



Ludumo Nkebe from Tuks in action.

Ludumo Nkebe from Tuks in action in last week's VarsityFootball semi-final against UWC. Photos: Reg Caldecott

Soccer thriller in Tshwane awaiting fans

UP-Tuks will face TUT in the Varsity Football final on 28 September 2017. If it were a boxing match, it would be labelled "Thriller in Tshwane".

It would be quite a fitting description as UP-Tuks and TUT are considered the two best teams in university football in South Africa. They clashed twice this season, and both times turned out to be titanic matches.

In the USSAFootball-final, TUT managed to beat Tuks in a penalty shoot-out while in the Varsity Tournament game TUT secured a draw with only a minute to spare in the match.

The road to the final for both teams is a total contrast. TUT dominated from the start while UP-Tuks failed to fire on all cylinders

in their first three games, but once they found their groove, there was no stopping them. They won five games on the trot.

Brilliant would be a good way to describe UP-Tuks performance in last week's semi-final clash against UWC. UP-Tuks won 3-1.

Apart from a slight lapse of concentration in the first minute which led to Clinton Herwel scoring for the visitors, the home team was in total control and tested the UWC defenders skills to the utmost.

From the 10th minute onwards, the question was not whether UP-Tuks would be able to score but when they would level matters. Odwa Makha headed in a corner kick just before the half-time. It was the third time in the tournament that Makha

scored with a header.

UP-Tuks took the lead five minutes into the second half when their captain, Simbongile Njokwe, scored. Makha sealed the game when he succeeded with a penalty, taking his tally of goals in the tournament to six.

As usual, Makha refused to take sole credit for his goal scoring accuracy.

"I just want to help the team win the Varsity Football Tournament. Each goal scored means we are getting closer to fulfilling our dream. Today there was no room for errors. We needed to score when an opportunity arose as in semi-finals you don't get second chances," he said after the game.

Njokwe felt redeemed after scoring UP-

Tuks' second goal and his first in this year's tournament.

"I felt bad after botching up one or two goal-scoring opportunities early on during the match as I realised the importance of making the most of every occasion. I will admit scoring the goal was special as it felt like I led by example," said the captain.

Tuks coach Tisane Motaung was justly proud of his team's performance.

"The hard work is starting to pay dividends. At the outset of the tournament, we were setting up one goal scoring opportunity after another, but we failed to make it count, but I never lost faith in my player's abilities. We needed to fine-tune a few things and now we are scoring," he said.

