



BOBBY SETS AMBITIOUS CHIEFS TROPHY TARGETS



THE DRAWING BOARD WITH MORITZ KOSSMANN & ACE OF THE WEEK

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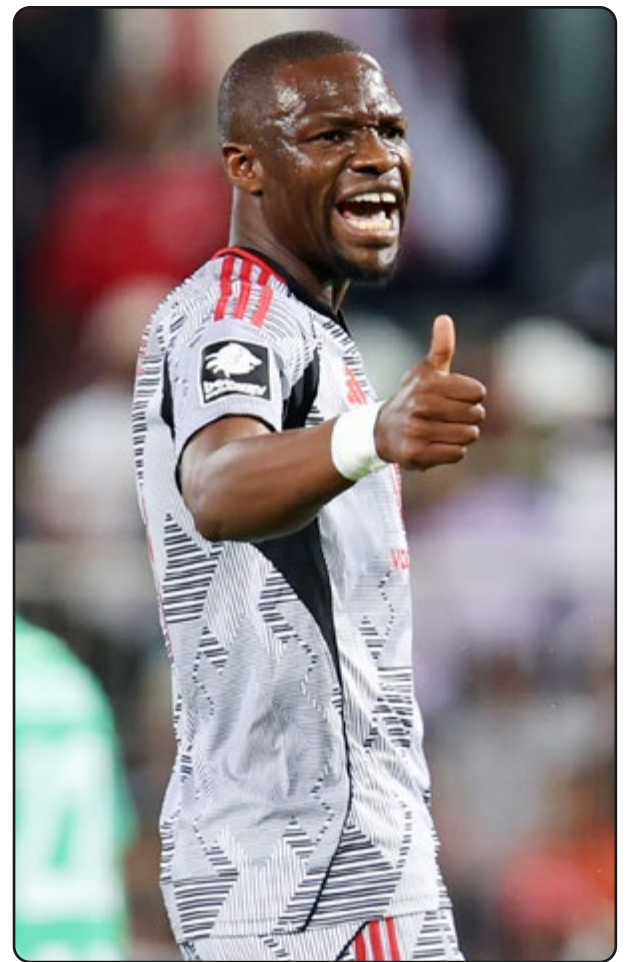
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FRANCO GIVES UP MABASA PURSUIT

Mas Fes have given up in their pursuit of Orlando Pirates striker Tshegofatso Mabasa and will not go in for another offer. In the previous window, the Botola Pro club made an official approach for the Pirates star, who is reportedly in his final six months of his contract. Speculation has been rife about whether he will remain at the club beyond January or until the end of the season, but a move to the Moroccan club has been ruled out. Despite a willingness to discuss the potential move, Pirates and Fes could not reach an agreement before the previous transfer deadline, leaving Mabasa in limbo at the Buccaneers.



EUROPE TO BEAT OUT CHIEFS AND SUNDOWNS?

TS Galaxy may soon be bracing themselves for life without Bafana Bafana international Puso Dithejane, with interest in the highly rated midfielder reaching a boiling point. The 21-year-old, who came through the School of Excellence and at Kaizer Chiefs, is firmly back on the radar of his former club, while Mamelodi Sundowns have also made their intentions clear. But the battle for Dithejane's signature is not limited to local heavyweights. Sources indicate that there is genuine and growing interest from Europe, interest that could ultimately lure the youngster abroad despite concrete offers on the table from both Chiefs and Sundowns. Galaxy have already sanctioned one major departure this window, bidding farewell to Khulumani Ndamane after his move to Sundowns, but insiders suggest that may not be the end of their transfer business. With Dithejane's stock rising rapidly and international suitors circling, the coming weeks could yet deliver another high-profile exit from the Mbombela-based club as the window gathers momentum.



TIWANI NEXT TO LEAVE SUNDOWNS?

Asekho Tiwani could be in line for a loan move away from Mamelodi Sundowns in the January window. The former Amajita captain joined the club from Sekhukhune United last season and featured 15 times for the first team as a teenager. However, injury and competition in the left back role has seen opportunities few and far between. The talented full-back had interest from Romania, Austria and Moldova before his move to Sundowns and it remains to be seen whether it will be revisited. A loan move appears on the cards for the player who is seeking regular minutes.



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SUNDOWNS FANS WILL HAVE TO WAIT FOR SALENG IMPACT

South African football was rocked by a rare jolt of disbelief last week when Mamelodi Sundowns confirmed the signing of Orlando Pirates winger Monnapule Saleng, a move few saw coming, and even fewer had predicted would end at Chloorkop.

Saleng’s relationship with Pirates has been strained for some time, and his last appearance for the Buccaneers came back in 2024. The 27-year-old spent the first half of the current season on loan at Orbit College, where he featured in 11 Betway Premiership matches, scoring twice and registering three assists. While the numbers were modest, there were flashes of the directness, confidence and creativity that once made him one of the league’s most feared wide players.

Still, his fall from grace at Mayfair has been well documented, and despite persistent speculation about his future, a switch to the reigning champions felt almost unthinkable. Sundowns rarely shop in Pirates’ aisles, and when they do, it tends to send shockwaves through the local game.

Those shockwaves have been tempered slightly by the reality that Downs supporters will need to be patient. Saleng arrives in Tshwane nursing a muscle injury and is expected to be sidelined for close to two months. His anticipated return in March means he will miss a crucial run of domestic fixtures as well as parts of Sundowns’ CAF Champions League campaign, where squad depth and rotation will again be tested.

The timing also rules him out of an immediate reunion with his former club, with Pirates set to host Sundowns later this month, a fixture that would have added an extra layer of intrigue had Saleng been available.



From Sundowns’ perspective, the move is a calculated one. The club hierarchy believes Saleng still has significant upside and views him as an investment rather than a short-term fix. He is expected to bolster competition in the attacking midfield, where Arthur Sales and Tashreeq Matthews have been key figures, while also offering a different profile, a winger capable of stretching defences and thriving in one-on-one situations.

However, his arrival inevitably raises questions about the broader attacking pecking order. Young talents such as Kutlwano Letlhaku and Siyabonga Mabena are vying for consistent minutes, and competition at Sundowns is famously unforgiving. Already Thapelo Maseko is set to depart, loaned out to a Cypriot club. For Saleng, there will be no easing-in period once he returns; performances will dictate everything.

For now, this remains a move filled with intrigue rather than certainty. It is a bold gamble by Sundowns, a fresh start for a player in need of one, and a transfer that adds another compelling subplot to an already fascinating season in South African football.

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TSO QUESTIONS TIMING OF SALENG MOVE

While many’s focus is still on the AFCON, the big local news of last week was the shock signing of Monnapule Saleng by Mamelodi Sundowns from Orlando Pirates.

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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This Signing Has Pitso Mosimane Written All Over It - Junior

Tso Vilakazi: “I think Orlando Pirates could have waited until the end of the season before allowing Monnapule Saleng to join Mamelodi Sundowns.

“Pirates are fighting Sundowns for the league and now Saleng could help Sundowns win the league.

“I love Saleng and I think he is a very good player who can make things happen. I think if he has his head and heart in the right place, he will be with Bafana Bafana at the World Cup.”

Junior Khanye: “This signing has Pitso Mosimane written all over it.

“Miguel Cardoso has shown that he doesn’t believe in these types of players. He didn’t want Thembinkosi Lorch back.

“He has Thapelo Maseko and Siyabonga Mabena and he is not using them. He doesn’t believe in these kind of players.

“Monnapule Saleng can succeed at Sundowns if he is a Pitso Mosimane signing.

“He is quick and is a good finisher. He cannot combine with his teammates.

“He will need a coach like Pitso to help him fit in the Sundowns way of playing. Overall, I’m happy that he has managed to sign for a big club after the pain he went through.”



BOBBY MOTAUNG: A LIFE OF FULFILMENT AT KAIZER CHIEFS

KAIZER CHIEFS TURNED 56 years old on January 7, and an air of optimism prevailed at Taung Village during the celebrations, with all and sundry at Amakhosi believing that the glory days will return for the Glamour Boys sooner rather than later. BOBBY MOTAUNG, Chiefs football manager who was born in 1970, just six months after his father Kaizer Motaung formed the club, is in no doubt that silverware will come to Naturena this campaign. He made time to speak to iDiski senior soccer writer MATSHELANE MAMABOLO

Matshelane Mamabolo: Bob Steak, my brother, thanks for agreeing to this interview. It's been a while. And happy birthday to the big club, 56 is a lot of years.

Bobby Motaung: Ngwana mme [Mother's child], it really has been a while. Glad we

can catch up. Yes, 56 is a lot of years. I should know, I am turning 56 later on too (chuckles).

MM: Ja, you are a twin of the club. That must be something pretty special indeed. Listen, the other day when we spoke about this milestone, you mentioned 'the Kaizer Chiefs family'; 'Amakhosi family'. It is a phrase we hear a lot. Most people associate that with the Motaung family. People believe that Chiefs is a family business. But you are saying that's not necessarily the case.

BM: No, no, it's way bigger than that.

MM: Please explain that to me.

BM: Yeah, the Amakhosi family is not just us, the Motaungs. It is way bigger than that because the Kaizer Chiefs family is broader. There are founder members; there are supporters whom we are serving, there are players who are contributors to sustaining the legacy. There are former players who have created this brand to be what it is in terms of the successes on the field. And obviously, there are sponsors who are also involved, sponsors who are contributing to the financial, marketing and exposure of the club. There are administrators from the past; there are the current ones, and there's going to be others in the future who are already involved in bringing in new ideas, given the fact we are now living in the modern era of technology. So when I say the Kaizer Chiefs family, it involves everyone. Chiefs is a corporate structure; we have directors who run this club who are not part of the Motaung family. Yes, there is the Motaung family that is involved in the running of the club, but the Kaizer Chiefs family is broad. It is huge, bigger than all of us.

MM: Bobby you were born the same year the club was formed. As a young man, you grow into this family that has a football club, players coming to your home. How was it being a Kaizer Chiefs kid?

BM: You know the team used to camp at our home in Phefeni. Our grandmother used to wash the uniforms, cook for the team, and we had players coming from Randfontein camping at the home where we grew up. So we grew up in this environment where all the players came, and I was part of this journey at a young age, not really understanding it, but enjoying football and enjoying being around these icons. I obviously also enjoyed working with the people, especially the branches who organised themselves into supporters clubs, and it's been great watching this network grow into what it is today. So the network started with people, not the family. You know, growing up, seeing people contributing and building this brand has been a unique experience, and that's why we have to give respect and honour to the Kaizer Chiefs family. The branches are formed by people who just love the brand, who love following the brand and who associated themselves with





this vision of the chairman and the vision of the former directors like the [Clarence] Mlokotis and [China] Ngemas, who toiled to build this brand.

MM: What's your earliest memory? What are your memories from those days in Phefeni, when the players would come? Who do you remember? What do you remember?

BM: For me, what stood out was togetherness; that spirit of love and unity among everyone associated with the club. It was Apartheid time, it was tough times, but you could find value in life, what to live for, because there was something to cherish and to love, and so there was unity. There was team-building. There was societal unity. There was the uplifting of the community. And for me, those are the memories of how we grew up in terms of society and growing up in communities. That's what this club is all about – it is about communities, it is about people, and it is about society.

MM: Bobby, you are a young boy, you grow up, you see all these players, you watch the matches. Why did you not become a player?

BM: Ja, I was a soccer player actually. I ended up playing in the development team at Elkah Stadium. Our coach was Bra Abie Matseng, who is still alive and the late Tikkie Khoza. I actually stopped playing because I got injured and then got into administration early. On weekends, I used to work at the gates, and then help with the admin by working with my uncles in the office, so I ended up saying let me focus on the admin. When you are a player, your passion must be to play and enjoy. So I had more interest in admin, and that's when I even started recruiting. Doctor [Khumalo] always talks about how he was signed up by the team. I was playing with them, him and Ntsie [Maphike] and Gardner Seale. But I had a different passion in terms of admin, even though the passion of playing football was always there.

MM: So you could have followed in daddy's footsteps?

BM: There was a lot of pressure to follow in Daddy's footsteps. Daddy was a star. My old man was a star. He was a great left-footer, an icon. That's pressure. I wanted to be Bobby, I wanted to be me. You know, once I follow someone's footsteps, it comes with pressure. I don't become realistic. Sometimes in life, you must be your own man. Support the legacy. Support the vision. Respect the legacy of the family. But being yourself sometimes helps, because my experience now in the game of football has built me to what I am today, and my contribution to the club today speaks for itself in terms of what I've done.

MM: I have memories of seeing pictures of a young you and Doctor Khumalo in magazines. Have you guys always been close friends? I mean, you say you also played together. Is that where the relationship started?

BM: Well, we grew up together. If you remember, his father, Bra Pro [Eliakim Khumalo] was always involved in Chiefs. He used to play for [Moroka] Swallows, but he came to Chiefs, and he was a coach. He was our coach when we were playing



“THE TEAM USED TO CAMP AT OUR HOME IN PHEFENI. OUR GRANDMOTHER USED TO WASH THE UNIFORMS, COOK FOR THE TEAM, AND WE HAD PLAYERS COMING FROM RANDFONTEIN CAMPING AT THE HOME WHERE WE GREW UP.”

in the development. So our families were very close. So, I grew up with him [Doctor] in the sense that we became buddies. And during school holidays, Doctor and I would go to camp at my uncle's place in Brits. We shared beds when I visited his home, and he visited mine; we were like brothers, along with my elder brother, the late Thabo. So at some point I realised that Doctor was the star and I allowed him to shine and I made sure that the chairman signed him immediately - at a young age, I think he was 16.

MM: Okay wait, what do you mean? Are you saying you influenced the signing of Doctor?

BM: Of course. He was playing for the development side. But there were challenges because Pirates wanted to sign Doctor. I've got an aunt at Pirates, Ausi Moipone. We used to host tournaments in Brits, and she used to be there. So she called the Pirates officials to say, 'Hey, this tournament has got great players, come and sign'. She was the Iron Lady at Pirates, so she was very influential. So at some point, I left Doctor sleeping in one of our rooms in Brits, and I took a taxi and came back to Joburg to tell the old man [Kaizer Motaung], you better sign this guy, you better sign Doctor, because Pirates are on his heels and they are going to steal him. But fortunately, Bra Pro was with Chiefs, our coach in the development, and he probably would not have allowed it, but we had to act. Doctor was then immediately promoted to the senior team, and he became a hero. He became a star, a shining star.

MM: It must be fulfilling to have played a role in ensuring Doctor is not lost to Chiefs and even more so to have seen him go on to become the great superstar that he did, not only for Chiefs but the country as well.

BM: Ja, it's an honour because I also realised my skill of spotting talent and that's when I started recruiting. Even now, I know what can go wrong, what can go right with player





recruitment. That's the experience I have. Even as a youngster then, I always knew players. I always knew how to identify. Doctor is one of the big names of course, but I've done so many, and obviously jointly with other coaches who were working at the time. But my contribution to Doctor's career, and he talked about it himself, it's a brotherhood thing. It is an honour for me to have contributed, and he thanked me for the effort. You know, when you recruit somebody - which I have done for many others - it's an honour to see them achieving and growing as icons and as legends because that's what we promote people to do, to achieve and grow bigger.

MM: Now, much later in your life, you actually took on that role on a more serious note. Yet you'll remember, there was that period when the majority thought Bobby's been given this job because, you know, he's the chairman's son. But from what you're telling me now, you evidently merited the position. It was not just, oh, because you are Bobby Motaung.

BM: You see, what the Chairman has done - with not only me, but all of us - is to allow us space and to find passion and what you are good at. I mean, not all of us in the family always worked in the club. I had my versatile way of earning a living. I used to work at the gate in admin; I used to sell tickets at the gate; I used to work with the coaches, and I used to work with the scouting team. So the thing is, I created these opportunities. In fact, the Team Manager position in all the clubs did not exist. I remember when Phillippe Troussier came, there was no one doing that team manager role because all we had was just admin and PR. So we started that position. We created it along with Emy [Casseletti] to focus on team issues, coaches' requirements and programs. It was the admin of the team in particular. We created that, and all others followed. Nowadays, we have different departments; we even have sporting directors because these things come generational, they develop. Football evolves. You know, it's not like a one-man show like before.

MM: When you were team manager, you were so high profile, everybody would talk about you. Chiefs would sign a player, and the fans would get excited if he's doing well. But then there'd be unhappiness if he does not perform, and they'd say 'Bobby signed him because he's friends with the agent'. How was that period for you?

BM: Fortunately, I understood my role. When you are in leadership, you must know that not everybody will smile or accept. The only way is to prove to them that this is a job that needs to be done for the success of the vision. Criticism makes you a better leader - from it, you become better equipped, and become more vigilant and more aware of the challenges, and then you focus on succeeding. Fortunately, in my case, I knew I was not doing things alone. There were other people that were working to recruit. It was not my sole decision. The coaches were also involved. Mine was to ensure the contracts were negotiated and approved with the input of coaches. It was a collective effort but being a leader and being the man in front, you take the brunt. You take the heat and you live by



"THERE WAS A LOT OF PRESSURE TO FOLLOW IN DADDY'S FOOTSTEPS. DADDY WAS A STAR. MY OLD MAN WAS A STAR. HE WAS A GREAT LEFT-FOOTER, AN ICON."

the decisions that you take as a collective. When things go wrong, as a leader, you take accountability. It was tough, but I grew to understand. There are certain decisions that you take which don't end up favourable. But for me, the successes were my joy. Let me tell you, my joy and happiness was to see people happy, to see the team succeed, and people smiling, and the players being successful. That's even my joy now. When I see people celebrating and the team winning like we did in Durban last year [Nedbank Cup], that was my joy to say, 'you know what? this is what we're looking for.'

MM: Talk to me about the joy of seeing your siblings also coming through, and you guys working together. How is that and how has that been?

BM: Look, remember the job we have on hand is a tough job. We are here to serve. We are custodians, so we are serving. So we'll always find challenges between each other, but the pleasure of working with each other is more about the passion. We are not forced to work here. We are not forced to do what we do. The passion is where we grew up. We grew up now understanding what we serve. So we share the load because we also differ with qualities of experiences and what we bring on board. You know, Kemiso has got a role in terms of what she specialises in - digital and all that. Jessica is more in marketing, which she specialises in, and she's passionate about that. And Kaizer was a player; he's passionate about that aspect of the game and his technical role. They've studied different things, but they come and work in a family environment where the chairman has never closed doors because we've got employees here coming from different parts of education and everything. Like I said, it's not just us as a family, you know. But the opportunity of working with siblings is that we never look at oh I am the eldest or the most experienced. No, the more they come in with such ideas, new ideas, it's good for me, it's good for the family. It's good. And also, we are all contributing to the legacy of the chairman. It's not just about us working in this environment because we





are family. We are here because of the legacy, and we are here to respect and honour the contribution of people to the chairman's legacy. So it's an honour. For me, it is difficult because we obviously will disagree to agree on certain things, but it's not out of hate, not out of anger, it's out of responsibility. We don't agree on everything. We disagree on a lot of things, but it's for the purpose of going forward; of succeeding and building this brand going forward.

MM: One thing that I think the football fraternity does not understand is your role and Junior's role because there have been people who said, 'Oh, they've moved Bobby from here and put Junior in'. Please clarify the roles for us.

BM: Kaizer is the Sporting Director - a similar role with mine, but it's more in-depth because he is closer to the coaches. I'm more at a high level in terms of overseeing and giving the experience. He's coming with modern ideology, modern things that I can't do. I mean, technology is now big in the game of football, and Kaizer is more on the technical aspects of things than myself and he is working closer with the scouts. I'm more of an admin, high-level advisory. He's more on the technical aspect of the operation. We don't clash. We collaborate, we work together. Everything that we do, decision-making, we are together in terms of giving review and constructive criticism. He makes certain decisions which we either support or disagree with. But those are internal operational things that we deal with. But mostly we collaborate, we work together.

MM: Now Bob Steak, the reality is that Bra K is getting older. He now performs a sort of oversight role. Now, is there talk of a succession plan? Is it something that's being talked about in the family, in the Motaung and the Kaizer Chiefs families?

BM: Not really, the succession plan will go with time because at the moment we are all trying to find our footing in terms of the brand with the guidance of the chairman. I mean, this man is a leader of note, guiding not only us as leaders, but the organisation as a whole - from the board to everywhere. The future of Chiefs depends on what we do now - that will determine the succession plan. But the good thing is, we all have roles and responsibilities, and with time, I think the succession plan will go with what we do and what we contribute to. If I can say succession plan is Bobby wants to be the chairman, No, No, that won't be right. The chairman is here. The chairman is still alive. And at the same time, the experience and what we do is what will determine the future. And like I said, the chairman is holding the fort properly. He is fresh. He's here. He's guiding us properly. So it's up to us in terms of what we contribute towards the organisation.

MM: How much pressure do you guys feel, though, to sort of fill those big shoes? Kaizer Chiefs have been very successful since Bra K formed it in 1970...

BM: Look, there will always be pressure. Every year, and every day when we wake up and come here, we have to live out our best. And pressure is always there to succeed. But you know, pressure is even more when you succeed, because you have



"I LEFT DOCTOR SLEEPING IN ONE OF OUR ROOMS IN BRITS, AND I TOOK A TAXI AND CAME BACK TO JOBURG TO TELL THE OLD MAN (KAIZER MOTAUNG), YOU BETTER SIGN THIS GUY, YOU BETTER SIGN DOCTOR BECAUSE PIRATES ARE ON HIS HEELS AND THEY ARE GOING TO STEAL HIM."

to sustain that success. Now, here we found a journey of 56 years to sustain the 56-year legacy to go forward, that's where the challenge is – it's not pressure, it's a challenge. Now, to face that challenge is how you plan, how you implement and how you work together, and how we have the vision of taking the brand forward. Once you put pressure, then you lose the vision. You lose the focus, because you want to do things to please and to shine and to do things quickly. But when you have a vision and a plan, and you understand what space you are in, then there's no pressure. There's passion. We must not find passion for what we do and respect what we do because, remember, we are serving. So when you serve, you must always bring that passion along because it brings less pressure. If you care and love what you do, and you respect and honour those people that you serve, then you can manage the pressure. The pressure is always there, just that it is different when we are losing and when we are winning. And for us, winning is a must. When you lose, there's pressure, but the challenge is how we rectify things when we lose. That's the trick of this business.

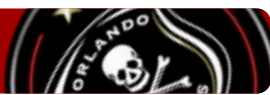
MM: Can Kaizer Chiefs win some silverware this season?

BM: Look, even in the past ten years, when we'd not been winning trophies, we were competitive. We got into the CAF Champions League final [2021] under difficult COVID conditions, and we were there and thereabouts in local competitions. The mission all these years has always been to remain the Chiefs that we are known to be, a team that wins. Even for this season, we remain confident that we will challenge. We want to retain our Nedbank Cup trophy and win the CAF Confederation Cup, and we also believe the league title race is still on, and we are going to compete for it.

MM: All the best, Bob Steak, and thank you for making time. Happy 56th birthday to Amakhosi.

BM: Ke a leboha ngwana mme [Thank you child of my mother].





DANSIN TO HIS OWN TUNE

By Matshelane Mamabolo

It was a hot afternoon, and Loftus Versfeld Stadium hummed with tension and expectation when Cemran Dansin announced himself to South African football in the most emphatic way possible.

The ball, coming from an Oswin Appollis corner kick, was half-cleared to fall kindly just outside the box. Time seemed to pause, just long enough for the 20-year-old midfielder to glance up, shift his body and unleash a left-footed thunderbolt that screamed past the stunned Mamelodi Sundowns goalkeeper Ronwen Williams, who remained rooted to his spot and into the net. For a moment, there was disbelief. Then pandemonium ensued.

It was an equaliser of rare quality - audacious, technically pure, struck with the kind of conviction that betrays an inner belief forged far from manicured pitches and bright lights. That goal has since been voted Goal of the Month, and there is already growing consensus that it may well stand as the Goal of the Season. Dansin himself hopes so, not out of vanity, but because it would be another marker in a journey that has demanded patience, faith and no small amount of resilience.

That goal was not born in the heat of a Soweto derby or the roar of a packed stadium. Its origins lie in a cramped flat in Newclare, a coloured township west of Johannesburg that has quietly produced football royalty before - the likes of Stanton Fredericks, Brent Carelse and Regan Noble. It was there, in a tiny parking space between blocks of flats, that Dansin learned to dribble, shimmy and trust his instincts.

Newclare is not a place that indulges dreams easily. Space is limited, resources scarcer still, and opportunity often feels like something meant for other people. Dansin grew up sharing that small flat with his mother and seven siblings - four boys and four girls - the youngest of the lot, watching older brothers carve their own paths while he chased a ball whenever he could.

His father, Bok, played the game with distinction at local level, though he never reached the professional heights his son is now scaling. The footballing bloodline, however, was unmistakable.

"It runs in the blood," Stanton Fredericks tells me, noting that while Cemran is a very different type of player, the genes are unmistakable.

Faith has always been the family's anchor. Dansin's mother is a staunch church-goer, prayerful and grounded,



MAKHANYA: "HE WAS SUPPOSED TO GO ABROAD. AN AGENT PROMISED HIM A CONTRACT IN FRANCE, BUT IT DIDN'T HAPPEN."

instilling in her children a belief that progress is not rushed, but entrusted. On the eve of one of the most important days of Cemran's young life - June 1, the day he would sign his first-team contract with Orlando Pirates - the family gathered at his uncle's house for a prayer session. No cameras, no grand declarations, just bowed heads, gratitude and hope.

It was a moment heavy with symbolism, because there were times when that contract felt impossibly distant.

Dansin's football education began properly at the School of Excellence, an institution that has shaped some of the finest technical footballers in the country. There, he wore the captain's armband and shared dressing rooms with players such as Relebohile Mofokeng. The expectation was clear: his path to the professional game seemed assured.

But football is rarely linear.

Mofokeng graduated to Orlando Pirates' development structures ahead of him, while Dansin's own career stalled. A promised move to France, sold to him as a serious opportunity, collapsed before it ever materialised. From there followed a period of uncertainty, club-hopping without contracts, trials at Stellenbosch FC, Cape Town Spurs and SuperSport United that yielded little more than frustration.

Former Pirates DDC coach Joseph



Makhanya remembers that period vividly.

“He was supposed to go abroad,” Makhanya recalls. “An agent promised him a contract in France, but it didn’t happen. After that, he went from club to club without securing anything. You could see how hard it hit him.”

For a young player who had captained peers now making names for themselves in the Premiership, the psychological toll was heavy. Doubt crept in. Confidence dipped. Fitness levels dropped. The game that once felt like destiny began to feel like rejection.

It was Mxolisi Mngomezulu, who knew Dansin from the School of Excellence, who sounded the alarm. He urged Pirates to take another look, to rescue a talent at risk of being lost.

Makhanya and fellow coach Ofentse Madute agreed.

“We already knew the talent he possessed,” says Makhanya. “We were confident of his potential. When he came in, his fitness wasn’t great and his confidence was low, but we understood why. He had seen players he captained making it ahead of him.”

Dansin was placed in a small group of players earmarked for revival, a six-month process that emphasised conditioning, responsibility and belief. He was used in tournaments, gradually reintroduced to competitive football, and eventually handed the captaincy when others were promoted to the senior team.

Something shifted.

“We saw his confidence coming back,” Makhanya says. “He started becoming the player we remembered from the School of Excellence.”

That player is defined not by brute force but by elegance. Though

MAKHANYA: “ON THE BALL, HE HAS FOOTBALL ARROGANCE FOR DAYS. HE BELIEVES IN HIS ABILITIES. HE’S NOT AFRAID TO TAKE THE GAME BY THE SCRUFF OF THE NECK.”

predominantly right-footed, Dansin is comfortable on both sides, technically secure and fearless in possession. Makhanya was not surprised when the midfielder struck that goal against Sundowns with his left foot.

“On the ball, he has football arrogance for days,” Makhanya says with a smile. “He believes in his abilities. He’s not afraid to take the game by the scruff of the neck.”

There are still lessons to be learned. At senior level, midfielders carry heavier responsibility and face smarter, stronger opponents. Dansin can still be muscled off the ball, and his physique remains a work in progress. But his discipline, calm demeanour and leadership qualities have long set him apart.

Even the controversial moment after his goal, Dansin running toward the Pirates supporters and shushing them while putting his hand to his ear as if to say ‘let me hear you say a bad word about me again’, was viewed by those who know him as a lesson rather than a flaw.

“Football is a game of emotions,” Makhanya explains. “Young players must learn not to react to provocation. But he is disciplined. He will learn.”

Dansin himself speaks with a quiet maturity that belies his age. Winning Goal of the Month was special, he admits, but it was not the end goal.



“No one really expected it,” he says. “I’m proud of myself. I want more opportunities to play, score more goals and win more trophies with Pirates. I’d be very happy if it ends up being the goal of the season.”

He speaks warmly of the support structure at Pirates, crediting teammates and coaches for creating an environment where he never feels alone. Pressure, he insists, is not a burden but a privilege.

“It’s a proud moment being part of a big team,” he says. “When I get the opportunity, I have to show what I’m capable of.”

That belief is shared by those who have walked the same Newclare streets before him. Fredericks, watching from afar as an analyst, sees a player cut from a different cloth.

“He’s more in the mould of Steven Pienaar,” Fredericks says. “Elegant, economical, scans the game. His football IQ is very high. He’s adapted quickly under European-influenced coaches, and that shows quality.”

But Fredericks also understands the unforgiving nature of life at a giant club.

“You don’t have much time,” he cautions. “You have to make an impact quickly. I just hope he gets consistency and more games this season.”

Current Pirates coach Abdeslam Ouaddou is acutely aware of that balance. Having worked in youth development in France, he knows the dangers of rushing talent.

FREDERICKS: “HE’S MORE IN THE MOULD OF STEVEN PIENAAR. ELEGANT, ECONOMICAL, SCANS THE GAME. HIS FOOTBALL IQ IS VERY HIGH.”

“You have to bring them step by step,” Ouaddou explains. “If he was complete, we would say he is Messi. But he still needs work.”

Yet Ouaddou also knew when the moment demanded courage. Against Sundowns, one of the best teams on the continent, he threw Dansin into the deep end.

“It’s like a bird,” he says. “You must give it the opportunity to fly.”

Dansin flew that afternoon. But perhaps more importantly, he landed on foundations laid years earlier - on concrete parking lots in Newclare, in whispered prayers before dawn, in the unwavering belief of a coach who refused to give up on him.

Football loves overnight sensations. Cembran Dansin is not one of them. His rise has been slow, uneven, and deeply human. And that may yet be his greatest strength.

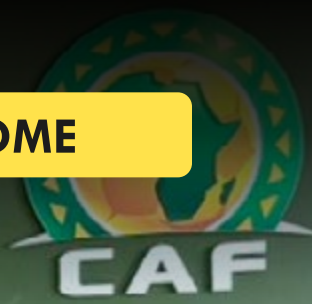
As the season unfolds and expectations rise, one thing is certain: that thunderbolt against Sundowns was not the destination. It was a reminder, to himself most of all, that the journey was always worth the wait.



EVERY DREAM **HAS A GOAL.**
MZANSI HAS A NEW COACH

OLD MUTUAL, THE FINANCIAL COACH
BEHIND YOUR DREAMS

FSP & Ins. Ts & Cs.



FIFA

FIFA AIMING TO TRANSFORM AFRICAN FOOTBALL - INCLUDING SAFA TC SHAMBLES

While at the Africa Cup of Nations on Thursday morning, 8 January, iDiski Times received an exclusive invite to the FIFA Africa Hub in Rabat, Morocco to get insight into the FIFA Forward Program, on the development of football on the continent, and what lies ahead in the future with several success stories, in investment in infrastructure expanding and increasing competitions for competitiveness for men's and women's football to accelerate development. In what was the first-ever press gathering initiative, iDiski Senior Journalist LORENZ KÖHLER was among ten invited media representatives that gained exclusive access and insights from key stakeholders of FIFA over the Forward Program.

The FIFA Forward Project, for those who don't know, is FIFA's main global development program designed to strengthen football at every level, especially in countries where resources are limited.

At its core, the project works by redistributing FIFA's revenues back into football development. Money earned from major tournaments—most notably the FIFA World Cup is invested into national football associations so they can build infrastructure, improve administration, and grow the game sustainably.

Rather than offering one-size-fits-all funding, the FIFA Forward Project focuses on long-term planning and accountability. Member associations must submit clear development plans showing how the funds

will be used. These plans are reviewed to ensure transparency and that the money directly benefits football development, not short-term or unrelated expenses.

The project supports several key areas:

- Infrastructure such as training centres, pitches, and headquarters
- Grassroots football, helping children and youth access organised play
- Women's football, including leagues, training programs, and leadership roles
- Education and governance, improving how football associations are managed

A defining feature of the FIFA Forward Project is its emphasis on sustainability. Instead of temporary fixes, it encourages countries to create systems that can support football growth for decades. This includes training administrators, coaches, and referees, ensuring that development continues even after funding cycles end.

Overall, the FIFA Forward Project represents FIFA's commitment to making football truly global—giving every nation, regardless of size or wealth, a fair opportunity to develop the sport from the grassroots to the professional level.

In what was a first press gathering of its kind, several insights were broken down into



OLD MUTUAL,
THE FINANCIAL COACH
BEHIND YOUR DREAMS



the success of the world governing body, particularly in Africa, with Cape Verde among the stories that have earned global attention as they effectively implemented a vision with the help of the largest solidarity program in sport.

The Blue Sharks’ rise from an amateur football nation to a credible World Cup challenger reflects how FIFA’s development support can transform potential into real competitive progress.

For a country with limited domestic resources, this funding was crucial in maintaining regular national-team activity and long-term planning.

Training pitches and stadium upgrades were their major priority, along with Federation facilities that improved organisation and logistics.

Better infrastructure meant players could train in more professional conditions and host international matches at home, reducing reliance on foreign venues.

Coaching education, referee training and technical workshops for local football staff also took place in order to bridge the gap from their amateur status in the country. This improved the quality of domestic coaching, which helped raise the standard of local players and ensured national teams were better prepared tactically and physically.

Support also took place for youth and grassroots football, with the aim of identifying talent earlier, creating youth

national teams and building a clearer pathway from local football to the senior national team

This was especially important in combining home-based players with those from the Cape Verdean diaspora in Europe as they professionalised their national federation with a clear vision over the last four years.

FIFA governance and administrative support helped the Cape Verdean Football Federation improve planning and budgeting, meet international competition requirements, and maintain consistent participation in CAF and FIFA competitions.

Strong administration allowed the national team to focus on performance rather than logistics as they made history and qualified for the FIFA World Cup for the first time in their history, an incredible feat for a country with less than a million population.

But with that success, there are always questions... Where are the other success stories? Why do we witness appalling projects like Fun Valley, the highly controversial Technical Centre owned by the South African Football Association, a far cry from the R1.2-billion state-of-the-art masterpiece in Morocco, one of the most advanced in the world?

In the informal discussion, members of FIFA Africa explained that what each MA does with the available budget is purely down to their own needs and requests, and every MA has access to the same amount within each five-year cycle.



EVERY DREAM **HAS A GOAL.**
MZANSI HAS A NEW COACH



Between 2016 and 2025, \$106-million was spent in Africa, with 103 technical centres, 52 Artificial turf pitches, 28 Stadiums and 8 floodlights (including solar upgrade projects).

As of 2025, 18 out of the 54 African MAs did not have CAF-approved stadiums that could host the FIFA World Cup or AFCON qualifiers.

The need for this is obvious from a continental perspective, as we have seen in the past year or more, that several countries have played home games outside their country due to not meeting the required standards, with South Africa in particular, hosting the bulk of the Cosafa region in Africa Cup of Nations and World Cup qualifiers.

But for all the infrastructure, a legacy of the 2010 World Cup, the first and only time the event was hosted on the continent, professional league and recent renaissance of the national team, the SAFA technical centre remains a cause for concern for FIFA.

“For us, the standards of South African football is very high, and in my opinion, Forward will not be enough to build a technical centre at the level the national team and the football deserves, it will only be complimentary, it’s not enough and something we are discussing with SAFA,” Gelson Fernandes, the Deputy Chief Member Associations Officer of FIFA told iDiski Times.

“We need to find solutions and all the partners to build... because the leagues are very strong, the clubs are very strong - the players are used to high-level facilities, so you cannot come with something cheap or tacky. That is something very important, and we’re working on that.

“It’s nothing easy, the conjuncture is not easy as well in the country, so we need some millions, so if you have some spare money, you are more than in the canyot [bag].”

When probed further, whether there are potential deadlines for the Association, in a country and football project deemed as a promising super power for the continent, the former Manchester City midfielder stated it’s not as easy as it seems.

“We’re working with SAFA, they have their own difficulties as well, which they need to face and as soon as they can, they’re doing better from a sporting side, they are doing well, but they also need to support the national teams,” Fernandes added to this publication.

“They need to travel, they’re qualifying for all the competitions, all the World Cup’s they come as costs, it’s not free, hey, to go there [and compete], who finances it? Sponsors? Themselves? Government? You know it’s not just... they’re playing many games, every tournament, they have staff...

“So before I criticise one federation, I’m very careful because I know the difficulties they have and certainly, it’s a priority, SAFA knows, we know, that the technical centre would need to be at a higher standard one day. It’s important, it’s important, for coaching education, for youth tournaments, for everything, it’s essential.”

Having qualified for the 2026 World Cup, the first qualification for Bafana since 2002, there’s once again optimism budding around football in the country, but financial mismanagement has plagued both the men’s and women’s teams from senior to age group level.





A SEASON TO BE PROUD OF AS JANINE VAN WYK HEADS ABROAD

JVW FC have enjoyed their most successful season in the Hollywoodbets Super League since their promotion from the SASOL League in 2021. After 30 matches, the Blue Diamonds finished in second position on the league log with 69 points, a best-ever season for the JANINE VAN WYK-led side. Under the guidance of the all-time most capped African player (men and women) the side also holds the honours of being the ones that beat the defending champions Mamelodi Sundowns Ladies this term. Now the former Banyana Banyana captain is moving to Sweden, where she has taken the assistant job post at Kristianstads DFF in the Swedish League from next year. In this edition, iDiski Times journalist LETHABO KGANYAGO reflects on the proud season the club had with Van Wyk, young players stepping up at the club, her thoughts on Sundowns' dominance, being inducted into the South African Hall of Fame, moving to Sweden and motherhood.

Lethabo Kganyago: Second place, 69 points in 30 games: This was the most successful season for JVW in the league since being promoted, and under your guidance. That must feel good...

Janine Van Wyk: It feels incredibly rewarding. The players, technical team, and support staff worked extremely hard, and seeing that effort reflected in our points tally makes me really proud. It shows the growth of the club and the belief everyone has put into this season.

LK: Being the only side to have beaten the champions this season must also be a good feeling, and does this speak to the competitiveness of the club, JVW?

JVW: Definitely. That result shows the character and competitiveness of this team. We have built a culture where we step onto the field expecting to compete, not just hoping for a result. It's a reflection of how far JVW has come.

LK: Are you seeing signs that Sundowns' dominance can be brought to a stop anytime soon?

JVW: Sundowns have been incredibly consistent and deserve respect for that. However, the gap is closing with the improvement of teams around the league and with clubs like ours strengthening every year. I believe their dominance can be challenged sooner rather than later.

LK: What is it that you have improved from coach Mitch [Stevens]?

JVW: Coach Mitch created a strong foundation, and I appreciate the work he did. This season, I introduced a different system that I felt better suited the strengths and profiles of the players we had. I also made sure that competition within the squad stayed high by consistently playing the players who were most in form. Keeping everyone competing and rewarding performance laid an important part of the groundwork for our progress.

LK: A top-three finish is not so bad, but would you have wanted better?

JVW: We are proud of the journey so



finishing 2nd was still a real possibility, which would be our best ever achievement as a club. That target has driven us from the beginning.

LK: So many players stepped up in the team this season, especially the young ones. What did you make of Casey [Gordon], Jessica [Wade] and Bonolo's [Mokoma] contributions last season?

JVW: I'm extremely proud of them. Casey showed maturity well beyond her age and played a crucial role for us as the 2nd choice keeper. Jessica adapted quickly to the system and made huge strides tactically and physically. Bonolo gained confidence in a position she has never played before and delivered important moments throughout the season. Their growth is a reflection of their work ethic and the trust we placed in them.

LK: What were some of the biggest challenges you have faced last season as a coach and also holistically as JVW?

JVW: One of the biggest challenges was balancing youth development with the pressure for results, especially in a league that demands consistency every week. We also had to adapt through injuries at key moments. Holistically, continuing to grow the club's structures, resources, and competitive standard is a long-term challenge, but one we have embraced well.

LK: You were also inducted into the SA Hall of Fame. How big was this moment for you?

JVW: It was a massive moment being inducted and one of the biggest honours of my life. It's something I never imagined

when I started my journey in football. It’s a moment of reflection, gratitude, and pride.

LK: What does it mean for your legacy?

JVW: It’s a recognition of my commitment to football, not only as a player, but for what I’ve tried to do for women’s football in South Africa. I hope it inspires young girls to dream big and know that their contribution matters.

LK: Congratulations again on your coaching job at DFF. How did the offer come about?

JVW: The opportunity came through ongoing discussions and from the work I’ve done, being recognised internationally. They were looking for a coach with experience, a strong identity, and the ability to build a competitive culture as well as develop the youth, and fortunately, our visions aligned.

LK: How excited are you about this journey?

JVW: I’m excited for a new challenge and a chance to grow even more as a coach. I’m looking forward to pushing myself in a new environment and contributing meaningfully to the club.

LK: What are your expectations?

JVW: Freezing cold weather that I’m still preparing my mind and body for. But other than that, I expect to learn different perspectives and approaches from coaches that have been working in this role for a while.

LK: On the personal front, how’s motherhood? Are you enjoying it?

JVW: Motherhood has been incredible.



“I BELIEVE THEIR DOMINANCE CAN BE CHALLENGED SOONER RATHER THAN LATER.”

It’s challenging at times, but it’s the most rewarding part of my life. I’m enjoying every moment and learning something new every day.

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



FIXTURES

KANYAMAZANE STADIUM

SATURDAY

17 JANUARY 2026



MAGESI FC
VS
AMAZULU FC



13:00



ORLANDO PIRATES
VS
MARUMO GALLANTS



15:00

SUNDAY

18 JANUARY 2026



ORBIT COLLEGE
VS
SEKHUKHUNE UNITED



13:00



KAIZER CHIEFS
VS
MAMELODI SUNDOWNS



15:00

#ASIDLALI #SIVUTHAMANJE

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BIGGER CLUB, BIGGER OBSTACLES

Last week, we broke down the current Bafana Bafana squad for the AFCON finals, tracing where each player first caught the national selectors’ eye and earned his place in the national setup. It painted a clear picture of how form, timing and opportunity, rather than club badge alone, have shaped this group.

But there is another side to that story. Several players who featured regularly for Hugo Broos’ Bafana went on to secure moves to so-called greener pastures, only to see their international prospects stall. In some cases, it was reduced game time, in others, a dip in form, the coach going a different route, or simply being overtaken by younger, hungrier options.

This week, we turn our attention to some of those names. We examine whether those moves ultimately helped or hindered their careers, and ask the big question: Is the Bafana door still open, or has it quietly closed behind them?

Sibusiso Mabiliso (1 cap)

It’s easy to forget now, but Sibusiso Mabiliso was part of the very first page of the Hugo Broos era, starting in the 3–2 win over Uganda. The former Platinum Stars left-back had been one of Benni McCarthy’s standouts at AmaZulu, playing with confidence, energy and purpose. A move to Kaizer Chiefs followed, but instead of elevating his career, it stalled it. Game time was scarce at Naturena, and by the time he returned to Durban just over a year later, the momentum was gone. In three seasons, he managed only 11 Premiership appearances, just four starts in total. Now at Baroka, Mabiliso finds himself far from the national conversation, with younger, sharper options having firmly closed the door behind him.

Yusuf Maart (9 caps, 1 goal)

Maart’s international rise began at Sekhukhune United, where strong COSAFA Cup performances earned him Broos’ trust and three World Cup qualifier appearances. His move to Chiefs, however, coincided with his gradual disappearance from the Bafana setup. Whether that was down to form, tactical preference, or simply Broos looking elsewhere remains debatable. Despite mixed reviews from Amakhosi supporters, Maart was often one of Chiefs’

steadier performers and even captained the side to their first trophy in a decade. Now, his move to SV Ried in Austria has added an intriguing late chapter, and early plaudits suggest he may yet have something to say.

Njabulo Ngcobo (7 caps, 1 goal)





There was a lot of noise when Ngcobo made his move to Kaizer Chiefs from Swallows, after winning the PSL Defender of the Season. He also made the Bafana squad for the COSAFA Cup in 2021, and then featured for Broos in three World Cup qualifiers. But Ngcobo found himself not getting regular game time at Chiefs, and that meant he also lost favour at the national level. After three seasons he moved onto Sekhukhune United, before joining Cape Town City at the start of this past campaign.

Keagan Dolly (27 caps, 23 goals)

Keagan Dolly's return to South Africa coincided almost perfectly with the dawn of the Hugo Broos era, and at first, it felt like a natural reunion. The Belgian coach leaned on a handful of experienced heads from the previous generation, and Dolly was very much part of that thinking. His first season back in the PSL, with Kaizer Chiefs, was arguably his strongest in years: goals, assists, authority, and flashes of the class that had taken him to Montpellier in the first place.

But momentum is a fragile thing in international football. Injuries, inconsistent club form and a gradual shift in Broos' focus toward younger profiles saw Dolly slip out of the picture. His last senior Bafana appearance came in the humbling 5-0 friendly loss to France, and the door quietly closed soon after. Last season he moved to TS Galaxy before joining Cape Town City. He also turned out for the CHAN side in 2025. Still, for a player of his pedigree, it feels like an international story that ended sooner than expected.

Ethan Brooks (16 caps)

Brooks was one of Broos' early experiments as the Belgian reshaped Bafana with youth in mind. After breaking through at TS Galaxy, his move to AmaZulu appeared to coincide with the end of his international run, though correlation doesn't necessarily mean causation. Brooks had flashes of quality, but it soon became clear that Broos' evolving midfield blueprint leaned toward different profiles. Still just 24, Brooks remains a regular in Europe, now turning out for Panserraikos in Greece, and time is very much on his side.

Terrence Mashego (13 caps)

After swapping TS Galaxy for Cape Town City, Terrence Mashego's career seemed to hit fast-forward. He settled almost instantly, locked down the left flank, and before long had caught the eye of Hugo Broos. Regular minutes led to regular call-ups, and Mashego

became a familiar name in Bafana Bafana squads through to just after the 2024 AFCON, looking every bit a long-term option at left back. Then came the move to Mamelodi Sundowns, and with it, a reality check. Competing with Aubrey Modiba and Divine Lunga, Mashego's game time dried up, and as the minutes disappeared, so did his place in the national setup. It was a harsh reminder of how quickly momentum can shift at a superclub. Still, Mashego hasn't sulked. His loan move to Durban City this season has given him a fresh platform, and he's used it well, delivering energetic, assured performances that underline why Broos rated him in the first place. The road back may be longer now, but the door isn't completely shut.



Sibongiseni Mthethwa (9 caps)

“Ox” was one of Stellenbosch’s great success stories, a midfield general whose consistency earned him national recognition. But his switch to Kaizer Chiefs marked a turning point. While he occasionally appeared in provisional squads, he was no longer central to Broos’ thinking. A recent uptick in form has reminded many of his quality, but at 31, it feels like the window of opportunity may have passed him by.

Cassius Mailula (2 caps)

Mailula ticked every box Broos looks for: youth, goals, impact. After a breakout season at Sundowns, he earned two caps in 2023 and played a role in AFCON qualification. His move to Toronto FC, though, proved disastrous, with limited minutes and a sharp drop in visibility. Now 24 and on loan at Kortrijk after a spell

at Wydad, Mailula’s career feels paused rather than finished. With the right platform, his Bafana story may yet resume.

Khanyisa Mayo (7 caps)

All seven of Mayo’s caps came in friendlies, but there was genuine hope that his move from Cape Town City to CR Belouizdad would sharpen his game and force Broos’ hand. Mayo himself acknowledged the need to improve his work rate, a key critique from the coach. While there were glimpses of progress in Algeria, they weren’t enough. Now back in South Africa on loan at Chiefs, Mayo has yet to reignite either his club or international career.

Jayden Adams (7 caps, 1 goal)

Adams was never a guaranteed starter, but his performances at Stellenbosch firmly placed him on Broos’ radar as a long-term prospect and a regular squad member, including at the last AFCON. A disciplinary issue strained that relationship even before his move to Sundowns, where inconsistency and competition limited his impact. At just 24, however, writing him off would be premature. A return to form could yet see him back in the conversation, particularly with a World Cup cycle still unfolding.

Fawaaz Basadien (5 caps)

Not long ago, Basadien looked like a Bafana mainstay. His rise at Stellenbosch earned him regular call-ups and even the captain’s armband. But his move to Sundowns has proven ill-timed. Limited minutes, competition behind Aubrey Modiba, and the emergence of Samukele Kabini have pushed him out of Bafana contention. Twelve months ago, AFCON and World Cup squads seemed inevitable; now, he faces the task of rebuilding from the club level up.

Sinoxolo Kwayiba (5 caps, 1 goal)

Not long ago, Kwayiba appeared to be a possible solution in attacking midfield, even scoring in a friendly in mid-2025. His move from Chippa United to Pirates, however, has brought limited opportunities, and his lack of game time has stalled his progress. Last week, Pirates confirmed that Kwayiba would return to Chippa on a permanent deal, so it might not be over for Kwayiba, as he remains one of those players who feels just one strong run away from relevance again.



IDISKI'S TEAM OF THE AFCON QUARTER-FINALS



ACE OF THE WEEK:
LUKE LE ROUX

This week's iDiski Times Ace of the Week honours Bafana Bafana and Portsmouth midfielder Luke Le Roux, whose latest display on a big stage did not go unnoticed. Having missed out on South Africa's AFCON squad,



Le Roux made just his sixth start of the season when he was handed a place in Pompey's starting XI for their FA Cup clash against English heavyweights Arsenal. While Portsmouth ultimately bowed out to a 4-1 defeat, Le Roux delivered a composed and industrious performance in midfield. He was particularly impressive in the opening half, where the numbers told their own story. At the break, he was statistically the highest-rated outfield player on the pitch according to Sofascore, bettered only by Arsenal goalkeeper Kepa Arrizabalaga. It was a showing that highlighted his work rate, intelligence and ability to compete at the highest level. Substituted shortly after the hour mark, Le Roux will take plenty of confidence from the outing as he looks to build momentum, push for more regular minutes at club level, and play his way back into contention for Bafana Bafana's World Cup squad.



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.

As a final column, iDiski asked Moritz to share with us his favourite training session...

4v4 Small-Sided Game

Moritz Kossmann: As someone who has designed a lot of practices over the years, its difficult for me to pick out a definitive favourite because there are too many.

However, as the years have gone by, a big lesson for me personally in training design has been that less is often more.

Ultimately, a good practice has a lot of content packed into a simple-to-understand set for the players.

Let’s take the basics of teaching football. We want the players to learn the game, and at the same time, we want them to enjoy the game.

Now, in order to achieve that, we don’t need to reinvent the wheel, but we need to let them play a lot of football.

Of course, at the core of that lies a level of comfort on the ball. In other words, that the ball is your friend.

This will only be the case if we learn to master it in competitive situations. Training is ideal here, because in training we have a more competitive setting than

when playing informally with friends on the street.

In this competitive setting small-sided games are ideal.

So, my favourite practice is a simple, small-sided game of 4v4 with keepers and big goals. Simple to understand, but ultimately has many layers to it.

Players get a really high number of touches on the ball in a competitive setting. They have duels, under-load and overload situations, they shoot, block the ball and transition in both directions.

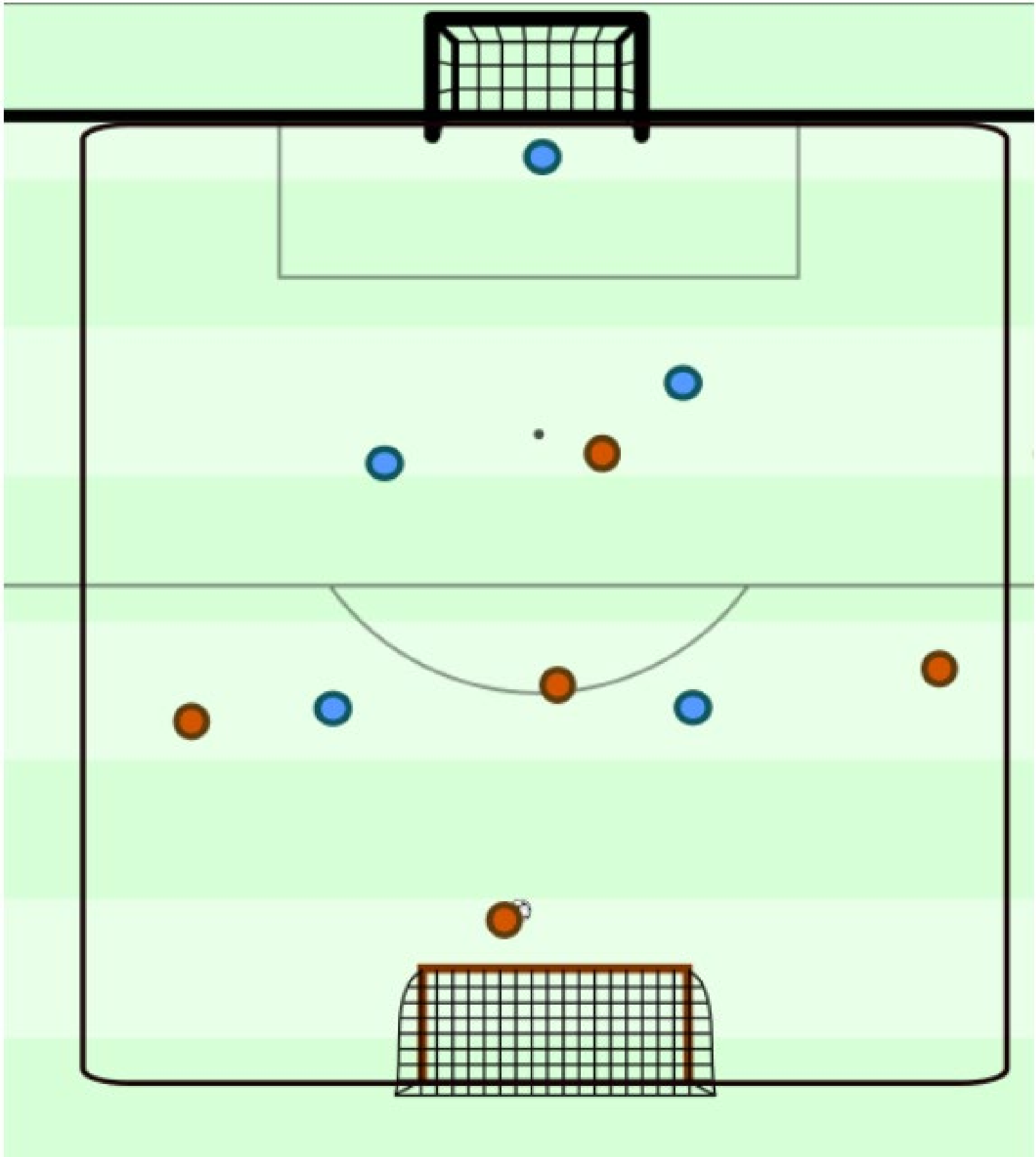
This game can be manipulated very easily with constraints both collectively and/or individually.

This is something we have written about extensively on this platform.

Thus, if I had to give coaches out there 2 cents of advice, it would be to play a lot of small-sided games like this.

Allow the players to enjoy the game and push the intensity of training.

Thanks, Moritz. We hope that readers have enjoyed The Drawing Board series and have found ways to apply some of the lessons practically. It’s been a fantastic three and a half years of learning.





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