



TOO BLUNT: Teenage Hadebe of Kaizer Chiefs is challenged by Phumlani Gumede of AmaZulu during their Absa Premiership match on Saturday. The match ended in another 0-0 stalemate.

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DROUGHT HURT CHIEFS

TOO MANY UNNECESSARY DRAWS HAS ESSENTIALLY COST GLAMOUR BOYS THEIR SHOT AT THE PSL TITLE

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KAIZER CHIEFS' coach Steve Komphela sounded like he was going through the motions, saying what a person in his position ought to say, but his voice lacked conviction as he said Amakhosi are still in the league race.

Mathematically they are still in the race. Chiefs, with six matches left to play, trail log-leaders Mamelodi Sundowns, who have played one game less, by seven points. But realistically Chiefs aren't genuine title challengers anymore, especially with their timid attack.

What should hurt Amakhosi the most is knowing that the seven points they trail Sundowns by, they dropped in their last

three matches by playing to two goalless draws with Bloemfontein Celtic and AmaZulu at home along with losing to Orlando Pirates also at FNB Stadium.

"We've just made it even more difficult for ourselves," Komphela said. "We thought that by the end of this match (against AmaZulu) the gap would be five points to put pressure on the opponent. But then again you never know what's going to happen in a game of football.

"We'll keep pushing, be as professional as possible. For every second and minute given to us, we will try to do the best that we can to get results. From there we will see what happens with the other teams. The table never lies. When you look at the table you can see where we did well and where we

could have done better. Too many draws. Unnecessary draws.

"Out of all the draws we played, eight of them were 0-0."

Those goalless draws and Amakhosi's failure to score consistently is what has hurt Chiefs' title challenge. Only Bloemfontein Celtic and Platinum Stars, before their match yesterday, have scored fewer goals than Amakhosi in the league.

Big difference

"Attacks make a big difference in any match," Komphela said. "You can go to any team to see how important (having a consistent goalscorer helps a team). You can go as far back as Vasco da Gama when they had Sibusiso Zuma. Moroka Swallows when

Gordon Igesund was coaching them, Siyabonga Nomvethe kept them at the top. You can come to Chiefs whether it was the era of (Knowledge) Musona or (Collins) Mbesuma. Strikers make a difference in any league.

"Maybe it's one thing we are not consistent with. The more number of goals you get from whoever plays upfront, the better your chances of winning the league. It's just as easy as that. Are we doing it? Not really. Can you work and improve on that? Yes, that's our responsibility."

Another problem for the club is their poor performances in the final stretch under Komphela.

Last season Chiefs collected just one win from their last five matches, against Bidvest Wits who were already crowned cham-

pions. The season before that they also registered just one win in their last five matches, against University of Pretoria who were eventually relegated.

"Those who have been here at Chiefs before me will tell you that there is a season where Chiefs won the league but the last five matches were so difficult to get through for whatever reason," Komphela said.

"Maybe it is something that we have to check. Is it physical or is it mental? Because from a tactical point of view the approach is still the same, you're still trying to get the team attacking.

"But why then do you find yourself towards the end of the marathon slowing down? It's something that maybe we have to look at."

