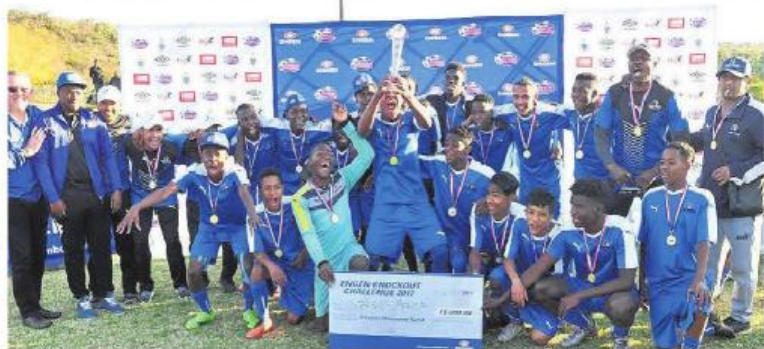


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STARS OF AFRICA SHINE BRIGHTEST!



Stars of Africa won the Engen Knockout Challenge against Tuks – and the bragging rights – at Wits' Marks Park Sport Complex. *Photo by Trevor Kunene*

By MTHOKOZISI MKHONZA

FAROUK Khan's Academy, Stars of Africa, were crowned the new champions of the Engen Under-19 tournament at Marks Park at the weekend.

Stars of Africa, who were one of the surprise packages in this year's competition, defeated University of Pretoria 5-4 on penalties after playing to a 1-1 draw in regular time. The new champions walked away with a whopping R15 000 in prize money.

The competition that has become well-known for football development, took place from Friday where 16 of the best youth teams in Gauteng contested for the 2017 Engen Knockout Challenge title.

It was a good competition where fans and soccer scouts from leading PSL clubs witnessed some great young Mzansi talent dazzling with their skills.

Stars of Africa now join the other regional champions and they will battle it out in the

Engen Champs of Champs later this year to determine Mzansi's national champions.

According to Stars coach Khan they were in Group D which was one of the toughest.

No one gave them a chance of clinching the trophy, but they did it in style.

"I'm proud of the boys, they fought against all odds.

"We faced some challenges such as not having enough players. I only had one goalkeeper and we did not have enough defenders. But we'll make sure that we strengthen our squad going to the national championships. I was also impressed with the standard of refereeing. The match officials did a great job."

This was the second time Stars have lifted the Engen Cup. They first won it in 2006.

The tournament has helped unearth some star players over the years, including former Ajax Cape Town star Thulani Serero and Ronwen Williams of SuperSport United.

