

Barrier breaker has big dreams

Akhona Makalima, who made history four-year's-ago by being the first woman to referee a men's professional football match in South Africa, is dreaming big.

She is hoping to be given an opportunity by FIFA to referee at a World Cup tournament, one day.

28 February 2015, turned out to be a double celebration for Makalima, who resides in the Eastern Cape.

It was her mother's birthday and that day Makalima made her debut as a referee in the Premier Soccer League (PSL).

She controlled the University of Pretoria and Mpumalanga Black Aces match.

It was a life changing experience for the football fanatic. After the match, Makalima conceded that minutes before she blew the whistle to signal the start of the game, she had butterflies in her stomach.

She said she had reflected on the words "What? A woman referee at a men's professional football fixture. This is surreal."

It was, however not a case of being thrown into the deep end, because in August 2011, Makalima obtained her referee's certificate from the SA Football Association.

The cherry on the top for the barrier breaker was becoming the first South African woman to be certified as a referee by FIFA.

In achieving that, Makalima had fulfilled FIFA's rigorous sprint and endurance criteria. After making her debut as a referee, where the University of Pretoria defeated Mpumalanga Black Aces

2-1, social media was buzzing. A number of people of both sexes complimented Makalima and encouraged her to continue to raise the bar.

She has over the years done that and has



Akhona Makalima made history on 28 February 2015 when she became South Africa's first woman to referee a men's professional football match

refereed hundreds of Premier Soccer League, women's football and Africa Women Cup of Nations fixtures.

Makalima is determined to see more women referee men's professional football fixtures.

To get the ball rolling, she formed a programme called Inter-Refs where girls from age seven and onwards are enlightened about football rules.

She said: "When a girl excels in sports, they will do the same academically. Being involved in sport not only keeps girls fit but also does wonders to her outlook of life. I can only do so much in my lifetime.

I initiated the programme so that I can pass the baton on to other women in the future. I also had a tough childhood but did not allow the obstacles to remain obstacles.

"There is a future for women to become referees. Women must seize the opportunities which come their way with both hands. We have the power to become the shining lights and role models of the future."

QUEENSBURGH
GUNS & SPORT

	GIRSAN MC 28 R6999		GLOCK 17,19 R8999
	GLOCK 25 R7495	 PEPPER SPRAY R69	

Shop RP08, Malvern Park Shopping Centre
Nivesh Singh: 031 464 8720