



MODIBA TARGETS AFCON & CAFCL TROPHIES



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IN-FORM PIRATES FACE STRUGGLING CHIEFS IN DDC SOWETO DERBY

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SUNDOWNS OPEN TO KODISANG
PERMANENT MOVE

Mamelodi Sundowns are open to the permanent exit of Kobamelo Kodisang, who is currently on loan in Liga Portugal with AVS Futebol. Kodisang struggled to adapt to life at Sundowns, with form and fitness issues, and was allowed to leave on loan for the 2025/26 season back to Portugal, where he had impressive stints with AD Sanjoanense, Braga and Moreirense. With one goal in five appearances, the 25-year-old is getting back to full fitness, but at the Betway Premiership champions, sources have suggested there's little chance of a return to Sundowns.



CISSE TOUTED FOR EUROPEAN BIG
LEAGUES

Golden Arrows pulled off a major coup when they landed Ivory Coast U23 captain Isaac Cissé for the 2025/26 season, and it appears it won't be a long-term stay in South Africa. The 19-year-old's signing, admittedly, was a stroke of luck for the club, head coach Manqoba Mngqithi stated, after several European suitors dragged their feet on the deal. Arrows came in with a tempting offer, and with his performances so far, it won't be long before bigger clubs come knocking. Bastia were reportedly in talks with the teenage sensation who has scored two goals from midfield in his opening five games in Mzansi.



WITBOOI ATTRACTS SPORTING
INTEREST?

Sporting Lisbon are reportedly interested in the services of Cape Town City winger Emile Witbooi. Sporting are no strangers to South African talent, with Liam Jordan and Sphephelo Sithole once on the books of the club in their development ranks, signed from Mzansi. The 17-year-old, currently at the U17 FIFA World Cup in Qatar where the Amajimbos have qualified for the knockout stages, was previously on trial in the United Kingdom with Chelsea, but sources have suggested there's strong interest from Portugal.



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AGENT: BROOS COMMENTS ON LINKS OUT OF ORDER

Bafana Bafana head coach Hugo Broos' recent comments over Gift Links have been met with a response from his representatives amidst his constant exclusion from the senior national team over the last four years.

Links, 26, last featured for the national team four years ago in a 0-0 draw against Zimbabwe, which was the opening 2022 FIFA World Cup qualifier in Broos' tenure and the last time the former Cape Town City and Platinum Stars talent was called-up.

He returned to his club AGF in the Danish Superliga with an injury from that game and missed their next six matches in all competitions, as an ankle injury he suffered before the camp, was worsened during the qualifier.

Links was one of many players who were part of a squad revamp, with Bongokuhle Hlongwane, Ethan Brooks, Sipho Mbule and Luther Singh among those who were out in the cold after those qualifiers.

While Mbule has since made a return to the fold, Links, who has been a standout player in the Superliga for AGF for the past four seasons, was described by Broos as a player 'not at the level for the national team'.

It was an interesting statement, with several Danish media outlets constantly questioning his lack of involvement in the national team and looking towards local media for explanations.

Broos has reportedly never visited, or watched Links in a live game before – and the decision or opinion has left those around Links baffled, as they feel his performances do not seem to warrant the label given last week.

iDiski Times reached out to Link's representatives at SSG to find out more about the situation given the blunt statement from the national team head coach.

Paul Mitchell, FIFA Agent said: "To be honest, we found the comments 'bizarre' to say the least and we felt it was very uncalled for and unprovoked.

"Gifty, when not picked for a Bafana squad previously, has never once spoken in the media, complained publicly and has always been the utmost professional, so to hear such comments, well, it's very disappointing. Gifty was upset, to be honest, and rightly so, he doesn't understand why such things would be said.

"To talk about levels, that's not an argument we would want to get into, but I think we will all agree that any SA player would love to be part of a league, with the level of the Danish Superleague, week in week out.

"Gifty has been outstanding for AGF over the past seasons. This is his sixth season, his data and MOM performances speak



for themselves, but to say he doesn't have the level!! I'm sorry, it is a 'miles off the mark' flippant comment.

"He has a great reputation not just in the City of Aarhus, but within the Danish Football fraternity at large and the Danish media.

"There has been talk that on Gifty's first appearance for the national team under the current Coach, the perception from the medical team, (when he asked to come off at half-time) was that he was not actually injured, well on return to Denmark he was out for three months with ligament damage, so if that is true, then it is also hard to fathom.

"At the end of the day, in any team, club or national team, it is a coach's prerogative who to select; this is no different in South Africa. However, to hear such comments is very disappointing for any player.

"This is not about Gifty's non-inclusion, but more so about the disrespect shown on this occasion, when all Gifty has been doing is working hard, playing very well, carrying himself in the right way, and paving the way with his success, for other SA players to potentially follow in his footsteps in Denmark.

"If the comments were based on his performances in Denmark, which had been watched live by members of the Technical Team, then fine, but we all know that none of the players outside of SA have ever been watched live at any time.

"Hopefully, a line can be drawn on this now. Gifty and AGF are fighting to win the league this season; his concentration is obviously on that. He supports the national team, always, and will continue to do so."

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TSO: AT ORLANDO PIRATES, WE DEAL WITH TROPHIES!

Orlando Pirates booked their spot in the Carling Knockout final, where they will face Abdeslam Ouaddou’s former club Marumo Gallants — setting up an opportunity for him and the Buccaneers to win a second trophy of the season.

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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Another Cup Final For Ezimnyama - Tso Vilakazi

“Coach Abdeslam Ouaddou must know that at Orlando Pirates, we deal with trophies!

“Ezimnyama won the MTN8 already with Ouaddou, and now they will play a final of the Carling Knockout!

“You already know where the trophy is going! Ezika Magebhula ezagebhula umhlaba ka Masipala Madoda!

“Well done to Richards Bay as well for giving Pirates a tough semi-final. They had a plan to play a low block and hit on the counter.

“It’s a pity that their attackers, Knox Mutizwa and Frank Mhango, had early yellow cards. Richards Bay had a good second half, too.

“Good goal for Tshepang Moremi and a good pass from Oswin Appollis. Pirates are always looking to attack on the left with Moremi, and it works.

“Well done to the big team for another cup final.”

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MODIBA SETS TARGETS ON AFCON & CAFCL TROPHIES

Whether playing in defence or attack, AUBREY MODIBA always delivers. It's why the 31-year-old is known as 'The Postman'. And he has continued to deliver, playing a key role for Hugo Broos' Bafana Bafana team as they delivered a World Cup qualification for South Africa. iDiski Times Senior Soccer writer MATSHELANE MAMABOLO had a long chat with the

Mamelodi Sundowns and Bafana utility player prior to his going into the national team camp ahead of their friendly international against Zambia to speak about this and that.

MATSHELANE MAMABOLO: Let's start with the fact that we've qualified for the World Cup. How exciting is it for you personally?

AUBREY MODIBA: It is really exciting for me. It is everyone's dream to represent their country at the World Cup. It is the main tournament that every country wishes to be part of. So qualifying is massive for us – and for me and my career as well, because as a footballer you want to reach those heights of the World Cup. I would say it is a dream-come-true because you play football for these types of events.

MM: It really is special because the last time we qualified was way back in 2002. And you'd have been fairly young when we hosted the 2010 World Cup. So, for you, when did the World Cup dream begin?

AM: I think as soon as I signed my first professional contract. I've always said I want to play for one of the big teams and then to represent Bafana [Bafana].. And from then on, it was all about making sure I do well at my team so I can be a regular for Bafana. I've always seen myself donning the Bafana [shirt], and now, having worn it for 40-plus caps, I am hoping to reach 50 caps and more. So, ja, it's always been a dream as soon as I started playing professionally, that's when I was like, I would love to be part of the World Cup and the AFCON [Africa Cup of Nations].

MM: Ja, and you've ticked the AFCON one now, you're about to tick the World Cup one. Of course, there is the issue of staying consistent until the final squad is announced. But you've become a regular member of Bafana in recent years. What would you attribute your consistently being there to?

AM: I think now I know what it takes to play for Bafana. I know that you are not only representing your fans at club level, or just your family or whatever – you are now representing the whole country. And sometimes when you don't do well for Bafana, you now get criticism from everyone in the country. Now I know what it takes to play for Bafana, and playing in the [CAF] Champions League every season helps as well. But also, I know what the coach wants from me and the other players and I make sure I try to do that. Also, doing well at your club level is important because you need to do well there to make it at Bafana level. You need to make sure you are consistently playing to stand a good



“EVEN WHEN PEOPLE MOCKED ME, SAYING I ‘DON’T HAVE A GIRLFRIEND’ OR THAT ‘FOOTBALL WAS MY GIRLFRIEND’, I WAS NOT BOTHERED BECAUSE I KNEW WHAT I WANTED AND I HAD A DREAM.”



chance of being called up to Bafana. So, I think all that played a role.

MM: Speaking of the Champions League, the group stage draw has been conducted, and you guys know who you will be facing. What do you think of the draw? How do you fancy your chances?

AM: I know all the teams are difficult, so it's gonna be difficult games. We know Al Hilal; we played them a few times before. Lupopo, we saw what they did against Pirates – they are a tough team. MC Alger, they are coached by coach Rulani [Mokwena], and we see what they are doing in their league – they have not lost a game, if I am not mistaken. It's gonna be tough, like it is every season, but possibly much tougher given the teams in the group. But we are also a tough team, and we are going to make sure we fight, so we can be able to do better than last season's final appearance. We want to win it this time, and we need that mentality. It won't be easy, but we are also not going to make it easy for them. It won't be a walk in the park, but we are up for the task of facing these tough teams.

MM: You've ticked a lot of boxes in your career, but you were not part of the Sundowns team that won it in 2016. The desire for that first title must be strong for you then?

AM: Oh, ja, that one is massive. The Champions League is big. I'd love to tick the Champions League box, of course.

MM: With the World Cup coming up, you will be ticking almost all the major tournaments in football. You've done the Olympics as well. You've lived the dreams many kids from the villages out in Limpopo see as far-fetched.

AM: Ja man. For me, it is a bit emotional because I was a young boy from Limpopo, where people feel there's no chance. They tell you that you won't make it. But I've always known what I wanted to be. As a young boy, I've always wanted to

“I DON'T THINK YOU CAN IMPRESS COACH HUGO ENOUGH. THAT MAN, I NEED TO IMPRESS HIM EVERY CAMP. I'M NOT GONNA SIT HERE AND BE LIKE I KNOW I AM THERE.”

play football professionally. It's been my passion since I was young, and I have put in the work as a youngster. Even when people mocked me, saying I 'don't have a girlfriend' or that 'football was my girlfriend', I was not bothered because I knew what I wanted and I had a dream. I was driven by my desire to become a professional, and I've not stopped pushing since I signed my first contract. And right now, having kids and a family, that's what pushes me to make sure I keep going. It's about never giving up because you are no longer representing just yourself, but your wife and the kids, and those are the things that drive me right now.

MM: That's very inspiring, Aubrey, and I am sure you are aware that you are now – as a national team player and a star of Sundowns – a role model to many kids from back home and even the whole country as a national team player.

AM: Ja, but it is not easy to be a role model because some get it, some don't, because there are those who think you are speaking from a place of privilege, even when you explain to them that 'I was here where you are' because they just see you after you made it. But my message to kids, whether those who want to be the next Aubrey Modiba or any other soccer star, or any other profession they want to pursue, is that



the talent you have can take you so far, going hand in hand with school. But you've got to put your mind, your energy and time into doing that. You've got to work hard at it.

MM: Speaking of youngsters who need guidance, there's a promising one at Sundowns called Thato Sibiyi, an heir to your throne so to say (chuckles). What's your view of him? What potential do you see in him?

AM: He's proper. He is good. For me, he is the Sailor [Khuliso Mudau] of left-backs. He is quick. He is strong. He can attack. He can defend. Right now he is just waiting for his opportunity. I've watched him and spoken to him. I see the next best thing for South African football. I think whenever he gets given a chance he will showcase his talent. He is quality.

MM: Aubrey, you are one of the most versatile players in the country. How has that come about?

AM: I started as a left winger and even went to trials at the School of Excellence as a left winger. But they did not have left-backs, and they tried me there and told me that's my new position. Then, when I was in Grade 11, Coach Whitey started playing me as a six and an eight, and the national under-20 used me at left-back. I could now play all those positions and [Mpumalanga Black] Aces and a SuperSport coach, Stuart [Baxter] played me as a left-back and winger as well as a six and an eight too.. So now, it does not matter where I play. Of course, I have not mastered all of them, but I have a good knowledge of them all.

MM: Lately, we've seen a lot of young players coming through. One of those is Neo Rapoo, who is in the under-20 side. What do you make of him?

AM: Ja, I know Rapoo. First of all, he's at a good team. Okay, now we know them as Siwelele, but they were SuperSport, and I knew it's a club that would develop him so well for him to become a big player for the country. He was very crucial for the team [SA under 20], as a left-back and winger and at the World Cup. So Ja (chuckles), I see a bit of myself – when I was young – in him. He must just keep his feet on the ground, keep working hard. I just wish him all the best because he is doing well, and he must keep on pushing. I am a big fan of his game. He is a quality player, a good crosser, and he's got the speed – he has a good future.

MM: The domestic championship looks set to be tight, and with Pirates out of the Champions League, people believe they are going to give you a good run for your money. You've won the league numerous times. What's your outlook for this season?

AM: Ja, it is going to be tough, like every other season. Just because Sundowns won it eight times in a row – yes, it is a good thing – does not mean it is easy. Not easy at all. Every season, teams are getting better; teams are improving,



“JUST BECAUSE SUNDOWNS WON IT EIGHT TIMES IN A ROW – YES, IT IS A GOOD THING - DOES NOT MEAN IT IS EASY. NOT EASY AT ALL. EVERY SEASON, TEAMS ARE GETTING BETTER; TEAMS ARE IMPROVING, AND TEAMS ARE BEEFING UP.”

and teams are beefing up. Look at Pirates – the quality that they have in every position; it does not matter who is playing, they keep on delivering. Even last season, they gave us a good run for our money, even though towards the end we edged them at the end. I think even if they were still in the Champions League I think they would give us a tough competition because they have a very strong squad.

MM: Will you still win the league, though?

AM: We always play every season to win the league. It's the mandate at Sundowns. That's the mandate, the moment you enter the premises, you know that you play to win the league.



MM: Bafana are going into a friendly international against Zambia that's seen as a final dress rehearsal for the AFCON before coach Broos announces the squad. But you, Aubrey, are almost part of the furniture at Bafana. Surely, you don't have much to worry about? Or will you be like the newer players trying to impress?

AM: (Chuckles) No, hey, I don't think you can impress Coach Hugo enough. That man, I need to impress him every camp. I'm not gonna sit here and be like I know I am there [in the final squad]. In the PSL, players are doing well; players are pushing, and players are knocking on the door to be at the AFCON. I can't sit here and disrespect other players; I am not that kind of person. I always try to push myself to the limit, and if it is not enough, I try again. I am not gonna sit here and be like I am there, whereas other players are pushing hard to be in the AFCON squad, whether they were in the qualifiers or not. We are competing every day, that's why it is a competition. We are pushing and fighting for the places in the squad.

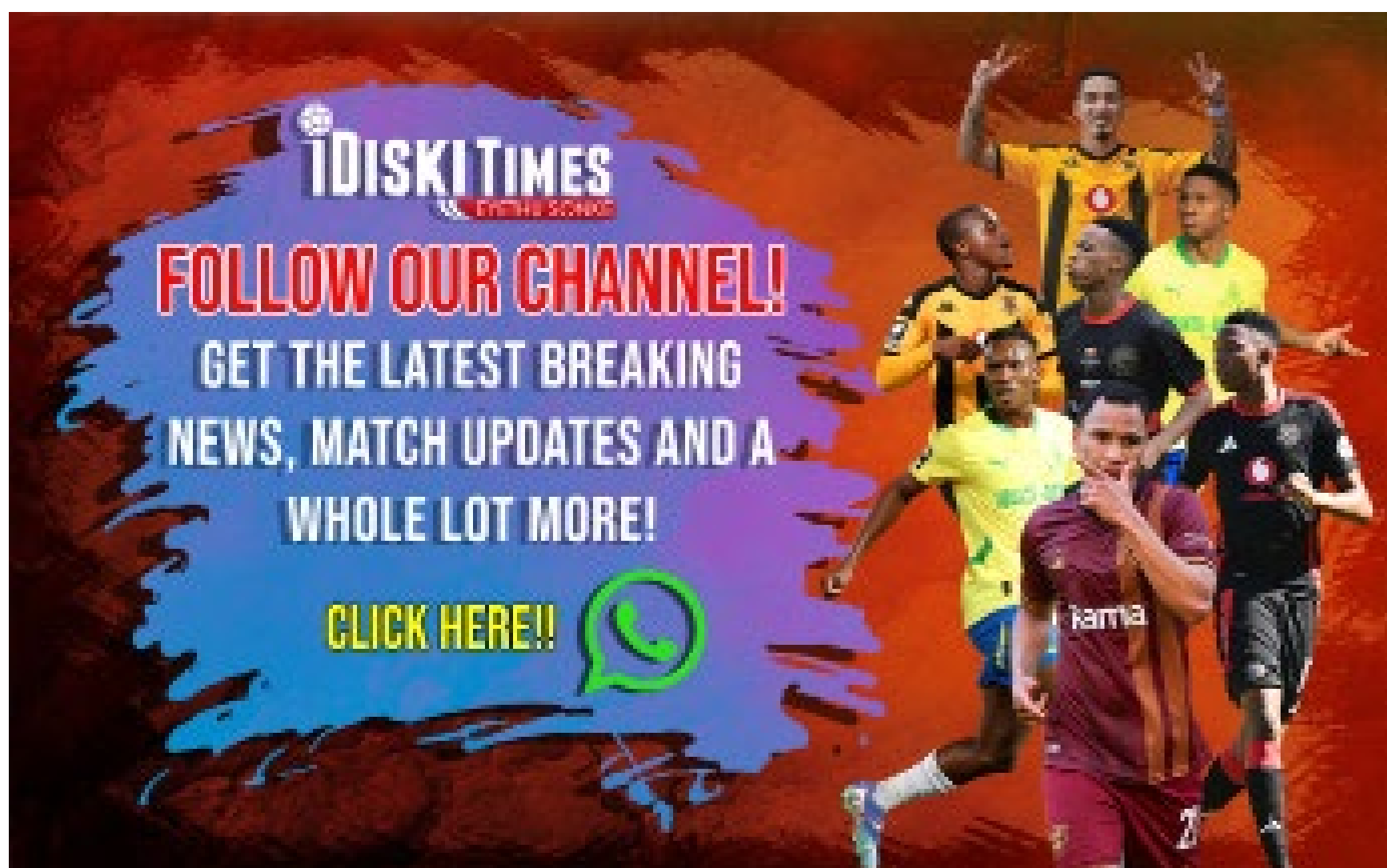
MM: We finished third at the previous tournament. Can we improve and win it this time around? Win the AFCON?

AM: Ja, we can. We believed even before we left for the Ivory Coast [for the previous tournament], the conversations were that we are going to win the AFCON, and not going to add to the numbers. Even though no one gave us a chance, no one believed, but we believed as players to say we were going to win the AFCON. We can. When we came third, we were not shocked [like some in the country were] because as players we knew our capabilities. We actually felt we deserved to be in the final, but the football Gods were not allowing us. But we believe they were preparing us for this one in Morocco, and hopefully, this time around, we can do better and go all the way to the final and win.

MM: Aubrey, thank you so much for making time for me, and all the best for the season and the rest of your career.



**“LOOK AT
PIRATES –
THE QUALITY
THAT THEY
HAVE IN EVERY
POSITION; IT
DOES NOT
MATTER WHO
IS PLAYING,
THEY KEEP ON
DELIVERING.”**





MAKHANYA: I WAS DISAPPOINTED TO MISS OUT ON BAFANA

It has been a dream 2025 season for MLS side Philadelphia Union and defender OLWETHU MAKHANYA after they finished top of the Eastern Conference with 66 points, won the Supporters’ Shield and qualified for the MLS Cup playoffs. For the 21-year-old Makhanya, this was his breakthrough season, where he finally got a chance to play for the first team, three years after signing with the club. He has played 30 matches and scored a goal in a campaign he called successful. The former Stellenbosch FC man reflects on the season with iDiski Times writer LETHABO KGANYAGO in this edition, the highs of lifting silverware with Union, how important it is to him and South African-born coach Bradley Carnell. He also touches on how the FIFA Club World Cup has heightened interest in the sport in America ahead of the Men’s World Cup, the US is co-hosting with Mexico and Canada next year, his disappointments at not making the Bafana Bafana squad this year, and hopes of still making the squad and how he is still chasing his big European dreams.

Lethabo Kganyago: Olwethu, we always appreciate your time. First thing, congratulations on your first silverware in America. How did it feel winning that Shield?

Olwethu Makhanya: I mean, it was a very proud moment, you know, just being able to work hard and be able to reward myself with such an accolade. It means a lot to me.

LK: And how important is it in a year where you have been playing consistently?

OM: It’s been really important because

“THE CLUB WORLD CUP DID BRING A CERTAIN INFLUENCE AND EXPOSED THE GAME MORE.”

for me it’s almost like a motivation to keep going. Like I’m saying, being able to work hard and have all these rewards, you know, it’s a motivation and it means a lot, you know, just something I can look at and have a feeling to just keep on going.

LK: Has this kind of defined the year for you?

OM: Yeah, you could say that. It kind of describes the season we had because we were just fighting for something this season, and we were able to win the Supporters’ Shield. It means a lot. It means a lot to have worked hard and be in the position that we are. It keeps us going as a team. We are already in the playoffs now.

LK: Does this mean the winner of this tie gets crowned the MLS champion?

OM: Yes, that’s how it works. So if you are at the top of the log, you get the Supporters Shield, then there’s the MLS Cup, which is the playoffs we are

in right now. So it's almost like another tournament on the side. So if you win that it's like you have won the whole MLS Conference.

LK: Having already lifted silverware this season, I'm sure that you guys want more...

OM: Of course, and we have already shown what we can do, what we are capable of. So now it's just a matter of, you know, trying to keep the standards high and see if we can go all the way with the MLS Cup.

LK: The number of matches you have played this season — would you have projected this at the start of the campaign?

OM: (Chuckle) to be honest, I kind of knew that I was going to have a positive season, but I did not think I would be playing this regularly. And that's how everything went, I got a chance, I did my best, and I've just been learning from every game, and that kind of gave me other opportunities to play even more games.

LK: And for you and the coach, would you say this has been the year for South Africans?

OM: You could say that. It has been a really good year for both me and the coach, the South Africans in the team.

LK: Not a lot of people give the MLS the legitimacy and credit it deserves. Do you feel that what you and the coach have achieved can make people look at the league differently?

OM: Yeah, like you say, for us to come this side and be able to do well, it's big. It kind of shows that we can also come this side and do well. We are trying to represent the most positive way, and maybe people can also tune in more on the league.

LK: After the Club World Cup and with the FIFA Men's World Cup coming next year, how's the atmosphere there in America? Is there excitement?

OM: Yes, the whole country is excited, especially the players around the league. Everyone is excited, and the country is already doing preparations to welcome all the countries that are going to be coming to play. So yeah, you can feel the energy and the excitement and everything.

LK: Do you feel that the Club World Cup also gave the country a taste of what's to come?

OM: Honestly, the Club World Cup did bring a certain influence and exposed the game more to even Americans that don't know much about the game,



“FROM MY OWN EXPECTATIONS, I WAS KIND OF DISAPPOINTED NOT TO BE PART OF THE NATIONAL TEAM.”

because you know, when it comes to sports, America is very complex. There are other big sporting codes like Basketball, American football and all these other sports, so that kind of exposed or set up a different influence for football.

LK: And were you impressed with how the African teams performed at the Club World Cup, especially a South African team, Mamelodi Sundowns?

OM: I don't want to lie, I was really impressed because they came here and they were actually competing really well, representing Africa very well. They came here and they were able to play with confidence and dominate some of the games. It was really impressive to witness.

LK: And Bafana Bafana qualifying for the World Cup must be something for you to brag about to your teammates...



OM: (Chuckles) yeah, it's something I do brag about, even my teammates who feel I should have been in the national team, they are like excited. They feel like maybe I might be there in the World Cup. So it is something I do brag about.

LK: I remember at the beginning of the season you said you just wanted to focus on getting game-time and everything that comes later will be a bonus. Is that still where you are, as far as the national team is concerned or now, with coach Hugo Broos giving younger players a chance, your stance has changed?

OM: Honestly, I would say from my own expectations, I was kind of disappointed not to be part of the national team, you know. But being able to see younger players in the national team go over there and play well, it's like a good thing for me because it kind of shows that players my age, they can actually go there and play well. So for me, it is some sort of inspiration. I'm just looking forward to it, but like you say, I'm just focused on my own game, and if it comes, it comes.

LK: But are you seeing the competition in that defence and all of them are doing well at your respective clubs, the [Khulumani] Ndamanes, [Samukelo] Kabinis, TLB [Mbekezeli Mbokazi]...

OM: It's really exciting because there are a lot of young centre-backs playing abroad, even locally, and everyone is doing well. It's good to see good competition, and competition is healthy; it's really nice to see.

LK: How do you describe the season,

“EVER SINCE I WAS YOUNG, I HAVE ALWAYS HAD BIG EUROPEAN GOALS.”

I mean, from waiting for your turn to play, then playing regularly, and the team being successful?

OM: It's honestly a very successful season for me. A lot of the goals that I have set for myself, I was able to achieve them, but for some reason, after everything. I just feel like I have gotten hungrier because a lot of things I felt I couldn't reach last season, I reached this year. Now it forces me to set more goals. Out of everything, I just feel I got hungrier, and I just want more of this. So, to conclude, it has been a really successful season.

LK: And finally, what's more to achieve for you outside of winning the playoffs?

OM: (Laughs) I mean, ever since I was young I have always had big European goals. I have always had big dreams to compete in the big leagues in Europe, so that's what I'm still chasing at this moment. You know I'm still trying to make it to Europe. But for the season in the MLS, I feel like I have done... not enough... but I have done good so far.

LK: Congratulations and thank you very much.





MAKGOPA: BROOS HAS ALWAYS BELIEVED IN ME

By Lethabo Kganyago

Baroka FC chairman Khurishi Mphahlele remembers vividly the events of the day his club discovered striker EVIDENCE MAKGOPA whilst playing at a festive tournament in Moroke village in the Sekhukhune District in Limpopo. This was just a few years ago, also around the same time Mphahlele started the construction of the Baroka Village in Lebowakgomo. Now at Orlando Pirates, the former Baroka striker, will always be remembered in South African football folklore, having etched his name in the history books this year, helping Bafana Bafana secure qualification to the 2026 FIFA World Cup in North America.

“It was just another normal tournament like any tournament in the offseason,” a proud Mphahlele reminisced to iDiski Times.

“There was a tournament there in Moroke, which most of the time we spend our time there during the festive season... And then we spotted him.

“And he was not even playing as a striker; he was playing as a defender!

“But we thought this boy can be a striker. If you see that boy defending, he can defend well, and if you don’t have a defender, he can do the job for you. At the time, we felt we had enough defenders; we needed a striker, and he could do that, play both positions very well.”

The lanky forward was promoted in 2020 from the club’s Diski Challenge team. Former coach Dylan Kerr selected him for the first team, and he made an immediate impact, scoring four times in his eight league appearances and once in the cup, in his debut season. He’d score 10 more goals for Baroka in his

next two seasons before Pirates signed him in 2022.

He has gone on to become an integral part of Pirates’ attacking department, with 18 goals in all competitions, and also become a key figure for the senior national team under Hugo Broos. The 25-year-old has 21 caps under his belt and six goals and two assists in national colours since making his debut in Broos’ first game in charge against Uganda back in 2021.

Of course, one of those six goals, and one of those assists, ensured that South Africa secured a place in America next year. Makgopa scored the final strike in the 3-0 win against Rwanda in the qualifier in October in Mbombela after earlier providing the assist to Oswin Appollis for the second goal.

“That was the cherry on top,” Mphahlele reflected on Makgopa’s goal in the qualifier.

“Remember, he got an assist and he scored another goal that was the cherry on top, in particular for the boy that comes from a rural village in Limpopo where Baroka is based.

“It hasn’t been long since we spotted him playing in the tournament on dusty streets. So it is wonderful for the boy, we are happy for the boy, we are happy for the country, and we are happy for ourselves too. We are also patting ourselves on the back that we have done something good; we must carry on doing it.”

At the back of this call-up, Bafana coach Broos had needed to defend his decision to recall Makgopa into the squad for these qualifiers. Makgopa was in the preliminary list but did not make the



final cut. However, after Iqraam Rayners withdrew because of medical reasons, Broos added Makgopa, much to criticism from those who believed an on-fire Bradley Grobler would have been a better replacement for the Mamelodi Sundowns man.

“I don’t think I have to make a big explanation of what he can [do] and not,” Broos told the media.

“When we went two years ago to AFCON, everybody was asking, ‘What is Makgopa doing in there?’

“And you saw which role he played in AFCON.

“There are many people who underestimate Makgopa – he’s not Messi, he’s not Ronaldo – but he’s a guy who can be very helpful for a team. He showed it two years ago in AFCON.

“When Iqraam had to leave the camp, I didn’t doubt to call Evidence.”

Makgopa came in facing stiff competition from Lyle Foster and Mohau Nkota in Bafana’s starting line-up. Makgopa didn’t start the penultimate qualifier against Zimbabwe in Durban and was a late substitute when the sides from COSAFA failed to score. The result meant Bafana needed to win their final qualifier and hope for a favourable result in the match between Nigeria and Benin.

But on October 14, and with Foster unavailable, Makgopa started, assisted and scored one of the most important goals in South African football. Sweet redemption, some thought, and his work on the field answering why Broos backed him.

The striker told iDiski Times how much he appreciates Broos amid celebrations of Bafana’s heroics in Mbombela.

“For me, I really appreciate him,” expressed a jubilant Makgopa.

BROOS: “THERE ARE MANY PEOPLE WHO UNDERESTIMATE MAKGOPA – HE’S NOT MESSI, HE’S NOT RONALDO – BUT HE’S A GUY WHO CAN BE VERY HELPFUL FOR A TEAM.”

“I think maybe he can see the effort I make. So he’s someone who’s always believed in me.

“And obviously, I’m happy, my sister. It’s not everyone who has qualified to go to America, so as a nation, we are proud we made it.”

Makgopa spoke with confidence that, leading to that encounter, he and his teammates were optimistic of qualification.

South Africa had missed three previous World Cup editions after hosting in 2010, and before then, the last time Bafana were at the World Cup was in 2002, when Makgopa was two.

Besides not being clinical against Zimbabwe and dropping points, the team had been docked points by FIFA for the fielding of a suspended Teboho Mokoena in the qualifier against Lesotho in March 2025. The team had worked hard to stay on top of Group C, but the sanction from the governing body saw them drop to second position, and dropping points against the Warriors threatened qualification.



But all of these obstacles did not deter Makgopa and his teammates.

“We knew that we were going to qualify because Rwanda didn’t have much to play for,” added Makgopa.

“Understanding what this meant also motivated us to want a win. We just focused on ourselves because anything could have happened.”

Meanwhile, for Mphahlele, Makgopa’s story represents so much more and one of the reasons he has built the Baroka Village now known as Mafori Village. The club boss says, for him, it’s about how access gives everyone a fair shot at success. Mphahlele says there are so many Makgopas waiting to be discovered and nurtured in rural Limpopo, and hopes the investment in infrastructure can help in that.

“We just wish the boy can go to the World Cup and score some goals because the more he scores, our name, our country will be known in the whole world,” added Mphahlele.

“We are happy to have produced a boy like him, and we ask God to help us to produce more because I feel there’s a lot more talent in this province that needs to be nurtured.

MAKGOPA ON BROOS: “I THINK MAYBE HE CAN SEE THE EFFORT I MAKE. SO HE’S SOMEONE WHO’S ALWAYS BELIEVED IN ME.”

“In this province of ours, facilities are hard to come by, and most of the facilities are located in the city. Not everybody can go to the city. Not everybody can access that facility in the city.

“That led us to saying we may need to take the service to the people, bring the facility to the people. That’s why we started this project of creating this facility so that the boys who are disadvantaged can come and show their talents and polish their skills.

“We are building this facility so that it can meet high-class standards. If God helps us and we gain promotion, I do not wish to go to the city. I wish to play all our matches here, even in the highest league.”



SOWETO DERBY HEADLINES THIS WEEKEND'S DISKI CHALLENGE

This weekend's DStv Diski Challenge promises a fiery showdown as the mini Soweto Derby takes centre stage at the Solomon Mahlangu Stadium, in a clash brimming with history, hunger, and youthful flair.

Defending champions Kaizer Chiefs will be out to reignite their campaign when they face current log leaders Orlando Pirates, who have been in red-hot form under new coach Roscoe Krieling.

Krieling, who arrived in the off-season after several years leading SuperSport United's DDC side, has quickly stamped his authority on the Buccaneers, transforming them into a unit that looks determined to finally shed their "nearly men" tag. Despite consistently challenging at the top, Pirates have never lifted the DDC title, but this season, they look every bit of the part and have already opened up a healthy lead at the top.

Their early statement victories, including a 5-1 thrashing of Mamelodi Sundowns and a 3-0 dismantling of a strong Stellenbosch side, have set the tone for what could be a historic campaign.

However, despite those excellent results, Krieling warns that past victories mean nothing when you're playing a derby.

"Form doesn't go into derbies," Krieling said in the build-up to the game.

"They'll be up for it. These boys will be up for it.

"So it'll be a derby, it'll be on TV... I also don't believe we've been the best on TV. When we've played off TV, we've actually played our best football.

"It's again about them learning the demands. You know, sometimes they're playing the 'hype' of the game, but play the 'game'.

"Again, part of our job is to mentor them to be better mentally and understand that this is going to happen when you're playing in a 40,000 seater stadium, packed, you've got to be able to perform at those levels, and those are the pressures they're going to have to be put under."

Chiefs, meanwhile, find themselves in unfamiliar territory. After breaking their Diski duck last season and being crowned 2024/25 champions, the young Amakhosi have struggled to find their rhythm this term, though did pick up a good win last weekend against Polokwane City, which ended their seven-match winless run. Last season, on the way to the title, Chiefs won both mini Soweto Derbies.

This derby could be the spark they need. With the added excitement of their upcoming trip to England later this month, where they'll face Manchester United, Leeds United and QPR, the Chiefs youngsters have every reason to lift their game.

"We are incredibly excited to see our Reserve Team heading to England to face these famous clubs. It is a reward for the dedication and resilience they showed in winning the DDC title for the first time last season," Chiefs Sporting Director, Kaizer Motaung Jr, told their media department.

"It presents them with a tremendous opportunity to test their abilities against emerging talent from some of the world's giants in football."

For the derby, Chiefs will be without their head coach, Vela Khumalo, who is currently on duty with the South African U17 team at the FIFA U17 World Cup in Qatar. His absence adds another layer of intrigue to an already fascinating fixture.

For Pirates, a win would reinforce their



title credentials.

“Everyone wants to win,” Krieling reiterated.

“And again, if you look at the log table, if you want to maintain your position, where you are currently, I think we are [five] points ahead of Sundowns. So yeah, we want to maintain that. We want to be able to keep the gap as big as possible if we want to really stretch and go for the title.

“So again, number one, don’t play the occasion, play the game. For me, I don’t get pressured by which games. I think that’s part of being a coach; you enjoy these games when they come thick and fast.

“And yeah, we’re just going to go and do our job this week. Let them work hard now, recover, and then we go back to training and work again towards the game.”

“FORM DOESN’T GO INTO DERBIES. THEY’LL BE UP FOR IT. THESE BOYS WILL BE UP FOR IT.”

For Chiefs, currently 11 points behind Pirates, it could be the turning point of their season. A derby victory could restore pride, spark belief, and set the tone before their trip abroad.

Either way, the stage is set for a thrilling chapter in South Africa’s most famous football rivalry — Diski-style.





SIVUTHA MANJE!

FIXTURES

SOLOMON MAHLANGU

SATURDAY

15 NOVEMBER 2025

	STELLENBOSCH FC VS MAMELODI SUNDOWNS	
12:00		
	TS GALAXY FC VS ORBIT COLLEGE FC	
15:00		

SUNDAY

16 NOVEMBER 2025

	POLOKWANE CITY FC VS MAGESI FC	
12:00		
	KAIZER CHIEFS VS ORLANDO PIRATES	
15:00		

#ASIDLALI #SIVUTHAMANJE

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THE RIGHT-BACK PRESIDENT & THE CONTENDERS

With the countdown ticking — less than 31 days to the start of the CAF Africa Cup of Nations in Morocco, and just over 200 days until the FIFA World Cup in the USA, Mexico, and Canada — the excitement around Bafana Bafana is building fast. As preparations ramp up, iDiski Times will be diving deep into each position on the pitch, analysing the frontrunners, the fringe players, and the rising stars, hoping to catch Hugo Broos’ eye for these two monumental tournaments.

Last week, we focused on the left-back position, and now, we switch flanks to the right, where Mamelodi Sundowns’ powerhouse Khuliso Mudau reigns supreme. If there were a hierarchy among Bafana Bafana’s full-backs, Mudau would be the President: commanding, consistent, and full of authority every time he steps onto the pitch. His rise at Sundowns and Bafana has been remarkable, evolving into one

of Africa’s standout defenders.

But right beside him, both literally and figuratively, is his Sundowns teammate Thapelo Morena, the perfect Vice-President. Morena is the ultimate utility man: blisteringly fast, intelligent in possession, and adaptable enough to slot in anywhere along the flank or even further forward. At times, the two have shared the field together, fluidly switching roles between right-back and right wing, creating headaches for opposition defenders with their seamless understanding and tireless running.

Their chemistry at both club and country level has become one of South Africa’s greatest assets. Broos knows he can count on them, not just for stability, but for that extra spark of dynamism that turns defence into attack in an instant. If both remain fit, it’s almost impossible to imagine a Bafana squad for AFCON in Morocco or the World Cup in North America without the Sundowns duo leading the charge down the right.

The Men In Possession:

Khuliso Mudau (Mamelodi Sundowns)

When Broos first took charge of Bafana Bafana, Khuliso Mudau wasn’t immediately pencilled into his plans. But once the Belgian got a proper look at what the Mamelodi Sundowns full-back could do, there was no turning back, and Mudau quickly became one of the first names on his team sheet. Blessed with pace, composure on the ball, and always a cool customer, Mudau has consistently proven his worth for both club and country.

That said, his journey hasn’t been without its hurdles. Injuries and a brief spell out of the Sundowns lineup earlier this season, amid some behind-the-scenes issues, tested his resilience. Yet he’s bounced back strongly, reminding everyone why



he's among South Africa's best.

Now, at the peak of his powers, the 30-year-old looks like a player ready for a move abroad; his skill set and mentality would fit comfortably in any top league. If there's one thing missing from his game, it's goals; for someone with his attacking flair and eye for space, adding a few more to his tally would elevate him even further. But make no mistake, Mudau remains the gold standard at right-back for Bafana.

Thapelo Morena (Mamelodi Sundowns)

In possession and in purpose, Thapelo Morena has quietly become one of Bafana's most trusted and versatile soldiers. While many still view him primarily as a full-back, Morena's ability to adapt has made him a priceless asset for Broos. He's comfortable bombing down the flank or drifting further upfield, often forming a slick and dynamic partnership with Khuliso Mudau on the right.

Morena's knack for reading the game and his explosive bursts of pace make him just as effective in attack as he is in defence. In fact, his recent goals in the World Cup qualifiers underlined his importance, not just as a utility player, but as a genuine match-winner when it counts.

At 32, Morena is the definition of experience meeting energy. His professionalism, composure, and selfless attitude make him exactly the kind of player every coach loves to have. Whether Broos needs a dependable back-up at right-back, a burst of creativity in midfield, or a tactical shift mid-game, Morena is the man who always delivers, efficiently, and with purpose.

The Back-Ups:

Thabang Matuludi (Polokwane City)

Matuludi's story feels like one of quiet perseverance meeting well-earned opportunity. The dynamic right-back had been knocking on the Bafana door for most of 2024, impressing with his energy, intelligence, and ability to influence games at both ends of the pitch. But just as momentum began to build, a cruel long-term injury forced him to the sidelines, halting what looked like a breakthrough moment in his young career.

Fast forward to the start of the 2025/26 campaign, and Matuludi returned with renewed purpose. His comeback performances were everything you'd hope for: sharp, fearless, and full of intent. It didn't take long for Broos to take notice, rewarding the player with a call-up to the national squad.

Though he didn't make his debut, Matuludi was there in Mbombela, celebrating as Bafana booked their tickets to the 2026 FIFA World Cup, a taste of what could

be coming his way.

At 26, Matuludi has all the tools Broos loves in a modern full-back: hard-working, athletic, and technically gifted, with a knack for timing his runs and even chipping in with goals. There's a quiet steel about him, a confidence without arrogance, and that could make him one of Bafana's most exciting long-term prospects. If he stays fit and continues on his current trajectory, don't be surprised if Matuludi moves from squad member to starter in the very near future.

Nyiko Mobbie (Siwelele FC)

From the very beginning of Broos' reign, Nyiko Mobbie has been one of his most trusted selections. No matter the criticism or outside noise, Broos always backed his man, and time after time, Mobbie repaid that faith with consistent performances for Bafana Bafana.

There were moments when fans and pundits questioned his continued selection, but Broos saw what others perhaps overlooked: a player who understood his tactical instructions, defended with composure, and played with quiet reliability.

However, football can be unforgiving.



His most recent injury came at the worst possible time, just as competition for the right-back spot began to intensify. Now, as Broos faces difficult decisions ahead of AFCON and the World Cup, Mobbie’s place is no longer a given.

This could be one of the coach’s biggest loyalty tests yet. Broos has shown before that sentiment has no place in his selections; several early favourites have already been left behind as new talent emerges. Whether Mobbie can fight his way back into contention will depend not just on recovery but on rediscovering the form and determination that made him indispensable in the first place.

The Contenders:

Fezile Gcaba
(Durban City)

One of the fresh faces in Broos’ recent Bafana call-ups, Gcaba has been quietly writing one of the more inspiring comeback stories in South African football. Comfortable playing both at right-back and in central defence, the 26-year-old has proven himself to be a reliable, composed presence wherever he’s deployed, and his recent rise has been nothing short of remarkable.

After several years plying his trade in the Motsepe Foundation Championship,



many might have thought Gcaba’s chance at the big time had passed. But his move to Richards Bay last season reignited his career, and when Gavin Hunt’s newly-promoted Durban City came calling in the off-season, he grabbed the opportunity with both hands. Since then, he’s become one of the cornerstones of Hunt’s side.

His performances didn’t go unnoticed, first catching the eye at the COSAFA level, where he earned his maiden taste of international football. For a player once part of the Orlando Pirates youth ranks, Gcaba’s journey back to the top is a testament to resilience and self-belief. He’s a late bloomer hitting his stride at the perfect time, and if he continues this path, he could soon be pushing for more regular minutes in the green and gold.

Keegan Allan
(AmaZulu)

A former Mamelodi Sundowns academy product, Allan, has truly redefined his career by stepping away from Chloorkop in search of regular first-team football, and it’s a move that’s paid dividends. Over the past five years, his journey has been a masterclass in persistence and adaptability, taking in stints at Tuks, Swallows, SuperSport, Richards Bay, and now AmaZulu. Wherever he’s been deployed, whether at right-back or in central defence, Allan has consistently showcased grit and determination, proving that his value isn’t tied to a single position. His kit may have changed along the way, but his work ethic and professionalism have remained rock-solid.

Now at Usuthu, Allan is eager to catch the eye of Broos, hoping that his consistent performances and versatility will finally earn him a chance to represent Bafana Bafana. At 25, he’s hitting his prime, and with every game, he’s making a compelling case that he belongs at the highest level.

Zuko Mdunyelwa
(Mamelodi Sundowns)

Mdunyelwa’s rise has been one of quiet determination. At Sundowns, where competition for places is as fierce as anywhere on the continent, the young right-back has had to wait patiently behind Mudau. But every time his number has been called, Mdunyelwa has made sure to leave an impression, combining pace, composure, and defensive intelligence in a way that has not gone unnoticed by Broos.

It’s no surprise then that the Belgian tactician rewarded him with a Bafana Bafana call-up, where Mdunyelwa looked comfortable at international level, playing with the same calm assurance he’s shown in the PSL.

However, life as a backup at a club like Sundowns can be a double-edged sword. When he isn’t getting regular minutes, it becomes increasingly difficult for Broos to justify selecting him ahead of those playing week in, week out.

Thabiso Monyane
(Kaizer Chiefs)

Monyane’s move away from Orlando Pirates last season may well prove to be one of the best decisions of his career. After years of showing flashes of brilliance without locking down a consistent starting berth, the switch offers him what every ambitious footballer needs: regular football and a real chance to reignite his career. For Broos, who has already shown faith in the energetic full-back before, that could make all the difference.

Monyane has all the raw tools Broos admires in a modern right-back: explosive pace, tenacity in the tackle, and a fearless willingness to surge forward in support of attacks. When he’s at full stride down the flank, he brings a sense of urgency and unpredictability that can lift both his team and the crowd.

But to truly push for a Bafana Bafana return, consistency is key. At Kaizer Chiefs, that’s easier said than done. The presence of Reeve Frosler, one of the most technically gifted full-backs in the country, makes the battle for that position fierce. Frosler, when fit and firing, is an elegant and intelligent player who really should be in the national team conversation as well. For Monyane, though, the challenge is clear and the opportunity massive. After all, for a

player with his energy, attitude, and athleticism, the potential ceiling remains incredibly high, he just needs the minutes to prove it.

Deano Van Rooyen
(Orlando Pirates)

It wasn’t too long ago that Van Rooyen looked destined to become a mainstay in the Bafana Bafana setup. Calm under pressure, reliable in defence, and intelligent going forward, the right-back was one of Stellenbosch FC’s most consistent performers.

His steady rise through the ranks earned him a well-deserved move to Orlando Pirates, and with that came the long-awaited national team call-up many felt was overdue. For a brief moment, it seemed like the stars were aligning. Van Rooyen’s mature displays and professionalism hinted at a player ready to make the next big leap. But football, as it so often reminds us, can be cruelly unpredictable. A combination of untimely injuries and a dip in form has slowed his momentum just as competition in his position has intensified.

That said, Van Rooyen’s story is far from over. Still in his mid-twenties, he has plenty of time to rediscover the rhythm that made him such a standout in the first place. Back on the pitch last week, if he can stay fit and put together a consistent run of performances at Pirates, there’s every chance he’ll climb right back into Broos’ plans.

Modupi Thokolo
(Sekhukhune United)

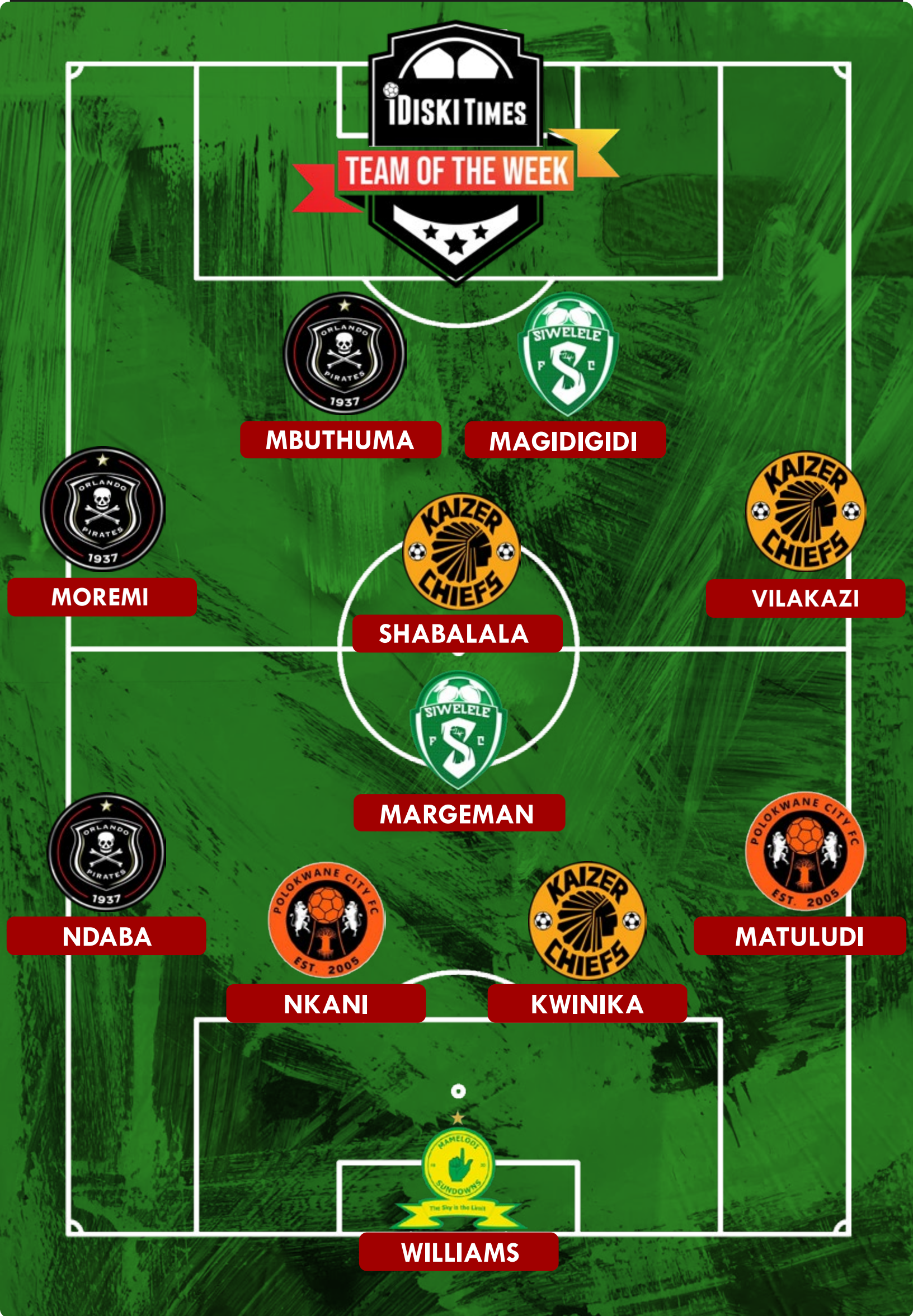
Another player capable of operating both at right-back and in central defence, Modupi Thokolo has burst onto the Premier Division scene with a maturity and composure that belie his inexperience. In what has been his first full season in the top flight, the 23-year-old has shown that he belongs at this level, and perhaps even that a national team call-up might not be far away.

Thokolo’s rise hasn’t come overnight. He was one of the standout performers for Casric Stars in the 2024/25 Motsepe Foundation Championship, ever-present, where his command at the back and calm distribution helped steer the club to the promotion playoffs. Although Casric fell just short, Thokolo’s individual performances had already caught the eye of top-flight scouts. And when Sekhukhune came knocking, he didn’t hesitate, swapping the heartbreak of near-promotion for the promise of a new challenge in the Betway Premiership.

At Babina Noko, Thokolo has wasted no time proving his worth. A few man-of-the-match displays early in the campaign have already made him a fan favourite, with his blend of power, timing, and tactical awareness fitting seamlessly into Eric Tinkler’s defensive structure. If his upward trajectory continues, 2026 might just be the year he swaps his club colours for the national ones.



IDISKI TEAM OF THE WEEK - PREMIERSHIP 4-5 NOV 2025



ACE OF THE WEEK:
AMAJIMBOS

Our iDiski Times Ace of the Week are Vela Khumalo's Amajimbos side who

made history this week in Qatar as they became the first U17 team to qualify for the knockout stages at the FIFA U17 World Cup. While the young South Africans lost their final group stage match against Italy, a victory over Bolivia and draw against hosts Qatar ensured they finished second behind the Italians in Group A to advance to the next round. The South Africans will find out their opponents later in the week as the group stages draw to an end on the 11th, with the round of 32 games set to be played on the 14th and 15th of November.





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.

Practice Game 4v3

Over the last few weeks, we had the great pleasure of speaking to Coach Thabiso Makhetha as well as Coach Rulani Mokwena. Both these South African experts are now working abroad in Estonia and Algeria, respectively and doing a great job of representing the South African coaching fraternity abroad. They both shared a favourite practice of theirs in these expert interviews, which coaches can use as inspiration in their work with their respective teams.

This week, we will continue with a training practice of my own, which carries some fundamental value in terms of teaching players to differentiate cleanly between when to pass and when to dribble the ball.

This very basic decision-making process is often taken for granted but is then practised at a far from ideal level in reality. If players are confident in both their dribbling and their passing ability, then it can be at times like having an extra player. If we look at the top level of the modern game, we constantly bear witness to how all-round top-level professional football players have become. Forwards have become extremely important against the ball in the pressing and as a first line of defence. One of the best examples of this is most certainly the current Ballon d'Or winner, Ousmane Dembele. Part of his and Paris Saint-Germain's success over the last season was their extremely intense and well-developed pressing, which was led from the front by Dembele and his fellow forwards. This is a far cry from times gone by, where forwards could take a break while their teammates had to defend. On the other side, there is also a very aesthetic development to the modern game, which we have and will continue to reference here time and again, and that is the improvement on the ball by players who play further back. Especially centre-backs and full-backs. These players are now pressed more intensely and collectively by the opposition when they are on the ball. Therefore, these players have had to develop a strong ability on the ball. Centre-backs are often the players with the most touches on the ball and carry a primary playmaking responsibility in the buildup. If the ball progression is clean, it can bring momentum to the attacking team in higher areas of the pitch. If not, we are very unlikely to

be successful as a team with positional attacks. However, the best teams at the top of the game are experts when it comes to this area of the game, and often exude the most dominance through their organised possession and buildup.

At the heart of the build-up is the player on the ball. On a most fundamental individual level, this player has a decision to make between passing the ball or dribbling it. With this dribbling, we most time aren't talking about the classic dribble in a 1v1 where an attacking player skips past an opposition defender. Most often, we are talking about a dribble where you are carrying the ball, in a relatively risk-free manner, into open space. This is critical for two main reasons. Firstly, from an objective point of view, we want the ball as an attacking team with the player that is in the most promising situation, in terms of field position relative to the opposition goal, but also in terms of pressure they are going to receive from the opposition defensive side. If a player is in a better position, we should pass them the ball; if not, we need to be able to carry it ourselves and make use of the fact that we, as an individual player, are currently the attacking player who is in the most promising position. Secondly, if we are only able to pass the ball on an individual level, we make the game much more predictable for the opposition defence, they can put minimal pressure on me as the ball carrier and put a lot of focus on being ready to press the teammates who are now going to receive a pass from the player on the ball that is unable to dribble. Therefore, we are less likely to have a player now who is in a better



position than the ball-carrier themselves, and we will create momentum with the first ball progression less often.

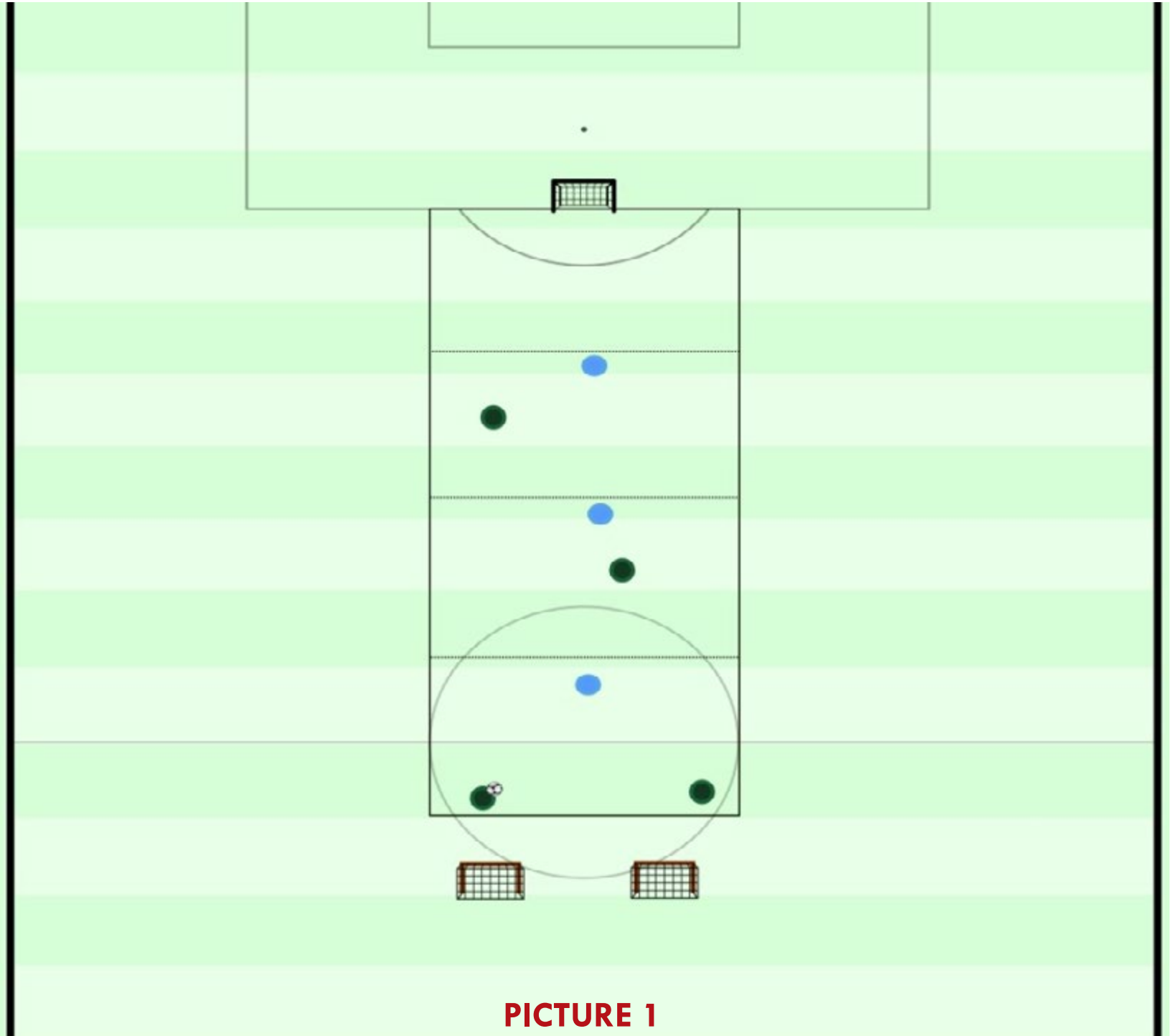
What we can obviously deduce from this is the fundamental importance of teaching our players to be able to make clean situational differentiations and decisions of when to pass and when to dribble the ball, and then, of course, also being comfortable to execute both from a technical perspective. The practice that we are highlighting today is a great practical example to work on this aspect of player development.

2v1 On 3 Levels

In picture 1, we have the green team attacking and the blue team defending. The field is divided into 4 horizontal areas. In the first corridor, we have 2 green attackers who start with the ball and one blue defender. The objective of these 2 players is to get into the next zone above this. In this zone, a further green attacker as well as a blue defender are positioned, trying to anticipate the moment when the ball will enter this area. As soon as the ball is played forward, one green attacker from the lower area is allowed to join the next higher area to support the player on the ball. Thereby, we allow the attacking team to create a 2v1 within each corridor of the field. The ultimate aim of the attacking team is to score the ball in the mini goal at the top of the field, which is placed behind a last (empty) horizontal corridor. The last boundary within the field also serves

as an offside line, basically a line from which the offside law is applied. This last field can also be used as an area for the green attackers to run in behind.

As soon as blue wins the ball, in whatever area that may be, all zonal restrictions are lifted. Blue now looks to score in the mini-goals at the bottom of the picture while the green players have to counter-press the ball in an attempt to win it back. When the ball goes out of play, we always restart with green in the bottom zone, looking to combine up the field. Scoring in the mini goal at the top of the picture is allowed at any time. However, this is obviously more difficult from a distance. I have most often played this game with two or even three mini goals for the green team to attack. Also, a further adaptation would be that there are only 3 horizontal zones instead of four, as is depicted in picture 1. At times, one can obviously decide as the green team to pass the ball quickly up the pitch. The advantage is a swifter ball progression; the disadvantage is that you are playing into a 1v1 higher up and will need some time to create the 2v1 with a player from lower coming up to support. This is quite a neat and realistic picture that has a lot of carryovers to 11v11. We have a choice between quick but risky ball progression or slower ball progression with more control and momentum from lower zones. A good coaching point in this game is to highlight the value of small and short dribbles to pin opposition defenders with your ball-carry.



PICTURE 1



FIRST DEPOSIT MATCH

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