



Royal Eagles mentor Kosta Papic hopes to move up the National First Division log.  
**PHOTO: GALLO IMAGES**

## Chance to bag full points for Eagles

**NONDUMISO ZAKWE**

ROYAL Eagles will be determined to cement their turnaround in the National First Division when they host strong foes AmaZulu at Harry Gwala Stadium this afternoon.

When Eagles edged Tuks 1-0 in Pretoria at the weekend, it was their first win in three outings and second in five assignments, which affected their promotion chances.

The Durban-based Usuthu have better form than Kosta Papic's home team, having won their last two games, including a remarkable 3-0 victory over Magesi, who had confidence going into that clash at the weekend after beating Eagles 4-2 in their previous meeting.

Usuthu are placed sixth on the league standings with 25 points from 23 matches. They are a match behind their counterparts with only a point separating them.

Eagles, meanwhile, will be seeking redemption when they take on their rivals having failed to win their previous meeting in the first half of the season – losing 3-2 at the Princess Magogo Stadium.

But Eagles did pick up that morale-boosting victory on Saturday against AmaTuks, thanks to a penalty from influential striker Sedwyn George.

Eagles are placed fourth on the league standings with 36 points from 24 games.

They are just a point behind third-placed Stellenbosch FC and three points adrift of second-placed Black Leopards who trail runaway Thanda Royal Zulu by a massive nine points.

Although Papic's side will have the home advantage, the former Orlando Pirates mentor knows that they will have to be consistent to keep up with teams around them, and that victory against their traditional foes could provide him and his team with the impetus they need to turn their fortunes around.

All eyes will be on George, the current top scorer in the second tier. The 25-year-old forward who has been in good scoring form for his side, bagging 19 goals for Eagles, four goals better than Mhlangi Cele's 15 for Thanda.

The Eastwood-born player will be keen to make it two goals in two games and help put his side back in contention for a play of berth.

In head-to-head stats, Eagles and Usuthu have met on three league occasions.

The Serbian coach's men have dominated this fixture, winning the first two games compared to one for the Durban outfit.

Papic has no suspension concerns, and although he doesn't have a clean bill of health, he still has a decent squad to choose from.

Zimbabwean midfielder Buthelezwe Ncube will miss the clash after being sent off for two bookable offences in the club's 3-0 win over the Limpopo side.

### **NFD FIXTURES**

**Today, all matches kick off at 3 pm:**

Santos v Tseke  
Spurs v FC Cape Town  
Thanda Royals v Leopards  
Eagles v AmaZulu  
Mbombela v Stellenbosch  
Magesi v Cosmos  
Real Kings v CF All Stars  
Nondumiso.Zakwe@witness.co.za

