



# ESWATINI FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION

## SEPTEMBER 2025 NEWSLETTER



### TOP NEWS

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QUALIFIERS**

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## A WORD FROM THE PRESIDENT



“As we commence this new chapter, it is crucial to note that football governance requires a concerted and synergised approach. The Executive Committee will retreat to forge an aggressive tactical plan to upscale the performance of football, engaging stakeholders across all spheres to fashion consolidated development constructs.

Club ownership and governance remain a priority. The newly promulgated statutes now provide structures that will help resolve disputes and assure harmony. Our national teams also require stronger support systems, from improved domestic leagues and training methods to professionalisation and use of modern technologies.

Financial sustainability is vital, football must be treated as a brand, with every stakeholder contributing to its commercial value. At the same time, grassroots development, coaching education, women's football and refereeing standards are key pillars of our vision. Initiatives such as the Talent Development Scheme, futsal programmes, women's league expansion, and referee training will form the backbone of progress.

Infrastructure remains a cornerstone, and we are grateful for government's support, especially in upgrading Somhlolo Stadium and establishing technical centres across regions. Looking ahead, our vision is to consolidate these efforts into a rewarding pathway for players, clubs and the nation, ensuring football thrives for generations to come.”



# THE U17 BOYS NATIONAL TEAM GAIN VALUABLE EXPERIENCE IN THE AFCON | COSAFA QUALIFIERS



The Eswatini Under-17 national team recently participated in the TotalEnergies AFCON U17 | COSAFA Qualifiers held in Zimbabwe from the 11<sup>th</sup> –20<sup>th</sup> September 2025. Drawn in a challenging group alongside Comoros, Mozambique, and the host nation Zimbabwe, the young boys displayed courage and determination throughout the competition.

Despite suffering defeats to Comoros and Mozambique, the team showcased their resilience in their second group match, holding the host nation Zimbabwe to a hard-fought 0-0 draw. That encounter highlighted the progress of the squad, with young defender Nkhosenhle Tsela delivering a standout performance that earned him the Player of the Match award.







Head coach Sindiso Dlamini praised the boys' spirit and fighting mentality, noting that the main difference between Eswatini and their opponents was international exposure. "Most of our boys were playing outside the country for the first time, while the other teams had players with international experience. Still, our boys showed great potential of becoming the best players," he said.



Though the journey ended at the group stages, the tournament was an important test for the squad and provided invaluable experience for the players. The EFA commends the team for their bravery, growth, and commitment on the field, and remains confident that this young generation of players will continue to improve and rise to future challenges.



# THE GIRLS U20 NATIONAL TEAM FACED SOUTH AFRICA IN THE FIFA U20 WOMEN'S WORLD CUP QUALIFIERS 2026

The girls U20 National Team embarked on a historic journey in the FIFA Women's World Cup Qualifiers 2026, marking a major milestone in the growth of women's football in Eswatini. Many of the players in this squad were selected from the ongoing EFA/PC Systems U19 School Girls Football Development Programme, which continues to play a pivotal role in nurturing young talent in as far as women's football is concerned. Special recognition goes to PC Systems for their commitment in empowering young girls through football.



Eswatini played against an authoritative South African side, featuring players with regular club experience and international exposure, which proved to be an acidic test for the local girls. Although the game ended in a 5-0 defeat in the first leg and 4-0 in the second leg, the girls displayed immense courage and determination, especially when playing away from home.





The players have proven that with regular monitoring, training, and opportunities to compete at both club and international levels, they can rise to become arduous players in the future. This campaign is more than just about results; it was also about getting the necessary international exposure that is vital in player development.





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# SIHLANGU SEMNIKATI IN THE FIFA WORLD CUP QUALIFIERS 2026



The senior men national team, Sihlangu SeMnikati, recently faced two tough away fixtures in the ongoing FIFA World Cup

Qualifiers 2026, taking on Cameroon and Libya respectively. While the results did not go in Eswatini's favor, the national team displayed resilience and fighting spirit worthy of recognition.

Against Cameroon, a squad stacked with internationally experienced players, Sihlangu conceded their goals only in the first half before regrouping and holding their own throughout the second half of the match. This disciplined performance against one of Africa's top footballing nations is a positive marker of growth for the national team. A similar story unfolded in the clash against Libya, where Sihlangu conceded in the opening 20



minutes but went on to contain the hosts for the remainder of the game.







Looking ahead, Sihlangu will wrap up the World Cup Qualifiers campaign in October 2026. The team will host Angola at Somhlolo National Stadium in what promises to be a thrilling encounter. This fixture will be particularly special, as it marks the first time since 2018 for Eswatini to play a home qualifier at Somhlolo National Stadium, following CAF's recent provisional approval of the venue.

Having previously been forced to host “home” games in South Africa, the return to Somhlolo National Stadium is expected to boost the national team's morale and provides a perfect platform for the football fans to watch Sihlangu SeMnikati on home turf. After that, the squad will travel to Cape Verde for their final qualifying match against the island nation.







## **The Eswatini Football Association & Mr. Zdravko Logarusic(Head Coach)**

**“MUTUALLY PART WAYS”**

**We thank him for his service and  
wish him the best of luck.**

**Following this development, the EFA Executive Committee has appointed the current Assistant Coach, Mr. Sifiso Ntibane, as the Acting Head Coach for the remaining World Cup qualifiers scheduled for October 2026. Additionally, Mr. Ernest Mavuso will serve as the Acting Assistant Coach during this period. The rest of the national team's technical and management staff will remain unchanged.**



# BASIC COACHING COURSE PRACTICAL TESTING.



On the 31<sup>st</sup> August 2025, the Eswatini Football Association (EFA) successfully hosted the Basic Coaching Course Practical Testing at the Lobamba Technical Centre. A total of 14 aspiring coaches took to the field, putting into practice the knowledge they had gained during the two-day theory sessions held at Ngwane Park High School from 29–30 August 2025.

The practical assessments provided the participants with the opportunity to demonstrate their understanding of coaching

principles in real-pitch scenarios. This hands-on experience not only tested their readiness but also deepened their ability to apply classroom learning to match day situations. Notably, the course also attracted female participation, with two women enrolling and successfully completing the program. This reflects the EFA's ongoing commitment to promoting inclusivity and ensuring that coaching opportunities are accessible to both genders, thereby strengthening the game across all levels.







This initiative, orchestrated by the EFA Technical Department, forms part of the broader mission to raise the standard of coaching in Eswatini. By equipping grassroots coaches with modern techniques and practical experience, the EFA continues to lay a strong foundation for the future development of players and the overall growth of football in the country.



## EFA HOST COACHING WORKSHOP IN THE SHISELWENI REGION



On the 20<sup>th</sup> September 2025, the EFA partnered with the Shiselweni Regional Football Association (SRFA) to host a vital coaching workshop at the King Sobhuza II Memorial Stadium in Nhlanguano. The session was organized at the request of the SRFA, and brought together coaches from the Super League, Promotion, and Zonal Leagues.



The workshop focused on equipping regional coaches with modern coaching methods and emphasized the critical role of education in football development. Coaches were reminded that their influence goes beyond the local leagues, as they are directly responsible for nurturing players who progress into the Premier League, and eventually represent Eswatini at the national team level.

By improving the quality of coaching at grassroots, the long-term performance of the national teams on the international stage will also improve. A key highlight of the workshop was the introduction of the EFA's DNA for identifying and developing future players, giving coaches a framework to guide talent development in alignment with the country's football philosophy.





This initiative deserves high praise for both the EFA and SRFA for their proactive efforts to uplift coaching standards. In his remarks, the EFA Technical Director Bhekisisa Mkhonta confirmed that his office will soon embark on visits across all Shiselweni zones to continue training coaches. The ultimate goal is to roll out structured coaching courses, enabling all coaches to earn recognized qualifications, from Basic Certificates to CAF Licenses.





# ELECTORAL COMMITTEE OVERSEES A BUSY MONTH OF FOOTBALL ELECTIONS



The EFA Electoral Committee, the body responsible for conducting and supervising elections within the football structures, had an eventful and productive month. Following the conclusion of the EFA Executive elections in August, a series of key elections were successfully conducted across various EFA Membership

The Lubombo Regional Football Association was among the first to hold its elections, ushering in a new leadership team that will steer football development in the region. Shortly thereafter, the Eswatini Women Football Association also held its elections, reaffirming the importance of women's football governance in the country.

The process continued with the Eswatini Football Referees Association, which elected new leadership to guide the refereeing fraternity, followed most recently by the Eswatini Football Coaches Association, ensuring that coaches across all levels are represented under fresh leadership. These elections-

-highlight the ongoing commitment of the Electoral Committee to transparency, inclusivity, and fair elections in Eswatini football. The new leadership teams are expected to play pivotal roles in strengthening their respective sectors, further contributing to the growth and development of the game at all levels.





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## CAF INTERCLUB COMPETITIONS: ESWATINI TEAMS ADVANCE

Eswatini football has every reason to celebrate as both Nsingizini Hotspurs F.C. and Royal Leopard F.C. have successfully progressed to the next round of the TotalEnergies CAF Interclub Competitions preliminary stages.



For Nsingizini Hotspurs F.C., their maiden appearance in the TotalEnergies CAF Champions League has already produced unforgettable moments. After suffering a narrow 1–0 defeat away to Zimbabwe’s Simba Bhora F.C. in Francis Town on September 21, 2025; the Eswatini side returned home with renewed determination. On September 28, at the Somhlolo National Stadium, they rose to the occasion, pushing the tie to penalties

in the very last minute. Defender Nkosingiphile Shongwe delivered a thunderous goal that ignited wild celebrations among the crowd. With the aggregate score tied at 1–1, Nsingizini Hotspurs F.C. demonstrated incredible composure during the penalty shootout, winning 4–2 and securing their place in the next round of the preliminary stage. Their resilience and fighting spirit marked a proud moment for the club and for Eswatini football.





Meanwhile, Royal Leopard F.C. proved their class in the CAF Confederation Cup against Namibia's Young African F.C. They set the tone early with a solid 2-0 away victory on September 20 in St. Francis Town (Botswana), before sealing the deal in emphatic style at Somhlolo National Stadium on September 26, 2025. They dominated their opponents with a commanding 5-0 victory, completing a remarkable 7-0 aggregate triumph that underscored their strength and experience in African competitions.



With both Nsingizini Hotspurs F.C. and Royal Leopard F.C. advancing, Eswatini football celebrates not just the victories of two clubs but a collective achievement that highlights the growth and potential of the domestic game. Their performances remind us that our teams can stand tall on the African stage, inspiring players, fans, and the nation.



# NSINGIZINI HOTSPURS F.C. CROWNED CHAMPIONS OF THE 8BET TRADE FAIR CUP 2025



The 2025 edition of the 8Bet Trade Fair Cup concluded in style on Sunday at a packed Mavuso Sports Centre, where fans were treated to an exhilarating finale of football, entertainment, and family fun. In the final match, Nsingizini Hotspurs F.C. claimed the championship title after narrowly defeating Green Mamba F.C. with a hard-fought 1-0 victory. This win not only secured the prestigious trophy but also a substantial prize of E630,000. Quality Dlamini of Nsingizini Hotspurs F.C. lived up to his name as he netted a stupendous free kick in the

first half of the match which was enough to win the Shiselweni based side the silverware.





Earlier in the day, Manzini Sea Birds F.C. secured third place by overcoming Ubombo Sugar F.C. with a score of 2-1 in a lively playoff match. The finals embodied the “family fun day” theme, with the Mavuso Sports Centre buzzing with enthusiastic fans cheering, dancing, and celebrating Eswatini football in true festive spirit.



The 8Bet Trade Fair Cup 2025 kicked off on August 30, featuring all 16 Premier League teams in an intense knockout pre-season tournament. Beyond the competition, the cup served as a valuable preparation tool for both players and referees ahead of the upcoming 2025/26 Premier

League season. This tournament provided an excellent platform for emerging talent in Eswatini’s elite football, setting the stage for an electrifying league season ahead.

Special congratulations go to Nsingizini Hotspurs F.C. for lifting the 8Bet Trade Fair Cup 2025 trophy, and to all individual award winners who excelled during the tournament. The Premier League of Eswatini (PLE), Competitions Committee, Referees, and other football stakeholders also deserves recognition for the seamless execution of this well-coordinated pre-season tournament. Above all, a heartfelt thank you goes to 8Bet, whose E2.5 million sponsorship has made a significant contribution to the development of football in the country.





**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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