



Embattled Madibaz have two matches left to avoid relegation



George Byron
byrong@fisoiblackstar.co.za

THE battered and bruised Madibaz must put the ugly crowd scenes that marred their Varsity Cup clash against Maties behind them as they fight a battle to avoid relegation, coach David Maidza said.

After losing against the table-topping Maroon Machine, the Madibaz have plummeted to bottom of the log with only two matches left to play.

The Port Elizabeth side have lost all six of their opening games in the competition.

Protesters forced referee Paul

Mente to call the match off early in the second half after the Maties had opened up a healthy 19-0 lead.

A Varsity Cup spokesperson said the Stellenbosch side would take four points for the win despite the game being abandoned.

That victory secured a home semi-final for the Stellenbosch side who have swept all before them this season.

The result left the Madibaz at the bottom of the log after Tuks leapfrogged them after a 54-26 win over Cut Kias.

The players were forced to leave to field via a back entrance after

protesters gathered in the main stand where the dressing rooms are situated.

"It was not what we wanted for a game and it was not in the spirit of rugby or the university," Maidza said.

"Thankfully, all the players are safe."

He said he would not like to comment on the crowd violence which erupted, and he would leave that to the university's administrators.

"From my point of view, I am here for rugby and that is what I am employed for. It was an unfortunate incident."

"Now the Madibaz just want to focus on the last two games we have to play in this competition against Shim-

las and Tuks. The team now have to try and get a win out of the last two matches, and that is our main aim.

"We are fighting hard as we showed in the first half against Maties. The team want to steer away from the controversy that happened on Monday night."

"The Madibaz just want to focus on rugby."

"We do not want to get relegated and that is our main aim at the moment," Maidza said.

The power of the dominant Maties scrum was evident from the kickoff and the home team were put under early pressure.

After six minutes the Maties were over for their first try when powerful lock Johan Momsen drove through the Madibaz defence.

Maties scored a second try in the 23rd minute when scrumhalf Logan Boonzaaier sprinted away from the Madibaz defence to catapult the visitors into a 12-0 lead.

Maties scored a third try on the stroke of half time when wing Munier Hartzenberg was on hand to rounded off a flowing backline move.

After six matches the Madibaz are bottom of the log with three points with Cut Kias (six points) and Tuks (seven points) above them in the

standings. The struggling Madibaz now have their backs firmly to the wall as they fight to avoid dropping down to the lower Varsity Shield competition.

Every second year the team that finishes last in the Varsity Cup competition is automatically relegated to the Varsity Shield while the team that finishes first in the Varsity Shield gains automatic promotion to the Varsity Cup.

The Varsity Cup team finishing second from bottom will play a promotion/relegation match against the Varsity Shield team that finishes second from the top.