

NFD's big guns add firepower!

By MTHOKOZISI MKHONZA

FIREWORKS are expected in the upcoming 2017-18 National First Division season!

This season's run will feature five former Absa Premiership clubs – Jomo Cosmos, University of Pretoria, Highlands Park, Black Leopards and Stellenbosch FC, formerly known as Vasco Da Gama – all of whom will be eyeing a return to the top flight. The season kicks off a little over two weeks from now.

These teams have promised to turn things around and are expected to make a huge impact in the league.

But one cannot not discount the likes of Royal Eagles, Mbombela United and Witbank Spurs, who will also be out to give it their best shot and have shown glimpses of their strength last season.

The NFD season kicks off on Friday 18 August, which is just two weeks and one day from today.

Many of the clubs made some desperate signings in the pre-season as they seek to redeem themselves after a disappointing 2016-17 campaign.

AmaTuks, who finished 12th last season, have roped in 10 new players to help the club improve on their position in the upcoming season.

Another former PSL side Cosmos introduced 11 new players a fortnight ago who have been signed for this season as *Ezenkosi* seek redemption after finishing 10th last season.

Cosmos, who are the only club to have been relegated more than three times, could be one of the teams to watch out for this season.

Leopards and Stellenbosch, who both failed in the promotion play-offs, have also reinforced their squads as they aim to improve on last season's performance.

Stellies coach Steve Barker said the players brought in would add more stability and add elements the club lacked when they lost in the promotion play-offs. His new signings include former Bidvest Wits player Abednego Mosiatlaga.

Barker said: "The plan is to improve from last season. We learned a lot from the play-offs and I believe we can do better. This time the competition will be real."

Lidoda Duvha have signed six new players – four from Magesi FC, who were relegated to the ABC Motsepe League.

