

BUILDING COMMUNITY

Bidvest Wits captain **TEFU MASHAMAITE** is working hard to guide the young kids of Mogale City. Words by Benjamin Nyirenda, pictures by Chris Ricco.

It is the umbilical cord of the struggle that continues to bind us together, so that we can march forward in the fight against poverty, ignorance and despair. What a better way to do this than with sport? Sport binds us into a community."

These are the words of Bidvest Wits captain Tefu Junaid Mashamaite, who takes KICK OFF along on a visit to the community of Soul City/Tudor in Mogale City.

Mashamaite grew up as a poor kid, and went on to graduate from Wits University. He says he would like to help other children get the opportunities he did.

"I was once an underprivileged kid myself in Limpopo, and the only way I can say thank you to the community that brought me up is to plough back into another community, wherever it is," he says.

And that is exactly what the defender does in his free time, travelling to impoverished areas to hold informal coaching clinics, encourage kids to read, motivate and generally uplift the community.

In this project Mashamaite joined hands with Umhlaba Foundation,



which runs the Shongi Soccer Project, sponsored by the Philipp Lahm Foundation.

One of the members of the project, Zarina Bahdur, sings Mashamaite's praises. "Junaid is a different player altogether. He has the community at heart and he has done a lot of good work. He is well-educated, so he is in a good position to

teach the kids the importance of school. Today he donated balls and bibs from his own money."

The community welcome the Wits player into their arms. Vinolia Boikanyo, hands her son to Tefu as soon as we arrive. "Your presence inspires us," she says. "We are happy and forget our problems when you come – you are a saviour my son."

The kids in the soccer team are overjoyed with their new bibs and balls. "If Tefu was not helping us I could decide to do bad things after school, but now I am here playing with my friends

and feeling good," says one of the boys, Wayby Mokgalaka. "We never used to mix with top people like him, but he is down to earth and makes our lives easy by mixing with us."

Mashamaite is also training the adults to be coaches.

"We are so thankful to Tefu for making himself available," one of these coaches, Ingrid Buffel, says. "Their behaviour has totally changed since he started helping, they are much better behaved – even at home. They are learning good values from him. He is a star and we wish him all the best." **KO**



Mashamaite gets to know the local community



The Wits captain leads the youth; and receives a hero's welcome (below and left)

