

**Address by Premier Mr. Mandla Ndlovu, at the Mpumalanga Premier's Cup Media Launch at Kanyamazane Stadium, City of Mbombela Local Municipality, 10 July 2026**

**1. Program Director**

Greetings to the owner of TS Galaxy, Mr Sukazi,  
Owners of Kruger United, Mr Khoza, Mr Whati and Mr  
Mathebula, Owner of Castrics Stars Mr Mthobeni and owner of  
the Bees, Mr Magunga

Executive Mayor of Mbombela Cllr Makushe-Mazibuko  
MEC for Sports, Arts and Culture, Ms Mabuza, MEC for  
Education, Ms Masina all MECs present

Chairperson of the Mpumalanga House of Traditional and  
Khoi-San Leaders who is also president of CONTRALESA, a  
soccer fanatic Kgosi Mokoena.

All HODs and government officials

Leaders of SAFA Mpumalanga, Mr Zwane and school sport and  
of Netball Mpumalanga

Our beloved soccer and netball fans as well as supporters of  
our teams.

2. We are here to unleash the 2026 Mpumalanga Premier's Cup, a flagship sporting programme that reflects our commitment to investing in the potential of our people, especially the youth.
3. Today is more than the launch of a football and netball tournament. It is the beginning of a movement to unearth talent, unite communities, stimulate local economy and inspire a new generation of sporting excellence.
4. As the Provincial Government, we firmly believe that sport is one of the greatest instruments for nation-building, social cohesion and youth empowerment. It has the power to break barriers, restore hope, build discipline and create opportunities where previously none existed.
5. The Mpumalanga Premier's Cup was conceived from a simple but powerful vision that every young person, irrespective of where they come from, should have an opportunity to showcase their talent on a competitive platform.
6. The province has produced and continues to produce some of the best players in soccer and in Netball that competed

and some are still competing with players from other provinces, countries and globally.

7. Players like Khanyi Chawane playing for the Proteas, Surprise Moriri, Michael Manzini, Dummy Hlengedwa, Fetch and Carry, David Nyathi, Ebenezer, Happy Jele, Lucas Twala, Mdledle, Junior Disco Makua, James Nyiko Mayinga, Reason Chilwana, they were the true ambassadors of Mpumalanga.
8. The Premier's Cup represents a unique partnership between the Department of Culture, Sport and Recreation and the Department of Education.
9. This collaboration demonstrates that education and sport are not competing priorities they are complementary pillars of youth development.
10. Our schools remain the breeding ground for future champions. That is why learners under the age of sixteen will participate in structured football and netball competitions that begin at circuit level, progress through municipalities and districts and culminate in provincial finals.

11. Alongside school sport, community clubs and professional teams will also participate, creating an integrated pathway from grassroots development to elite competition.
12. This means that a talented learner watching today's professional footballers could very well become tomorrow's PSL or Bafana Bafana star.
13. Equally, our young netball players can aspire to represent the Proteas on international stages. This is how sustainable sporting excellence is built.
14. The Premier's Cup is also about economic development. Sport has become a powerful driver of tourism and local economic activity across the world.
15. When major tournaments are hosted, hotels fill up, restaurants receive more customers, transport operators benefit, informal traders increase their sales and local businesses experience increased economic activity.

16. We want every district of Mpumalanga to experience the economic benefits that accompany major sporting events. This tournament will not only produce champions on the field but will also create opportunities for entrepreneurs, service providers and communities.
17. One of the defining features of this tournament is the strong partnership we have established with SAFA Mpumalanga, the Mpumalanga Netball Association, the Mpumalanga Sport Confederation, municipalities, private sector partners and professional football clubs.
18. I wish to acknowledge TS Galaxy, Kruger United, Casric Stars and The Bees Football Club for supporting this important initiative. We thank these teams and other teams for giving our boys an opportunity showcase their skills and talent.
19. Boys like Bright Benny Ndlovu who is playing for Skhukhune, Innocent Mkhabela, the captain of the Bees, Ntandoyenkosi Nkosi playing for TS Galaxy, Bibo Malatjie playing for Kruger United and Seun Tower Ndlovu playing for Chippa United and many others.

20. Your involvement sends a powerful message that professional sport has a responsibility to inspire and develop future generations.

21. The coaching clinics, mentorship programmes and interaction between legends of the game and our young athletes will leave a lasting legacy long after the final whistle has blown.

22. To every coach, referee, volunteer and administrator, we thank you. You are the backbone of sport development in our province.

23. The Premier's Cup forms part of that broader vision. It is a platform where talent will be identified, nurtured and given exposure. It is a platform that teaches teamwork, discipline, resilience and leadership.

24. Programme Director, government alone cannot achieve these ambitions. We therefore invite the private sector, sponsors and investors to partner with us in growing the Premier's Cup into one of South Africa's premier sporting events.

25. Together we can transform Mpumalanga into a recognised destination for sport development, sport tourism and sporting excellence.

26. Our vision is to see this tournament continue to grow year after year, producing national champions, international athletes and stronger communities.

27. As we officially launch this Mpumalanga Premier's Cup, let us remember that we are not merely starting a tournament.

28. We are building dreams, We are creating opportunities, We are strengthening communities, We are investing in the future of our children, I wish every participant the very best and look forward to years to come.

29. We wish to invite soccer and netball lovers to come and enjoy wayawaya in netball, bo nice, nice, sidla bo nice, a mi nyumi kudya hi va vaki!!!

30. Come in large numbers to enjoy unrestricted soccer, before the start of the league, we allow show boating, this is the only place where fans will be entertained, shibobo, kitchen and dining room, tsamaya, sandwich, spy 2, for free.

31. Let the games begin.

I thank you.