



NOT QUITE THERE YET

SUNDOWNS: NEED THREE POINTS FROM LAST TWO GAMES TO TAKE TITLE

ALWAYS DANGEROUS. Percy Tau of Mamelodi Sundowns shields the ball from Bokang Tlhone of Maritzburg United in their clash at Harry Gwala Stadium last night. Picture: Gallo Images

➔ Pirates keep their flame burning with a 4-0 thrashing of Wits.

Michaelson Gumedede

Mamelodi Sundowns will have to keep their champagne on ice for now as the race for Absa Premiership honours is still very much on. The Brazilians needed to win their game against Maritzburg United last night in the hope that their closest rivals, Orlando Pirates, lose to out-going champions Bidvest Wits.

It was not to be as Pirates wal-

loped The Students in an empty Orlando Stadium in a 4-0 rout – bringing a seven-game losing streak against Wits to an end.

Meanwhile, at the Harry Gwala Stadium, Pitso Mosimane's men played to a 2-2 draw against United.

It was Themba Zwane who opened the scoring for Masandawana just after five minutes from kick-off. Thapelo Morena did all the spade work down the right before delivering a delightful cross, finding the head of Percy Tau.

The on-form Tau looked as though he had headed his 13th league goal this season, but Richard Ofori stretched to stop the 23-year-old's attempt. However, he could do very little to keep

Zwane's shot from the rebound.

At the opposite end, Belgian forward Andrea Fileccia equalised for the Team of Choice after capitalising on a Denis Onyango misjudgment. The former African Player-of-the-Year gushed out of his line hoping to clear a Bandile Shandu pass to Fileccia. However, Fileccia got to the ball first and he flicked it into an empty net.

Soon after, Tebogo Langerman opened his scoring account in fine style in the 72nd minute, blasting a powerful shot to the roof of the net.

Downs proceeded to dominate the match, but the attacking prowess of Maritzburg could not be silenced as Man-of-the-Match Lebogang Maboe equalised in the 86th minute.

With two games to go before the curtain falls on the 2017/18 season, the second-placed Buccaneers have a tally of 52 points. This means that if they win their remaining two games against Cape Town City and Free State Stars, they can finish on a maximum of 58 points.

Sundowns are sitting on 56 points and a win in their next game against beleaguered Ajax Cape Town will see them clinch a third championship in five seasons – something Mosimane is fully cognisant of. "A point is not bad, we need three points from the last two games, we have a team that can do that. When we won the title last time, we took a point against Ajax and went to Tuks and won it," he said.

