

# Former soccer star swaps the green turf for dirty gutters in construction

Netshidzivhe now works as labourer after retiring as a professional player

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Former Black Leopards and University of Pretoria player Christopher Netshidzivhe has traded his soccer boots for pick and shovel.

Netshidzivhe, 37, a talented midfielder who used to leave a lot of opponents on the floor with his skill, said he is happy with his new career path as it puts food on the table for his family.

Sunday World recently visited Netshidzivhe on site at Marotola Primary School in Stinkwater, north of Pretoria, where his civil engineering employer, Athivhlonali Trading and Projects, is constructing storm water drainage.

The former footie said he has been working for the company for two years, having started on a project in Polokwane, Limpopo and later on another job in Pretoria.

He said he joined the company because he had no other source of income after he was discarded by clubs due to his age.

"I'm currently playing for a local club in Pretoria called Mosquito FC and I also participate in the Maimane Alfred Phiri games in Alexandra.

"But I had to face reality and find a job so I can support my family," he said.

He said the transition from being a professional soccer player to working in construction was not easy but it was a necessary step he had to take.

"I had to swallow my pride and not think about what people will say. I have three kids and a wife that I needed to support. At least now I have learnt to manage my money even though it is no longer the same as what I used to earn as a player," he said, while flanked by his supervisor Rofhiwa Sigeda.



**Christopher Netshidzivhe is a former professional soccer player. He is now working for engineering company Athivhlonali Trading and Projects in Pretoria.** / Kabelo Mokoena

Sigeda, a qualified quantity surveyor, praised Netshidzivhe's commitment to his new job.

He said Netshidzivhe was a fast learner and a hard worker with an impressive work ethic.

"At first we just wanted to help him to have an income but he shocked us. He is very good with the construction of sub-soil drainage systems and he has never given us attitude," Sigeda said.

Netshidzivhe said he was planning to use the experience he was earning from the projects to start his own company.

"I'm not planning to work as a labourer forever. We have

**"At least now I have learnt to manage my money although it is no longer the same as what I used to earn"**

training sessions which I attend to learn more about my work and I believe it will help me in future," he said.

He said one of his biggest regrets about his career in the PSL was a lack of financial management skills, which he blames for his current situation.

**Christopher Netshidzivhe during a match between University of Pretoria and Black Leopards in 2010.** / Gallo Images

