



Football requires more than just talent

MANY talented footballers who have had the opportunity to reach their full potential have attributed their success to their consistent values and characteristics required to make it as professional athletes.

Such talent includes COPA Coca-Cola graduate, Khulekani Kubheka, who was unearthed in the global school's competition back in 2014 when playing for Clapham High School in Pretoria.

The young Mamelodi Sundowns player believes that talent, accompanied by education and quality values, are the key components of a complete and modern-day footballer.

The 20-year-old, who recently earned his first senior national team call up after representing South Africa in three FIFA World Cup competitions, shared his views on what gave him the edge against thousands of young and aspiring footballers.

"Talent alone is never enough. There are thousands of talented footballers who, at times, are more skilled than you in all areas of the game.

"What truly sets you apart as a footballer is supporting your natural talent with essential values that must be exercised both on and off the field," says Kubheka.

The Mamelodi Sundowns reserve side goalkeeper says the two years he played at the annual COPA tournament moulded him to be the footballer and person that he is today.

"Besides affording us an opportunity to compete against some of the best schools, the COPA tournament instilled values such as discipline, hard work, patience and fair play in us.

"These are values that you can carry outside the football pitch. We were also encouraged to take education very seriously, as a football career can come to an end at any given time," says Kubheka, who is currently studying towards a BComm Degree in Transport and Logistics Management at the University of South Africa.

With the aim of ensuring that such values are thoroughly instilled, Coca-Cola introduced the COPA Future Stars camp, which brings together the best performing players selected during the Provincial and National Finals round of the competition.

The players are invited to an intensive week-long training camp at the High-Performance Centre in Pretoria.

Spearheaded by football legends, Jabulani Mendu, Simba Marumo and Selekedi Mogale, the Future Stars exposes the invited players to some of the country's best life coaches.

Besides getting a taste of life as a professional footballer at the world-class sports facility, players also get to spend a lot of time with various industry experts who advise and instil important values required to make it as a well-grounded professional athlete such as Kubheka.



KHULEKANI Kubheka at training with the national team | MUZI NTOMBELA BackpagePix