



# SIGWACA FORTNIGHTLY

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ESWATINI FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION

## EFA'S EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE DECIDES TO END THE 2019/2020 FOOTBALL SEASON

- Why the 2019/2020 football season was cancelled?



## FOOTBALL FAMILY MOURNS THE PASSING ON OF A TOP COACH AND 3 OTHER FOOTBALL PEOPLE



## NATIONAL TEAMS TO COMPETE IN INTERNATIONAL COMPETITIONS



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## 2019/2020 FOOTBALL SEASON ENDS



The General Secretary of the Eswatini Football Association Mr. Frederick Mngomezulu during the press conference about the ending of the 2019/2020 football season

The Eswatini Football Association (EFA) has decided to end the 2019/20 football season due to the force majeure circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic. This was disclosed by the General Secretary (GS) of the EFA Mr. Frederick Mngomezulu.

“During this protracted period of consultations, various scenarios have been analysed culminating to a meeting of the Executive Committee on the 20<sup>th</sup> August 2020, where, after critical analyses of this force majeure circumstance of the COVID-19 pandemic, which, has already placed football into an unparalleled hiatus, and the responsibility to assure the practice of the football business prospectively, in an optimal environment, albeit imperfectly as a result of the pandemic, decided that the 2019/2020 football season, as at the 20<sup>th</sup> August 2020, is decided concluded as at the point at which it was suspended, with the determination of the

winners and promotions, as per the standings at that point, however, without the effect of relegations”, Mngomezulu elaborated.

He further stated that with the season being ended, the current focus will now be on the preparations for the commencement of the new season. “In this regard, decisions on the commencement, including issues of registration, will be communicated in due course as close collaborations with the Government of the Kingdom of Eswatini and international football governing bodies, particularly in terms of registration, cannot yet be determined”, Mngomezulu said.

## CONSIDERATIONS OF THE EFA EXCO WHEN DECIDING TO END THE 2019/20 SEASON

The Eswatini Football Association's (EFA's) Executive Committee had certain considerations when coming up with the decision to end the 2019/20 football season. Some of the considerations are as follows:

- ❖ The current restrictions, as prescribed by Government of the Kingdom of Eswatini, in the fight against the universal catastrophe of COVID-19, particularly the restrictions on the practice of sport, which to this date has not allowed football to resume.
- ❖ Disturbance probabilities to the following football seasons of 2020/2021 and 2021/2022, which are generally expected to be in sync with the rest of the global football. In this regard, a protracted delay in the conclusion of the 2019/2020 football season will have adverse effects on the onset and conclusion of the

above mention two seasons.

- ❖ The issue of registration of players and clubs, including the status and registration of football players, where most significantly some football clubs were already at risk of losing players, without having the possibility to replenish due to the regulation to conclude the 2019/2020 season utilizing the same players. For international transfers, it would have proved to be too cumbersome for many.



Some of the EFA Executive Committee Members.

- ❖ The consistency of the application or applicability of the 2019/2020 football season conclusion scenarios, across all leagues of the country, where it was discovered that the conditions varied significantly, hence there was a need to avoid major disturbances or discrepancies in the uniformity of application.

- ❖ The implication of the application of the established football resumption strategy, especially, the time needed to execute the strategy, in relation to the commencement of the 2020/2021 football season, taking into account that the football association still has international obligations.
- ❖ The strain to be posed on the current and future budgets for the practice and sustenance of the football business, where it was discovered that the practice of that the football association still has international obligations.
- ❖ The available facilities for competitions and associated business, to optimally respond to the requirements of hosting safe matches during this high COVID-19 transmission period. Some of the key facilities like stadiums that host most of the competitions are currently inaccessible.
- ❖ In doing all these , the EFA has to remain in conformity with the guiding principle of placing the health of all individuals and groups, who participate in the game of football at various levels first.

## FOUR PROMINENT FOOTBALL PEOPLE PASS ON

The month of August was a sad one for the football family as three (4) prominent football people lost their lives. These were Mr. John Mazibuko, a seasoned sporting administrator of great repute, having been the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the Premier League of Eswatini (PLE). He also served as an Executive Board Member of then Swaziland Tennis Association (now Eswatini National Tennis Association), including diligently serving in various football establishments, amongst others.



The late former PLE CEO, Mr. John Mazibuko

The other life that was lost was that of Mr. Jameson Fakudze who diligently discharged his duties as a referee and lately for a protracted period, served as a Match Commissioner at the PLE and National First Division League where he served diligently. He was an inspiration to many referees and upcoming match commissioners.

The coaching sector of football in the country lost one of their own in the passing on of Mr. Thabo Khokhe Vilakati. He previously coached in various national teams as head coach, at U17, U20, U23 and an assistant coach to Mr. Shakes Mashaba, at Sihlangu. The late Vilakati, presided as head coach and even as coach/Manager of various football clubs at the PLE and National First Division in a coaching career that also took him to the African continent, in the CAF Interclubs competitions most notable, with Mbabane Swallows Football Club in the last few

“Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted”- Matthew 5:4



The late coach, Mr Thabo Vilakati

years, when they shone brightly internationally. He was still expected to prolong his coaching career and significantly contribute to the development of players and the game of football.

The football family also lost a talented player after the demise of Gomez Godwe who was a Malawian international.

“The month of August was a dark month for the football family due to the loss of lives that has hit us so hard as these people were contributing a lot towards the development of football in the country. As EFA, we would like to express a note of heartfelt and profound condolences as well as symbol of accord to all affected Families and Relatives, and all establishments and the entire football family, for the untimely and shocking loss of Mr. John Mazibuko, Mr. Jameson Fakudze Mr. Thabo Vilakati and Mr. Gomez Gondwe”, said the General secretary of the Eswatini Football Association, Mr. Frederick Mngomezulu.

## KOKI'S DEMISE A BIG LOSS TO FOOTBALL-EFCA

The Eswatini Football Coaches Association (EFCA) has lamented the pass on Mr. Thabo Khokhe Vilakati who was one of the experienced coaches in the country. He started his coaching career at grassroots level where he coached Mbabane Highlanders FC's U17 and U20 teams in the early 90s before graduating to the senior team where he started gaining popularity in his coaching career. He previously coached in various national teams as head coach, at U17, U20, and U23 and as an assistant coach to Mr. Shakes Mashaba, at Sihlangu.

“This is an incredible tragic and loss for the coaching fraternity. It is also important to recognize that although gone far too soon, Mr. Vilakati left an incredible mark on the coaching fraternity and on the lives of players through every aspect of both his career and personal life”, said the Chairman of the EFCA, Mr. Anthony Mdluli. He also stated that the passing on of “Koki” was not only a loss to the EFCA but to football. “It is a big loss for football and a shock to everyone”, Mdluli said.



Some of the EFCA Members

## FOCUS ON FOOTBALL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES

### EFA'S CEO AND TD PARTICIPATES IN VIRTUAL WORKSHOPS

The Eswatini Football Association's (EFA's) Chief Executive Officer Mr. Frederick Mngomezulu and the Technical Director Mr. Bhekisisa Mkhonta were participants of the CAF Legal Workshop and FIFA Growing Professional Workshop respectively. These were online workshops due to the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Some of the topics that were discussed during the CAF Legal Workshop included the legal structure of CAF and legal procedures just to mention but a few. The participants of this workshop were the members of the CAF Legal Affairs and



EFA's Technical Director Bhekisisa Mkhonta

National Associations. As for the FIFA Growing Professional Workshop which is an on-going workshop, the topic that was discussed was on leadership focusing on self-introspection. The participants of this workshop are the Technical Directors of the 211 FIFA Member Associations.

### MANDLA DLAMINI PARTICIPATES IN THE FIFA FUTURO III COURSE

The Eswatini Football Association's (EFA's) Refereeing Instructor Mr. Mandla Ernest Dlamini was one of the participants of the 3-day FIFA Futuro III Course that was implemented online due to the outbreak



**Mr. Mandla Ernest Dlamini in full concentration during the FIFA Futuro III Course.**

of the COVID-19 pandemic. The purpose of this course was to equip the Technical Refereeing Instructors with the skills and knowledge on how they can best enhance the development of the referees in their respective countries.

Some of the facilitators of this course included Mr. Felix Tangawarima from Zimbabwe and Mr. Jarome Damon from the Republic of South Africa.

The topics for this course included the changes of the laws of the game for the 2020/2020 football season, tactical fouls, off sides and handball just to mention but a few.

**19 REFEREES ATTEND THE EFA YOUTH COURSE**

In the month of August, the Eswatini Football Association (EFA) implemented a Youth

Refereeing Course at the Technical Centre that was attended by 19 referees. This was a 2-weeks course. The main objective of this course was to capacitate the referees with the latest trends more especially on the amendments of the laws of the game, handball and offside just to mention but a few.

The facilitators of this course were Mr. Gilbert Dlamini, William Shongwe and Mr. Dumsani Hadebe.

**THE EFA DEVELOPS A 4-YEAR WOMEN'S FOOTBALL STRATEGY**

The Federations of African Football Association (FIFA) has called upon all its Members to develop their own Women's Football Development Strategies. The world football governing body has prioritized the development of Women's football in the world. The African football governing body CAF has set the tone by developing its own strategy themed "It Time, Its Now for the CAF Women's Football Strategy".

In the month of August, the Eswatini Football Association (EFA) commenced the development of its own Women's Football Strategy that will be implemented in the country in order to develop the sport in the country. Some of the stakeholders that are part of the development of this strategy include the Executive Committee Members, Women Football Committee Members and the EFA's Technical Department just to mention but a few.



**Some of the participants of the strategic plan development.**

The Chief Executive Officer of the EFA, Mr. Frederick Mngomezulu highlighted that this is a 4-year strategic plan focusing on the development of Women's Football in the country. "FIFA has called upon her Member Associations to develop their own Women's Football Strategic plan as a way of developing Women's football in all the 211 FIFA Members of which as the football association in the country we have adhered to what FIFA is saying and this is in line with our long term plan as we also want to develop women's football in the country", Mngomezulu said.

## FLASH BACK



**Senior Men's National Team that played against Zimbabwe on the 6<sup>th</sup> September 1993**



## NATIONAL TEAMS TO COMPETE INTERNATIONALLY



Senior Men's National Team



Senior Women's National Team

The Eswatini Football Association (EFA) is optimistic that all national teams will compete in international competitions as the international bodies have already rolled out their plans in as far as the progress of international competitions is concerned.

"We will prepare the national teams accordingly for the international competitions as it is important that we compete not just to participate", said the General Secretary (GS) of the EFA, Mr. Frederick Mngomezulu.

He emphasised the commitment of the EFA in as far as the implementation of the international competitions are concerned which also includes the interclubs competitions however,

the football association is in constant consultation with the Government of the Kingdom of Eswatini and other relevant stakeholders regarding this matter.

"Currently we are in constant consultation with the international football governing bodies, government and other relevant stakeholders regarding the national teams and clubs to compete in international competitions", Mngomezulu said.

The EFA has already presented a football resumption strategy to government as it focuses on the preparations of the new football season.



U20 Men's National Team celebrating after scoring a goal against Malawi during the 2019 U20 COSAFA Championships.

## UP CLOSE WITH SIBONGILE “FISH” SKAGGEL, THE EFA’S WOMEN FOOTBALL OFFICER

Muzi Radebe (MR) had a one-on-one chat with Sibongile Skaggel (Fish) who is the Eswatini Football Association’s (EFA’s) Women Football Officer about her involvement with the beautiful game among other things.

**MR:** Who is Sibongile Skagell?

**FISH:** I am a lady who was born and grew up in Mbabane, Manzana zone 1 under the guidance of my grandmother.

**MR:** When was your first involvement in football and at what capacity?

**FISH:** My first involvement in football was in 1991 as a player for Queens Park Ladies. I was the youngest player but very much competitive. The coach of the team was the late Tham Tham Dibethla Vilakati. I also played for Sheppard Athletics Ladies coached by Fritz “Mdar” Seilbea where my football skills improved a lot as I was able to make my national team break through.

**MR:** How did you get the nickname? Fish?

**FISH:** I got it while I was playing for the national team. You know, I was as solid as a rock at the back, and my teammates told me that the way I tackled oppositions I resemble the former Orlando Pirates FC defender Mark Fish. May be even my complexion had an effect to that as I am also light skinned just like the original “Fiiiiiiiiish” (laughs).

**MR:** What is your take about the girls and women’s participation in sport?

**FISH:** Since I grew up as a sports person having played football, netball and athletics, I treasure the benefits of sports in general. As I grew up I was able to look after my body which is something that I am still doing as I train a lot. I was able to go to other countries and I know the inside of a plane thanks to sports. I have been to the USA thanks to football.

For young girls and women out there, please take sports serious it can present lifetime opportunities for you. Muzi, it is quite encouraging to see the figures of women participating in sports and some even representing the country internationally which is an indication that sport is for everyone. The girl child needs support in order for her to be the best in Sports. Let’s support her.

**MR:** The EFA is currently developing a Women’s Football strategy, what’s your view about this exercise?

**FISH:** The EFA has taken the right direction as women’s is still at the introduction stage and it is high time that it grows as it is what her members. I hope this strategy will benefit the women’s football in the country.

**MR:** FIFA has implemented a #safe home campaign as a way of advocating against the gender base violence and child abuse; what can you say about this issue?

**FISH:** This is a very serious issue that is adversely affecting girls and women in the society. It is everyone’s right to live a safe life regardless of gender and age and I thank FIFA for such a campaign. Over and above that we thank every stakeholder that is putting an effort in stopping gender base violence and child abuse. It must stop now!



Sibongile Skaggel in control of the ball.