



Ugly side of the beautiful game in final

Michaelson Gumedede

Varsity Sports CEO Duitser Bosman says they anticipated the ugly side of football might show its head on Thursday evening, when Tshwane University of Technology hosted the University of Pretoria in the Varsity Football Cup final.

TUT fans vented their frustrations with their side trailing 2-0 going into the final 10 minutes of the match. They threw missiles at rival fans and later invaded the pitch.

"We always knew there was going to be a bit of a risk because TUT students are very passionate

about their football," said Bosman.

"We've had slight pitch invasions in the past but nothing bad, this is the first big one and it is a pity it forced us to halt the game.

"There will be an inquiry, we don't want this to be part of the brand. We don't want to expose the fans to this. We definitely have to see what we can do going forward," he concluded.

Referee Daniel Bennett halted the game with six minutes left as the chaos escalated, prompting police to open fire on the unruly crowd with rubber bullets.

Bennett had visions of last season's league game between between Mamelodi Sundowns and

Orlando Pirates at Loftus Versfeld, which also saw unruly behaviour and a pitch invasion from fans, but intimated that Thursday's incident was worse.

"In 25 years of refereeing I have never witnessed police firing at fans," he said.

"I remember the game between Sundowns and Pirates last year where there was a stampede in that game and that was quite a hectic experience ... this is a little bit above that.

"We stopped the game as a precaution ... the competition rules state that if there is any invasion we do have the right to stop the game if the invasion is in the second half."

