



Ngoma: late bloomer at the top of his game



Left idle at Pirates, today he has three nominations in forthcoming PSL awards

KGOMOTSO SETHUSHA

IT IS often said that for every wonder kid who failed to live up to expectation, there is another who goes on to realise his full potential.

At 27, Cape Town City's Aubrey Ngoma is a PSL late bloomer, who like many others may well have fallen through the cracks of the country's poor scouting and development systems.

Yet Ngoma can count himself among players who have realised their full potential, notwithstanding their ripe age.

Frustrated by the lack of playing opportunities at Orlando Pirates five years ago, Ngoma joined to University of Pretoria on loan without much of a reputation but a pair of boots and hope.

"I don't have regrets about my time at Pirates. I learnt much and built up my character," Ngoma said.

A transfer to Mpumalanga Black Aces three years ago and now he has been nominated in three categories in the upcoming PSL awards.

This after being included in the last two Bafana Bafana camps, including the current Cosafa Cup squad.

"I'm honoured to be nominated for those major awards," he said.

"It shows if you put in the hard work, you get the results and the recognition. I'm very much looking forward to the night of the awards.

"It's been a good season for me and the club. I'm just happy to be among the nominees." Ngoma won the Telkom Knockout Cup with City, a fairly new team after a franchise sale changed the identity of Black Aces early last season.

It got better for Ngoma after he received his second Bafana call-up, currently in camp for Cosafa Cup in Rustenburg. His first came for the Africa Cup of Nations qualifier against Nigeria, but he had to

wait for his opportunity and made his international debut against Zambia in a friendly earlier this month.

"It's

always an honour to be called up to represent the nation," Ngoma said.

"When you have to represent the country you must take it as a privilege and honour because there are a whole lot of players who could be chosen, but you were given the opportunity." Ngoma has formed a formidable combination with Lebogang Manyama at club level, scoring 21 goals between them in helping City finish in third place, as well as clinch the Telkom Knockout title. He will miss Manyama in the Cosafa Cup, who was omitted from the makeshift squad.

But this could well be Ngoma's opportunity to follow in the footsteps of Teko Modise and morph into an international player.

kgomotosos@thenew-age.co.za

LATE BLOOMER: PSL Awards nominee Aubrey Ngoma is finally living up to his potential. PICTURE: GALLO IMAGES

