



# ESWATINI FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION

## JANUARY 2026 NEWSLETTER



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LIVING THE FOOTBALL SPIRIT AND OUR PRIDE



# TOTAL ENERGIES CAF AFCON 2027 PRELIMINARY ROUND

The Confederation of African Football (CAF) has conducted the draw for the Preliminary Round of the TotalEnergies CAF Africa Cup of Nations (AFCON) 2027 qualifiers, pairing Eswatini's national team, Sihlangu SeMnikati, against Eritrea in a two-legged tie.

According to the draw procedures, Eritrea, being the lower-ranked team, will host the first leg of the matchup. Eswatini will then welcome Eritrea for the return fixture at home. The

aggregate winners of this tie will progress to join the 42 highest-ranked nations in the Group Stage, as they aim for a spot in the finals, which will be co-hosted by Kenya, Uganda, and Tanzania.



Eritrea has been absent from AFCON qualifying since 2008 and has withdrawn from recent tournaments, including the 2023 AFCON and the 2026 World Cup preliminaries. This lack of competitive play has left them with limited recent exposure in official matches, with their last games occurring during the 2019 World Cup preliminaries against Namibia.

The qualifiers are scheduled to take place from March 25 to March 30, 2026.

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# FANELO 'ORDER' MAMBA EXPRESSES GRATITUDE TO EFA FOR SUPPORT DURING RECOVERY



Senior National Team Sihlangu SeMnikati player Fanelo 'Order' Mamba penned a heartfelt letter of appreciation to EFA Chief Executive Officer Mr Frederick Mngometulu thanking the Association for the unwavering support provided during his recovery from a career-threatening injury sustained on national duty.

In the letter dated 17 January 2026, Mamba highlighted the emotional, physical, psychological and financial assistance extended by the EFA office, describing it as “amazing and motivated” in helping him stay positive through a difficult period. He noted that the support was not only easy to access but also visible and consistent, creating lasting memories of care and belief in his return to play. Mamba also extended thanks to national team manager Mr Dumisani Sibandze for regular check-ins and ensuring the

recovery process ran smoothly, as well as acknowledging the efforts made to secure the best medical attention, including access to top hospitals.

The player dispelled misconceptions that injured national team players are neglected, stating that his experience proved the opposite and that the EFA's support was a pleasant surprise. The Eswatini Football Association is deeply touched by Fanelo Mamba's words and remains committed to the welfare of all players representing the Kingdom. We wish 'Order' continued strength as he returns fully fit to club and country duties.





# EFA STANDING COMMITTEES (2025 - 2027)

The Eswatini Football Association hereby presents the list of Standing Committees Members for the 2025 - 2027 term.

The Standing Committees play a critical role in supporting the Executive Committee through governance, oversight, and the implementation of key football development programmes. Their work is essential in ensuring transparency, professionalism, and the continued growth of football across all levels in the country.

## ESWATINI FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION STANDING COMMITTEES (2025-2027)

### Finance

1. Steve Horton - Chairperson
2. Linda Mnisi
3. Sicelo Mkhonta
4. Themba Mavuso
5. Cindy Dlodlu

### Competitions

1. Dr. Comfort Shongwe - Chairperson
2. Ntokozo Tsela
3. Simo Sikhondze
4. Sithembiso Mamba
5. Mduduzi Mtsetfwa

### Technical & Development

1. Nkosingiphile Shongwe - Chairperson
2. Nhlanhla Mabuza
3. Donald Nkonyane
4. Raymond Dlamini
5. Thokozane Shongwe

### Legal

1. Bonginkhosi Mhlanga - Chairperson
2. Patrick Mkhathshwa
3. Sifiso Shabalala
4. Zakhele Dlamini
5. Mphemelelo Ngwenya
6. Dennis Sifundza

### Referees

1. Sicelo Nene - Chairperson
2. Gilbert Dlamini
3. Senzo Nkambule
4. Lybnah Sibiya
5. Jabulani Motsa

### Women

1. Phumzile Dlamini - Chairperson
2. Mbongiseni Fakudze
3. Simangele Zwane
4. Fisiwe Hlophe
5. Sidudla Maseko

### Amateur & Grassroots

1. Aaron Mavimbela - Chairperson
2. Lusekwane Dlamini
3. Sifiso Dlamini
4. Ishmael Dlamini
5. Sabelo Dlamini

### Medicine

1. Nkosinathi Kunene - Chairperson
2. Welcome Motsa
3. Busi Mamba
4. Dr. Lindela Mathobela
5. Nonduduzo Mabuza
6. Sakhile Dlamini

### Futsal & Beach Soccer

1. Lucky Dlamini - Chairperson
2. Phinda Ndzimandze
3. Gcina Ndwandwe
4. Christian Thwala
5. Joseph Tsela

### Safety, Security & Safeguarding

1. Vusi Hall - Chairperson
2. Sandile Zwane
3. Mphatsi Shabangu
4. Cilongo Fakudze
5. Bongani Shiba





# COACHING COURSES 2026

As part of its continued commitment to football development and capacity building, the Eswatini Football Association will be rolling out a series of coaching education programmes in March.

**ESWATINI FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION**  
**Coaching Courses**  
...  
All interested parties must register on or before  
**21 FEBRUARY 2026.**





The Eswatini Football Association is pleased to announce the commencement of the coaching courses from **1 March 2026**

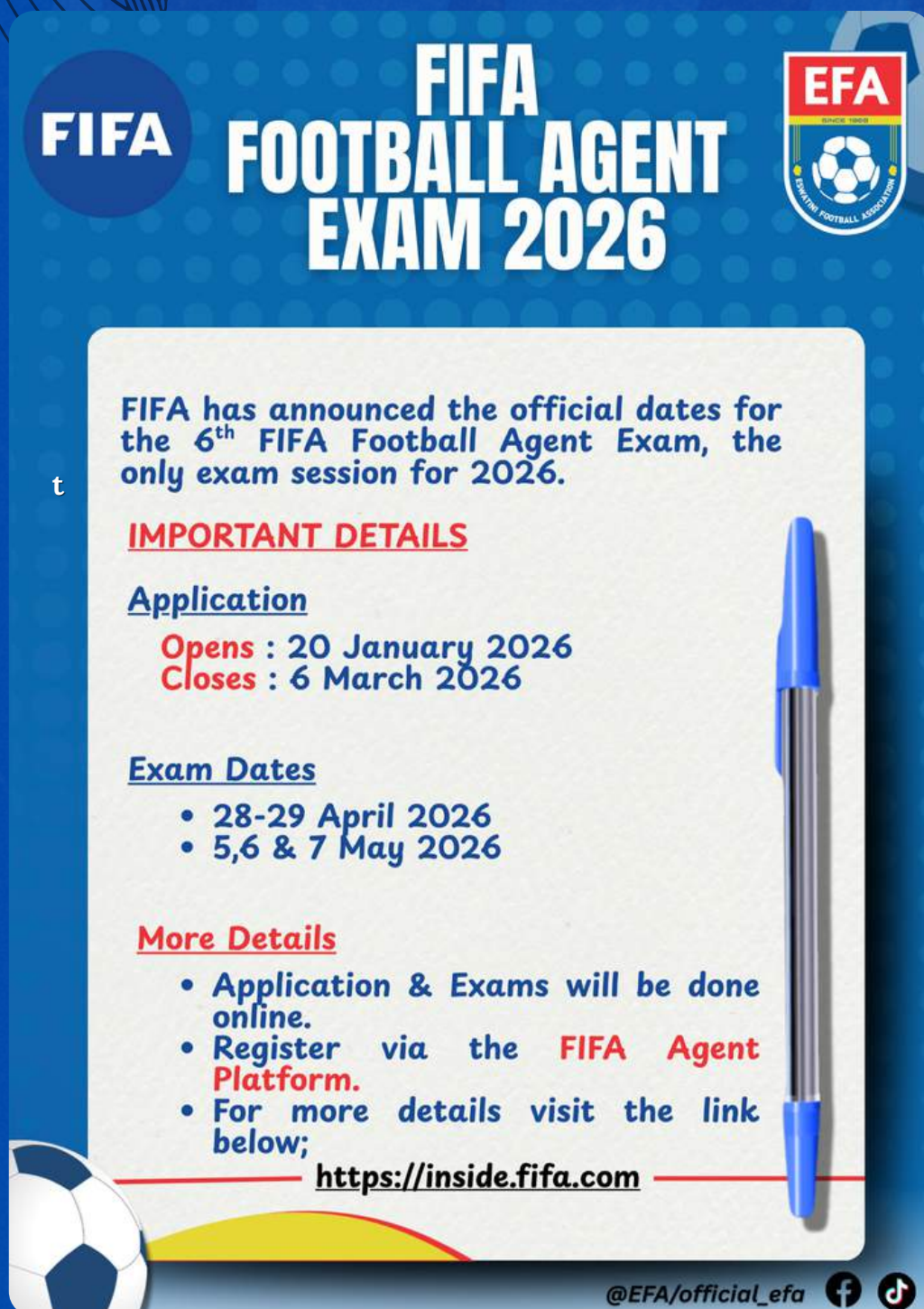
BASIC	INTERMEDIATE	ADVANCED
1 March - May 2026	1 March - May 2026	1 March - June 2026
Coaches in all Regions	Requires Basic Cert.	Requires Intermediate Cert.
 E 300	 E 600	 E 1 200
✓ Payments to Nedbank Mbabane Account Number <b>20000025896</b> (Use your name as Reference)		
✓ Mon - Frid: Online Sessions   Weekend: Physical Sessions		

For more information please contact: 78191137/ 79191137

The upcoming coaching courses will cater for different levels of experience, offering Basic, Intermediate and Advanced coaching certificates aimed at equipping participants with the knowledge and practical skills required to contribute effectively to the game. These courses form a key part of EFA's long-term strategy to strengthen coaching standards and support the growth of football at all levels across the country. All interested and eligible participants are encouraged to register for the courses



# FIFA AGENTS EXAMS 2026



**FIFA**

## FIFA FOOTBALL AGENT EXAM 2026

FIFA has announced the official dates for the 6<sup>th</sup> FIFA Football Agent Exam, the only exam session for 2026.

**IMPORTANT DETAILS**

Application

**Opens** : 20 January 2026  
**Closes** : 6 March 2026

Exam Dates

- 28-29 April 2026
- 5,6 & 7 May 2026

More Details

- Application & Exams will be done online.
- Register via the **FIFA Agent Platform**.
- For more details visit the link below;  
<https://inside.fifa.com>

@EFA/official\_efa

FIFA has officially announced the 2026 FIFA Football Agent Examination, providing an opportunity for individuals who intend to operate as licensed players' agents within the global football industry. The examination will be conducted online, allowing eligible candidates to participate from their respective locations in line with FIFA regulations. The exam forms part of FIFA's framework to professionalise player representation and ensure integrity, transparency, and competence

within the football transfer system. Interested participants are encouraged to familiarise themselves with the requirements and application process, with detailed information and guidelines attached in this newsletter.



# ESWATINI FIFA-ACCREDITED REFEREES - 2026

The Eswatini Football Association (EFA) is proud to announce the list of Eswatini's FIFA-accredited referees for the 2026 season.



These referees have successfully met the stringent FIFA standards and will represent the nation in international and continental competitions, carrying the responsibility of upholding integrity, excellence, and professionalism in football officiating. The 2026 FIFA-accredited list comprises six (6) Referees, eight (8) Assistant Referees, and one (1) Video Match Official (VMO), reflecting Eswatini's growing presence and recognition in elite football officiating structures.

To formally mark this achievement, the officials were presented with their FIFA badges for identification during a special presentation held at Sigwaca House on 27 January 2026. The presentation was officiated by EFA Chief Executive Officer, Mr Frederick Mngometulu, who emphasized the importance of FIFA accreditation as a key pillar in ensuring that referees are clearly identifiable during matches, while also reinforcing professionalism, safety, and strict compliance with competition regulations.

Mr Mngometulu further highlighted that the initiative strengthens confidence in match officiating and aligns Eswatini football with global best practices. The accredited officials expressed their deep appreciation to the EFA for the continued support and recognition, reaffirming their commitment to upholding the highest standards of officiating and proudly representing Eswatini football on all stages.

## Eswatini's FIFA 2026 Accredited Referees

### Referees

- Sabelo Thulani Sibandze
- Celumusa Siphepho
- Njabulo Theminkosi Dlamini
- Sanele Cedric Ntimane
- Nothando Buyisile Mkhumane
- Pholile Goodness Simelane

### Assistant Referees

- Celumusa Sivumelwane Phiri
- Zamani Thulani Simelane
- Banele Bonginkosi Thwala
- Theminkosi Ndumiso Magagula
- Buyisile Patricia Mkhalihi
- Siphwayinkhosi Cosma Nxumalo

### Video Match Official

- Letticia Antonella Viana





# NATIONAL TEAM REPLICAS AVAILABLE



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African Heritage (Matsapha)  
Mr. Matata (Moneni)



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# ESWATINI WOMEN'S FOOTBALL GBV CUP 2026

The Eswatini Women's Football Association successfully hosted the Women's GBV Cup on 3 January at Zakhele Sport Ground, in a one-day tournament aimed at raising awareness against Gender-Based Violence (GBV) while promoting women's football.



A total of eight teams participated in the tournament, divided into two groups. The top two teams from each group advanced to the knockout stage, setting the tone for a highly competitive and exciting day of football. With favourable weather conditions, matches ran smoothly from the group stages all the way to the final.



After an intense contest, Nsingizini Hotspurs F.C. and Young Buffaloes F.C. emerged as the two finalists. In a thrilling final encounter, Nsingizini Hotspurs edged past Young Buffaloes to claim the GBV Cup trophy, walking away with both the silverware and a cash prize.

Speaking after the tournament, Eswatini Women's Football General Secretary, Ms Ntandoyenkosi Hlatswayo, applauded the successful execution of the event, noting that it met and exceeded its objectives. She emphasized that the primary aim of the tournament was to help spread awareness on Gender-Based Violence, especially at a time when the country is experiencing a worrying rise in GBV cases.





Ms Hlatswayo further expressed gratitude to all participating teams for their commitment, discipline, and cooperation throughout the tournament. She also extended heartfelt appreciation to the sponsors of this year's edition, Emlembe Mountain Spring Water, KFC, and Premier Eswatini, whose support made it possible to introduce cash prizes for the first time.



While celebrating the progress made, Ms Hlatswayo noted that as women's football continues to grow in magnitude, there is still a strong need for additional sponsorship, not only for such initiatives but also for the women's league, which remains without a title sponsor. The strong turnout of supporters at Zakhele Sport Ground was also highlighted as a major encouragement, with Ms Hlatswayo stating that the attendance truly warmed the hearts of the Women's Football Association, reaffirming the growing support for the women's game.







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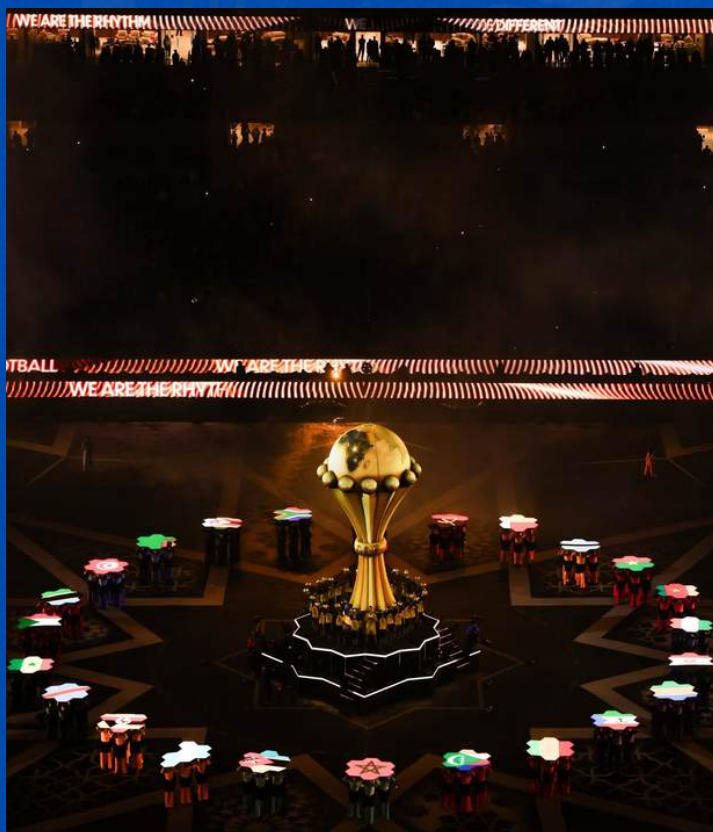


# AFCON MOROCCO: A CELEBRATION OF AFRICAN FOOTBALL EXCELLENCE

The recently concluded TOTALENERGIES Africa Cup of Nations (AFCON) in Morocco once again showcased the remarkable growth, quality, and professionalism of African football. From the opening match to the final whistle, the tournament was executed to the highest standard, setting a new benchmark for continental competitions.



Morocco delivered an exceptional hosting experience, with world-class stadiums, modern training facilities, efficient logistics, and vibrant fan engagement throughout the tournament. The seamless organization reflected Africa's growing capacity to stage major global sporting events with confidence and excellence. On the pitch, AFCON Morocco highlighted the rapid evolution of African football. Tactical discipline, technical quality, physical intensity, and youthful flair were on full display, with teams demonstrating that African football continues to close the gap with the world's best.







The Eswatini Football Association (EFA) extends its warm congratulations to Senegal, who were crowned AFCON champions after an outstanding campaign. Their consistency, discipline, and winning mentality epitomized excellence and served as an inspiration to the entire continent. Beyond the results, the tournament served as a powerful source of

inspiration for emerging football nations, including Eswatini. AFCON stands as proof that with the right structures, investment, and long-term vision, African countries can rise, compete, and belong on the biggest stages.



For EFA, AFCON Morocco was more than a tournament, it was a statement of possibility. The quality on display motivates all stakeholders to continue strengthening development pathways, governance structures, and competitive

standards, as Eswatini continues to dream and work towards future AFCON qualification.



# LETTICIA VIANA FLIES THE ESWATINI FLAG AT AFCON AND BEYOND

The Eswatini Football Association proudly celebrates Ms Letticia Viana, a distinguished Swati match official who continues to raise the national flag on the biggest stages of African and world football.

Ms Viana was selected as part of the officials for the TotalEnergies CAF Africa Cup of Nations (AFCON) in Morocco, where she served as an Assistant Video Assistant Referee (Assistant VAR) throughout the tournament. In a historic milestone for Eswatini Football, she was also assigned as Assistant VAR for the AFCON Final, becoming the first Liswati

to officiate a continental final at this level. Reflecting on the experience, Ms Vianna described AFCON as “officiating at the pinnacle of African Football,” Highlighting the high levels of professionalism and the privilege of learning from elite instructors and colleagues who have previously officiated at AFCON And FIFA Competitions. She noted that the environment pushed officials to the highest standards, both technically and mentally.







Beyond the appointment itself, the milestone carried deep personal meaning. Ms Viana expressed gratitude for being able to represent Eswatini on such stage, describing the achievement as a blessing and a responsibility. She encouraged women referees to maintain committed and disciplined, emphasizing that reaching this level requires hard work, dedication, and sacrifice. Preparation, she explained, play a crucial role in her performance. Her Matchday routine begins with prayer, Followed by revisiting the Laws of the game and VAR protocols. She prays before kick-off, at Half time, at the end of the match. While technical preparation is essential, she believes prayer helps her maintain focus and confidence, trusting that God guides her decisions throughout the game.

Ms Viana also credited her support system for her continued rise. She acknowledged God as the foundation of her journey, alongside her church, High Praise Assembly, and her Pastors, who consistently offered prayers and messaged of encouragement, even during halftime intervals. She paid tribute to her family, whose understanding and support have been unwavering despite the demands of her career. Their encouragement, especially during difficult moments, has played a key role in her resilience. She further recognized Mandla Gama, a former FIFA Referee, who identified her potential and recruited her into officiating while she was still a player, a path she initially resisted. His patience and belief in her, she noted, were instrumental in shaping her career.

The achievements do not stop there. Ms Viana has further been invited by FIFA to participate in the Elite Video Match Officials Course for AFC and CAF, scheduled to take place in Doha, Qatar from 3-5 February 2026. The high-level programme will bring together some of the world's top video match officials and will include classroom discussions, video-based assessments, and intensive VAR simulator training, aimed at mastering modern officiating technologies. This milestone represents a significant step in Ms Viana's career and highlights her continued rise within international football officiating circles. It also serves as an inspiration to aspiring referees, particularly women, across Eswatini and the region.





# MTN PREMIER LEAGUE FIRST ROUND CONCLUDES



The MTN Premier League first round officially concluded on the 17<sup>th</sup> of January, delivering competitive football and thrilling encounters across the country.



Defending champions Nsingizini Hotspurs F.C. emerged as First Round leaders, securing the coveted first-round “carrot” prize of E120,000. The achievement comes despite a narrow 1-0 defeat to Mbabane Swallows in their final match of the first round. Nsingizini Hotspurs’ consistency proved decisive, with the champions registering 10 victories in 15 first-round matches, a run that ultimately placed them ahead of their rivals at the halfway mark of the season. The strong first-round performance underlines Nsingizini Hotspurs’ title credentials as they look to defend their championship in the second round of the season, while the race remains wide open for other contenders aiming to close the gap.

The MTN Premier League has now ushered on to the second round with renewed intensity, promising even more excitement for supporters nationwide.





# PLAYERS OF THE MONTH DECEMBER



The Eswatini Football Association congratulates the MTN Premier League, MulaSport National First Division and Eswatini Women Football Players of the Month for December, whose performances stood out during an exciting period of league action

In the MTN Premier League, Young Buffaloes F.C midfielder Bongwa Matsebula was recognised after playing a key role in the team's strong December run. Young Buffaloes recorded three wins and one defeat in five matches during the month,

scoring in all five games, with Matsebula's influence proving crucial to the team's attacking momentum and overall consistency

In the MulaSport National First Division, Viva Stumbo XI striker Simphiwe Mavuso earned the accolade following an impressive and impactful month. Mavuso scored four goals and provided two assists, spearheading his side's unbeaten run throughout December and underlining his importance to the team's success.

On the Eswatini Women Football League, Manzini Wanderes F.C. Ladies Team's left winger Siphokazi Ngcamphalala was given the player of the month award. The Women's league player of the month is proudly sponsored by Wanderville.





# SMVAF INGWENYAMA CUP 2025/2026 LAST 32 DRAW

The SMVAF Ingwenyama Cup has reached an exciting stage, with the Last 32 draw officially conducted on 26 January at the Sincephetelo MVA Office Park. The draw marked a significant milestone in the competition, confirming the match-ups for the remaining 32 teams, as the race for the prestigious Ingwenyama Cup intensifies.



The event was attended by several dignitaries, including the Minister of Sports, Youth and Culture, Hon. Bongani Nzima, the Chairman of the Ingwenyama Cup Committee, Prince Hlangabeza, and EFA President, Mr Peter Simelane, among other football stakeholders. Speakers at the event applauded His Majesty's vision of blending football and culture, describing the Ingwenyama Cup as a unique national platform that unites sport, heritage, and community development.



Speaking during the draw, Premier League of Eswatini (PLE) Chairman, Mr Polycarp Dlamini, extended heartfelt appreciation to all stakeholders for their outstanding contribution to the success of the tournament. He highlighted the

Ingwenyama Cup as a powerful platform for showcasing and celebrating Eswatini's football talent, while strengthening partnerships that continue to grow and deepen. Special appreciation was also extended to the media fraternity for ensuring that the competition reaches emaSwati across the country





Looking ahead, Mr Dlamini noted the potential to expand player awards, especially as local talent continues to shine across Africa, contributing not only to sport but also to national visibility and tourism. He further encouraged the public to prioritize road safety and adhere to traffic regulations to help reduce accidents. SMVAF Board Chairman, Mr Zithulele Gina, welcomed all guests and thanked football stakeholders for the cooperation and discipline shown throughout the past years of the tournament. He emphasized that the Ingwenyama Cup is more than just football, serving as a key vehicle for road safety awareness and the promotion of SMVAF services, with the ultimate goal of reducing and eliminating road accidents.

As the tournament progresses, anticipation continues to build, with clubs from across the country set to battle for a place in the next round of the SMVAF Ingwenyama Cup, a competition that truly unites football, culture, and national responsibility.



## SMVA INGWENYAMA CUP 2026

ITINTILE! | AKUDLALWA KUYADLALWA

### LAST 32 FIXTURE

RICHMOND ACES FC	VS	MBABANE SWALLOWS FC
KAPPA KAPPA FC	VS	SISONKHE FC
NSINGIZINI FC	VS	RANGERS FC
SIDWASHINI UNITED FC	VS	GREEN MAMBA FC
LOZITHA SPURS FC	VS	MBABANE HIGHLANDERS FC
VIVA STUMBO XI FC	VS	NSINGIZINI HOTSPURS FC
MSUMPE MANCHESTER FC	VS	TABANKULU CELTICS FC
USUTHU LIVERPOOL FC	VS	ROYAL LEOPARDS FC
RED RHINOS FC	VS	AMAWELE FC
LOUIS XIV FC	VS	MALANTI CHIEFS FC
MANZINI SUNDOWNS FC	VS	MONENI PIRATES FC
PIGGS PEAK PROFESSIONALS FC	VS	UBOMBO SUGAR FC
M ROYAL SWALLOWS FC	VS	MANZINI SEABIRDS FC
MAGWANYANA FC	VS	YOUNG BUFFALOES FC
NKWENE SUNDOWNS FC	VS	EZULWINI UNITED FC
MADLENYA FC	VS	MANZINI WANDERERS FC





**ESWATINI FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION**

Living the Football Spirit and Our Pride

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BULLYING**



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condemns all  
forms of bullying  
among children**

**Be a Teammate and a Classmate not a Bully**

**PLAY  
FOOTBALL**

**Football teaches  
respect, teamwork  
and fairness**



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**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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*Follow us on our official platforms for daily updates, results, and stories  
behind the scenes.*

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