



PSL adventure begins for eager Patosi and 'blindfolded' McCarthy

RODNEY REINERS
Cape Town

THE traditional simile suggests Ayanda Patosi is as eager as a beaver as he contemplates his first exposure to the PSL. But, truth be told, it doesn't fully express the depth of emotion of the new Cape Town City attacker. In short, the beaver has nothing on Patosi – the 24-year-old's excitement is at fever pitch.

City host Polokwane City in a MTN8 quarter-final at the Cape Town Stadium on Saturday afternoon (kick-off 3pm) – and the Cape club's new signing, who was lured back from Europe, is determined to make an impact.

Patosi is set to make his PSL debut at the age of 24 because he spent six

years at Belgian club Lokeren. As a junior, he came to prominence at the Cape youth academy ASD (Africa Soccer Development) and it was on an overseas trip to Belgium that the hard-running player was spotted and signed. After initially doing well in Belgium, performances that earned him a call-up to the Bafana Bafana squad, things went awry for Patosi.

His career took a bit of a dip and, two months ago, when persuaded by City boss John Comitis to return home, the kid from Khayelitsha took the gamble. Now he is confident the familiar, comforting surroundings of the Mother City will allow his natural game to blossom again.

"It's really exciting to be back playing at home again," said Patosi. "I played in Cape Town with the national

team before, but now I'm with City at home, with my family coming to the ground, and so, too, are the people from Khayelitsha. I've been made welcome in the squad, there's a great togetherness here and I'm looking forward to the season."

For Patosi, the opportunity at City is also a nostalgic journey into his football-mad childhood. Back then, he idolised players like Benni McCarthy and recently-signed Teko Modise; now McCarthy is the coach, energising and engineering Patosi to get back on track, and Modise is an experienced, old hand, a teammate he can turn to for guidance. "Teko was my role model when he was at Pirates and now I have an opportunity to play in the same team as him," said Patosi. "There are also other players like Lehlohonolo

Majoro, who I used to watch on TV. Now he, too, is my teammate.

"My aim is to achieve with this City team and help them to do well. I also want to do well for myself, to get back into the Bafana squad."

In Polokwane, though, City are up against a tricky opponent. The Limpopo club surprised many by finishing sixth in the PSL last season – and they did so with a fearless, relentless attacking style of football.

With both McCarthy and Patosi new to the PSL, they admit they are a bit in the dark about the opposition.

"Even though I watched Polokwane a few times, I don't know all that much about them," said Patosi. "The important thing is that we need to focus on our own team and make sure we get through to the next

round."

McCarthy, instead, has leaned on a former teammate for assistance about Saturday's opposition.

"I am a bit blindfolded going to the match against Polokwane, but I spoke to Shaun Bartlett (McCarthy's former Bafana teammate, who is head coach of the University of Pretoria)," said McCarthy. "Tuks played Polokwane in a friendly last week and Shaun has an idea of how they play."

McCarthy also gave some insight into how he wants to do things a little differently, in order to tweak City's style of play. "I have introduced a high press style of play, in that I do not want teams to settle. We can still have the usual counter-attack as one of our strategies, but I don't want it to be the only way we play."

