



Mthatha Bucks remain hopeful, as Santos drop

By ZIYANDA ZWENI

FOLLOWING their slender 1-0 victory over Santos at the weekend, Mthatha Bucks have now turned their focus to Milano United for today's all-important National First Division (NFD) duel at Athlone Stadium (3pm).

A crucial goal by striker Petrus Ngebo secured the much-needed three points for Bucks at home and saw Santos sink deeper into the relegation zone. Bucks will hope to repeat the feat against Milano.

Bucks head coach Ian Palmer and his charges were happy with the win and the way they had executed their game plan.

"We are elated with the win," said Palmer. "We had to play the game and show no mercy because we were fighting for the top spot."

Bucks will find the Milano game to be no walk in the park, as they too come from a morale-boosting 3-2 win against FC Cape Town.

Palmer, who recently joined the Mthatha based side, said their remaining seven games were all must-wins.

"We have four away games and three at home. Our away record has not been that good compared to home matches, and we must dig deep to fulfil our play-offs dream. It is still completely possible, as only goal difference and wins separate us from the teams above us."

Bucks are fifth in the table with 36 points, equal on points with fourth-placed Royal Eagles, with only goal difference separating the two.

Thanda Royal Zulu are 12 points clear at the top of the standings with 48 points.

Santos, who face off with struggling Pretoria University FC at Athlone Stadium, will be hoping to register a win to vacate the bottom of the table, while 15th placed Magesi will clash with Jomo Cosmos at the Peter Mokaba Stadium.

Santos coach Tony De Nobrega said he was disappointed with the match outcome.

"We worked so hard but one momentary lapse of concentration led to our defeat. But when you're at the bottom such things happen," he said.

NATIONAL FIRST DIVISION

	P	W	D	L	GF	GA	GD	Pts
1 Thanda Royal Zulu	23	13	9	1	41	19	22	48
2 Black Leopards	23	16	7	0	33	27	6	37
3 Stellenbosch	23	10	7	6	29	23	6	37
4 Royal Eagles	23	10	6	7	45	32	13	36
5 Mthatha Bucks	23	10	6	7	45	32	13	36
6 AmaZulu FC	23	10	6	7	34	27	7	36
7 Witbank Spurs	23	8	8	6	28	28	0	32
8 Real Kings	23	8	6	8	28	28	0	32
9 Jomo Cosmos	23	8	7	8	32	28	4	31
10 Mbombela United	22	8	7	7	24	22	2	31
11 Pretoria University	23	7	8	8	26	23	3	29
12 CT All Stars	23	8	5	10	27	36	-9	29
13 FC Cape Town	23	5	9	9	28	38	-10	24
14 Milano United	23	7	2	14	28	46	-18	23
15 Magesi	23	4	7	12	20	37	-17	19
16 Santos	23	3	8	11	14	28	-14	18

