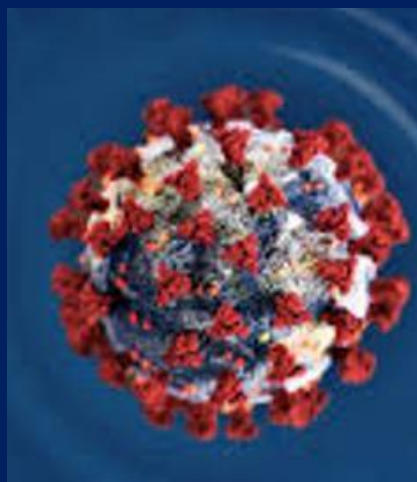




SIGWACA FORTNIGHTLY

"Living the Football Spirit and Our Pride"

ESWATINI FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION



- COVID-19 PUTS FOOTBALL ON ICE
- EFFECTS OF COVID-19 ON ESWATINI FOOTBALL



EFA acknowledges His Majesty The King Mswati III for gracing the 2020 SMVA Ingwenyama Cup Finals



Mbabane MIDAS continues to **love** grassroots football



Elite football clubs sends COVID-19 preventive messages



Up close with Bhekisisa Mkhonta, the former Bulembu Young Aces FC player, now the TD of the Eswatini Football Association

CONTENTS

| | |
|----------|--|
| Page 03 | : COVID-19 puts football events on ice |
| Page 03 | : EFA President urges the Public to implement the COVID-19 preventive precautions. |
| Page 04 | : Elite football clubs send health preventive messages about COVID-1. |
| Page 06 | : The effects of COVID-19 on Eswatini Football. |
| Page 08 | : Up close with Bhekisisa 'Bizzah' Mkhonta. |
| Page 09 | : EFA acknowledges His Majesty The King Mswati III for gracing the 2020 SMVA Ingwenyama Cup Finals |
| Pages 10 | : Focus on the regional football development. |

Since the Government of the Kingdom of Eswatini has imposed a partial lockdown, the Eswatini Football Association (EFA) urges its members and the public at large to respect the regulations of this partial lockdown and also to adhere to the health precautions by the Ministry of Health and the World Health Organisation (WHO).

COVID-19 PUTS FOOTBALL EVENTS ON ICE



THE General Secretary of the EFA Mr. Frederick Mngomezulu

Since the outbreak of the coronavirus (COVID-19) in Eswatini all football matches in the country were suspended by the Eswatini Football Association (EFA). This included elite, women and regional football matches. After the World Health Organization (WHO) declared this disease a pandemic more preventive actions were taken which included the total suspension of all football activities which includes football development programmes and meetings just to mention but a few. The suspension of local competitions also coincides with the halt of international competitions after FIFA and CAF also suspended their competitions and football development programmes due to the outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic.

This decision will definitely affect the local calendar as the 2019/20 football season will be finished on a later period than the usual one. The General Secretary (GS) of the EFA, Mr. Frederick Mngomezulu highlighted that the Executive Committee decided that all the football competitions will resume where they stopped until the last match of the season is played. "All football competitions (leagues, knockouts, etc.) countrywide, will resume from the point where they were suspended and be implemented until their conclusion, with the current football season extended accordingly", Mngomezulu said.

The GS also highlighted that there will be proper adjustments in the football season(s) as this break will require such in order to bring back the football season to the original time frame. "Depending on the time taken to resolve the COVID-19 pandemic, the subsequent football season(s) in collaboration and/or direction of the international football governing bodies, will be adjusted accordingly", Mngomezulu highlighted.

LET'S IMPLEMENT THE HEALTH PRECAUTIONS – EFA PRESIDENT



The EFA President, Mr Adam Mthethwa

The President of the Eswatini Football Association, Mr. Adam Mthethwa urges the public to implement the health precautions as per the government and the World Health Organisation's (WHO's) directives. The President's plea comes after the WHO has declared the COVID-19 as a pandemic.

"Let us implement the health precautions as per government and WHO's directives as we fight against the coronavirus", Mthethwa said. This pandemic has become an invisible killer around the world which has made governments around the globe, FIFA, CAF, COSAFA and other international organisations around the world to join forces in the fight against this pandemic.

"Wash your hands frequently; maintain social distance; avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth; practice respiratory hygiene and if you have a fever, cough and difficulty when breathing, seek medical care early", Mthethwa emphasised.

ELITE FOOTBALL CLUBS SEND PREVENTIVE MESSAGES ABOUT COVID-19



Thabiso Manyatsi (Denver Sundowns FC), London Dlamini (Manzini Sea Birds FC), Frank Hurube (Royal Leopards FC), Mancoba Mabuza (Mbabane Swallows FC) and Paul Masilela obeying the social distance as they pass the message about the COVID-19 pandemic.

As the country and the world fights the invisible enemy that is killing thousands of lives around the globe, every football stakeholder is definitely affected as the sport has come to a standstill with no action at all. Football stadiums are now gathering dust as each week passes with no action at all. The whole world is living in hope in as far as the vaccination of this pandemic is concerned as the health experts work around the clock in tackling this pandemic.

The Public Relations Officers (PRO's) for the local elite football clubs are other football soldiers in the army as the fight against COVID-19 continues. The PRO's has shared some COVID-19 preventive messages to the public about this pandemic. "As Manzini Wanderers FC we urge the public to implement the preventive guidelines as per the Ministry of Health and the World Health Organization (WHO) in order for us to be safe from this virus", said Manzini Wanderers FC's PRO Sandile Dlamini. Royal Leopard

FC's PRO Frank Hurube acknowledged government and WHO for their efforts in the fight against this pandemic. "We would like to acknowledge the government and the WHO for their efforts in the fight against this pandemic and the public must implement the COVID-19 preventive precautions", Hurube said. "Let's obey the partial lockdown as imposed by government", said Mbabane Swallows FC's PRO Mancoba Mabuza.

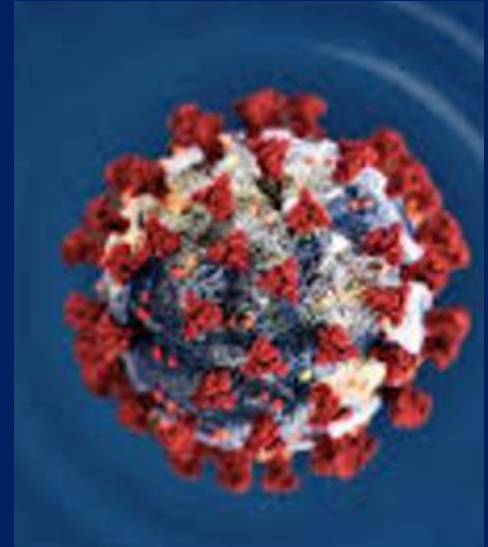
"We urge the public to follow the guidelines from the Ministry of Health and the WHO" said Mbabane Highlanders FC's PRO, Paul Masilela.

#let's flatten the COVID-19 curve.



The Prime Minister of The Kingdom of Eswatini, His Excellency The Right Honourable Ambrose Mandvulo Dlamini.

"We are also appreciative to all Emaswati who have taken these tough measures in their strides. The nation is not doing Government a favour by respecting the partial lockdown measures and following health advices but protecting each other, communities and country by acting responsibly"- His Excellency The Right Honorable Prime Minister Ambrose Mandvulo Dlamini.



"Every loss of life is a tragedy. It's also a motivation to double down and do everything we can to stop the COVID-19 transmission and save lives"- WHO Director General, Dr. Tadros Adhamos Ghebreyesus.

COVID-19 PREVENTIVE MEASURES



Dr. Tadros Adhamos Ghebreyesus- Director General of the World Health Organization

THE EFFECTS OF COVID-19 ON ESWATINI FOOTBALL

ECONOMIC FACTORS

Each and every match-day has some financial gains for the football teams, EFA affiliates and stadium owners just to mention but a few. Most of the football teams in the country depend on ticketing for their survival of which due to the break as a result of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, no revenue is generated by the teams. If the football teams are not generating any incomes, then the players and officials salaries are being compromised.



Football fans in jubilation at the Somhlolo National Stadium

Fans are the customers of football as they are the consumers of the product. Their presence in the football matches presents some business opportunities not only to the football, but to other stakeholders. Sponsors get the opportunity to implement fan engagement initiatives, the transport industry also benefit as they transport football fans to and from the stadiums. People who sell food and beverages are other stakeholders who benefit by doing business during football matches of which a number of families benefit.

With no action, there is no or minimum business opportunities for them which have an adverse effect in the socio-economic condition in the country.

DISRUPTION OF THE FOOTBALL CALANDER

Under normal circumstances a football season is expected to be nine (9) months. Since the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, it is not certain as to when will the current football season end. Currently the 2019/20 football season is on an unplanned break with no football event currently taking place. International football is also affected by this outbreak as FIFA, CAF and COSAFA has postponed all the international competition.



2019 Eswatini Bank Champions, Young Buffaloes FC celebrating their championship at the Somhlolo National Stadium

New date for the adjusted 2019/20 football calendar will be known after the COVID-19 pandemic has been controlled with the WHO and the International Governing Bodies instructing the authorised advices on the continuation of the football competitions.

PLAYERS CONTRACTS

It is a fact that some players contracts are due to expire on the last day of the current football season of which with this break, the 2019/20 season will end at a delayed date that is currently not known. This situation has even forced FIFA to set up a task team to study the prevailing regulatory frameworks touching on the Regulations for the Status and Transfer of players. This task team will also look at issues of players contracts and the registration window periods, in relation to prevailing regulations and the occurring situation of the COVID-19.



Mbabane Highlanders FC (black) in action against Royal Leopards FC (blue and white) during the 2019 Charity Cup at the Somhlolo National Stadium

DISRUPTION OF THE FOOTBALL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES

Due to the COVID-19 outbreak, there is no football event taking place which includes the implementation of football development programmes. In terms of football development, the local game is at a stand still which has an adverse effect in the development of players, referees, coaches, administrators and medical personnel.



Participants during the 2019 MA FIFA Instructors coaching course

Currently, the players and referees are encouraged to do individual training as a way of keeping in shape while waiting for the next kick-off in terms of matches. Technically, game time is important in as far as player development is concerned of which it is also true in as far as the development of referees is concerned. With no matches currently taking place, their development or growth is a little bit flattened. Football development also includes infrastructure development and currently the Eswatini Football Association is developing the Ka-Langa Technical Centre. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, this project is also affected as it is on ice which will have an effect in terms of timelines in as far as the completion is concerned.

UP CLOSE WITH BHEKISISA 'BIZZAH' MKHONTA

The Marketing and Communications Manager of the Eswatini Football Association (EFA) Mr. Muzi Radebe (MR) had a chit-chat with the former Bulembu Young Aces player who is now the Technical Director (TD) of the EFA Mr. Bhekisisa Mkhonta (BM) about his playing days, role of a TD and the effects of COVID-19 on the coaches perspective.

MR: When did you start playing football?

BM: In 1983 playing for Bulembu Young Aces.

MR: Who were the toughest opponents?

BM : Mbabane Highlanders FC and Manzini Wanderers FC. These teams were dubbed demigods of the Castle Lager League and the Trade Fair Cup respectively.

MR: Who was your best player during your playing days?

BM: There were a lot of good players, but Absalom 'Scara Thidwa' was the most revered player in the 1980s.

MR: When did you start working for the EFA?

BM: In 2010

MR: What is the difference between the TD and the national team Head Coach?

BM: The TD prepares for the future, decides where to go and how to go, dictates the national philosophy and national system in terms of play and finally supervises training camps for the national youth and women teams. The national team Head Coach prepares for the next game, works under extreme pressure, prepare for the short term and is expected to deliver instantly. Having said that, the relations between the national team Coach and the TD is horizontal. In addition, the national team coach worries about the next game yet the TD prepares players for the future. There must be a close co-operation between the two because they are dealing with the same product but at different levels.

MR: How will the COVID-19 pandemic affect the players?

BM: It will affect the players both emotionally and mentally because the excitement and anxiety to compete weekly is no more there and it is dying gradually. The players' physical fitness, technical ability

And maintenance has come to a halt hence all performance indicators (endurance, strength, technical-tactical acumen) will drop tremendously. Business-wise, the teams will crumble because there are no matches as most of them depend on ticketing for revenue.

MR: If you were a coach how will you handle the situation?

BM: I would ensure that the safety of the players is guaranteed. For instance, I would request the club management to reduce the number of players staying in the club house or to look for a safe environment with less people and control the movements of players by providing them with the basic necessities. The usage of the latest technology will help a lot in the dissemination of information particularly on the prevention measures from contracting the COVID-19 pandemic, the training programme and the setting up of on-line meetings whenever necessary.

MR: Thanks' a lot TD.

BM: Sharp Rhoo.



Bhekisisa Mkhonta in action for Manzini Wanderers FC

EFA ACKNOWLEDGE HIS MAJESTY THE KING MSWATI III FOR GRACING THE 2020 SMVA INGWENYAMA CUP FINALS



His Majesty The King Mswati III talking to Green Mamba FC's Captain, Banele 'Makonesi' Dlamini after handing the trophy to the 2019 SMVA Ingwenyama Cup Champions

The Eswatini Football Association (EFA) extended a special tribute and momentous gratitude to His Majesty The King Mswati III together with the Royal Household for gracing the fifth edition of the Sincephetelo Motor Vehicle Accident Fund (SMVA) Ingwenyama Cup Finals, which presented the winners of the 2019/20 SMVA Ingwenyama Cup Competition. "As a football association and family, we are always greatly humbled by His Majesty's attendance", said EFA's Chief Executive Officer, Mr. Frederick Mngomezulu.

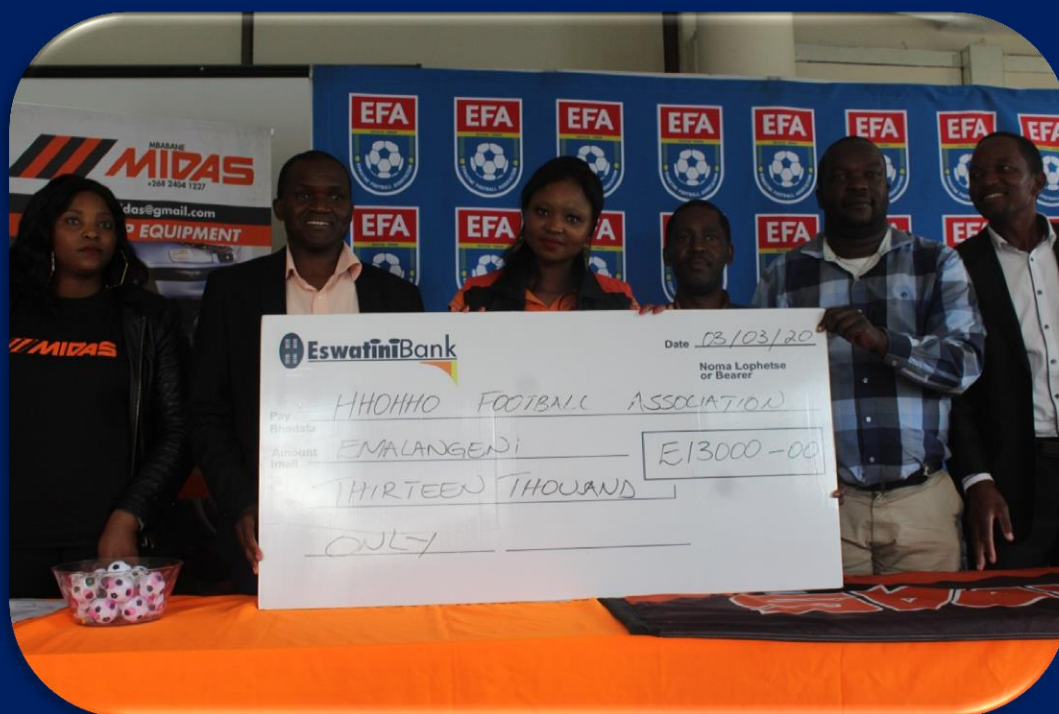
He also highlighted that the presence of His Majesty gave this event the glamour and Royal Extravagance that it deserves, as His Majesty The King Mswati III is the pioneer of this unique competition that perfectly blends both football and culture.

"The presence of His Majesty's Guests is a clear indication that the entire world has a keen interest in this competition as it also showcases the identity of the Eswatini nation through culture", Mngomezulu added. The EFA further appreciated the Head of Government of the Kingdom of Eswatini, his Cabinet and Civil Service, Members of both Houses of Parliament, Chiefs, Sponsors-SMVA, the Football Family, Culture groups, invited Guest and the Media for being part of this historic event.

This was the last football match played in the country before all football events were stopped in the country due to the COVID-19 outbreak that was declared by the WHO as a pandemic.

FOCUS ON REGIONAL FOOTBALL DEVELOPMENT

MBABANE MIDAS CONTINUES TO LOVE GRASSROOTS FOOTBALL



Mbabane Midas Representatives presenting the replica cheque to the Hhohho Regional Football Association's Executive Members in the company of the EFA General Secretary Mr. Frederick Mngomezulu

Children are under our care; we need to take good care of them. This is what Mbabane Midas is doing to children who are participating in the Hhohho U19 Championship that is sponsored by the Mbabane Midas. The slogan of the sponsor is "The love of cars"; however Mbabane Midas has done beyond that as this organisation has showed the love for children as they continue to sponsor this championship which is for the 3rd time this year. This year's sponsorship is E13 000.00 which shows an increment of E 1 000.00 from last year's sponsorship. The initial sponsorship was E10 000.00. Receiving this sponsorship on

behalf of the HRFA was the Chairman of the Youth Committee Mr. Ntokozo Tsela and the General Secretary (GS) of the Eswatini Football Association (EFA) Mr. Frederick Mngomezulu.

"As the HRFA we would like to acknowledge Mbabane Midas for her investment in the development of the Eswatini child through football", Tsela said. He also challenged the participating teams to work extra hard and at least produce one player for the U20 national team.

The SG of the EFA, Mr. Frederick Mngomezulu highlighted that this investment was vital as it was building the future of the game and country. "This is an important investment as it is building the future of the country", Mngomezulu said. He also acknowledged the HRFA for the excellent work



Zanele Shongwe and Gcebile Vilakati with some of the teams' officials and players

when it comes to the development of the game. "The HRFA is doing an excellent job in as far as football development is concerned as a result, their work was used by the EFA when developing last year's report to the Federation of International Football (FIFA) which created a good image for the whole country in as far as football development is concerned", Mngomezulu highlighted. He also urged Mbabane Midas to continue sponsoring the league as these youngsters who participates in this championships are the future customers of the very same sponsor as by so doing, the brand will stick in their minds.

In conclusion, the SG challenged the players to put more effort in their game so that they can be part of the U20 HRFA Pick Team that will play in the upcoming International Youth Championships in June and ultimately make it in the U20 National Team that will compete in Mauritius in December.



SIYAKHA FOOTBALL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME- THE BACK BORN OF FOOTBALL DEVELOPMENT- 'ACE' MASHWAMA

The Chairman of the Lubombo Regional Football Development Programme who is also an Executive Member of the Eswatini Football Association, Mr. Nicodimus 'Ace' Mashwama has acknowledged the role played by the RSEC Siyakha Football Development Programme in as far as football development is concerned.

"The RESC Siyakha Football Development Programme is the back- born of football in the country", Mashwama said. As a former national team player himself, he believe that the sky is the limit as this programme has the capacity to produce quality players that can represent the country at international level with the ultimate goal of playing for the national team. "We can produce national team players through this football development programme" the former Mbabane Highlanders



FC midfielder said. His words were echoed by the Lubombo Regional Football Association's Technical Director Mr. Frank 'The Horse' Maziya who stated that, the future is bright in as far as this football development programme is concerned as he is confident that more quality players will be produced.



Mr. Frank Maziya awarding medals during the RESC Siyakha Football Development Programme

"The RES Corporation Siyakha Football Development Programme will produce many other talented players in the class of Sibusiso 'Spoko' Dlamini and Dennis 'Yuki' Masina, Maziya said. Both players played their club football in the highest football leagues in the country and the Republic of South Africa. They also played for the Sihlangu.