



# Johannes: There's nothing personal with AmaZulu

RODNEY REINERS

CAPE TOWN CITY captain Robyn Johannes has urged his players to remain calm in the heat of battle as he believes, at this critical time of the year, it's the reason why they are failing to close out games. At the weekend, the Cape side looked on course for victory, but somehow contrived to throw it away in the dying seconds in a 1-1 draw with SuperSport United.

City are back in action on Friday when they host AmaZulu at Cape Town Stadium (8pm kickoff) – and, not only does Johannes want cooler heads from his teammates, he's just as stoked to go up against one of his former clubs.

Johannes is currently in the form of his life, but it has taken him a while to get to what he calls a "good space". Having left his Mother City home in Strandfontein as a kid to join the youth academy at the University of Pretoria, the defender went on to play for Mamelodi Sundowns, Orlando Pirates, Golden Arrows, Maritzburg United and AmaZulu.

The 31-year-old, in fact, still appreciates the role AmaZulu played in rebuilding his confidence. At the time, around 2015, his career was going nowhere. He had been plagued by injury and, on returning, was struggling to get going. So he dropped down to the NFD with AmaZulu, regained his passion for the game, raised his performance levels, and then signed for City the following season. Ever since, he has only gone one way: upward, including being handed the City captaincy by coach Benni McCarthy this season and even a return to the Bafana Bafana squad last month.

In coming up against AmaZulu on Friday, Johannes acknowledged his gratitude to the Durban club.

"There's nothing personal with AmaZulu," said Johannes. "In fact, I had a good time there, they offered me an opportunity at a time when I was going through the ups and downs in my career. But it was also the period that made me stronger, it brought me to situations that were out of my control and, in that way, it made me grow up."

"But I'm expecting a tough time against my former club on Friday. They're a good team, with a good coach, and we know we will have to be at our best to get a result."

As for City's current plight, and their struggle to win football games, the City skipper had no doubt that it was just a matter of time before they got back on track again.

"It has been disappointing how we have been throwing games away," said Johannes.

"Last weekend's 1-1 draw even felt like a defeat. We definitely deserved the three points against SuperSport, but then gave it away at the end. I think, as a team, we need to learn from that. We need (to) stop going into panic mode and crumble under pressure. We need to learn and grow from such situations. We have spoken about it



SLOWLY BUT SURELY: Robyn Johannes has no doubt that it is just a matter of time before City are back on track again.

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quite a lot at training this week because it has happened a few times, and it's something we need to eliminate from our game."

And, just to illustrate how important Johannes is to City, and how he has elevated his career since returning home to the Cape Town, he picked up yet another man-of-the-match award in the draw with SuperSport. But, as the humble defender emphasises, accolades are just bonuses in a player's career; in the end, it's still about the collective about the team.

"To be honest, awards don't really faze me, it's not the reason why I play," said Johannes. "My objective is always to try to do my best every week, for the team, for the coach, for the club. I wear the badge on my heart and on my sleeve, and always try to perform to the best of my ability. I have been playing well now for the last year and a half and I just want to keep doing so. Obviously, as we focus on AmaZulu for Friday, the main objective is that we need to start getting results more consistently."

## PSL FIXTURES

**Tonight:** Free State Stars v SuperSport United; Mamelodi Sundowns v Maritzburg United  
**Friday:** Cape Town City v AmaZulu (Cape Town Stadium, 8pm)  
**Saturday:** Mamelodi Sundowns v Bloemfontein Celtic; Chippa United v Polokwane City; Free State Stars v Orlando Pirates; Bidvest Wits v Platinum Stars; Kaizer Chiefs v Ajax Cape Town (Moses Mabhida Stadium, 8.15pm)  
**Sunday:** Baroka FC v SuperSport United

