

# Soccer boss faces high jump on his first day

## Petersen must deal with unhappy Safa staff as morale plummets

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Newly appointed Safa chief executive Robin Petersen faces a potential staff revolt on his first day at work tomorrow.

And on Wednesday he might have to defend the organisation at the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration, where former Bafana Bafana team manager Siphon Nkumane has taken his dismissal case. It has been dragging on since last August.

Disgruntled Safa employees had a briefing with the Banking Insurance Finance and Assurance Workers Union (Bifawu) at Safa House this week and on Friday postponed a scheduled meeting with the South Africa Commercial, Catering and Allied Workers Union (Saccawu) to this coming week.

Morale is said to be at its lowest at the football headquarters and staffers are said to have insisted that they want to join a union affiliated to the Congress of South African Unions.

Among their grievances are:

- » The growing number of former 2010 Fifa Local Organising Committee staffers who have been brought in at high salaries

- » The influx of people aligned to the Football Transformation Forum
- » restructuring without communicating with staff, and;
- » the dictatorial leadership style of chief operations officer Denris Mumble.

An insider said there were already more than four former members of the Local Organising Committee spread over the media, commercial and security departments, plus two secretaries.

"The problem is that these people come in at exorbitant salaries. This has demoralised those who have been here for a long time," said the insider.

Safa has made several appointments, including that of Mumble, who was the Football Transformation Forum's chief strategist leading to the elections and the author of its manifesto.

He was moved from being strategic planning and transformation manager in the president's office and appointed chief operations officer without the position being advertised.

Other Transformation Forum-aligned appointees are Lindile "Ace" Kika, Steve Pila, Nkcsinathi Ngcobo and Solly Phasha.

"Mumble is the biggest problem as it's either his way or the highway," added the source

An interim staff forum has been formed, with John Mthunzini as its



Former SA Under-20 coach Khabo Zondo has yet to set foot at the Transnet Football School of Excellence since being deployed there by Safa four months ago but is still drawing his full salary || PHOTO: SABELO MNGOMA / BACKPAGEPIX

leader. Mthunzini said he could not discuss staff grievances as he had not been given the mandate to do so but confirmed the meeting with Bifawu and the one pending with Saccawu.

"People want a union as there are issues they are not happy with. But we have not yet tabled our grievances," said Mthunzini.

Mumble said he had no problem with staff joining a trade union as they were well within their rights to attend any gathering.

"We encourage them to do so and even assisted them with a meeting venue as we understand the need for workers' representation," said Mumble.

"We have put new, accountable management systems in place. Obviously some people will be uncomfortable. My job is to ensure they deliver at all times. I am not going to compromise on that."

On the issue of appointing former members of the Local Organising Committee Mumble said they came with expertise that did not exist at Safa.

"Those complaining must check who has been brought from the Local Organising Committee and ask themselves whether there was somebody at Safa who could do the same job," said Mumble.

» Meanwhile, **NTOMBI MOLEME** reports that former Under-20

coach Khabo Zondo has not reported at the Transnet Football School of Excellence four months after being redeployed by Safa.

Zondo, who was shipped there after failing to qualify for the African Youth Championships, is still on full salary.

The coach, who completed Safa's Level 3 Pro Licence last month, still has two years left on his contract.

Safa technical committee chairperson Fanyana Sibanyoni said negotiations between the organisation and Zondo were underway.

"We had to amend his contract after his failure with the Under-20 team," said Sibanyoni.

"We could not terminate it as it would have meant buying him out as he still has two years to run. We are in talks with his legal representatives. It's not easy for him to move without a new contract."

He confirmed that Zondo was earning his full salary despite being inactive.

Sibanyoni ruled out any possibility of moving Zondo to assist Bafana or the Under-23 teams.

Zondo could not be reached for comment as his mobile phone went unanswered and he did not respond to voicemails or SMSes left for him.