

## Players' union happy with progress



Footballers Union of Botswana (FUB) is happy with the progress they have made since their formation about two years ago. FUB has made a number of presentations at congresses about the state of football affairs in the country, the progress to date and the challenges faced by the players in Botswana.

It is common knowledge that football in Botswana is played at an amateur level although there are professional players (players with professional contracts) who ply their trade in it. In 2008, the Botswana Football Association (BFA) took a decision that players who ply their trade in the elite league should all have professional contracts by the beginning of the 2009/2010 season. Regrettably, this is not the situation on the ground as only about 70% of the players have complied. Notwithstanding this omission on the part of teams and players, progress is evident in the concept of contractual stability and respect for player and club contract. However the only stumbling block which has been created thereafter has been the absence of a body within the structure which enforces contracts entered into between clubs and players.

To this end, the union feels that clubs tend to abuse these contracts when facts are in their favour and as such players have to run to the former for assistance and the union's only point of reference is the labour court which deals with industrial disputes of any nature.

Although the labour court has been of great help in cases which we have brought before them especially cases of premature termination of contracts and non payment of salaries due to players, teams previously raised a technical point of non-recognition of the union.

In terms of the labour laws of Botswana, a Union will only be recognised if it represents more than one third of its contracted members within a certain trade. It is on this basis that teams feel that the union must sign a recognition agreement with each of the teams before they (union) can help the players who are their members.