



Paez brace saves Chiefs



OVER THE KEEPER: Mduuzi Nkosi of Acornbush United is challenged by Kaizer Chiefs' goalkeeper Itumeleng Khune during their Nedbank Cup last 16 clash at Kabokweni Stadium yesterday. Chiefs rallied from being embarrassingly 1-0 down at half-time to beat the ABC Motsepe League club 2-1.

PICTURE: BACKPAGEPIX

Substitute scores twice to help Amakhosi advance to the quarter-finals of the Cup

MATSHELANE MAMABOLO
Kabokweni stadium

Acornbush United (1) 1
Sidumo 44
Kaizer Chiefs (0) 2
Paez 78, 85

HE MAY HAVE been a journeyman whose goals to clubs ratio made a mockery of his position as a striker before he joined Amakhosi but with this brace yesterday, Venezuelan Gustavo Paez went a long way in silencing his detractors.

With yet another embarrassing defeat to a lower division outfit looming large for Chiefs in the Nedbank Cup, Paez came off the bench to save the day.

Two goals in seven minutes against a 10-man Acornbush side that was fast beginning to dream

they could add their name on to that glorious list – which includes AmaTuks, FC Cape Town and Baroka FC – of teams to have knocked Chiefs out of the country's premier club knockout competition, made Paez the hero.

First he capitalised on a defensive blunder by the Acornbush centrebacks, who collided as they attempted to clear the ball. The goal was just reward for Chiefs' persistent attacking from the hour mark as Acornbush went into their shells.

Once cracked open, the ABC Motsepe League outfit was always going to fall apart and Chiefs kept on going at them.

The winner duly came when another substitute William Thwala forced his way from the left and delivered the ball into the box. Paez hit it first time to send the net rattling and the Chiefs followers, who had been

stunned into silence, celebrating their side's march into the quarter-final stage.

Yet, for a long time, it had looked as though the third-tier outfit would pull off a remarkable victory that would set them up nicely for the upcoming play-offs for promotion into the National First Division (NFD).

Having managed to take the lead just before half-time, despite being reduced to 10 men when Sandy Nyathi was sent off for a dangerous tackle on Erick Mathoho, Acornbush held their own against Chiefs.

Steve Komphela, aware he had to go for broke, sacrificed fullbacks Sibusiso Khumalo and Kgotso Moleko for attackers Paez and Thwala and the result were immediately evident.

Their attacking approach was a far cry from their earlier display during which they allowed

their hosts to get into their danger zone through long punts from the back.

The home side created the first clear-cut chance of the game when they dispossessed Willard Katsande in the heart of midfield and released Mduuzi Nkosi. The midfielder did well to go around Itumeleng Khune but then showed his lack of experience when he rushed his shot and directed the ball wide off goal when walking it into the open net was easier.

Two minutes later it was Chiefs who got the chance on the break but Joseph Molongane had his shot saved by goalkeeper Sibusiso Masuku after he'd beaten two defenders.

When referee Chris Harrison sent off Nyathi, it appeared the ABC Motsepe League outfit were in trouble. Instead, it was they who scored courtesy of their long-

ball approach. A ball sent long to the left found Mduuzi Nkosi and he delivered an immediate cross that at first seemed innocuous only for Rhulani Sidumo to rush in from the right and headed it powerfully past Khune at the near post.

But then midway through the first half, Chiefs pressed the homeside into their own half and while they seemed to be doing well to keep Amakhosi a bay, it was only a matter of time before they cracked. It was largely thanks to Masuku that Acornbush held on for as long as they did – the Man of the Match denying Chiefs on numerous occasions with some splendid saves.

But there was very little he could do to stop Paez from ending himself to the Amakhosi faithful, who must now no longer remember that he came to their club on the back of an unimpressive scoring record with numerous clubs.

