

PRETORIA NEWS

COLUMN: TUESDAY 22 JUNE 2010

OPEN LETTER TO BAFANA BAFANA

Dear Bafana Bafana,

You are in Bloemfontein today ready to take on France in what some describe as a "do or die" match, as I address this open letter to you.

I'm sure the entire team is anxious and nervous. The nation is expecting you to perform a miracle.

The last week has not been easy for you. I'm sure you have had time to reflect of your performance with Uruguay.

Yes, you will probably now say that you could have played better and differently. You can also blame the referee. But, we lost and you need to accept it. The South Americans who are ranked within the top 20 outplayed us.

If we don't make it this afternoon and win by five goals, you are out of the World Cup.

However, please remember that it's not the end of the world if we don't qualify. The beautiful game will continue to live on and you will continue to represent our country.

Some South Africans have bashed you over the past week. Don't let this discourage you. The fact that you did not lose any match for months, prior to last Wednesday, says it all.

Fingers have also been pointed at your coach, Carlos Alberto Perreira. But, you all know how hard he has tried.

The one memory we want you to keep for ever is the fact that the entire South Africa rallied behind you.

For months, we donned our Bafana Bafana shirts each and every Friday. We declared today "Football Tuesday" and we are again proudly wearing yellow.

Boys, we want you to know we are with you each and every step of the way and we will support you going forward.

Tens of thousands of us took to the streets on Wednesday, 9 June, to show our unwavering support for you. We waved our flags, we celebrated your success and we pledged our support. Some of you witnessed the euphoria.

Remember, the parade was the biggest ever show of support for a national team in South Africa .

When you took on Mexico in the opening game, you drew. We all knew it was not going to be an easy clash - but you stood your ground.

Assume we don't qualify today, keep that spirit going and start working towards the next World Cup.

As South Africans we have a proud history of defying the odds and uniting as a nation to ensure our heroes do not stand alone. You are our heroes and we will not abandon you.

Thanks largely to you, we became masters of the vuvuzela, kuduzela and makarapas.

You must continue the momentum and maintain positivity. Continue to bring your best on the field.

Sport is about winning and losing—but more importantly it's about continuing to unite our nation and keeping the spirit of national pride alive.

The fact that we are hosting the World Cup is already a win for us all. After today, we need you to continue flying our country's flag high.

Millions of people see you as role models. The youth dream of maneuvering Jabulani as some of you do. Others pray that you get the ball into the net more often.

As you walk off the field in Mangaung this evening as winners or losers, remember you are all winners because you united South Africans.

On one occasion ahead of the opening game, I visited your camp and saw you all together having lunch. The tension and anxiety was tangible.

You all wanted to do our nation proud and you tried your best. We salute you. Continue enjoying the beautiful game.

On Sunday, July 11 at Soccer City, the winning nation will hold the World Cup up high and they will be celebrating.

Assume it is not South Africa, continue working towards one day lifting that trophy. The dream needs to live on.

I am a proud supporter of Bafana Bafana.

Yours in soccer!

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