



FEATURE THEMBINKOSI LORCH



He was shipped out to Chippa United at the beginning of this season without his knowledge.

This time he was infuriated, as he didn't even train with The Buccaneers ahead of his move to the Chilli Boys.

"It was worse the second time because I didn't even train with the team," he says, showing visible signs of frustration at the memory.

"After we won the Cosafa Cup, we went to play a friendly in Japan and the moment I landed back at OR Tambo Airport I was phoned by Chippa [Mpengesi], who told me he was already done talking to Dr Irvin Khoza and I must come to his team.

"I asked myself, 'How did he finish everything when I don't know anything?'. It turns out Chippa had been keen on me for a while and when I got to Pirates, I was told I had to go.

"That day, I got to understand how football works. But what gave me hope with this second loan was that I was going to be working with a familiar face in coach Dan, who I had worked with before at All Stars."

However, prior to departing for

(Above) Lorch feels his loan spell at All Stars put him on the radar.

Port Elizabeth, his dad had him thinking about pursuing Kaizer Chiefs, as things didn't seem like they were working out at Pirates.

"It is not like my dad wanted me to sign for Chiefs," he relates.

"He was merely talking as a Chiefs fan. Just like I also supported Chiefs growing up, he had a dream that I would get to play for them. That is as far as it went.

"I have to admit, though, that along the way I had a feeling of regret about why I had signed for Pirates. I had moments when I regretted taking that phone call from Screamer Tshabalala, who had called me two days after spotting me in action for Maluti against Jomo Cosmos [in 2015]."

A touch of the fast forward button on his career has seen the 23-year-old swiftly springboard himself from feeling like an interloper to being branded "the Real McCoy".

The first half of this season was enough to convince the authorities at Pirates to cut short his loan deal.

"I never thought that this opportunity of getting game time like I am

doing now would arrive," enthuses Lorch, with the tone of his voice suddenly getting energised.

What's evident, more than anything, is his yearning to make a success of his move at Bucs, something he shows on and off the field.

"As a player you can move to another team at any time, so you must always stay switched on," he says. "I had gotten used to the style of football at Chippa.

"Coach Dan wants the ball to be passed around and the options are always plenty, yet here at Pirates it is a different story and you have to fight. Plus, Pirates is not like Chippa because the pressure is huge and you have to double your performance when you play.

"When I got here I found Pirates playing a different style, which meant I struggled in the beginning. In my first four games I could feel I was struggling.

"It was only from the game against Chiefs that I felt like my normal self. I now have a much better understanding with my teammates."

