



Peter Raath: Is there any truth to the rumour that you've signed for Jomo Cosmos?

Ryan Chapman: Jomo Sono did phone me. He said that he wanted to meet and that was it. Nothing else. It is fun times (huge laughter). I'm telling you, soccer is a funny sport. Tuks offered me a new contract, but I tried to push for more money. I was chatting back and forth, as I needed the maximum. Football's a short career, so it's only fair, but we couldn't agree. Currently, I haven't decided where I'm headed, although my agent, Alban Newman, has received an offer from an NFD club. I rate myself more as a PSL player and that's kind of what I was actually hoping for. However, according to Alban, it's doesn't look like it's going to happen. Maybe that has something to do with my age (more laughter).

PR: What's your fitness level like at 30?

RC: In the past, I did have injuries, but now I'm 100 percent fit. I feel good, am still in a decent condition, not overweight or anything like that. My frame's small, so I've a couple of years left in my career. Other guys who've reached my age could have about 200 games under their belts after 10 seasons. However, I've only played half that number. It's hectic the way another striker, Joshua Sauls, also 30, couldn't find a club for a while after being released from Witbank Spurs. It's not easy being a pro player. There are lots of youngsters from ABC Motsepe League teams trying to get into the NFD. My message to them is, "Work hard, listen to your respective coaches." If football is

NATIONAL FIRST DIVISION FOCUS



I rate myself as a PSL player



Former AmaTuks striker, Ryan Chapman, who's in between NFD clubs, chats to Soccer Laduma's Peter Raath about his career. He also talks about Clive Barker, Gavin Hunt and Anthony Gordinho.

their passion, then those guys will do anything to get to where they want to be. Look, I started out as an Orlando Pirates' junior, aged about 10, playing under coach Augusto Palacios and had Excellent Walaza and the late Senzo Meyiwa as teammates. I still have lots of goals in me. I don't think my goals-per-game ratio is too bad a return for a striker. Wherever I've been - starting in the PSL at Santos in 2006/07 - goals have come my way!

PR: AmaTuks certainly benefitted from your six goals in 12 starts, which brings your professional tally to 43 in 120 games.

RC: I scored on my Tuks' debut against AmaZulu, while also hitting braces when we played FC Cape Town and Santos. There were a num-

ber of assists from my side as well. We were doing well for a time but just fell apart (laughing) due to mistakes in defence and injuries to key players. That left us with just a mix-and-match team. When I arrived at the beginning of the second round, it looked like we were heading for promotion, but towards the end, could have gone down. It was close. Maybe if I'd got there a bit earlier, things might've been a bit different. One thing I must admit is that University of Pretoria are an extremely professional club, probably better than some PSL sides. You literally have no issues, nothing. Players are there to play soccer, which is their only concern. They don't need to worry about anything else compared to some of my former clubs. But I won't men-

tion any names (laughing). One thing that I haven't been lucky with is the number of coaches. There's been a lot of changing of the guard during my career. But what can you do? It's one of those things.

PR: That's correct. At Bidvest Wits, you played under four different coaches - Roger de Sa, Antonio Lopez Habas, Clive Barker and Gavin Hunt.

RC: I also had about four at Santos. For me, Clive Barker's one of the best out of all of them. Of course, he's been around the block and knows how to make it pleasurable - not only for the guys who're playing, but also the other squad members. Nobody has a bad word to say about him. Gavin Hunt coached

me for a short period before I went out on loan to SuperSport United. The nice thing about him is that he doesn't mince his words. He'll tell you straight what you're in for. I find it amazing that Wits won the PSL but, honestly, it was about time and also well deserved. There's been a lot of hard work both on and off the field. I enjoyed working under Shaun Bartlett at Tuks and playing alongside Shane Poggenpoel, who's still solid. He's one of those fun guys. You need a couple of experienced players in a team full of youngsters. Being a senior player, I tried helping the younger ones as much as I could. I rate Anthony Gordinho as a very, very good midfielder. He's still going to get his chance in the PSL, although it's just a little bit tight now because SuperSport United obviously has a lot of big name players in that position.

PR: Before we let you go, what are your thoughts on the demise of Santos?

RC: It's sad to see what's happened to the People's Team. They were a big PSL club in my day. Even their reserve side, Mitchell's Plain United, where I also played, was once a well-known outfit. They're obviously having tough times... but it's one of those things. That's football. I actually played five games for Santos before joining Tuks. I didn't have a club at the time, so when they asked me to help them out, I agreed.

PR: Thanks, Ryan, and good luck in finding a new club.

RC: No problem, Peter. □

