

City's Ngoma is ready to take the leap

Rodney Reiners

CAPE TOWN CITY coach Benni McCarthy describes the imminent return of winger Aubrey Ngoma akin to having a "new signing" available. The Cape side has been without their star man for so long – the 28-year-old has not played since May – that, when he plays again, it will be like having a new player in the team.

Ngoma is likely to play some part when City resume PSL duty against log leaders Baroka FC at Cape Town Stadium on Tuesday, and he is determined to hit the ground running. McCarthy, needless to say, is delighted to have the winger fit and available again, though it's not yet clear whether he will use Ngoma from the start or off the bench. Either way, the player is ready.

It has been a long, hard and frustrating slog, but Ngoma can't wait to be back in action. After playing an influential role in the Cape side's rise to prominence, he sustained



AUBREY NGOMA:
Long road back

a knee injury while training with the Bafana Bafana Cosafa Cup squad. While recovering over the last few months, he has had to watch both City and the South African national football team struggle.

"The recovery has been a long road for me," said Ngoma. "But I've healed well and worked hard off the field to get myself back to full fitness.

"I am looking forward to getting back to playing again. It has been a few months without football for me, which is something no player wants to

go through. My hunger for the game has always been there, especially now that I'm this close to getting back on the field. I feel ready to take the leap and get back to playing."

From Hammanskraal Ngoma started his junior career at community club Bolton Wanderers. He was then recommended to the University of Pretoria. Ngoma quickly made an impression, going on to play a key role in the team winning promotion to the PSL in 2012. His performances placed him on the radar of the big clubs – and it was Orlando Pirates who won the race for his signature.

Ngoma, though, failed to get going at the Soweto club. In 2015, after a move to Mpumalanga Black Aces the winger was to find his form again. And, after the purchase and relocation of Aces to the Mother City, Ngoma continued in the same vein for the new Cape PSL club, developing a match-winning attacking partnership with Lebogang

Manyama.

Manyama has since moved on to play for Konyaspor in Turkey, while Ngoma, unfortunately, had to sit injured on the sidelines. But, back now, the City star has an opportunity to elevate his name and presence back into the PSL and national picture again.

And there is, of course, no better way to do it than in a top-of-the-table clash when City take on surprise leaders Baroka on Tuesday. As it stands, the Polokwane-based club is on 17 points, with City, Golden Arrows and Bloemfontein Celtic joint-second on 15 points.

A few weeks ago, Baroka knocked City out of the Telkom Knockout Cup, so there is also likely to be a whiff of payback in the air. The PSL pacesetters, though, are a difficult team to face: they are unorthodox in their approach and committed to the hilt, which means the Capetonians will have it all to do if they are to see off their opposition on Tuesday.