

Championing Inclusivity and Empowerment Through Sport and Storytelling.

Ziyawa Under-14 Soccer Challenge: uMfolozi.



March - April 2026



The impactful uMfolozi Ziyawa Under-14 Soccer Challenge forms an integral part of the broad range of initiatives and events organized and hosted under the Gijima Sport banner, which forms a key component of Bidvest Protea Coin's social and community development efforts. The tournament uses sport and storytelling as tools to connect with young people, empower them, and positively influence their lives.



The 2026 uMfolozi Ziyawa Under-14 Soccer Challenge ran from 27 March to 1 April and was intentionally scheduled during the public-school holidays. This ensured that the school-going youth had a positive and structured environment during a period when daily routines are disrupted and vulnerability to negative influences, such as substance abuse and misbehaviour, is heightened.

The tournament featured 44 teams, comprising a total of 660 players, with the inclusion of 10 girls' teams—an important step towards promoting gender inclusivity in sport.

Participating under-14 players came from the following communities in uMfolozi: Nzalabantu, Mzingazi, Nkunzebomvu, Ntobazi, Thandaza, Qedumona, Jamela, Mankwathini, Nhlanzini, Tshingimpisi, Khondweni, Kwa Khoza, Mkhayideni, Ehlawini, Nhlabane, Entongonye, Entongonye, Malalemi, Emadengeni, and Mazimazane.



The main event was preceded by a Team Building and Leadership Training Session held on 25 March, facilitated by Youthzones' founder, Doc Mabila.

March - April 2026



Coaches from uMfolozi were brought together for a session focused on mentorship, nurturing young minds, women empowerment, and the development of essential life skills. They were also introduced to the five core themes of Gijima Sport and Youthzones: Reading, Fairplay, Environmental Conservation, Gender-Based Violence (GBV), and anti-Substance Abuse. They were encouraged to incorporate these themes into their engagement with the under-14 players.



The official tournament launch took place on 27 March, where the 660 young players, their coaches, and community members gathered. The day began with a friendly match between the Community Coaches and Bidvest Richards Bay Minerals (RBM) employees, creating a cheerful and lively atmosphere. Thereafter, the main festivities began as each team received their branded soccer kits with logos of each individual soccer club.

The soccer kit included playing gear and essential training equipment. Following opening speeches from Bidvest Protea Coin's Human Resources Executive, Chris Laubscher, and Bidvest RBM's Assistant Manager, Simon Skosana, as well as the Regional Manager, Juan Baird, the sports ground erupted with excitement as players tried on their gear and participated in team photo sessions.



Knockout matches commenced on 28 March and continued until 31 March, leading to the boys' semi-finals and a girls' finals. The boys' semi-finalists were Two Touch FC, Mandela FC, Holy Starz FC, and Excited IG's Development FC. The girls' finalists, Abagijimi SMS FC and Silence Killers FC, advanced to compete for the championship title on 1 April.

In the interim, teams also participated in an Online Short Film Comprehension Competition, featuring the Gijima Sport and Youthzones' themed animation short film, *Strike!*



The winners of the competition, General Masters FC, were awarded soccer boots for their players.

In the finals, the teams that claimed victory were Abagijimi SMS FC in the girls' division and Excited IG's Development FC in the boys' division.



Beyond the final scores, the trophies, and prizes, the tournament fostered a sense of pride among players and coaches. It brought communities together through a significant and enjoyable cause, nurturing discipline, gender inclusivity, leadership, and hope among the youth. More than a sporting event, the Ziyawa Umfolozi Under-14 Soccer Challenge serves as a powerful platform for positive social change.