

Madibaz closer to professional soccer

Mogan Segadavan
segadavanm@timesmedia.co.za

NMMU Madibaz set their sights on becoming the first home-grown team to compete in the professional ranks in three decades when they eased towards winning the Safa-NMB SAB League by a record points margin on Sunday.

The students, on a nine-point lead with one match remaining, beat a dogged Royal Bucks 2-1 at Motherwell's NU2 Stadium.

"Madibaz are in a league of

their own," NMMU sport manager Mark Tommy said.

"Throughout the season, the team displayed the professionalism that is required to compete at a higher level.

"Our ultimate aim is to reach the National First Division with players born and bred in the area.

"We hope to take the first step next month by winning promotion to the ABC Motsepe League."

Johannesburg's Wits and the University of Pretoria are the two university-based teams that play soccer professionally.

The match against Bucks was not plain sailing for Madibaz, despite the difference on the log.

The home side, fighting for survival in the league, took the fight to Madibaz and deserved to be leading 1-0 at the break.

After the break the students showed why they are winning the championships so easily.

They dominated and Chumo Fobo thought he had equalised with a thunderous volley. However, the goal was ruled offside.

Madibaz kept up the pressure and their leading scorer levelled

the score with a trademark goal.

Midway through the half, Simankhele Thobi rounded off an excellent move to give Madibaz the maximum points.

Meanwhile, it is down to the wire in the race for the runners-up berth.

Golden Aces, the favourites to finish second, beat Highland Spurs 2-1 on Saturday only to go down 5-2 against Motherwell Academy on Sunday.

The loss opened the door for Fairview Rovers, who thrashed Showvillage United Brothers 3-0.

With a match in hand, Rovers are four points behind Aces.

Mabayibone Strikers, the leaders before the Christmas recess, had another dismal showing, losing 3-1 to relegation battlers Despatch Pioneers.

Unless they win their final match, Strikers could finish out of the Safa-NMB SAB top eight.

Results:

Despatch Pioneers 3 Mabayibone Strikers 1, Ikamva Movers 2 Camper United 1, Fairview Rovers 3 Showvillage United Brothers 0, Motherwell Academy 5 Golden Aces 2

