



ESWATINI FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION

OCTOBER 2025 NEWSLETTER



TOP NEWS

SIHLANGU FIFA WORLD CUP QUALIFIERS GAMES

LOCAL LEAGUES KICK-OFF WITH A BANG

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PLE GOALS WITH MR PETROS VILAKATI (PLE CEO) FOR THE 2025/26 SEASON

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SIHLANGU SEMNIKATI WRAPS UP WORLD CUP QUALIFIERS

The nation witnessed a heartfelt homecoming on 8 October as Sihlangu SeMnikati returned to hosting at Somhlolo National Stadium after 7 years away, facing Angola in their penultimate FIFA World Cup Qualifier. The chilly weather did the little to cool the excitement, as passionate fans filled the stands to cheer on the national team.



Sihlangu showed impressive determination in the first half pressing high, defending tightly, and matching Angola's intensity. The teams went into the break level at 0-0, with the SeMnikati looking sharp and composed.

The second half brought fireworks as interim coach Sfiso Ntibane's Tactical changes paid off immediately. Justice Figareido struck twice in quick succession, putting Eswatini ahead 2-0 and sending Somhlolo into celebration.



Angola however mounted a comeback, scoring in the 69th minute and equalizing at the 80th. Despite conceding late, Sihlangu maintained their fighting spirit and nearly sealed a victory deep in stoppage time, narrowly missing a well-crafted chance.

Just days later, on 13 October, Sihlangu travelled to face Cape Verde for their final qualifier. The hosts, eager to secure qualification, faced a determined Eswatini side that held them to a goalless draw first half. Though Cape Verde ultimately won 3-0 Sihlangu SeMnikati fought valiantly until the final whistle, earning respect for their resilience and teamwork. With that, Eswatini concluded their World Cup Qualifiers campaign with three points in Group D, leaving behind performances that showed growth, grit and the promise of a bright future for our national team.



BUILD IT PLUS CELEBRATES FANS DURING SIHLANGU'S HOMECOMING MATCH



During the Sihlangu's homecoming match against Angola held on the 8th of October 2025 at Somhlolo National Stadium, one of EFA's proud partners, Build It Plus Mbabane, added excitement to the day by introducing a special fan engagement initiative. The sponsor rewarded the Fan of the Match, recognizing outstanding passion and support for the national team.

The award was won by Sizwe "Mpapane" Ndlovu, who walked

away with a Build It voucher worth E2, 500. He later received his prize on the 10th of October at the Build It Plus store in Mbabane, where he expressed his gratitude to both Build It and the Eswatini Football Association. Sizwe also took a heartfelt moment to thank his parents for nurturing his love for football from a young age.

This initiative not only highlighted Build It Plus Mbabane's commitment to supporting local football but also encouraged fans to continue rallying behind the national team. It served as a reminder that football's true spirit lives in the passion and unity of its supporters.





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EFA, GOVERNMENT, GAVI AND PARTNERS UNITE TO PROMOTE HPV AWARENESS AMONG YOUNG LEARNERS

On the 2nd of October, the Eswatini Football Association joined hands with the Eswatini Government, through the ministry of health, in partnership with CAF, UEFA, and Gavi, for a special health awareness initiative held at Somhlolo National Stadium.



The event held alongside the EFA/CAF African Schools Programme under 15 activities, brought together learners, teachers, and coaches from schools across the country to raise awareness about the Human Papillomavirus (HPV) Vaccination.



The Initiative highlighted the importance of early vaccination in preventing cervical cancer one of the leading health challenges affecting women globally. Health officials conducted interactive sessions to educate the young participants about HPV and healthy living



Adding an inspiring sorting touch to the day, the event was graced by Eniola Aluko, a former Chelsea FC Women and England National Team player. Aluko shared her personal journey in football, encouraging the young girls in attendance to believe in their dreams, work hard, and pursue excellence both on and off

the pitch. Her message resonated deeply, blending the themes of empowerment, health and opportunity.



Through this collaboration., EFA, CAF, UEFA, and Gavi reaffirmed their shared commitment to using sport as a tool for change, building stronger, healthier and more informed communities through the power of football.



EFA/CAF AFRICAN FOOTBALL FOR SCHOOLS FESTIVAL

On Saturday the 4th of October, The Eswatini Football Association (EFA) successfully hosted the EFA/CAF African Schools Grassroots Festival at Somhlolo National Stadium. This vibrant event brought together 400 Under-15 boys and girls from 20 different primary and high schools, all participating in the FIFA Football for Schools Development Programme.



Despite the cool weather, the atmosphere in the stadium was warm and energetic, as the young players showcased their passion, teamwork, and enthusiasm throughout the day.



Teachers who are also youth coaches gained valuable technical knowledge on how to effectively train and guide young players.

The playing pitch was transformed into a series of training stations, each focusing on specific football skills, including ball control, crossing, passing, dribbling, marking, penalty shooting, throw-ins, corner kicks, and warm-up routines. By the end of the festival, noticeable improvements were observed among the participants, many of whom demonstrated newfound confidence and ability on the field.



SINCE 1968



The event was attended by football administrators and coaches to name but a few, all of whom expressed their appreciation to the participating schools, teachers, and principals for their commitment to developing young talent. They also commended the Government of the Kingdom of Eswatini for her continued support, particularly in granting access to national stadium facilities.

EFA/CAF AFRICAN SCHOOLS PROGRAMME AWARD CEREMONY MARKS GRAND FINALE



The EFA/CAF African football for schools programme came to a colorful and memorable close on Friday, 17 October, at the EFA Technical Centre in Lobamba. The atmosphere was filled with excitement and pride as outstanding young talents were honored for their performance throughout the competition.

Both boys' and girls' teams that finished in the top three positions were celebrated, receiving bronze, silver, and gold medals. While the champions proudly lifted their trophies. In addition, all participating schools were presented with



soccer balls as a token of appreciation and encouragement to continue nurturing young football talent within their institutions. Lobamba National High School emerged as champions in the boys' category, showcasing remarkable teamwork and determination throughout the tournament. In the girls division, Mjinga High School claimed top honors.



EFA CAF AFRICAN FOOTBALL FOR SCHOOLS

UNDER 15: BOYS

LOG STANDING

	P	W	D	L	GF	GA	GD	Pts
1. Lobamba National H.S.	17	14	2	1	62	12	50	44
2. Elangeni Primary	17	14	2	1	61	16	45	44
3. Swazi National H.S.	16	13	1	2	43	9	35	40
4. Hillside H.S.	17	11	3	3	41	22	19	36
5. Lozitha H.S.	17	11	2	4	49	28	21	35
6. Kobe H.S.	17	11	2	4	41	34	7	35
7. St Mary's H.S.	17	10	0	7	48	36	12	30
8. Ngwane Park H.S.	16	9	0	7	37	27	10	27
9. John Wesley H.S.	17	8	1	8	24	31	7	25
10. John Wesley Primary	17	8	1	9	25	30	-5	22
11. Lobamba Lomdzala H.S.	17	7	0	10	28	36	-8	21
12. Ntuthukweni Primary	17	6	0	11	17	29	-12	18
13. Elangeni H.S.	17	5	3	9	19	34	-15	18
14. Woodlands H.S.	17	4	4	9	16	31	-15	16
15. Moyeni H.S.	17	4	3	10	25	42	-17	15
16. Mbabane Central H.S.	17	3	1	13	12	42	-30	10
17. Zombodze H.S.	17	1	0	16	8	58	-50	3
18. St Paul's H.S.	17	0	1	16	4	49	-45	1



EFA CAF AFRICAN FOOTBALL FOR SCHOOLS

UNDER 15: GIRLS

LOG STANDING

	P	W	D	L	GF	GA	GD	Pts
1. Mjinga H.S.	13	11	2	0	46	7	39	35
2. St Mary's H.S.	13	9	2	2	36	10	26	29
3. Hillside H.S.	13	9	2	2	37	12	25	29
4. Ngwane Park H.S.	13	8	3	2	38	7	31	27
5. Swazi National H.S.	13	7	1	5	30	13	17	22
6. Lobamba National H.S.	13	6	1	6	24	22	2	19
7. Lobamba Lomdzala H.S.	13	5	3	5	19	15	4	18
8. Mbabane Central H.S.	13	6	0	7	14	23	-9	18
9. Elangeni H.S.	13	5	0	9	15	32	-18	15
10. John Wesley H.S.	13	5	0	8	16	45	-29	15
11. Lozitha H.S.	13	4	1	7	17	30	-13	13
12. Zombodze H.S.	13	3	0	10	6	25	-30	9
13. St Paul's H.S.	13	2	1	10	6	25	-19	7
14. Woodlands H.S.	13	1	0	12	3	36	-33	3



The closing ceremony was attended by Chairperson of the Sports Portfolio Committee in Parliament Mr. Sifiso Shabalala, EFA Youth Committee Members and the EFA General Secretary Mr Frederick Mngomezulu, who congratulated all participants and commended the



champions for their hard work and dedication. He further applauded those selected to be part of the tentative squad for the CAF African Football for schools Championships scheduled for South Africa in December to work extra hard, reaffirming EFA's unwavering commitment to football development in the country.

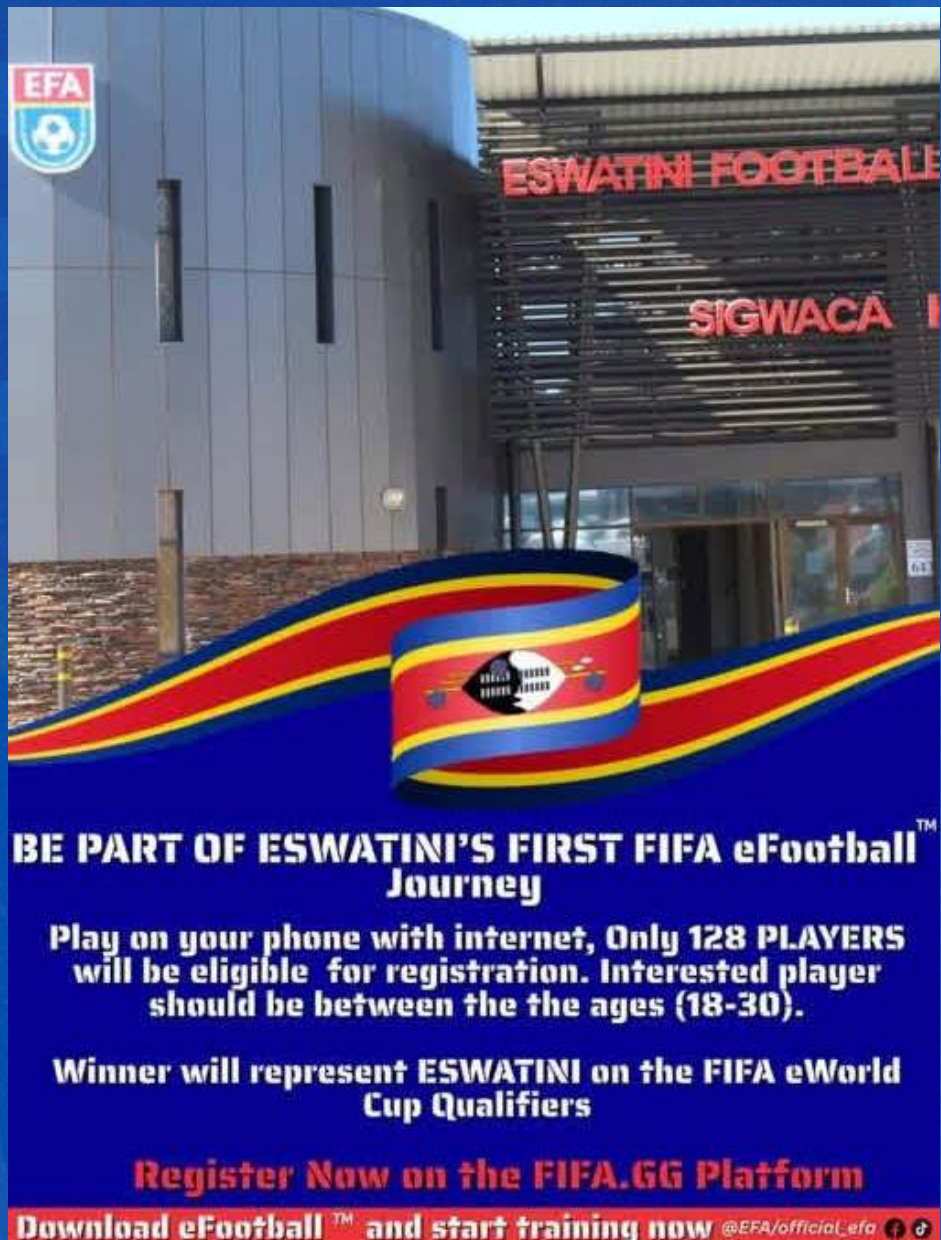


The sports Portfolio Chairperson emphasized the importance of investing in grassroots football, noting that the future of the sport lies in the nurturing of young talent from an early age. He further assured that the Parliament's Sport Portfolio Committee will continue supporting initiatives aimed at ensuring that football is developed holistically and that young players are given opportunities to grow and become some of Africa's greatest footballers.

EFA ENTERS THE DIGITAL FOOTBALL ERA

The Eswatini Football Association (EFA) made history this year by taking part in the FIFA eFootball competition for the first time. As football continues to go digital, eFootball powered by KONAMI, is now FIFA's official online gaming platform.

EFA officially launched the national qualifiers on 22 August 2025, open to all Swazis aged 18 and above. Then the competition which was played on mobile phones in a single-knockout format, kicked off on 6 September. After intense matchups, Sean Rodrigues became Eswatini's first ever eFootball representative at the Continental FIFA eWorld Cup Qualifiers



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He represented the country at the African Qualifiers on 9 and 10 October, where he secured two wins and two draws against tough opponents. Although Eswatini didn't advance, it was a strong debut performance that sets a solid foundation for future editions. With the FIFA eWorld Cup set for December in Saudi Arabia, EFA looks forward to involving even more young gamers next time as eFootball continues.





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ESWATINI CLUBS BOW OUT WITH DIGNITY IN CAF INTERCLUB COMPETITIONS

Royal Leopard FC and Nsingizini Hotspurs FC exited the TotalEnergies CAF Interclub competitions with strong-willed showings in the second legs of the TotalEnergies CAF Confederation Cup and Champions League competitions respectively. Both teams' tenacity and tactical growth marked a proud milestone, advancing beyond the first stage and arming them with lessons for the future.

Royal Leopard F.C. welcomed AS Maniema Union at the Somhlolo National Stadium, tied 1-1 from the away leg. The hosts rose to the occasion with fierce pressing and fluid counters, leveling the score at 1-1 to force a 2-2 aggregate

stalemate. The drama spilled into penalties, where AS Maniema Union triumphed 4-3 to advance



Nsingizini Hotspurs F.C., down 0-3 from home, journeyed to Benjamin Mkapa Stadium to confront Simba SC. Undaunted, Nsingizini Hotspurs F.C. locked horns with disciplined pressing and swift recoveries, stifling the Tanzanians to earn a commendable 0-0 draw. The team's clutch interventions secured the clean sheet, sealing a 0-3 aggregate exit but proving their mettle on foreign soil.

MTN PREMIER LEAGUE KICKS OFF WITH EXCITEMENT AND INNOVATION

The 2025/26 MTN Premier League season is officially underway, ushering in a fresh chapter of Eswatini domestic football filled with passion, rivalry and spectacular goals. With Most teams having already played more than three matches, fans have been treated to thrilling encounters, breathtaking skills, and the revival of old rivalries that define local football at its best.



Adding to the excitement this season is the introduction of the PLE Smart Card, a cutting edge innovation aimed at boosting match day attendance and improving clubs revenue collection. This new digital system makes it easier for fans to access stadiums while ensuring greater efficiency and transparency in gate

management marking a significant step forward in the modernization of Eswatini Football operations. As the season gains momentum, one thing is certain the MTN Premier League promises more drama, more goals and even more unforgettable football moments across the kingdom.



MULASPORT NATIONAL FIRST DIVISION USHERS IN A NEW ERA



The country's second tier league has officially kicked off under a brand new identity, The Mulasport National First Division. This follows the exciting sponsorship shift from MTN to Mulasport. A proudly Swati betting company that has invested E4.5 Million into the league in a partnership set to run for three years.



The new deal marks a major milestone for Eswatini Football, signaling growth and confidence in the local game. Already, the league has delivered entertaining fixtures and fierce competition, as

newcomers from Super League test their strengths against former Premier League sides and long standing First Division clubs. It's truly a survival of the fittest, where every point matters and every match tells a story of ambition, resilience and hope. With promotion and relegation battles looming ahead, one thing is clear this season of the MulaSport National First Division promises intensity, drama, and the kind of football that keeps fans coming for more.

STATEMENT FROM PLE CEO MR. PETROS VILAKATI



“The opening weeks of the season have reflected a spirit of discipline, respect, and renewed commitment from all stakeholders. Attendance at the grand opening of both leagues was impressive, and teams have honoured their fixtures with exceptional professionalism. Referees have also received praise

for their stellar performances, with no major complaints recorded.

It is worth noting that this season has ushered in a historic sponsorship milestone for Eswatini football. The Premier League signed a three-year E22.5 million partnership with MTN Eswatini, while the National First Division secured its own E4.5 million deal with MulaSport, also running for three years. This marks the first time in nearly 24 years that the two leagues have attracted separate sponsors, signaling the sport's growth and widening corporate appeal. These partnerships are expected to bring significant benefits to both players and clubs, including incentive programme designed to reward performance and commitment throughout the season. The PLE views this diversification of sponsorship as a major step forward in strengthening the financial base and overall competitiveness of the local game.



In line with efforts to modernize football operations, the PLE has also embarked on digital transformation initiatives. One of the key innovations for this season is the PLE Smart Card, a first of its kind in Eswatini football,



which is an NFC-enabled physical and digital membership card for fans of the Premier League of Eswatini, costing E150 annually and linking to a unique fan profile with loyalty points. It is Powered by SkyFly and MTN MoMo, it enables fans to tap for cashless payments at stadiums and partner outlets, secure digital access to events and promotions, discounts on merchandise and partners, and exclusive content such as league updates. The card will also boost teams financially as the ratios of sharing revenue of the smart card will be 80 % to teams and PLE, and the remaining 20% will be for SkyFly.



Additionally, all match day tickets are now exclusively available through Moja Tickets, a nationwide platform with multiple outlets that enable fans to purchase their

tickets conveniently before match day. On arrival at stadiums, fans simply scan their tickets for entry, a move aimed at improving efficiency, reducing congestion, and enhancing the overall match day experience.

Despite these positive developments, infrastructure remains a challenge for clubs, many of which continue to rely on privately owned or rented facilities.



Several key venues, including the Prince of Wales Ground, Killarney Sports Ground, and Somhlolo National Stadium, are still undergoing renovation. The PLE, however, continues to receive invaluable

support from Mavuso Sports Centre and Manzini Club, which have provided reliable venues for league fixtures and other Premier League Tournaments like the recently hosted 8bet Cup.

In an effort to address the matchday venue shortage, the League has also acquired Bhunya Stadium, currently being tested with National First Division fixtures to determine its suitability for Premier League matches. While this is a step forward,



the League recognizes that hosting games far from urban centres such as Mbabane and Manzini presents logistical and financial challenges for supporters. But I personally send out deepest appreciation to fans who continue to travel long distances to support their clubs, often at personal expense. Their loyalty and passion is commendable, as such dedication forms the foundation upon which Eswatini football continues to build.

As the 2025/26 season unfolds, optimism remains high. With strong leadership, solid sponsorship backing, and unwavering fan commitment, the Premier League of Eswatini stands poised to deliver a season defined by progress, stability, and growth.

”

THANK YOU

EFA WOMEN'S FOOTBALL LEAGUE BEGINS IN FULL SWING

The EFA women's Football League has also kicked off its new season, with teams already having played over three match weeks, and goals continuing to pour in from every corner of the pitch. The level of competition and passion displayed so far highlights the growing strength and potential of Women's football in the country.

However, there remains a need for more sponsorship and investment to help the women's game reach even greater heights from improving their play grounds to supporting player development and club sustainability.



The EFA continues to encourage partners and stakeholders to come on board and be part of this exciting journey of empowering women through football. With such energy and determination on display, then this season will be filled with goals, growth and inspiration.

SIBEBE RESORT SPONSORS REFEREE UNIFORMS FOR HRFA

On the 30th of October, The Hhohho Region Football Association (HRFA) hosted a referee's kit handover ceremony with their sponsor Sibebe Resort where the sponsor presented referees for the regional association with refereeing kits as they gear up for the start of the Sibebe Resort Mdzimba league on the 1st of November. Attendees included the Hhukwini Member of Parliament Mr Alec Lushaba, HRFA Chairman Dr. Comfort Shongwe, and Sibebe Resort Managing Director, Mr. Lizwe Nkosi.

When making his remarks, Hhohho Referees Chairman, Mr. Salebona, expressed gratitude to Sibebe Resort for their support, acknowledging the challenges of securing sponsors for local football. He urged referees to maintain high standards and minimize conflicts on the field. Mr. Lizwe Nkosi, representing Sibebe Resort, expressed his



expressed his excitement about partnering with HRFA, stating that this sponsorship is just the beginning. He emphasized the importance of supporting referees, noting that the uniforms will not only boost their confidence but also align with international refereeing standards.



HRFA Chairman recognized all parties, crediting the MP for linking HRFA with Sibebe Resort. He noted benefits for clubs and referees alike, stressing that football is now a professional industry generating revenue, and he urged everyone to develop it for the nation and for future generations, while warning the referees against match-fixing. He then encouraged referees to wear the new kits proudly during games.



CONDOLENCES

Mr. JEROME

NTJALINTJALI



The Eswatini Football Association and the entire football community in Eswatini are deeply saddened to learn of the untimely passing of Mr. Jerome Ntjalintjali. A dedicated football player, who played the beautiful game with passion and displayed his football artistry even at the international arena.

At this moment, the EFA extends its heartfelt sympathies to his family, relatives, friends, and the broader football community affected by his passing.

Psalms 147:3 "He heals the broken-hearted and binds up their wounds"

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**

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