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—PAGE 7



INSIDE SHOOT TOMORROW
SOCCER STARS TURN TO SONG

WIN RUGBY TICKETS TODAY
—PAGE 16

Matfield heads back to Bulls?

An offer of R3.5 million would make the Bok lock the highest-earning player in SA

JOSHUA'S STRUGGLE



Netcare 911 personnel ready Joshua before putting him in an ambulance for emergency transport from Johannesburg to Pretoria.

PICTURE: NETCARE 911

Ambulance ride for injured baby chimp

HANTI OTTO

Covered in a space blanket, pipes down his throat and life support machines keeping him alive, little Joshua the chimpanzee was rushed from the Netcare Milpark hospital in Johannesburg in an ambulance to the ICU at the University of Pretoria's faculty of veterinary science at Onderstepoort yesterday.

Fighting for his life, this 18-month-old primate had apparently fallen victim to bigger chimps in his family group at the Johannesburg zoo early in the day.

Joshua was in a stable condition last night, but his prognosis was not very good.

Dr Leon Venter, veterinarian and anaesthetist at the faculty, said: "We have induced him into a coma as he is on a ventilator. There is swelling on the brain that prevents the chimpanzee from breathing on his own."

Louise Gordon, executive



Little Joshua on life support at the Tuks Faculty of Veterinary Science.

PICTURE: VETERINARY SCIENCE FACULTY

manager of marketing and education at the Johannesburg zoo, said Joshua, who was born and raised at the zoo, shared an enclosure with other chimps.

"The family group includes adults and baby Joshua. It appears that two males got into a fight early (yesterday) morning and Joshua got caught up in it. He was badly injured," Gordon said.

When zookeepers found him, they immediately separated the baby from the others and took him to the zoo's vet hospital.

"The vet suspected a head injury, but they are not equipped to do a brain scan. So they rushed Joshua to the Netcare Milpark hospital," Gordon said.

Nick Dollman, spokesperson for Netcare 911, said the hospital took X-rays and scans, revealing serious head injuries.

Medication was administered to the young chimp and he was placed on life support machinery.

"Joshua was taken to the faculty at Onderstepoort in an ambulance as it was the safest way of transporting him in this emergency," Dollman explained.

En route the chimp was monitored by a paramedic, a trauma nurse and the zoo's vet.

Venter said last night Joshua was unconscious when he arrived at the faculty. He had concussion, bite marks and swelling on the brain.

"We will take him off the anaesthetics by midnight to see if he can breathe on his own. If he can, it is a good sign. It doesn't look good, but one never knows with wild animals. Sometimes they can surprise you with their survival urge," he said.

Venter said he would stay with Joshua throughout the night.

Dollman said afterwards their equipment and ambulance were thoroughly sterilised and prepared for transporting humans.

"In our profession we see a lot of sadness, so we are glad we could help. We hope this has a happy ending," he said.

Gordon quietly remarked: "We are extremely grateful for all the assistance."

VATA NGOBENI
RUGBY WRITER

Springbok lock and former Bulls captain Victor Matfield will become the highest paid rugby player in the country if he accepts an 11th-hour revised offer from the Blue Bulls Company to return to Loftus Versfeld.

Matfield stands to earn in the region of R3.5 million per year over a period of three years.

However, standing in the way of Matfield's return to South Africa from his present job at French club Toulon is a lucrative offer from English club Northampton, who have put a staggering £375 000 (about R5.6 million) a year offer on the table.

Matfield now has until midnight on Saturday to make up his mind on whether to return to his homeland or brave three years in unfavourable conditions in Europe.

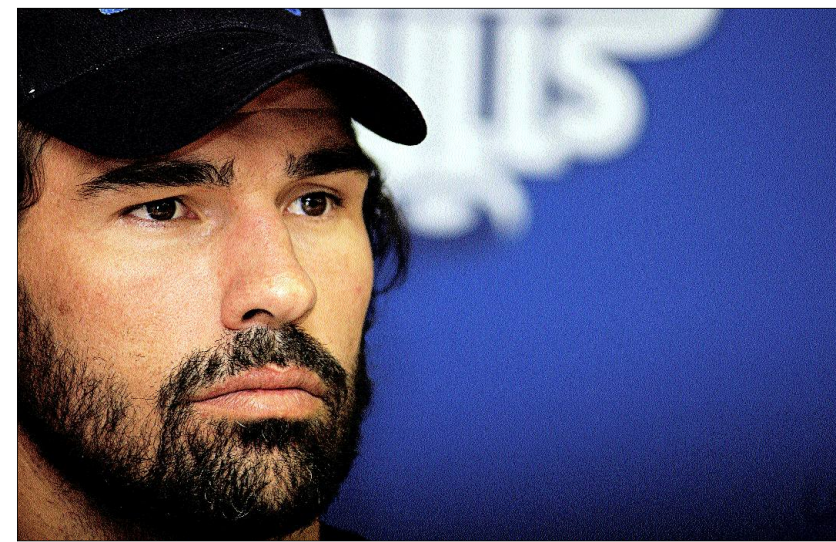
Staying in Europe could also spell the end of his future Springbok aspirations.

Blue Bulls Company business and communications manager Ian Schwartz was reluctant to divulge details of the new offer nor was he willing to comment on the Bulls chances of getting Matfield to sign on the dotted line.

"I cannot comment on anything to do with money because this is a confidential matter."

"It could be good or bad news, we'll just have to wait," said Schwartz.

If Matfield accepts the Bulls offer,



Victor Matfield has until Saturday to decide.

then he will stay in South Africa until 2011, ensuring his availability for the Springboks beyond next year's British and Irish Lions tour to South Africa.

A source close to Matfield is confident that he would return to join the Bulls when his jackpot six-month contract with French second division club Toulon comes to an end in July.

"He definitely wants to come back. He wants to rectify what is going wrong at the moment with the Bulls and wants to be part of the new era," said the source.

Meanwhile, the Blue Bulls Company lambasted Springbok lock Bakkies Botha for lodging a complaint at the Labour Court to have his contract declared null and void, and

also took a swipe at Bernie Habana, Botha's agent and father to Springbok and Bulls wing Bryan Habana.

The Blue Bulls Company's statement has questioned the ethics of Botha and Habana Sr in breaching the International Rugby Board's regulation by negotiating with another club while Botha was still under contract with the Blue Bulls Company.

The Blue Bulls Company said they would enforce the agreement between them and Botha as it was the extension of Botha's contract that had led to the Blue Bulls Company's failure to retain the services of impressive locks Adriaan Foncke (Stormers), Cliff Milton (Stade Francais) and Francois van Schouwenburg (Toulon).

SuperSport up due to Downs

SuperSport United regained the lead in the Premier Soccer League title race last night thanks largely to their arch-rivals and city neighbours Mamelodi Sundowns.

United drew their game against Santos in Cape Town 0-0, but it was the outgoing defending champions Sundowns who sparkled as they beat Ajax Cape Town 2-0 at the Super Stadium in Atteridgeville.

That win meant that Ajax were knocked off the top of the league table and replaced by United.

The win propelled Sundowns from sixth place to fourth on the table, but they cannot catch the leaders.

Sundowns have won the league title twice in succession, but had a poor start to the season meaning they now relinquish the title.

But the title could stay in the city should United win it. — Sports Reporter

See PAGE 16

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Bills signal demise of Scorpions as NPA unit

ANGELA QUINTAL
POLITICAL EDITOR

The cabinet yesterday approved two bills that will see the end of the Scorpions as an independent unit under the National Prosecuting Authority and will instead give birth to a new organised crime fighting machine in the police.

They are the General Law Amendment Bill and the National Prosecuting Amendment Bill.

The new unit, however, will not have the power to initiate criminal investigations, nor will it be staffed with prosecutors working hand in glove with investigators, as was the case with the Scorpions.

In a statement, that sought to downplay the practical effects of the bills that will spell the death of

Scorpions as a unit, cabinet spokesperson Themba Maseko, echoed the official line that the draft laws were aimed at strengthening the country's capability to fight organised crime.

Ironically, the decision reverses a previous cabinet decision in which it approved the Khampepe Commission Report's recommendations, that the Scorpions remain in the NPA and not be relocated to the police.

However, an ANC resolution in Polokwane in December calling for the Scorpions to be disbanded put paid to that.

Instead, two new bills were drafted, in line with the ANC resolution although the government has sought to play it as part of its wider strategy in revamping the criminal justice system.

The bills will now be tabled in parliament and will be processed by the National Assembly's safety and security and justice committees sitting jointly. The committees will call for public submissions and will hold public hearings and the ANC hopes that the bills will be processed by both houses of parliament before the end of July.

Maseko confirmed that the Khampepe Report would be gazetted on Monday and said it had laid the basis for "the analysis and review of the criminal justice system".

Meanwhile, the cabinet also approved the "smart ID card project" which has been in the offing for years. It will replace the green ID book over a period of 5 to 8 years.

"The key advantages of the

smart card will include secure and reliable identification," Maseko said.

The project will be piloted by December 2008 and the smart card will be introduced in 2009.

Earlier this year, Home Affairs director-general Mavuso Msimang accused parliament's home affairs committee of potentially compromising the integrity of the tender process, by accepting hospitality from one of the companies in Germany who is expected to bid for the contract. The company had paid for the land arrangements of three MPs who had visited Germany on a fact-finding missions.

Last month, Msimang told a meeting of business people that the new smart card system formed part of the strategy to clean up a depart-

ment beset by corruption related to the issuing of IDs.

Msimang said that ahead of a formal tendering process, the department would scrutinise requests from 25 information technology companies that had expressed interest in supplying the cards, and that this process was still open to other companies.

The pilot project could be carried out using a sample of pensioners to see how the cards work. His department was also investigating how countries such as China had rolled out the system in three years.

"The one major question to be answered, though, is how far the government is prepared to subsidise these cards, as their production cost is quite high."

See PAGE 2

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