

Pitso chases history inside Wydad's backyard

Ahly coach could become first man to win three successive Champs Leagues

By **Marc Strydom**

Al Ahly coach Pitso Mosimane says his team have every belief they can upset Wydad Athletic at their home ground in tonight's CAF Champions League final at Stade Mohamed V in Casablanca, Morocco.

Mosimane said he knows it will be tough to beat the 2017 Champions League winners and 2019-19 runners-up at their 45,000-seat home venue (9pm SA time) as Ahly go in search of a third-straight title in the continent's premier club competition.

Morocco has been seen in the past as influential in Confederation of African Football decision-making. The choice of venue for the Champions League final to the north African powerhouse for a second year running, made at the semifinal stage in May after

Senegal withdrew its bid, was criticised by Mosimane then.

In his pre-match press conference in Casablanca on Sunday the coach did not want to get drawn into complaining about meeting Wydad on their home ground, saying it "would be nice to win it here".

"We will play the cup final where it's supposed to be played. And the cup final is here, and we are here," Mosimane said.

"If you are going to look for other things outside that it's not going to be good for your preparations. So we prepare for the match and try to play the match on the pitch in the 90 minutes.

"It does not mean that the external factors do not play a role, but you can do better without talking or worrying about decisions that are not in your control and that are in the control of the people who



Al Ahly coach Pitso Mosimane seen here at his team's training session, before they departed for Morocco where they face Wydad in the CAF Champions League final tonight. /WEAM MOSTAFA / BACKPAGEPIX

make them.

"We are football people. The rest is politics. And it would be nice to win it here. I think it can be historic if we win it here."

Mosimane's relationship with Wydad is a love-hate one as the fans of the club once chanted the name of the then-Sundowns coach at Stade Mohamed V after a 0-0 Champi-

ons League group stage draw in December 2019.

"Morocco has been good to me. It's not the first time I'm here," the coach said on Sunday.

"I'm one of the four coaches who was invited to do the CAF Fifa Pro Licence in Rabat, with Walid Regragui, who is sitting here next to me interpreting for me; with the coach of Raja Casablanca [Rachid

Taoussi], who was playing against me [in the quarterfinals].

"So I feel at home. It's just a different game to come to. I'm welcomed here so I'm happy to be here."

Mosimane is seeking to become the first coach to win three Champions League titles in succession in Monday's final.

Winger scores winner against Liverpool to send trophy to Madrid

Paris - Vinicius Jr crowned his breakout season by scoring the goal that won Real Madrid a record-extending 14th European Cup title with a 1-0 win over Liverpool in Saturday's final.

It was the perfect ending to the fairytale of an improbable hero who a year ago was tormented by criticism from media and fans who were questioning if the Brazilian youngster was worth the 45 million euros Real Madrid paid Flamengo when he was 17.

Vinicius was 20 last season, struggling with his decision making and finishing, having scored only six goals with seven assists in the 49 games he had played, the inconsistency in his performances clouding his future at the club.

His low point was in October 2020 when team mate Karim Benzema was caught on camera giving a damning opinion of Vinicius to defender Ferland Mendy during halftime against Borussia Moenchengladbach in the Champions League.

With the Brazilian standing only metres away in the tun-

Vinicius crowns breakout season as Real final hero

nel, Benzema whispered to compatriot Mendy in French "Don't pass to him, he is playing against us", blasting his strike partner's display in the first half as his side were trailing 1-0.

Vinicius fell out of favor with coach Zinedine Zidane and hit rock bottom but then Real

lured back Carlo Ancelotti for a second spell last June following the departure of Zidane.

Ancelotti saw a diamond in the rough in Vinicius and immediately made a personal priority of developing the Brazilian youngster and putting him in the best position to succeed.

With his calm guidance, Ancelotti gave Vini the confidence he needed to flourish.

One year later, Vinicius is a transformed man, an international superstar who scored 22 goals with 20 assists in a season during which he was

an intrinsic part of Real's success as they won the LaLiga-Champions League double.

Always with a huge smile and an energy that has made him a fan favorite in the Spanish capital, mainly with the young fans, Vinicius' persistence has gradually earned him the respect and trust of the dressing room and his blooming relationship with Benzema is one of the greatest comeback stories of recent years. - Reuters



Real Madrid's Vinicius Junior celebrates with the trophy after winning the Champions League against Liverpool at Stade de France, Saint-Denis near Paris, France. /DYLAN MARTINEZ / REUTERS

NKANGALA DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY



NOTICE OF COUNCIL MEETINGS TO BE HELD IN THE 2022/2023 FINANCIAL YEAR

Notice is hereby given in terms of Section 19 of the Local Government: Municipal Systems Act, Act 32 of 2000, (MSA) as amended, that the Council meetings of Nkangala District Municipality for the 2022/2023 financial year will be held as follows:

DATE	TIME
27 July 2022	10h00
31 August 2022	10h00
28 September 2022	10h00
26 October 2022	10h00
23 November 2022	10h00
07 December 2022	10h00
25 January 2023	10h00
22 February 2023	10h00
29 March 2023	10h00
26 April 2023	10h00
31 May 2023	10h00
28 June 2023	10h00

Kindly note that the above Special Council meeting is open to the public in terms of Section 20 of the MSA and will be held virtually through Microsoft Teams and NDM Facebook page in accordance with the Disaster Management Act, 2002 (Act 57 of 2002) Regulations relating to the Covid-19 national lockdown rules pending the amendment of the Covid-19 Regulations

Enquiries on the above notice can be referred to the General Manager: Corporate Services:- Ms. N N Ngwenya, Manager: Corporate Services: Mr. T A Segoane at: 013 249 - 2012/ 2078 or email to segoaneta@nkangaladm.gov.za/mahlangusa@nkangaladm.gov.za and/or mathibemk@nkangaladm.gov.za

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