

# Marks Park Rangers F.C.

I had a dream and wanted to share it...



When I started at MARKS PARK MUNICIPALS in early 2007, I had few players and lots of hope. It was likely to be difficult to attract talent to a club with no obvious big sponsor or supporter like most of the clubs that we were competing against. Despite being one of the country's oldest clubs and having produced many a fine soccer team and player in its long history, Marks Park was also not deemed to be a "fashionable" club anymore. Even with all the adversity facing us my prayers were being answered soon after.

The nucleus of the team was quickly formed from the stalwarts that I used to coach at my old club, and soon the "Benoni kids", as we nicknamed them, joined the party as well. In between logistical headaches, transport crises, competing sports codes we nevertheless kicked off the 2007 season. Once again we faced another challenge namely our association, Rand Central or RCFA. They insisted that we could only enter an u/14 team in the lower leagues as Marks Park already had an existing u/14 team. Furthermore no "new" team would be allowed to walk straight into the u/14 premier league according to their stipulations. Ultimately, this was our team's goal.

Having learnt that adversity will always be there in one way, shape or form we showed true character and we bounced back from a couple of losses and made the u/14 plate our mission. In October 2007 we lined up in the final against Robertsham at the magnificent UNV of JHB stadium and in a thrilling game we won 2-1.

This season the boys have grown in so many ways! Whilst not yet men, they are displaying a maturity beyond their years. They look the part and are certainly playing the part. The team won the Easterns U/15 Tournament without losing a game but were unfortunately beaten by an in form Moroka Swallows side in our own home

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tournament in which 13 teams took part. Swallows went on to win the tournament.

We are now on the verge of an adventure of a lifetime, a dream all aspiring footballers wish for, namely participating in the Arsenal International Tournament in Surrey, England. Besides playing against top teams from all over the world, the team will also watch the Emirates Cup at the magnificent Emirates Stadium in London where they will see star teams Juventus, Hamburg, Real Madrid & Arsenal in action. But all this pales against the true milestone made by the team so far namely winning their confidence for their adult future. It has always been my aim to give kids hope. After all, how often have we heard "they are our future." This rainbow team will continue to make a positive contribution to society. They are great kids who know no colour, only friendship. This is a team who forgets individual backgrounds and demographics but supports each other in adversity. This is a team of youngsters which will hopefully as they do now, continue to set an example for others to follow. To quote the Academy For Sports Excellence - "Aspire Today, Inspire Tomorrow!"

Our heartfelt thanks to the **Music for the Children Foundation** who have successfully been assisting us to raise funds for the past few months to partially cover the cost of the UK tour. It has been an honour, joy and privilege to be part of their team and we look forward to a fabulous journey ahead.



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