



AmaZulu have an eye on play-offs

WILLIAMS: WE BELIEVE WE CAN STILL GAIN PROMOTION

» **Magesi FC are really finding their feet under Murape.**

Sibongiseni Gumbi

Young AmaZulu midfielder Zaakir Williams has acknowledged that *Usuthu's* National First Division campaign has not been a success story up to now, but he is still hopeful that they can give their fans something to smile by the end of the season.

The 23-year-old Williams admitted things could have been way better for the Durban team, who are in seventh place with eight games to go, though they are also just two points away from a spot in the promotion play-offs.

"It has not been a fairy tale season for us. Overall, things have not gone according to plan this season," he said. "However, we remain hopeful and we believe we can still gain promotion to the

elite league through the play-offs."

Joey Antipas' team have a good chance of keeping pace with the promotion-chasers as they host Magesi FC at Princess Magogo Stadium this weekend.

But *Usuthu* will also do well to be wary of Magesi. The Polokwane team have been slowly finding their rhythm under veteran coach Shepherd Murape.

Murape told *Phakaathi* he has managed to change the players' thinking, which is what was lacking previously and feels they can now beat anyone.

Magesi play *Usuthu* on the back of an impressive win over Royal Eagles two weeks ago. Murape said the win was a turning point.

"It was tremendous. It was what we needed. You can see at training that everyone is bouncing and happy. They won against a big team with experienced players like Isaac Chansa and Katlego Mphela," said Murape.

"Now they can feel they can win against any team. They know they have to put in maximum effort."

Eagles will, meanwhile, hope

to get back to winning ways when they play the University of Pretoria at AmaTuks Stadium on Saturday. Kosta Papic's team have blown hot and cold all season and must start getting results consistently if they are to stand any chance of qualifying for a play-off spot.

Second-placed Black Leopards will be away to Real Kings in a match that could prove tricky for the Limpopo promotion hopefuls, who have not lost in 2017. They have opened up a five-point gap on Stellenbosch in third, though they still trail NFD leaders Thanda Royal Zulu by eight points.

Fixtures

- **Friday:** Cape Town All Stars v Mbombela United
- **Saturday:** University of Pretoria v Royal Eagles; Black Leopards v Real Kings; FC Cape Town v Milano United; Stellenbosch v Witbank Spurs; Mthatha Bucks v Santos
- **Sunday:** AmaZulu v Magesi; Jomo Cosmos v Thanda Royal Zulu



ZAAKIR WILLIAMS
Picture: Backpagepix

