

Goraseb announces retirement

Black Africa and former Brave Warriors icon Sylvester Lolo Goraseb announced his retirement from football at a press conference attended by prominent members of Namibia's football fraternity at the NFA Soccer House on Wednesday.

Goraseb said he would play his last match in Windhoek on Saturday evening against arch rivals Orlando Pirates, while Black Africa's final match of the season will be away to Oshakati City on June 20.

"I'm going to retire at the end of this season. It has been a very emotional and moving decision to call it a day. Football has given me a wonderful career and there have been so many exciting moments that I have shared with the fans and my team mates," he said.

"I have played with many legends of Namibian football and it has been a wonderful time," he added.

Goraseb is a true legend of the Brave Warriors as well as Black Africa. He made his debut for Black Africa as a 17-year-old in 1992 and remained a loyal player and captain for them for the next 17 years.

He made his debut for the Brave Warriors as a 19-year-old in 1994 and went on to become the third most capped Namibian of all time with 65 international caps. Only Congo Hindjou with 69 and Mohammed Ouseb with 66 caps have won more caps for Namibia.

Goraseb was a member of the Brave Warriors' squad that qualified for the African Cup of Nations in Burkina Faso in 1998, while he was also in the team that beat South Africa's Bafana Bafana for the first time in 1998.

During his prolific career he developed into a top goal scorer and is currently joint fourth on the list of all time goal scorers for the Brave Warriors with a total of nine goals.

At the press conference various football personalities paid tribute to Goraseb for his contribution to Namibian football and his loyalty. His current coach at Black Africa Ali Akan mentioned that he organised Goraseb trials in Germany in 1999 but Lolo decided to return to his homeland after three months.

"Lolo was supposed to be a great player in Europe, but he returned to Namibia after three months because he loved his country so much. I am so happy that I have walked a path with Lolo for such a long time. He is a great player and a great person, Namibia must be proud of him," he said.

Rusten Mogane, the current chief administrator of the Namibia Sport Commission and former Brave Warriors coach recalled how he had spotted Goraseb when he was still an unknown teenager.

"By chance I coached a Khomas regional team, before the players had joined bigger clubs and that team included Lolo, Ricardo Mannetti and Page Ananias. Later I was

asked to become involved with the national team and Lolo, Ricardo and Page were my obvious choices to bring in. Lolo is a special player for me – his skills and discipline have kept him performing at the highest level all these years,” he said.

Goraseb said he had remained loyal to Black Africa throughout his career because of their support.

“Black Africa approached me when I came from the south of Namibia. In the beginning they supported me a lot and the fans stood behind me. In those years our football was still amateur and I didn’t see a reason why I should join another team. The support I received from Black Africa was always more important to me than money and I made a conscious decision to remain with them,” he said.

Testimonial match

Goraseb meanwhile announced that he would say farewell in a testimonial match on October 31, to be preceded with a gala dinner the previous day.

“I want African Stars and Orlando Pirates to be part of this festival. We will have three generations of all these teams playing 30 minutes against each other, while the main match will be between a SADC All Stars team and a Lolo Goraseb Invitational team,” he said.