



Mentor overjoyed at Ngidi's Proteas call-up

By MAHLATSE MPHAHLELE
In Johannesburg

FORMER Titans and Dolphins all-rounder Pierre de Bruyn, who recruited Langi Ngidi from Hilton College to Tuks Cricket Club almost five years ago, hopes to keep his emotions in check if the fast bowler makes his debut in the second Test against India at SuperSport Park on Saturday.

The 21-year-old Ngidi, who played three T20 internationals for South Africa last year against Sri Lanka, was called up to the Proteas squad by coach Ottis Gibson this week.

De Bruyn said if Ngidi was picked as a replacement for Dale Steyn, he

would be happier than the Titans bowler.

"If he plays in his first Test match on Saturday, I will definitely be the happiest man inside the stadium and probably a little bit emotional," De Bruyn said. "He has come a long way since he was a little kid.

"I am abundantly happy for what he has achieved in a short period of time and I believe that he has a lot to offer because he is a special talent and a humble human being."

De Bruyn said he found out about Ngidi from former Zimbabwe all-rounder Neil Johnson, who was working at KwaZulu-Natal's Hilton College, where Ngidi was on a scholarship.

"I made a lot of effort to convince him to move out of the province because he was not willing to leave KZN. I went back to Durban a month later, sat him down again and asked him to trust me.

"I told him that he will continue to study at University of Pretoria and all his cricketing needs will be taken care of. Ultimately he agreed to come to Pretoria and like they say, the rest is history," said De Bruyn, who has just returned from a coaching stint with Leicestershire in the County Championship in England.

"When I first saw video footage of him in action, my immediate reaction was that there was potential but his

action was raw. However, I was convinced that we could work on his action because he had lots of potential to generate pace."

Ngidi's former coach at Hilton College, Sean Carlisle, said he was not surprised by Ngidi's rapid rise as he had given notice of his talents from the beginning.

"He came to us at the beginning of Grade 8 on a scholarship and he stayed with us until he finished matric," said Carlisle.

"He was a good kid to work with and we are very proud of what he has gone on to achieve.

"Credit must also go to the guys at Tuks who continued to look after him

so that he fulfills his undoubted potential."

Titans assistant coach Mandla Mashimbyi, who also worked with Ngidi at SA U19 level, said the young bowler had shown maturity beyond his years after suffering two major injuries.

"When the U19s won the World Cup in 2014, he missed that tournament due to injury and he also missed out on a possible T20 World Cup in England last year after he got injured against Sri Lanka.

"He is very quick, he has done well for himself and I hope he gets his opportunity going forward in the Test side," said Mashimbyi. — *TimesLIVE*

