

It's Official: Bidvest Protea Coin extends Youth Month into July.

July - 2025



At Bidvest Protea Coin, sport is not just about play; it's a vehicle for change. Through the Gijima Sport initiative, we've seen how sport can inspire, educate, and connect communities. The first half of 2025 has been a powerful journey of impact, culminating in July with our annual Ziyawa Soccer Championship: a multi-day, multi-dimensional event with a special focus on shaping the next generation through the Under-14 experience.



LAYING THE GROUNDWORK: HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE FIRST HALF OF 2025

Gijima Sport was created as part of Bidvest Protea Coin's social and community development efforts. More than just the physical sport infrastructure developed at the Gijima Training Academy, Gijima Sport has evolved into a dynamic movement. A movement that provides opportunities through sport with a focus on youth and disadvantaged communities. It fosters both excellence and inclusion, using sport as a powerful tool to achieve sustainable, positive change.

The Gijima Sport infrastructure boasts of high-end soccer, netball, and cricket facilities, which are regularly used by employees and learners at our leading Training Academy.



Gijima Training Academy is situated just north of Pretoria.

Some of the highlights from the 2025 calendar year (up to June) included:

The launch of three sport-focused internship programmes in soccer, netball, and cricket. These initiatives gave the participants the opportunity to live out their passion for sport while also receiving training in fields such as security and other areas of interest.



The Ziyawa uMfolozi Under 14 Soccer Challenge which took place in Richards Bay, involving 40 soccer teams and 600 players.



Numerous community challenge events held at the Gijima Sport facilities and within communities, involving the soccer and netball interns competing against the local community teams. Many of these teams were associated with our long-term community development partners, Youthzones, with participating communities including Hammanskraal, Diepsloot, Phokeng, Boitekong Kameeldrift, Kanana, and many others. The participation of the Gijima Training Academy Cricket Team (made up exclusively of the cricket interns) in the Joburg Winter League Under-21 category.



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MOMENTUM BUILDS: CELEBRATING JULY WINS BEFORE THE MAIN EVENT



After a jam-packed schedule of sport initiatives in the first half of the year, July brought new momentum. During the first week, the Gijima Cricket Oval hosted Under-14 teams participating in the Montana Festival Under-14A. The festival featured teams including Montana Hoerskool, Hoerskool Hans Moore, Prestige College, Hoerskool EG Jansen, Rustenburg Hoerskool, Hoerskool Frikkie Meyer, Hoerskool Marais Viljoen, Monument Hoerskool and Steyn City School.

On Sunday, 6 July, the Gijima Training Academy Cricket Team was crowned champions in the Joburg Winter League.



ZIYAWA 2025: A CHAMPIONSHIP OF CHAMPIONS AND CHANGE

With momentum from earlier victories and events, the stage was set for the annual Ziyawa Soccer Championship, our flagship event that brings together the full spectrum of our sport and social change goals. The multi-faceted event commenced on Tuesday, 9 July, bringing together teams from across the country. The event featured Bidvest Protea Coin teams from regions as far afield as Richards Bay and Kuruman, alongside ten Under-14 teams representing diverse communities nationwide. These included teams from Umlazi, Umtatha, uMfolozi, Kuruman, Alexandra, Phola, Bojanala, Kameeldrift, Welkom and Mahikeng.



The soccer competition was fierce and competitive, yet played with the highest levels of sportsmanship and camaraderie with a shared passion for the beautiful game. In the end, it was the two Free State – Welkom – teams that walked away with the coveted winners' trophies. Welkom Real Stars secured the senior team prize after beating Gijima Training Academy in the final and Bugalove Killers scraped past Bojanala Squad to be crowned champions in the Under-14 category.



THE UNDER-14 JOURNEY AT ZIYAWA

The four-day Ziyawa Soccer Championship is more than a soccer tournament. It is a dynamic experience that blends the power of sport with storytelling, interactive learning, community development and positive social change. It is an experience that uses the energy of the game to inspire meaningful conversations about social issues plaguing communities and the youth.

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This year's Ziyawa Championship was anchored in five core Gijima Sport themes, each chosen to impact the participants' consciousness and behaviour. The themes promote Reading and Fairplay, while discouraging Gender Based Violence (GBV), Substance Abuse and Littering. Far from being abstract ideas, these themes were deeply woven into the fabric of the championship – quite literally – as they were imprinted on the sponsored soccer player kit, water bottles, t-shirts and caps – serving as a constant visual reminder.



Fatigued from their long-distance travels yet excited about the Ziyawa week, most of the Under-14 teams arrived on Monday evening, 07 July, at the Gijima Training Academy.

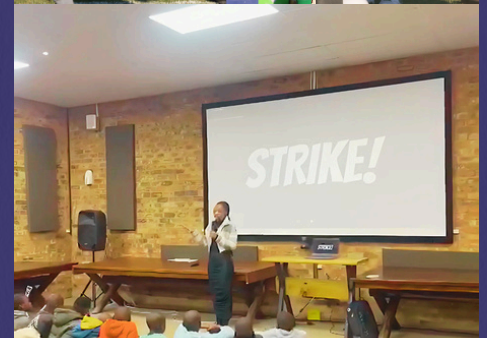


The following morning marked the official kick-off of the Ziyawa Championship, beginning with an Anti-Litter Talk and a Conservation Walk, both aimed at teaching the young players meaningful lessons about the significance of caring for and respecting their environment.



Soon after the Anti-Litter Talk and Conservation Walk, the Under-14 teams took part in a soccer skills clinic led by PSL Legends, who were also based at the Gijima Training Academy for the week. These legends not only shared their professional soccer journeys and life stories to inspire the young players but also offered valuable coaching sessions to prepare each team for their knockout games.

Before dusk, each team received branded soccer kits in preparation for their upcoming back-to-back Ziyawa games. The kits included soccer boots, balls, and other essential gear, ensuring the players were fully equipped and game-ready.



The first day of Ziyawa, 08 July, ended with a memorable experience: the premiere of an animation short film, titled Strike! The film blends Gijima Sport's key themes while reflecting the world and realities of the young players themselves. Scripted and produced by two interns based at Bidvest Protea Coin Head Office, the film featured voiceovers primarily performed by interns from the Gijima Training Academy. This creative project transformed earlier talks from Enviroserve & the South African Federation of Mental Health into a storytelling experience with real impact.

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After a pulse-pounding day of back-to-back soccer matches on Wednesday, 09 July, two teams emerged as finalists, set to compete for the Ziyawa Under-14 Championship 2025 title on Friday, 11 July. Before the grand finale, an Individual Awards Ceremony was held in the evening to celebrate outstanding individual performance.

BEYOND THE PITCH: EMPOWERMENT THROUGH STORYTELLING, SKILLS, AND STEM



On Thursday, 10 July, the Under-14 players took a break from the soccer pitch, making way for the senior teams. The day featured a Security and STEM Careers Expo, exposing the young players to future-focused career paths. Their morning began with a visit to the Gijima Demo Farm, where they engaged in a hands-on farming experience that highlighted key lessons on food security and sustainable agriculture, practical knowledge they could take home and share with their communities.

What followed was a stimulating workshop with Young Engineers, which introduced the young players to exciting possibilities in STEM careers during the interactive Career Expo. They explored potential pathways in science, technology, engineering, and math, and gained insight into which subjects to focus on to pursue those careers. The session also included a fun, hands-on activity where they built their own mini robots. At the end of this experience, each participant received a certificate – a proud moment that left many beaming with a sense of accomplishment.



Thereafter, the Career Expo shifted focus to career paths within the security industry. Highlights included a Bidvest Protea Coin K9 dog show. The day concluded with a series of tactical demonstrations and team-building challenges.



The winners were crowned, but the true victory was clear: empowered young minds, inspired futures, and communities brought together by purpose-driven sport. Through Gijima Sport, Bidvest Protea Coin is not just building champions; we are actively building change.

