



LEOPARDS TO GO FOR THE KILL!



Newbies Ajax face uphill battle

By MTHOKOZISI MKHONZA

IT is now or never for National First Division (NFD) runners-up Black Leopards.

Lidoda Duvha kick off the much anticipated Premier Soccer League (PSL) promotion/relegation play-offs tomorrow with a home fixture against dejected Ajax Cape Town, who finished 15th in the top flight.

The match is set to take place at Thohoyandou Stadium at 7.30pm.

Having failed to win the play-offs three times in four seasons, Leopards have vowed to do whatever it takes to get results.

The players know that promotion to the PSL will change their lives drastically.

Having seen teams who finish in 15th place in the PSL struggle to retain their top flight status in the play-offs, Ajax will face an uphill battle in the three-team mini-

league against Leopards and Jomo Cosmos, who both know the drill because they have been in the play-offs more than once.

University of Pretoria, Chippa United, Vasco Da Gama who are now known as Stellenbosch FC, former PSL giants Moroka Swallows and Santos have all failed to retain their top flight status via the play-offs.

Furthermore, Ajax will be part of the play-offs for the first time.

Leopards coach Joel Masutha says they are not dwelling on the past – this is another chance for them and they must make use of it.

He said: “They (Ajax) have quality but our players know what needs to be done.

“We have been here before and now the outcome must be different. The first match could determine our journey in these play-offs.”

Masutha confirmed that their leading goal poacher Mwape Musonda, who sustained an injury in their last league game against Cosmos, would not be available for the Ajax game.

“Musonda is doing well, he is training but not with the team. He will only start playing in our second match.”

The NFD Under-23 rule, which states that clubs in the league should have five players who are aged under 23 and eligible to represent the country, and that two of them must be on the field of play at all times during a match, does not apply in the play-offs.

Joel Masutha
Photo by Backpagepix

