

# Mosimane upbeat despite MTN8 loss

MARK GLEESON  
in Pretoria

PITSO Mosimane looked to take positives out of a disappointing showing from champions Mamelodi Sundowns in their first game of the new season after being bundled out of the MTN8 by Platinum Stars at Loftus Versfeld on Saturday.

Following the 2-1 defeat, the Sundowns coach praised the debut of winger Lindokuhle Mbatha, although he missed a golden chance to get his new team back in the game.

He said Bongani Zungu would continue as a holding midfielder and predicted that new signing Bongani Ntuli would go on to play for Bafana.

Mosimane defended the touchy issue of Sundowns' continued signing of new players as Platinum Stars player and Botswana international Mogakolodi Ngele are poised to be added to the expensive squad.

"Sundowns is an ambitious team. We will always strengthen the team and if there is a possibility of acquiring good talent, we'll make sure we try and get talent into the team.

"Obviously we can only play 11 on the pitch and that doesn't guarantee you'll win everything. If you don't take your chances, it doesn't matter how many players you've signed."

Mosimane, whose side start their league defence at home against Maritzburg United on Friday, praised

Mbatha, the only one of his new signings he has used from the start.

He said of Ntuli: "He's a powerful striker. I believe with time he'll play for Bafana Bafana, because Bafana doesn't have a kind of player like that in the box."

Zungu, preferred to Hlompho Kekana in the midfield holding role, did not stamp his authority on the game. But the coach added: "He had been playing in that position for much of the last season and did a fantastic job."

Mosimane was magnanimous in congratulating Platinum Stars. But he cautioned that it was still early days: "This is still pre-season. Week six. We need time."



**HALLELUJAH:** Platinum Stars players celebrate one of their two goals in their MTN8 quarterfinal match against Mamelodi Sundowns at Loftus Stadium on Saturday. Stars won the game 2-1. Picture: LEE WARREN/GALLO IMAGES

## SA culture a hurdle for women

TEAM SA's final Commonwealth medal haul will be 40 — better than Delhi 2010, comparable to Melbourne 2006, and offering some encouraging signs.

But there are also some discouraging signs, and the most alarming is the enormous gender inequality in our medal haul. Forty percent of the team sent to Glasgow were women, but of our 40 medals, only eight were won by women.

That's 20%, and it is by far the lowest tally of any of the top 10 medal-winning nations in Glasgow.

It gets worse: In the medal-heavy Olympic sports of swimming and athletics, we won 21 medals, but only a single silver medal went to a female athlete (Sunette Viljoen in the javelin). Also, our men reached 14 individual swimming finals, compared to only one SA woman.

This is an alarming disparity that has to be addressed.

Understanding the problem requires understanding the journey taken by elite athletes to arrive at the podium.

The path begins with being exposed to a sport, and being inspired by it. This interest must then be fed by the encouragement and expertise of coaches, parents, teachers and peers.

The path then continues, relying on opportunities to train, facilities, exposure to competition, expertise of coaches and innate/genetic factors, which either limit or enable the young athlete to pursue sport as a career.

So, when a country cannot produce athletes, these paths must be interrogated — they are either blocked by barriers, have too many exit points, or the best potential athlete was not chosen to embark on the path.

Importantly, in the absence of a

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structured, strategic system to find athletes and facilitate this high-performance journey, which we unfortunately lack in SA, a country becomes increasingly vulnerable to broader environmental, cultural and social forces.

It is here, I believe, that the primary problem for SA's women exists.

It is not the only issue, and to blame only this problem would be false, because Nigeria and Cameroon, who arguably face similar socio-cultural gender challenges, owed 58% and 100% of their medals to women respectively.

This suggests that genetic factors and sporting system issues influence success.

But the challenges faced by women in South Africa, already documented for example in the corporate sector, cannot be ignored, since they are just as likely to exist in sport.

Given that success cannot happen without opportunities, a significant barrier may exist from the onset of the path.

The big drivers of opportunity inequality in sport are social and cultural factors. Colleagues of mine researching South Africans' attitudes to physical activity have already shown that, for cultural reasons, women are actively discouraged from even being physically active, let alone pursuing a career in elite sport. It is,

sadly, the propagation of the stereotype that "a woman's place is in the ...", except in South Africa, it is definitely NOT in stadiums, sports teams and on podiums.

There is precedence for this — Kenyan men began winning medals in 1964, but it took 32 years for women to join the triumph. That was largely because women were frowned upon for trying, and the wheels of change had to turn. They did, and now Kenya's women win as many medals as their men.

Given the socio-cultural barrier to entry, I suspect we simply do not get the early engagement with sport from South African girls. And then, even if we do, conflicting forces pull women away from sport as they mature, because it is not financially and culturally attractive to become an elite athlete.

Whatever the causes, and I have speculated what they might be in this article, they have to be explored further. This is not a sporting problem — our medal failures are always a symptom of broader issues, and in this particular case, those issues have ramifications that go beyond sport and medals, into the health and well-being of half our population.

The solution lies not only with the Department of Sport, but also with the Department of Health and the Department of Basic Education. The question is, do they have the appetite?

### TV HIGHLIGHTS

**TODAY**  
**Baseball:** Major League, New York Yankees vs Detroit Tigers at 1am (tomorrow) on SS2  
**Soccer:** Varsity games, UWC vs Kovsies at 4.30pm on SS4/SSSelect, Tuks vs UJ at 6.45pm on SSSelect; Durban U19 tournament, Boca Juniors vs Roma at 3pm, KZN Academy vs Benfica at 5pm, both on SS9  
**Tennis:** ATP Rogers Cup, from Montreal, at 5pm on SS6