



Press Release 6

9 November 2011

ZAMBIA COACH Q&A FOR 2011 Metropolitan COSAFA Under-20 Youth Championships

ZAMBIA COACH Q&A

Zambia coach Keegan Mumba is looking forward to plotting the defence of his country's title at the 2011 Metropolitan COSAFA Under-20 Youth Championships in Botswana from December 1-10.

The Young Chipolopolo are the defending champions after they beat Namibia in last year's final and although Mumba was not in charge of that side, he says he followed the tournament closely and is hungry for more success.

How different is this squad from the one that was victorious in the 2010 Metropolitan COSAFA Under-20 Youth Championships?

It is an almost complete overhaul as the vast majority of the players from last year have now graduated to the national Under-23 set-up. We have one or two who remain from 2010 and their experience will be valuable to the others who have come in, but on the whole this is a totally new group. Probably 99 percent of the players we have in camp are schoolboys still, so they are very young.

How have your preparations gone so far?

We have been holding regular camps. We first invited 45 boys to training but that number has dwindled for various reasons. Seven of them were offered the chance to train with Chelsea and have gone there; others have gone overseas for other reasons. At the moment we have 30 players in camp and we will get our final group of 20 from them.

I believe you will be going to India at the end of this month with the senior national side?

Yes, the Football Association of Zambia [FAZ] has made 12 places available to us to travel with the squad to India for their friendly international on November 29. We will be travelling directly from there to the COSAFA Under-20 Championships in Botswana. It will be a great experience for us to travel with the senior players and get a feel for the environment within that team.

You have been pooled with Tanzania, South Africa and Mauritius in this year's group stages of the Metropolitan COSAFA Under-20 Youth Championships. What is your take on the pool?

Tough, it is very tough. Tanzania come with a different style to what we are used to and they have had some good results in the recent past. South Africa is always a big game for us, we are like brothers, each one wants desperately to win and they are always very difficult games to play. And then Mauritius beat us in the qualifiers for the 2011 African Youth Championships that were held in South Africa so we know they are a quality team too. They will be three very difficult games.

What do you think of the general standard of the Under-20 teams in the region?

I think they have improved greatly over the past few years, the standard has definitely lifted and that is a good sign for the future. I think the biggest problem for the Southern African countries is that most, bar maybe South Africa, do not have proper youth programmes put in place to develop and nurture this talent we have. I look at Zambia and I know that we have great talent here, but unless we put the proper structures in place, we will find it very difficult to be one of the best in Africa and maybe even get to the World Cup. I believe this should be achievable for us, but not until we can get the proper structures in place to develop our youngsters at a much earlier age.

For Further Information:

Technical

Sue Destombes / COO Cosafa
+27 82 900 0648
sued@iafrica.com

All other information

Lynda Greeff
Media Office / lyndagreeff@mweb.co.za /
+27 82 446 5120
