

African Bank Limited press release

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Raise your hands for the underdog

Thursday was a big day for a group of young U10, U11, U12 and U14 African Bank Footy players from Mfuleni. They nervously climbed on the buses and made their way to the leafy suburbs of Rondebosch to play football at Bishops Diocesan College against one of the most prestigious schools in the country, Bishops Prep. The players, who have been practicing for weeks in anticipation of this clash, kept their cool, quickly adapting to the high level of competition and managed to deliver a beautiful display of good sportsmanship.

The results were excellent, with the young African Bank teams winning two matches, drawing one, and only losing one. In fact Bishops U10 coach, Grant Desousa, was so impressed with the African Bank players, he promised to include them in future tournaments and offered to collect soccer boots and shin pads for the teams. This will make a huge difference to the morale of these young players.

“We are so proud of the boys,” says Kennedy Dembetembe, African Bank’s National CSI Manager. “What began five years ago as a dream to improve the lives of underprivileged children through sport has now developed into an incredibly uplifting programme and these young players are the result.”

For over 5 000 underprivileged primary school children where sport is not on offer and 500 youngsters who play football on community-based fields, the Western Cape Footy Project, supported by African Bank, is just what they need. “The Western Cape Footy soccer, coaching and development project is now in its 4th year and has been fortunate to have built a good relationship with PSL club Ajax Cape Town. It provides opportunities for young girls and boys to develop their physical and social abilities through football. Leagues and tournaments are set up throughout the communities and life skills are taught before each practice in an effort to stem the youth away from drugs and gangsterism,” says project leader Njabz Zondi.

“We realised that this was a way to keep the kids off the street. Many of the kids come from really poor families. In fact in some schools 70% of the kids are orphans and can’t even afford to bring their own lunch to school. This project, which also runs in KwaZulu Natal, is a way to literally assist in bettering lives and providing learners with opportunities they would never be able to access,” says Zondi.

The project has been a dream come true for many of these youngsters. “It was so encouraging to see the day ending with such a warm sense of camaraderie between the boys as they shook hands and shared some lunch, courtesy of Bishops.”

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