



**Press Release 10**

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FIFA development officer for Southern and East Africa, Ashford Mamelodi, tells us why football's governing body were so keen to help stage a five-day course for the coaches involved in the 2011 Metropolitan COSAFA Under-20 Youth Championships.

**The five-day coaching course is being funded by FIFA, COSAFA and the Botswana Football Association. How keen were you to see this happen?**

We were very keen because as FIFA we see great value in putting these development coaches together to give them additional knowledge and also to let them share their experienced with one another. It is the perfect time to do it now ahead of the 2011 Metropolitan COSAFA Under-20 Youth Championships in Botswana. Quality coaching is vital if we are to develop football in the region and although some of our attendees here have vast experience in the game, they will still benefit greatly from the workshop. It is the same as we do on a fairly regular basis with the referees; we try to enhance their knowledge all the time.

**What for you are the key aspects of this course, which is being run by renowned FIFA Instructor Roy Miller?**

The course gives the coaches a greater understanding of the skills needed to manage the technical set-up of a youth team, so this goes beyond what happens on the pitch. It is about consolidating the knowledge that they already may have, and also giving them additional tools to help them with the day-to-day aspects of looking after a development team. What happens on the pitch is, of course, vitally important, but so is what happens off it.

**Are you pleased the caliber of development coaches in the region?**

Yes, but we have areas that we do need to work on. This is a very important stage in the careers of these young boys just as they are hopefully breaking into the professional set-ups of their clubs. So we have to make sure we have the ability to handle boys of this age and manage them properly as outcomes now can affect their future. So coaching is part of it, as is the mental side of the game, fitness and nutrition. All of these could be improved in certain instances.

**FIFA have been busy in the Southern African region it seems ...**

Yes, very busy, and in East Africa where I am responsible for four countries as well – Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania and Ethiopia. We have a lot of grassroots projects on the go in the various countries, and as previously mentioned we have been running regular referees courses for the last four or so years. We are also giving due attention to women's football, which we would like to see develop further in the regions as we believe the potential for these sides is there. Then we have Futsal and beach soccer programmes running, as well as courses to help improve administration. There is a lot going on.

**So you see strong possibilities for the region in the future?**

Yes, we still need to build quite a bit of capacity to realise this potential but we are moving in the right direction. What we need to do as a region is become less reliant on FIFA and more self-sufficient in the running and managing of these programmes. But that will happen over time. We would like to see strategic development plans put in place at member association level too, because that gives us goals to work towards. If there are no plans in place then the status quo remains. But these are things that we are working on.

**Have you been impressed with the way the Botswana Football Association have gone about hosting both last year's and the Metropolitan COSAFA Under-20 Youth Championships?**

Very impressed, I think they have put on a quality product for COSAFA and the sponsors and from their side it also gives them experience in hosting multi-team competitions which can only be good for the future. I am sure that the 2011 Metropolitan COSAFA Under-20 Youth Championships will be even more successful than the last!

**For Further Information:**

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