

Thanda roars back to PSL as Santos delay NFD demotion

Race for play-off spots still open

By **Sihle Ndebele**

At the start of this season it would have been difficult to give Thanda Royal Zulu a chance to clinch automatic promotion to the Absa Premiership based on their disastrous previous campaign in the National First Division (NFD).

Amabhubezi evaded relegation last season but yesterday, the KZN-based outfit made up with a spot in the premier division next season.

Thanda outwitted promotional play-offs hopefuls Stellenbosch 2-1 at a packed Umhlatuze Sports Complex, KwaZulu-Natal, where the new NFD champions haven't lost a game this season.

The Cape side's loss boosted Black Leopards' play-off hopes after Lidoda Duvha's 1-1 draw

with Royal Eagles.

Though Leopards moved up to the second spot, the hunt for the two play-off spots remain wide open with Eagles, AmaZulu and Witbank Spurs all still in with a chance.

Meanwhile, Thanda attained their feat yesterday with three games to spare.

Amabhubezi broke the deadlock through Khotso Malope but veteran striker Mame Niang levelled the scores from the penalty spot in the second half.

Michael Gumede's strike declared Thanda the NFD champions

Elsewhere, Santos inevitable relegation was put on hold after they drew 1-1 with Jomo Cosmos at Athlone Stadium yesterday.

The outcome also meant Cosmos's play-off hopes were all but dashed.

Results

Thanda 2, Stellenbosch 1; Bucks 0, AmaTuks 0; Santos 1, Cosmos 1; Eagles 0, Leopards 0; Magesi 1, All Stars 0; Kings 1, Spurs 1; Mbombela 3, FC CPT 1

NFD Log

Team	P	W	D	L	GF	GA	Pts
1 Thanda	27	15	11	1	46	21	56
2 Leopards	27	12	8	7	39	33	44
3 Stellenbosch	27	12	7	8	36	28	43
4 Eagles	27	11	8	8	47	35	41
5 AmaZulu	27	12	5	10	44	35	41
6 Spurs	27	11	8	8	36	34	41
7 Mbombela	27	11	7	9	39	27	40
8 Bucks	27	8	13	6	35	35	37
9 Kings	27	9	9	9	35	30	36
10 Cosmos	26	9	8	9	28	26	35
11 AmaTuks	27	9	6	12	29	38	33
12 All Stars	26	6	11	9	19	26	29
13 Milano	27	9	2	16	33	52	29
14 Magesi	27	7	7	13	27	39	28
15 FCCPT	27	6	10	11	32	45	28
16 Santos	27	3	10	14	15	36	19

