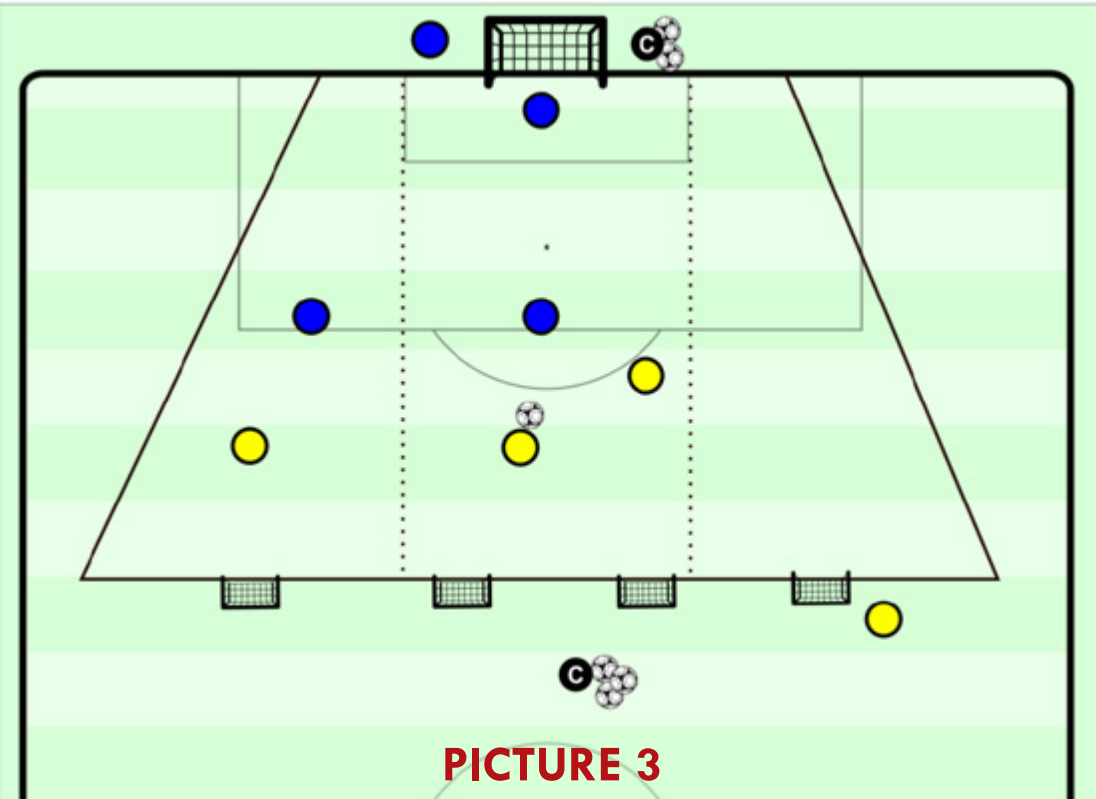
PICTURE 2

that they can perhaps benefit from a change of tempo again during the second wave.

Again, the above 2v1 is played until the ball leaves the playing area or is scored in the goals on either end. After this, the game gets more complex as the coach between the mini-goals plays in the third ball. In the moment that the third ball enters the field, an extra yellow

attacker as well as an extra blue defender enter the field, creating a 3v2 situation overall as is depicted in picture 3. What makes the game quite challenging now is the increase in size of the playing area. As soon as the 3v2 is played, the game is played on the side where the ball was played in, as well as the previous central channel. In other words, 2/3 parts of the entire field are now played in. The 3 yellows work together to attack the big goal, and the two blues can counter to now 3 mini goals. One question that can add variance to the practice is what you do when the keeper is holding onto the ball. Now it is possible to either immediately start the next wave or allow their team to try to attack out, almost like in a build-up situation. Either one is possible, but it really depends on what outcome you want. Do you want a really fast-paced attacking practice? Then it probably makes sense to start the next wave as soon as the keeper holds onto the ball. Do you want something more multifaceted where the players really have to think about solutions? Then it may make more sense to allow Blue to continue playing even when their keeper holds onto the ball after making a save.

In picture 4, we see the final stage of the wave practice. The coach at the top of the picture plays in another ball, and an additional yellow attacker as well as a blue defender enter the playing area, creating a 4v3 situation on the field (with blue obviously being supported by a goalkeeper as in all the previous stages as well). The entire playing area is now used, offside is employed from the box line, and blue can counter to all 4 mini-goals at the top of the picture. The players who have been part of the previous stages have to constantly adjust to the new situation and immediately

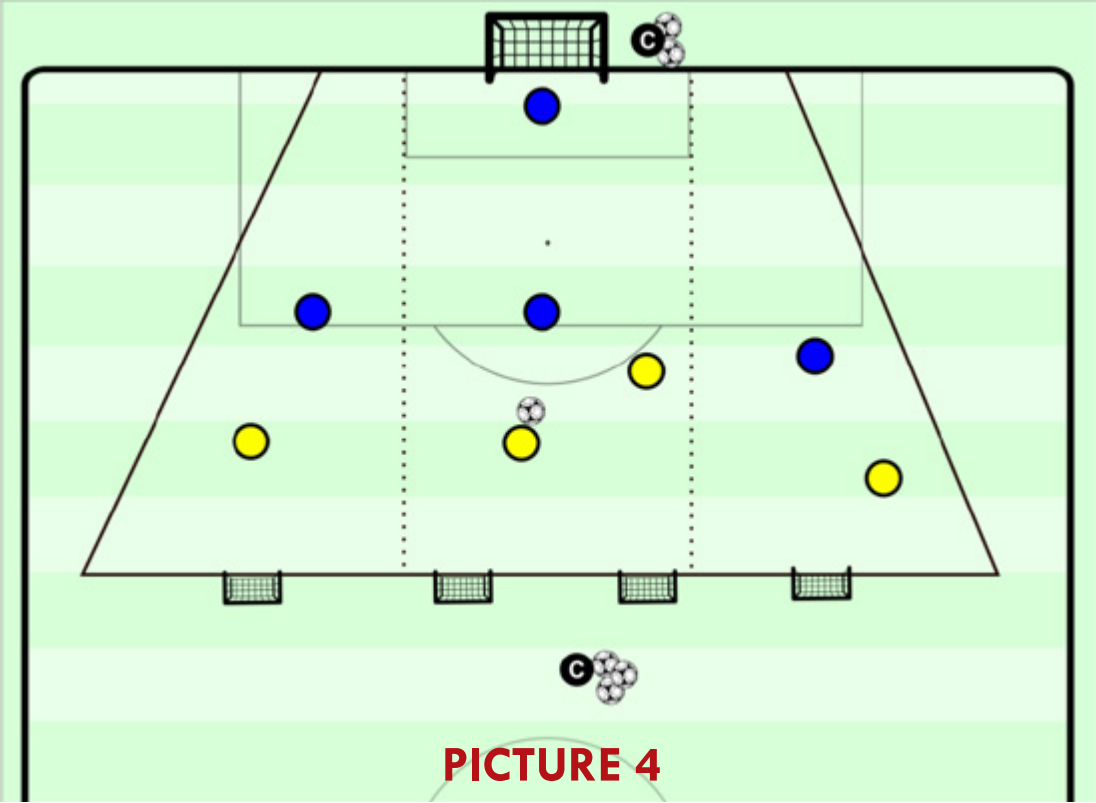


make productive actions to support their team in the next attack that quickly ensues.

Organisationally, it can make sense for the 4 attackers to always play together but to change positions in a wheel. For example, player 1 starts the 1v1 in the first round, in the second round they sit out the 1v1 but join in the 2v1, in the third round they sit out the first two stages and only join in the 3v2, and finally in the last round they only join in the 4v3. When working with professional players who might need to be loaded very carefully, it can make a lot of sense to keep the waves short and very intense. While in the academy stage, before that, just doing a few waves might not be enough field practice time for the players to develop effectively. Here, it makes a lot of sense to, for example, play the 1v1 for 20 or even more seconds. If the ball leaves play, then a new ball is just played in until the total time is finished. This can be repeated at each stage of the practice and obviously ensures more total repetition.

Another key question is whether players go into specialist positions or if we play this practice with 2 teams that change roles. In other words, all players take a turn in the defensive team and a separate turn in the attacking team, or we just play a straight competition between attacking and defensive players. Both

are possible and largely depend on the context in which you are working. From experience, players really enjoy this practice as it involves a lot of shooting at the goal and is normally played at a very high tempo. Players should be encouraged to make creative attacking actions where they take risks and discover new possibilities in these key situations that ultimately decide the game.





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