

THE LONG WAIT



BY LOVEMORE MOYO

Being loaned out twice before playing a single game at your new club will always rank as a setback for any footballer, regardless of the circumstances. This is the difficulty that **Thembinkosi Lorch** has had to deal with since he first signed for Orlando Pirates from Maluti FET College two years ago. But now, he has quickly charmed his way into the hearts of The Ghost as they drag their way through a frustrating campaign.

(Main) Lorch has finally received an opportunity to shine for Orlando Pirates.

At first it was joy. Signing for Orlando Pirates from Maluti FET College. It then turned to sorrow, when he was loaned out into the National First Division without kicking a ball.

Worse still was the choice of club he was sent out to, in a coastal city that he never fancied as a progressive football destination, based on what he had experienced through the two years that he spent in the second-tier with Maluti between 2013-15.

Naturally, as someone whose parents separated at a young age, such events always prop up abandonment issues.

"I was pissed at that time because I felt, 'Why the hell are they loaning me out without having at least given me time to show what I am all about?' And worse, dumping me in a place so far away like Cape Town," he says, recalling his first loan spell at Cape Town All Stars.

He had also failed trials to break into the Ajax Cape Town Under-17 team earlier in his career, and so his distaste of the Mother City was fierce.

"I would have preferred to be

loaned to another club in Johannesburg or somewhere inland because, in my time playing in the First Division, I never liked the football played by Cape Town sides.

"They always kicked it up in the air all the time and that is not my style. Plus, Cape Town is a place that feels like another country and I honestly thought I would struggle to settle there," Lorch confesses.

Having retreated into a shell of depression, it then took the influence of his father and the sudden appointment of Dan Malelela at his loan club to turn what he perceived to be darkness into light.

"It was actually my dad who convinced me to go to Cape Town, where I was lucky to meet coach Dan," he says. "It was all down to coach Dan that I was able to enjoy my football in Cape Town, otherwise it would have been tough.

"Though I initially didn't want to go to All Stars, that loan eventually turned out to be good for me because I got game-time and right now, people have an idea of who I am because of that loan spell."

He was all smiles after completing that successful loan period, which led to an inclusion in the Bafana Bafana squad that won the Cosafa Cup in Namibia last year.

But Lorch then found himself back at square one yet again soon after. ▶

"WHY THE HELL ARE THEY LOANING ME OUT?"

