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SA's top little titans go for goal

Young soccer talent will come forward in under-12 Danone Nations Cup finals

THEO GARRUN

THE NATIONAL finals of the under-12 Danone Nations Cup competition take place at Reiger Park today.

The nine provincial champion schools have emerged from a process that began in April and involved more than 400 schools in the early stages.

The winners of today's play-off tournament will represent South Africa at the world finals of the competition in London in September.

The last of the provincial play-offs took place last weekend, also in Reiger Park, and Kgomoco Primary School, from Sharpeville in the Sedibeng district, walked off with the Gauteng title.

They beat Johannesburg's Basa Tutorial College 2-0 in the final to clinch the title, and with it the right to return to the same venue today to meet the other eight provincial champions in the competition for the national title.

Their goals were scored by Mafole Mofokeng and Siso Motaung.

It was cold and blustery in Reiger Park on Saturday, but that did nothing to dampen the enthusiasm of the eight teams in action.

There was some excellent football played and a feature of the day was the fact that there were regulation-time results in all but two of the 15-minute games played.

The only sour note was the disqualification of two of the team for age group and legal player transgressions.

Results

Basa Tutorial 0 Sonqoba 3
Makgwananeng 0 Lukholweni 2
Isiqalo 3 Manamelong 0
Tsakane 0 Kgomoco 1
Basa Tutorial 2 Isiqalo 1
Makgwananeng 0 Tsakane 2
Sonqoba 2 Manamelong 0
Lukholweni 1 Kgomoco 0
Manamelong 1 Basa Tutorial 1
(Basa Tutorial won on penalties)
Kgomoco 1 Makgwananeng 0
Isiqalo 0 Sonqoba 3

Tsakane 0 Lukholweni 0
(Lukholweni won on penalties)
Final: Kgomoco 2 Basa Tutorial 0.

The nine participating provincial champion schools are:

Gauteng – Kgomoco, Limpopo – Batwane, Mpumalanga – Danlye, North West – Tlaseng, Free State – Monamadi, KwaZulu-Natal – Siphumelele, Northern Cape – Rietrivier, Eastern Cape – Nkumzimbini, Western Cape – AH Barnard

● Kgomoco's key midfielder Romeo Gawu will miss today's action due to a foot injury he sustained last weekend, writes Mbongiseni Buthelezi.

Kgomoco team manager Tebobo Shale says the team will, however, be ready for the games over the weekend. They have been working hard at training this week for the national tournament.

"We will be looking for a replacement for Gawu from within the team," he says. Gawu was injured playing for his Sharpeville local club team over the weekend.

"We will not be looking outside of the squad for a replacement.

"In this competition you are allowed only 10 players on the field, including the goalkeeper, so we have enough players in the squad.

"We will, however, miss Romeo as he is our most effective attacking midfielder."

Sable says they will be relying on their goalkeeper, Katleho Mofokeng, to see them through to the next stage.

"He has been the key in our qualifying matches," he says. "Many of our games were decided on penalties and he has stopped a number of those.

"We will also be turning to Sabata Radebe, our captain and midfielder."

Shale says they are pleased the tournament is in Boksburg.

"It's home ground advantage for us, and we will be busying in our supporters from the school to support the team on the day."



PICTURES: THEO GARRUN

SLIDING IN: Youngsters in action at the Gauteng play-offs for the Danone Nations Cup finals this weekend.

