



Peter Raath: How would describe Real Kings' past season, considering you were NFD debutants?

Siyabonga Shoyisa: To be honest, I think we did very well based on the fact that it was our first season. During the January transfer window, coach Simo Dladla decided to lure in some experienced players, including myself, to give his side some back-up. Obviously, I feel that things didn't always go the way that they were supposed to, but that's football. When I got here, Kings were near the relegation zone. However, we managed some good wins, which lifted us up to safety. I'm one of the craziest guys in the team (huge laughter). When we're together, you won't even notice that I'm older than most others. If I share my stories, based on what I've seen along the way, I just tell my teammates, "You can laugh but it's the truth because I've seen it." They look up to me and love me so much.

We have lots of quality players such as Lindokuhle 'Ma 11' Mtshali and Ntsako 'Never Die' Malhubela but, being young, they still have a lot to learn. That's only if they want to.

PR: What do you mean?

SS: We senior guys do talk to the youngsters, more especially when we're in camp, but it's up to them whether they take in what's said or not. If you tell a teammate something and he doesn't listen, it's not your problem, so long as you've told him. I've learnt so much being a pro. It looks a beautiful career from the outside, but it's not easy on the inside. Last season, when we went on strike at Moroka Swallows, management called us every day, begging us to come back. But they were the ones allegedly not paying us. Such things can destroy a club. Everything was a mess there. If bosses don't take good care of players then the club will suffer. Look at Swallows today! However, I don't feel anything for them. They still owe me money (laughing). That's why



NATIONAL FIRST DIVISION FOCUS

The biggest mistake I made...



Real Kings' defender, Siyabonga Shoyisa, talks to Soccer Laduma's Peter Raath about the past season. He also discusses Moroka Swallows, salaries and his regrets.

Siyabonga Nomvethe and I left for AmaZulu and Thanda Royal Zulu respectively. When a player gets old, he has responsibilities, like looking after his children. That was the first time in my career that I didn't get paid, so I couldn't take it.

PR: That's interesting. Please continue...

SS: Football's a short career, so when people promise you big money, you think, "Okay, sharp,

let me go there." But the only team that didn't do anything for me was Swallows. I never knew what was happening inside, but went there hoping that because they were a big club, it would be a good move. I was promised things that never materialised. That was a problem. The biggest mistake I made was leaving University of Pretoria for Mpumalanga Black Aces. As soon as I got there, they hired coach Muhsin Ertugral and he didn't want

me. Then, after spending some time at home, they decided to call me for a friendly against Swallows. That's when I was told that I was going to be loaned to the Dube Birds. To be honest, I shouldn't have left AmaTuks, but Gordon Masondo wanted me at Aces. Being at Kings is a good platform for me to revive my career. I had signed until end of the season, so we must still sit down and talk. But obviously, I still want to go back to the PSL.

PR: That's where the wages are better!

SS: Who earns above R50 000 in the NFD? Maybe one or two players. The rest of us are below that bracket, which is a problem. People think because a particular guy's earning big money in the PSL, that all footballers get huge sums, which of course is not the case! Most of us maybe broke at retirement. You'll find some of the population making jokes by saying, "Soccer players get too much money but don't know what to do with it." They think we're chowing money. Instead of a security guard using his last R10 to buy bread, he'll buy air-time to say rubbish things, even though he knows nothing about you. Do I ever say something about the kind of job he's doing? The fact of the matter is that's what happens.

PR: Any other regrets?

SS: I should have stayed at Thanda but, due to my relationship with Stellenbosch FC coach Sammy Troughton, I had to go to Cape Town. He's my father. However, after only playing three games, I decided to leave, as there were people giving me a hard time. If you don't get along with certain guys, then it's always going to be difficult for you to give your best. So after being settled for a long period at AmaTuks, I've jumped around. Imagine! Now it's time to settle again and enjoy myself playing for a season or two. Obviously, I look after myself. At Tuks, we had good food and everything was great. It was the same at Stellenbosch.

PR: Thanks for your openness, Siya, and good luck.

SS: No problem, Peter. I've now worked under Mlungisi 'Professor' Ngubane, the late April 'Styles' Phumo, Troughton, Steve Barker, Clive Barker, Ian Gorowa, Roger Sikhakhane and Simo Dladla. They all good coaches and funny in their own ways (huge laughter). □

THE LATEST NFD NEWS

- Despite winning the North West ABC Motsepe League, Buya Msuthu are awaiting the outcome of a DC case before their participation in the national play-offs can be confirmed. "Other teams have protested," the club's assistant coach, former Pirates defender Abednego Ntshozwi, told Soccer Laduma.
- It's a similar situation in the Eastern Cape, where top-of-the-log EC Bees, who are owned by Nceba Ntantsana, the brother of Mthatha Bucks' co-chairman, Simthembele Ntantsana, lost a case against second-placed Future Tigers.

"There are more cases, so it'll probably end up going to arbitration," said a source.

- Santos were not only relegated from the NFD but their reserve team, who dropped into the third-tier SAB at the beginning of the season, suffered a second successive humiliation after finishing rock bottom, with only five wins in 29 games. Their negative goal difference of -33 was similar to Santos' first team's (-24).
- Magesi FC head coach, Shepherd Murape, can't believe that his club were relegated, especially after

hammering Real Kings 6-0 just four days earlier. "It's terrible. We went to Mbombela United overconfident. I don't think it'll work for me to continue coaching here but I'm going to meet with the chairman, SollyMakhubela," he said.

- Veteran striker, Josef Lekata, 29, is pondering his next move after the expiry of his Magesi contract. The former Black Leopards and FC Cape Town forward told Soccer Laduma, "It's difficult, I don't yet have any idea where I'm going. I'm still waiting for someone to call me."

