



'Cosmos must win first game'

Friendlies against African sides were handy - Macuphu

By **Sihle Ndebele**

It is not how you start but how you finish - so goes the old adage.

However, Jomo Cosmos striker Mxolisi Macuphu has a different sentiment ahead of their National First Division (NFD) opening fixture against Highlands Park tomorrow at Makhulong Stadium (3pm).

Macuphu, 28, believes that if Ezenkosi were to reclaim their Premiership status at the end of the season, they must win their first match and boost their morale.

"I think the most important thing for us is to win this game because winning the first game will boost our confidence going into the next games. When you start working hard early, you put yourself in a good position to finish well," Macuphu told Sowetan yesterday.

In their pre-season, Cosmos played friendly matches against teams from Swaziland, Mozambique and the Angolan national team.

Macuphu reckons Ezenkosi had good preparations for the new term and this will set them apart from other NFD

teams this season.

"This was the best pre-season since I joined Cosmos [in 2015]. We played against many clubs from the continent and that helped us a lot.

"The NFD is physical, so playing against African clubs helped us in that aspect. We will be a different team this season. Teams will struggle to win against us, we have worked harder than the previous season," added the Johannesburg-born marksman.

Fixtures

- **Tomorrow (all 3pm)**
AmaTuks v Bucks, Tuks Stadium
Spurs v Super Eagles, Puma Stadium
Highlands v Cosmos, Makhulong Stadium
Uthongathi v Royal Eagles, Princess Magogo
Mbombela v Leopards, KaNyamazane Stadium
- **Sunday**
Richards Bay v Kings, Umhlathuze
Tshakhuma v All Stars, Giyani
- **Monday**
Ubuntu v Stellenbosch, Athlone

