



# ESWATINI FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION

## AUGUST 2025 NEWSLETTER



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## EFA ELECTIONS

The Eswatini Football Association proudly congratulates its newly elected President Mr. Peter Simelane, who will lead for the 2025–2029 term, following the successful elections held on the 17<sup>th</sup> of August 2025. Alongside his executive team, the President has been entrusted with steering the future of football in the Kingdom of Eswatini.



In his inaugural address, the President expressed gratitude to the delegates for the confidence they placed in him and his fellow executive members. He emphasized that they are fully aware of the responsibilities entrusted to them, not only by the delegates but also by the football community and the nation at large.

He highlighted the call made by His Majesty King Mswati III, who recently urged the national team to aim higher by qualifying for major international tournaments such as the Africa Cup of Nations (AFCON) and the FIFA World Cup, while also striving to secure victories in regional competitions like COSAFA.



The President assured that the newly elected leadership will work tirelessly to ensure that the national team continues to improve and delivers good performances.

Looking ahead, he underscored the importance of expanding development programmes across refereeing, coaching, and player pathways. These initiatives will target both youth and senior categories, laying the foundation for sustainable growth and nurturing the next generation of elite football stars.



On infrastructure, the President reiterated the need to broaden the availability of quality venues, ensuring that league competitions proceed smoothly countrywide. He welcomed the recent CAF partial approval of the Somhlolo National Stadium to host international home matches for the senior men's national team (Sihlangu SeMnikati)

and the interclub matches, describing it as a significant step forward. He further recognition Government of the Kingdom of Eswatini's effort towards the upgrading of the Somhlolo National Stadium to meet full CAF requirements.

# EFA NEWLY ELECTED EX.CO. MEMBERS



**VICE PRES.**  
Mr Nkosingiphile Shongwe



**PRESIDENT**  
Mr Peter Simelane



**VICE PRES.**  
Mr Steve Horton



**EXEC. MEMBER**  
Mr Aaron Mavimbela



**WOMEN  
EXEC. MEMBER**  
Ms Phumzile Dlamini



**EXEC. MEMBER**  
Mr Sicelo Nene

**Congratulations to the newly elected  
EFA Executive (2025 - 2029)**

**LIVING THE FOOTBALL SPIRIT AND OUR PRIDE**

# SENIOR MEN'S NATIONAL TEAM SQUAD ANNOUNCED



The Senior Men's National Team, Sihlangu SeMnikati, has officially announced the travelling squad for the upcoming 2026 FIFA World Cup Qualifier matches against Cameroon and Libya. Head Coach Zdravko Logarusic shared this news during a farewell event held at the EFA's Technical Centre in Lobamba.

Coach Logarusic expressed confidence in the team's ability to perform well against top African national teams, stating, "We have shown the world before that we can compete effectively against the strongest teams in Africa."

**FINAL SIHLANGU SEMNIKATI SQUAD**  
FOR THE UPCOMING 2026 WORLD CUP QUALIFIERS GAMES  
AGAINST CAMEROON & LIBYA

**GOALKEEPERS**  
Mlamuli Makhanya (Royal Leopard)  
Khanyakwezwe Shabalala (Nsingizini Hotspurs).

**DEFENDERS**  
Nkosingiphile Shongwe (Nsingizini Hotspurs)  
Simanga Masangane (Royal Leopard)  
Philiso Newman (Mbabane Swallows)  
Mzwandile Mabelesa (Royal Leopard)  
Siphosethu Mabilisa (Young Buffaloes) | Gift Gamedze (Royal Leopard)

**MIDFIELDERS**  
Mpendulo Tfomo (Manzini Sea Birds)  
Junior Magaula (Royal Leopard)  
Kelvin Kunene (Royal Leopard) | Innocent Dlamini (Young Buffaloes)  
Neliswa Dlamini (Nsingizini Hotspurs)  
Kwakhe Tfwala (Nsingizini Hotspurs)  
Thubelihle Mavuso (Nsingizini Hotspurs)  
Bongwa Matsebula (Young Buffaloes)  
Mazwi Sihlongonyane (Young Buffaloes)

**STRIKERS**  
Philani Mkhonto (Manzini Sea Birds)  
Mayibongwe Mabuza (Manzini Sea Birds)  
Joseph Kibonge (Manzini Sea Birds)  
Justice Figareido (Chippa United- RSA)

**HEAD COACH**  
ZDRAVKO LOGARUSIC



Eswatini Football Association (EFA) President, Mr. Peter Simelane, emphasized the importance of the team's mission, reminding them of His Majesty King Mswati III's mandate to qualify for major tournaments, including the AFCON, CHAN, and FIFA World Cup. He encouraged the players, saying, "You must remember that there are no small teams in football. Being part of the national team means you are among the best."

Mr. Mzwandile Mtsetfwa, Under Secretary of the Ministry of Sports, Arts, and Culture, spoke on behalf of the Minister, urging the national team to aim for positive results and maintain good conduct as ambassadors of the nation: "Please return home with good results and remember the significance of good conduct."



# NATIONAL TEAM REPLICAS AVAILABLE



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## FIFA MA ELITE REFEREES COURSE

The FIFA MA Elite Referees Course, which commenced on Monday, 4 August 2025, concluded on Friday, 8 August 2025 at the EFA Technical Centre in Lobamba. The five-day programme had 34 elite male and female referees as participants, was facilitated by FIFA Referee Experts Paulo Marques and Mark Mzenge, in collaboration with local referee instructors. The main objective of this course was to equip Eswatini's referees with the new refereeing rules and technology.



Speaking on behalf of the participants, was Sanele Ntimane who expressed gratitude to FIFA and the EFA for their unwavering support. He noted that the course had introduced them to new concepts of the game and emphasized the importance of continuous practice and self-investment in their officiating careers. He highlighted that both the theory and practical sessions of the course, enhanced their knowledge about modern refereeing.



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On behalf of FIFA, Paulo Marques described the week as “tough but fruitfully successful,” affirming that all objectives and expectations were met. He commended the elite referees for their dedication both in class and on the field, and thanked the local instructors for their support, which helped achieve exceptional results. Marques reminded the referees that this was only the beginning, encouraging them to maintain a commitment to learning and improvement, and wished them a successful 2025/26 season.

EFA President Peter Simelane applauded the determination and hard work of the participants throughout the course. He further commended the collaboration between local



instructors and FIFA experts, pointing out that the course also enhanced the skills and knowledge of the instructors themselves. Addressing the referees, he acknowledged the significant task ahead of applying the recently amended Laws of the Game in the new season. He urged them to remain composed under pressure and reaffirmed the EFA’s commitment to supporting refereeing development, including the introduction of new refereeing technologies in the future.

## REFEREES IN FOCUS WITH MR. ZONDO



Ahead of the new season, we caught up with Sifiso Zondo to discuss referees development and the lessons from the two recent FIFA MA Referees Courses

**Question 1 (Q.1.) :** As we begin the 2025/26 football season, how are the referees preparing for the upcoming competitions?

**Sfiso Zondo (S.Z.) :** The referees are prepared theoretical and physically. EFA has organized some courses, workshops to equip the local referee from various level of refereeing. They

also undergo fitness training which helps keep them in good physical conditions.

**Q.2. :** Can you briefly reflect on the previous 2024/25 season? What were some of the highlights, challenges, or lessons learned from a refereeing perspective?

**S.Z. :** It was a successful season; However, there were some challenges. Sometimes referees are vulnerable to security issues like, being threatened by team officials and fans. The most common challenge is the misinterpretation of the Laws of The Game (LOTG). I think the gap of interpretation and understanding of the Laws of The Games may be narrowed by educating the teams (Coaches, Players, etc) at the beginning of each season.



**Q.3. : Earlier this month, the EFA hosted the FIFA MA Elite Referees Course, and last month the FIFA MA Youth Referees Course. What impact do you expect these programs to have going forward?**

**S.Z. : These Courses enhanced the referee's interpretation and application of the LOTG. They also capacitated the participants in as far as refereeing is concerned**

**Q.4. : What steps are being taken to ensure that referees are physically and psychologically prepared for the new season?**

**S.Z. : The EFA has organized numerous courses, workshops and Fitness trainings; which align with the preparation of the match officials ahead of the new season 2025/26. The preparations covered all aspects of refereeing**

**Q.5. : Lastly, what message would you like to share with football stakeholders regarding the role and importance of referees in the game?**



**S.Z. : I would like to highlight that the referees are among the priority athletes in football. Therefore, referees are the law enforcers in the game of football, So they must be protected and respected at all times. All football stakeholders have a responsibility to respect the referees and their decisionsts.**

# SCHOOL TRIP SEASON AT EFA TECHNICAL CENTRE

This year's schools' trip season brought exciting moments at the EFA Lobamba Technical Centre, as two rural primary schools visited the EFA's facility as part of their educational tours. Each school came with more than 80 learners, eager to learn beyond the classroom.



The learners and teachers received a warm welcome from the EFA staff, who guided them through a brief history of football, and the structure and roles of the Eswatini Football Association.



The sessions also introduced the learners to the various careers in football, expanding their understanding that football is more than just a game. From refereeing, coaching, and administration, to sports medicine, catering, and facility management, the learners discovered a wide range of opportunities within the football ecosystem. The impact was immediate, as one young girl left inspired and declared her ambition to become a referee in the future.



Although some schools expressed interest in visiting, EFA activities and ongoing courses at the Technical Centre meant they could not all be accommodated this year? However, with the positive reception and evident learning outcomes, the EFA is confident that more schools will participate in next year's school trip season, further empowering students with knowledge and inspiring the next generation to contribute to football development in Eswatini.





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# EFA SHOWCASES FOOTBALL CAREERS AT WATERFORD KAMHLABA CAREER EXPO

The Eswatini Football Association had the privilege of participating in the Waterford KaMhlaba Career Expo, which brought together high school learners from various schools across the country. The event featured several businesses and organizations, all aiming to guide learners as they prepare for future career choices.



At the EFA stall, learners showed great enthusiasm, flocking to ask questions about both football careers and the pathways to becoming successful players in Eswatini. While some were curious about the steps to excel as players, many others were eager to understand the wide variety of professions that football offers. The

EFA team ensured that every learner left with their questions answered, emphasizing the importance of balancing passion with education. Learners were encouraged to pursue their football ambitions while maintaining strong academic foundations, as education is vital across all football-related careers, whether one becomes a player, doctor, coach, referee, or even a dedicated supporter.

# BUILD IT UNDER 13 — 2025 — TOURNAMENT



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## BUHLENI BUILD IT

The fifth installment of the thrilling 2025 Build It Under-13 Tournament took center stage at the EFA Mkhuzweni Technical Centre, hosted in partnership with Build It Buhleni.. With incredible goals, tight fixtures, and an electrifying atmosphere, this episode stood out as one of the most action-packed tournaments.

A notable highlight was the goal-scoring frenzy. Ntabinezimpisi Skom Academy netted an impressive total of 13 goals throughout the tournament, showcasing an attacking power that made them to be fans favorites.

Despite their firepower, their journey ended in the semi-finals, where they were defeated 3-1 by the eventual champions, Ntabinezimpisi Swallows F.C. However, their efforts didn't go unrecognized. The lethal forward Thandiweyinkhosi Dlamini from Skom Academy walked away with the Top Goal Scorer Award, having found the back of the net 7 times, cementing his place as one of the tournament's standout performers.





The tournament drew the full support of the Hhohho Regional Football Association's leadership, who were present throughout. The Chairman of the Hhohho Regional Football Association Dr. Comfort Shongwe extended his heartfelt appreciation to the coaches, parents, and Build It Buhleni management, emphasizing the role of community in youth development. Build It

In a highly anticipated final, Ntabinezimpisi Swallows F.C. faced off against Ntabinezimpisi Fontotje FC, a team they had previously played to a 1-1 draw in the group stages. Both teams arrived in the final undefeated, setting up an intense showdown that lived up to expectations. The Swallows soared to victory with a 2-1 win, powered by the brilliance of Okwezulu Dlamini, who was later named Player of the Tournament. He orchestrated the final by assisting the opener and scoring the second goal before halftime. Fontotje pulled one back in the dying moments, but it was too little, too late.



representative Mr. Nhlanhla Dlamini echoed Dr. Shongwe's words as he also expressed his admiration for the level of talent on display. He further noted his hope that such tournaments could happen more frequently, maybe every three months.

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## PIGGS PEAK BUILD IT

The Build It Piggs Peak Under-13 Tournament, was held on Saturday, 9 August 2025, at the Killarney Sports Ground in Piggs Peak, proudly hosted by Build It Piggs Peak. The day was filled with passion, skill, and promising young talent, but it was Mshinande Arsenal F.C. who stole the show, lifting the trophy after a dominant run.

From the opening group stage match, Mshinande Arsenal F.C. established themselves as clear favorites. Their teamwork and passing were far beyond their age group, making them a joy to watch. They conceded only two goals throughout the tournament, one in the group stages and another in the semi-finals, while scoring freely and with style. Their second group match showcased their attacking firepower, thrashing Tinyosi F.C. 11–0 in one of the most lopsided victories of the day.



In the semi-finals, Mshinande Arsenal F.C. defeated Zibonele F.C. by 4–1, sealing their place in the final against Maguga FC. The championship match was effectively decided in the first half, with Arsenal surging to a 3–0 lead. In the second half, they displayed their passing and connection on the field, controlling the game to secure the title with a 3–0 final score.



Although none of their players claimed the Top Goal Scorer award, which was a testament to their unselfish, team-oriented play, but Mshinande Arsenal F.C. dominated the individual accolades. Player of the Tournament, Best midfielder, and Best Defender were all awarded to members of their team. In a special moment, EFA Technical Director Mr. Bhekisisa Mkhonta introduced a new accolade, the Most Exciting Player award, on the spot. This was

presented to Mali Msimango who was also playing for Mshinande Arsenal F.C. His brilliance, creativity, and ability to score from difficult positions at such a young age impressed the technical team from EFA. The Best Goalkeeper award went to a Piggs Peak Black Swallows F.C. player, in recognition of his outstanding individual saves throughout the day.



## NHLANGANO BUILD IT

The King Sobhuza II Memorial Stadium was buzzing with excitement on Saturday, 23 August 2025, as the Build It Nhlangano Store proudly hosted the seventh edition of the Build It Under-13 Football Tournament. Despite the windy and chilly weather, the young players showcased remarkable determination, skill, and passion for football, while parents and supporters filled the stands, cheering enthusiastically throughout the day.



The tournament began with a lively parade from the Build It store to the stadium. Parents marched proudly alongside their sons, many sporting fresh haircuts and new football boots, creating an inspiring atmosphere that highlighted the strong community spirit and grassroots support for youth football.

From 9 a.m. to 2 p.m., eight teams competed fiercely in a day full of thrilling moments and impressive performances. Across 12 group stage matches, there were no draws, with 10 matches decided by a single team scoring. All Nations F.C. made a memorable run to the finals, conceding only four goals during the entire tournament, all of which came in their only group stage loss to Home Affairs F.C. (4-2). Home Affairs F.C. finished the group stages unbeaten and appeared destined for glory but were heartbreakingly eliminated in the semifinals by Abashe F.C. on penalties after a goalless draw.



The final showdown between All Nations F.C. and Abashe F.C. was a nail-biting affair. After a tense 0-0 draw in regular time, the winner was decided by penalties. Both teams displayed exceptional composure, with every player converting their kicks until an Abashe F.C. player narrowly missed the post, handing All Nations F.C. a dramatic 7-6 victory and the prestigious Build It trophy.



The tournament concluded with the announcement of the player of the Tournament, Khanyisani Ndwandwe, who was awarded a brand-new bicycle, a prize that left the young footballers inspired and motivated.



In his closing remarks, Mr. Nkosinathi Kunene, Chairperson of the Shiselweni Regional Football Association, expressed gratitude to Build It for their unwavering commitment to grassroots football development. He also applauded the parents for their outstanding support and congratulated coaches and players for making the tournament a resounding success. Representing the sponsor, Mr. Sam Essa acknowledged all stakeholders who contributed to the event's success and reaffirmed Build It's dedication to football development, emphasizing its positive impact on Eswatini's youth and the nation.

## MBABANE BUILD IT PLUS

The Build It Mbabane Under-13 Tournament took place on Saturday, 30 August 2025, at the lively Msunduza Sport Ground. Hosted by the Build It Mbabane store, this marked the 8th and final leg of the 2025 countrywide Build It U13 series, which successfully reached communities in Siteki, Manzini, Siphofaneni, Matsapha, Buhleni, Piggs Peak, and Nhlangano.



The Mbabane edition did not disappoint, delivering football excitement, passionate support, and a showcase of young talent. In the end, Lobamba Dynamos were crowned champions after edging out Dark City 5 - 4 on penalties, following a nail-biting goalless draw in the final.

Both sides earned their place in the decider with solid group-stage performances and resilience in the knockout rounds. Dark City booked their place in the final after a dramatic semifinal clash against Swazi Sundowns, where they triumphed on

penalties following a 1- 1 draw. Lobamba Dynamos, on the other hand, looked unstoppable in their semifinal, overpowering Majotini with a dominant 3 - 0 win.



Majotini had been the standout team in Group A, going unbeaten and winning all their matches while conceding only two goals. Despite their impressive run, their journey ended in the semis against the eventual champions. Dark City, who had lost one group-stage match, showed grit and determination to fight their way into the finals. The Msunduzi grounds were a hive of energy, with fans of all ages filling the stands to cheer on the youngsters. The clear skies created the perfect backdrop for an exciting day of football, where skill, passion, and great goals were on full display.



## INSIDE FOOTBALL DEVELOPMENT

# BHEKISISA “BIZZAH” MKHONTA

## EFA TECHNICAL DIRECTOR



### **OBSERVATIONS OF THE 2025 BUILD IT UNDER 13 TOURNAMENT**

The standard of play is high, and we observed clear glimpses of tactical organization, a structured system, and collective play both in defence and attack. Influential players played a decisive role in determining the outcomes of the games.

### **WHAT IT TAKES TO BE A TECHNICAL DIRECTOR ?**

#### **CORE COMPETENCIES & SKILLS**

- Strategic Planning & Policy Development.
- Technical Leadership & Mentorship.
- High-Level Communication & Negotiation Skills
- Curriculum Design for Coach Education.
- Talent Identification & Performance Pathway Management.
- Knowledge of CAF, FIFA, and global football trends.
- Adaptability to local football realities.

#### **QUALIFICATIONS**

- CAF A Licence (or equivalent UEFA/FIFA qualification).
- FIFA Technical Leadership Diploma.
- Extensive experience in coaching at elite level and youth development.
- Proven track record in coach education.
- Academic qualifications in sports management or related field.

### **FOOTBALL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME TO EXPECT THIS YEAR**

(A) CAF courses are scheduled to roll out soon, aiming to boost the number of licensed coaches nationwide.

(B) To address performance gaps, a structured match analysis programme will be implemented, targeting improvements especially within the elite league

### **SUMMARY OF IMPLEMENTED PROGRAMMES**

Significant progress has been made in football development. Grassroots football has been rolled out in the Shiselweni and Lubombo regions. The U-20 Girls' Football for Schools programme is operational, alongside ongoing U-15 Boys' and Girls' leagues under the Football for Schools initiative. Furthermore, three Basic Coaching Courses have been conducted, contributing to the expansion of our coaching base

## ***ADVICE TO COACHES AHEAD OF THE NEW SEASON***

As the season begins, I would encourage coaches to prioritize proper planning and preparation, both technically and physically. Focus on building strong team cohesion, instilling discipline, and ensuring players understand their tactical responsibilities. It is also important to manage player workloads carefully to avoid early-season injuries. Above all, coaches should emphasize consistency, patience, and continuous learning, as the foundation laid in the early stages often determines the success of the entire season.

## ***THOUGHTS ON NSINGIZINI HOTSPURS F.C. & ROYAL LEOPARD F.C. AHEAD OF THEIR CAF INTER-CLUB OPPONENTS FROM THE COSAFA REGION***

Facing COSAFA opponents gives our teams a fair chance, as they are already accustomed to the playing styles in the region. With good preparation and the right mindset, both Royal Leopard F.C. and Nsingizini Hotspurs F.C. can certainly progress.



## ***HOW YOU USED TO PREPARE YOURSELF BACK IN YOUR PLAYING DAYS***

As a player, preparation for the new season always began with ensuring that I was physically and mentally ready. I dedicated extra time to personal fitness, focusing on endurance, strength, and ball work. Once the season started, I made it a point to listen to my coaches, stick to the team's tactical plan, and maintain discipline on and off the field. Throughout the season, I managed myself by living a balanced lifestyle—resting well, eating right, avoiding distractions, and staying focused on continuous improvement.



# CONDOLENCES



## Mr. Johannes “Ace” Sibozza

**The Eswatini Football Association and the entire football community in Eswatini are deeply saddened to learn of the untimely passing of Mr Johannes Sibozza. A dedicated football administrator and player. Mr Sibozza made significant contributions to the sport throughout his career.**

**We stand in solidarity with those mourning the loss, and wish comfort to everyone affected by the tragedy.**

*Psalms 34:18, “The Lord near to the broken hearted and saves the crushed in spirit”*



**May his soul rest in peace**





**THANK YOU FOR STAYING UPDATED WITH THE LATEST  
FROM THE ESWATINI FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION  
WE REMAIN COMMITTED TO THE DEVELOPMENT AND  
GROWTH OF FOOTBALL IN THE KINGDOM OF ESWATINI  
FROM GRASSROOTS TO THE GLOBAL STAGE**

**Until next time, Stay passionate, Stay proud, Stay Eswatini.**

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