



THE WITNESS 15

SPORT



Royal Eagles coach Roger Skhakhane plans to do well in the remaining matches to move up the NFD standings.
PHOTO: GALLO IMAGES

Eagles set sights on NFD points

NONDUMISO ZAKWE

WITH Royal Eagles out of the Nedbank Cup, their attention has turned to the National First Division where they intend to fight for every point on offer to avoid relegation.

The Pietermaritzburg side will start their end-of-season run with a tricky fixture against struggling Super Eagles at Goble Park in Bethlehem this weekend.

Super Eagles have a new man at the helm in the form of Ian Palmer, who replaced Spanish tactician Antonio Flores.

The Free State outfit are equally desperate for results going into this Saturday's encounter and will also be eager to impress the new coach.

They have only managed five wins from 23 matches this season and are strong favourites for relegation, sitting just three points above bottom-placed Mthatha Bucks.

Despite the obvious disappointment of crashing out of the Nedbank Cup to city rivals Maritzburg United on the weekend, Royal Eagles coach Roger Skhakhane says the mood in his camp remains positive. "I think it'll be the same as other encounters; long balls and so on. We just have to be fully prepared and make sure we continue with our plan and, hopefully, continue in the way we've been playing in the league recently," said Skhakhane.

He said they did not expect Super Eagles to be pushovers regardless of their poor form.

After Super Eagles, the Midlands side will be left with six matches — against Stellenbosch, Ubuntu Cape Town and Cape Town All Stars away, and University of Pretoria, Jomo Cosmos and Witbank Stars at home.

Skhakhane said he knew his 11th-placed charges faced an uphill battle, but wanted them to pick up as many points as possible to save their campaign.

He added: "I don't want to talk about the previous coaches, I just hope the winning mentality that I am trying to instill in the team takes us through to the end of the season.

"I'll stick to my philosophy and I'm happy that the players are receiving it well. We can't think about what's going to happen next season yet, because we still have games remaining and a task to make sure that we get the results from those games and make sure we stay in the NFD. We'll plan for next season when this current one concludes."

NFD FIXTURES

Saturday

- TTM v Richards Bay
- Mthatha Bucks v Uthongathi
- Super Eagles v Royal Eagles
- Pretoria Univ. v Witbank Spurs
- Highlands Park v Mbombela Utd

Sunday

- Real Kings v Black Leopards
- Jomo Cosmos v Ubuntu Cape Town
- CT All Stars v Stellenbosch
- *All start at 3:30 pm

HOW THEY STAND

Team	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Highlands Park	23	15	5	3	40	9	50
Real Kings	23	10	8	5	28	19	38
TTM	23	10	6	7	27	31	36
Black Leopards	23	9	8	6	28	15	35
Jomo Cosmos	23	9	6	8	30	26	33
Witbank Spurs	23	7	11	5	27	32	32
CT All Stars	23	7	10	6	19	17	31
Mbombela Utd	23	10	4	9	26	27	31
Stellenbosch	23	7	9	7	19	23	30
Pretoria Univ.	23	8	6	8	26	32	30
Royal Eagles	23	6	8	9	30	38	26
Ubuntu CT	23	5	9	9	22	24	24
Richards Bay	23	5	9	9	18	27	24
Uthongathi	23	4	11	8	14	19	23
Super Eagles	23	5	8	10	19	31	23
Mthatha Bucks	23	4	8	11	23	33	20

* nondumiso.zakwe@witness.co.za

ed
and tight-
one more
y. Atletico
about the
ming last
t off with
sy and we
lation we
he said.
py, the Ar-
with five
including
letico Ma-
find a so-
is, has giv-
the club's
d only in
yer, Eden
with alone
t Atletico
y Simeone
factor but
rde's calm
L.
ee a Barca
ly? Sime-
s doing is
ed them?
es Iniesta
midfielder
ng a ham-
"They are
close to-
pe and all
sees Tur-
yern. Ma-
e first leg
e
ances but
ich in the
fans cele-
in conver-
ing some
any wing-
with the
now head
with their
mouthwa-
the league
ocal rivals,
Mark
ing as the
lace Mau-
ston man-
n Monday
F A Pts
85 20 81
58 23 65
59 25 61
68 34 60
52 27 56
55 41 48
27 26 43
65 43 40
35 49 37
39 50 36
28 40 34
35 48 33
30 40 32
25 42 31
25 50 31
36 57 30
29 44 28
28 48 27
28 56 27
23 47 20

