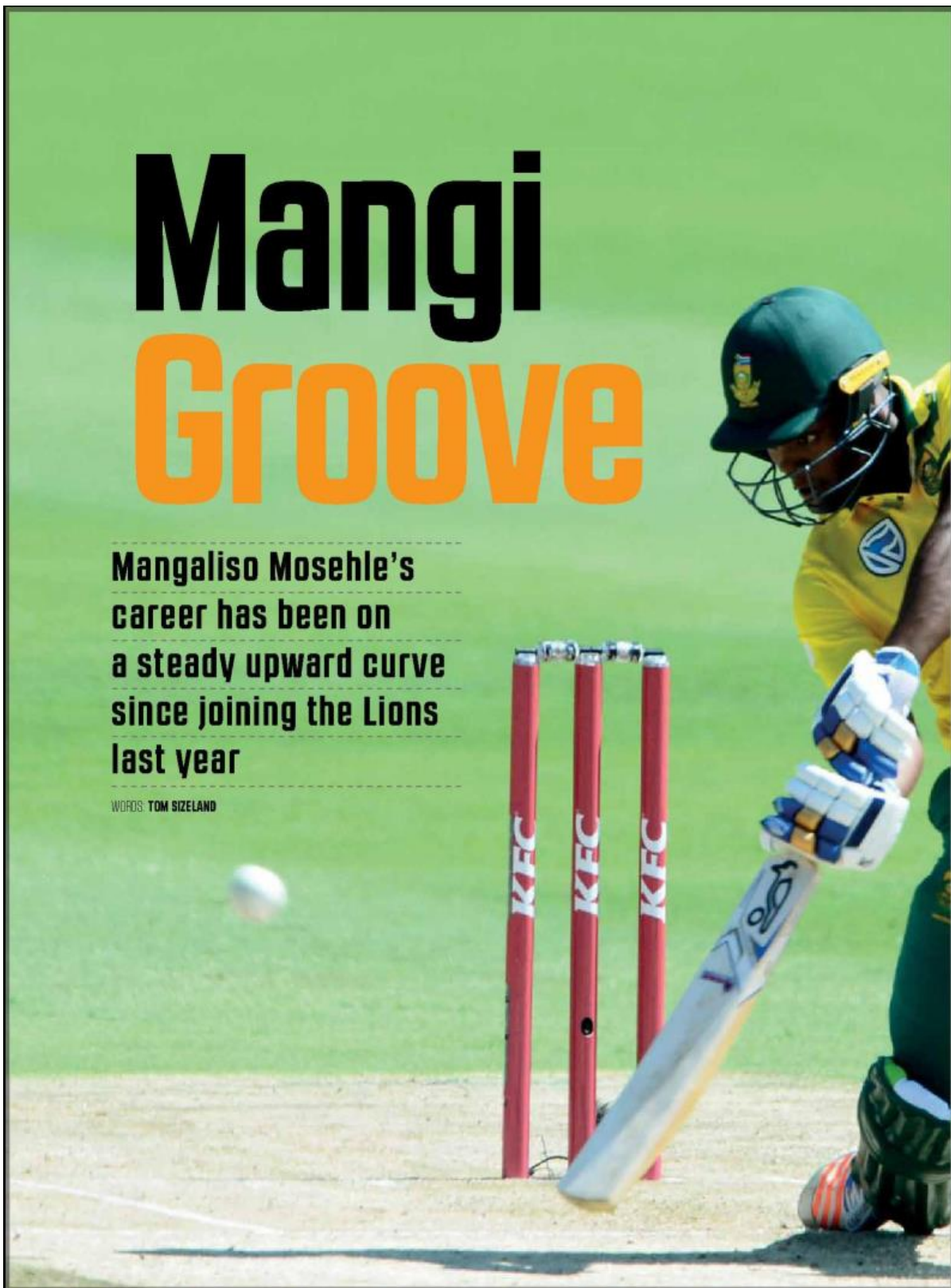




Mangi Groove

**Mangaliso Mosehle's
career has been on
a steady upward curve
since joining the Lions
last year**

WORDS: TOM SIZELAND





MANUALIDU MUSEHEE

A LOT HAS HAPPENED IN YOUR CAREER SINCE YOU MOVED TO THE LIONS. WHY DID YOU DECIDE TO MOVE TO YOUR RIVALS?

I wanted to get out of my comfort zone. I had been at the Titans for seven years and I was really grateful for that, but I wanted to challenge myself and find other ways to grow my game. It was a tough decision because I was scared of the unknown, but I took the risk and so far things have been OK.

WHAT'S YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH YOUR COACH, GEOFFREY TOYANA, LIKE?

It's nice working with Geoff *[right]*. I watched him at the Titans when I was growing up and I always used to enjoy watching him play and looked up to him. He has been very close to my heart. He understands the type of person and player I am, so he knows how to coach me.

DID IT FEEL LIKE MORE THAN A FRIENDLY WHEN YOU GOT CALLED UP TO THE LEGACY CUP TO PLAY THE SPRINGBOKS?

It was a charity game but as soon as I walked into the changing room with the guys, I instantly felt like that was where I wanted to be. There's a different energy and vibe because you're able to represent your country and that's always been a dream of mine. I was grateful to be in that environment. But I always take it one game at a time and if I do get the opportunity, I just need to try to express myself and enjoy my cricket.

THE SELECTORS OBVIOUSLY SEE VALUE IN YOU IN THE LONGER GAME WITH YOUR INCLUSION IN THE SOUTH AFRICA INVITATIONAL XI TO PLAY THE SRI LANKANS.

Everyone wants to play Test cricket; it's the ultimate. You want to be a part of it. I feel like I still have a lot to do, though. Quinton de Kock is a world-class wicketkeeper; he's something special. I've got a lot to improve on to get to his standard. I want to score more runs and improve my keeping, but I strongly believe that whatever happens, happens for a reason.

WHAT WAS GOING THROUGH YOUR MIND WHEN YOU SCORED YOUR MAIDEN FIRST-CLASS CENTURY?

I spoke to Geoff the night before and he sent me a message saying 'make sure you stick to your game plan and prepare yourself for the emotions that come your way'. When it happened, there was a



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THE EVENTS THAT PUT MOSEHLE ON THE MAP

- 12 December 2015:** Scores 87 off 88 balls against the Dolphins in the final to win the Ram Slam T20 Challenge for the Titans.
- 27 May 2016:** Moves across the Afskiet to sign for the Lions.
- 9 December 2016:** Plays for the Proteas in the Legacy Cup against the Boks.
- 18 December 2016:** Plays in a three-day match for an SA Invitational XI side against the Sri Lankans.
- 12 January 2017:** Scores a maiden Sunfoil Series hundred against his old side, the Titans.
- 20 January 2017:** Makes his T20 International debut for the Proteas, against Sri Lanka at Centurion.
- 25 January 2017:** Scores an impressive 82 off 15 balls in the third match at Newlands.

lot of pressure off my shoulders because it was always something I wanted to do. Batting with Dominic Hendricks helped a lot to keep me calm. But the team in general have been good, and leading up to that game we talked about avoiding soft dismissals and that's what we've been trying to do.

WHAT DO YOU PUT THESE IMPROVEMENTS DOWN TO?

I've spent a lot of time working on changing my attitude towards defensive batting. Shukri Conrad is another person I've enjoyed working with and he said there's no difference in intensity when you move from T20 cricket to four-day cricket. I'm always trying to bat as positively as I can. I've felt that, in the past, I was playing too defensively. As I become more of a senior player I need to accept more responsibility. Geoff has allowed me to do that. My mental approach towards being clear about the game plan, playing to my strengths and improving my communication towards the person I'm batting with has improved.

HOW WERE YOUR NERVES LEADING UP TO YOUR PROTEAS DEBUT?

I was actually very chilled, but then we huddled around and discussed what it means to be a Protea – as every debutant does – and I started to feel nervous. I was still nervous when I was warming up, so I went up to Ray Jennings, who is like a dad to me. He kept me calm and told me to just express myself and enjoy every moment. When



'I JUST PLAYED WITH FREEDOM AND WITHOUT FEAR. THAT'S THE TYPE OF PERSON I AM'





I calmed down I just went out there and played. Ray was a mentor and a coach to me. He keeps me humble and has always told me to never be comfortable with what I've got; I must always challenge myself.

EVERYONE WAS TALKING ABOUT THAT SIX OFF YOUR FIRST BALL IN INTERNATIONAL CRICKET.

Before I walked out to bat I was having an argument with Andile Phehlukwayo over which bat I should use. I wanted to use my old bat but he told me to try out my new one. So I went out there and the bowler bowled quite wide, so I just threw my hands at it and it hit the middle. Kookaburra make good bats! Neil McKenzie had a word with me after to say, 'How can you get run out when you're on a strike rate of 600?' I was just trying to get my partner on strike!

ON 'THAT MOMENT' WITH TREVOR NYAKANE

'I saw him before the Legacy Cup started and thought, "Beaz, this is quite a big guy!" so I thought I'd give him a stare-down. When I realised he wasn't going to flinch, I thought I'd throw out that dance move he does when he scores a try, and luckily he followed! It was completely spontaneous, there was nothing planned; it was all in the moment.'



MANGALISO MOSEHLE

AND YOU FINALLY GOT A CHANCE TO EXPRESS YOURSELF IN THE THIRD MATCH AT NEWLANOS.

I've been striking the ball well recently and I've always tried to be aggressive in my approach. In the second game I batted with Heino Kuhn and as soon as I took my guard he told me to just go and express myself. That was what was going through my mind in the third game and I just played with freedom and without fear. That's the type of person I am. Fortunately, on the day it worked well. It was just a pity we lost the game.

THERE WERE SIX DEBUTANTS IN THAT T20 SERIES. WHO STOOD OUT FOR YOU?

There are some really good, young players coming through. I faced Lungi Ngidi [left] when I was still at the Titans and I think he was only 18 at the time. He was studying at the University of Pretoria and was invited to have a bowl in the nets. He was always someone with a lot of potential. It just goes to show that hard work pays off and it also goes to show that the guys who put their faith and effort into training him did a fantastic job too.

WHERE TO FROM HERE FOR YOU?

Whenever an opportunity presents itself I just want to make it count. I'm not going to be able to control the outcome, but what I can do is prepare myself as well as I can and give myself the best possible opportunity to get picked.



GIANLUIGI CHERICHICHS - RICCO-SAMUEL, SHANMUKHCHRISTIAN, NOTERBAUNKEMERGENCY IMAGES/GALLO IMAGES

