



COCA-COLA FOOTBALL STARS TEAM LEAVES FOR GERMANY

Sunday, August 31, 2008 – The top 15 highly skilled players that emerged from the Coca-Cola Football Stars workshop, which was held at the Tuks High Performance Centre in May, leave for Germany today to compete in three development games.

The international tour brings to an end a successful 2008 Coca-Cola Football Stars season, which kicked off in January.

The South Africans will first compete against Bayer Leverkusen Football Club's development team on September 3, in a match which kicks off at 6pm. On September 6 Munich's Bayern Munchen will be their next competitors. The tour will end with a 6pm game on September 9 against Eintracht Frankfurt. All three games will be played at the clubs' home venues.

Bayer Leverkusen and Bayern Munchen will both host the South Africans at a dinner to be held at their respective clubs the night before each game.

"The Coca-Cola Football Stars concept fits in with our strategic social responsibility plan, which is to assist in strengthening the game of football at the grass-roots development level," explains Bradford Ross, Coca-Cola Brand Manager. "Globally The Coca-Cola Company sponsors football at the highest levels, including the pinnacle event, the FIFA World Cup, but we believe this must be complemented by getting involved in developing future stars and role models."

Coca-Cola Football Stars has two phases: identifying the top Under-18 school team in the country as well as searching for talented players, putting them through a gruelling workshop to find the top 16 players to compete internationally.

Cloeteville Secondary School from Stellenbosch was crowned the 2008 Coca-Cola Football Stars champions and received goods to the value of R150 000. The team beat

Harmony Academy from the Free State, which finished second, receiving goods to the value of R100 000.

The talent search component of the project came into play during the Coca-Cola Football Stars provincial finals, with scouts Clive Barker and Kenny Niemach attending each event to identify 10 top talented players from each of the nine provinces.

The 99 youngsters were then invited to attend a workshop where they were put through an intense programme both on and off the field. Every couple of days the boys had to endure an elimination process that finally ended with the announcement of the Top 16 players to travel to Germany. One of the players, Andile Khumalo, is unable to make the trip due to family problems which resulted in him not being able to get a passport on time.

The team coach will be Paul Matthews, an experienced youth coach who was involved in the workshop and has been with the programme for a number of years.

“The quality of players that attended the 2008 workshop has been the best since I have been involved with Coca-Cola Football Stars, and I believe that, if the players keep focused over the next few years, most of the Coca-Cola Top 16 will become national players. As far as Germany is concerned, we are competing against tough opposition who have been training together for years, but I believe that our youngsters will be tough opposition for them. This is an opportunity that the boys must cherish and learn from as it will help their future careers,” said Matthews.

Since its inception in 2005, Coca-Cola Football Stars has produced talented players that are now competing at PSL level, with two being Happy Jele (Orlando Pirates) and Mandla Masango (Kaizer Chiefs).

Christopher Flandorp from Cloetesville Secondary School, one of the top players emerging from the 2008 event, is already competing for SuperSport United’s Under-19 team.

Travelling with the Coca-Cola Team will be eight consumers who won the trip through a Coca-Cola sms competition.

THE COCA-COLA TEAM:

Siyanda Xulu

Mzuvele Skhosana
Mondli Miya
Mthobisi Maduna
Pule Letshabo
Morena Mokoena
Christopher Flandorp
Sanele Ngingi
Zama Dlamini
Tshepo Mboweni
Vumile Nxako
Tumelo Mosimane
Lawrence Senyane
Sandile Mtshali
Tshepo Mothiba

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