



Players from the 16 teams are fired up for the challenge ahead of the Johannesburg leg of the 2017 Engen Knockout Challenge at the Wits Marks Park in Emmarentia from 4 to 6 August.  
 Photo: Tshepiso Mametela.



Teams were decided in a group draw at the Sunnyside Park Hotel in Parktown ahead of the 2017 Engen Knockout Challenge at the Wits Marks Park in Emmarentia from 4 to 6 August.  
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# Teams get ready for knockout challenge

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The groups for the eagerly anticipated fifth and final stop of the Engen Knockout Challenge 2017 tournament was decided at a draw at the Sunnyside Park Hotel in Parktown on 25 July.

Sixteen youth development soccer teams are set to battle it out in the five-city tournament in Johannesburg from 4 to 6 August.

The Wits Marks Park in Emmarentia will host the Joburg event for a 12th year, being preceded by the Bloemfontein

event which takes place from 28 to 30 July at the Grey College Sports Complex.

The 2017 edition of the preeminent youth football event was kick-started in Cape Town on 30 June to 2 July, subsequently heading to Port Elizabeth between 7 to 9 July, before culminating in the Durban leg of the competition from 14 to 16 July.

With the attention now firmly on Johannesburg, the draw saw three-time losing finalists Wits Juniors pitted in Group 1 alongside Southern LFA, Bidvest Wits and Platinum Stars.

Group 2 places defending Joburg champions, Orlando Pirates, against Highlands Park, Supersport United and Bophelo FC, while Kaizer Chiefs, Soweto All Stars, Mamelodi Sundowns and Polokwane City Rovers are waiting to trade punches in Group 3.

Tuks will, meanwhile, tackle little known Axton Panorama, Stars of Africa and School of Excellence in Group 4.

"We've been training hard and are just looking to play our game – take each game as it comes. We're obviously looking to get a win

in the first game we play," said SuperSport United shot-stopper, Giovanni Idi.

"It's vital to get a win to hopefully [finish] at the top of our group and then get through the rest."

Commenting on his hopes for his team to fare well at the event, Bidvest Wits player Jaime Crook said cup football is usually full of surprises.

"This is tournament football and you can expect anything on any day from any team," he said.

"So, the guys have been preparing very hard and are

looking forward to the challenge."

Platinum Stars centre back Bootjie Boseke added that he hopes that his team can compete well. "We're drawn in a tough group but I hope my boys can compete and come with a good mind," said Boseke.

"We always stay positive and work hard as a team and I hope that we will succeed."

**Which team do you think will run away with proceedings? Tell us by posting your comments on the North Eastern Tribune Facebook page**

