

## An Analysis of Factors Involved in Nicknaming of Some Soccer Players in South Africa

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**ABSTRACT** The aim of this paper is to discuss the meaning and relevance of the nicknames given to soccer players in the Premier Soccer League in South Africa, either as a token of appreciation or disapproval. The argument raised in this paper is that there is a marked deterioration in the creative naming of nicknames in the contemporary dispensation unlike in the past. It argues that nicknames have an influential role on the manner in which the players perform their duties in the field of play. The recordings of the interviews were made into a Marantz PMD-661 field recorder using a WH-30 Shure head worn microphone in a quiet room with a sample of ten people. The result shows that soccer stars are given nicknames either by coaches, teammates or by fans. These players are famously known by their nicknames, rather than their personal first names.

### INTRODUCTION

Across the world, soccer is regarded as one of the most loved and entertaining sporting codes with the largest following. It is one of the first sporting codes to have developed mass appeal of interest to millions of people. Hlongwa (2010) conducted a research on nicknames of South African soccer teams and players as symbols of approbation in a multilingual and multicultural country. The main focus for her study was the influence of African languages on nicknames in football. The study found that nicknames of soccer players and their teams are derived from various sources such as the regalia and the performance of the players. According to her findings, players, supporters or managers of the teams coin the nicknames of players. This paper predominantly examines the nicknaming of players plying their trade in the Premier Soccer League (PSL) in South Africa. The PSL began in 1996 following the agreement between the National Soccer League and the National Premier Soccer League (NPSL). The PSL is affiliated to the South African Football Association (SAFA), which is affiliated to the Federation of International Football Association (FIFA). At the moment teams which are affiliated to PSL include: AmaZulu, Bidvest Wits, Bloemfontein Celtic, University of Pretoria F.C, Chippa United, Free State Stars, Mamelodi Sundowns, Kaizer Chiefs, Orlando Pirates, Supersport United, Mpumalanga Black Aces, Platinum Stars, Maritzburg United, Ajax Cape Town, Polokwane City and Golden Arrows.

The argument in this paper is that some of the soccer players are given nicknames, which are now more famous than their real names. Nicknames are the names that are given to an individual due to the habit s/he has formed or due to things s/he usually say or do, or even by looking at his or her physical appearance. It is an informal name that may be given to a person anytime (Sebashe 2007: 160). Bruner (1976) and Korg (1977), in De Klerk and Bosch (1996: 95), cite that nicknames are acquired informally, and they provide name-users and name-givers with a far range of freedom in manipulating and binding the usual naming conventions of society. Such names offer a rare example of using language creatively in accordance with logic that is not laid down from outside; they are a means of displaying linguistic license, of breaking the rules freely and getting away with it. They are an escape vent for creativity and an avenue for the expression of some of the pure enjoyment that the sounds of words can give. This means that nicknames are freely given and involve a lot of onomastic innovation on part of name-givers. Mashiri (1999: 98) cites that nicknames can be positive, negative and descriptive. He further gives two types of nicknames, namely, the self-selected and imposed nicknames. The self-selected nickname is always positive and has overtones of self-praising and bragging. On other hand, the imposed nicknames could be positive, negative or descriptive (Mashiri 1999: 98).

Imposed nicknames are also common in sport, particularly in soccer. Nicknames in soccer are

those names given either by the teammates, fans, team coaches or soccer commentators. Mostly these nicknames are derived from the playing style of a player, commitment or social behavior on or off the playing field, the player's totem or clan praise name. According to Mashiri (1999: 99), most of the nicknames are used and popularized by the teammates, the fans and the soccer commentators as they recite them during appropriate occasions.

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study is qualitative in nature. As the participants in this study are human beings, the researchers have taken the aspects of political, social and cultural into consideration because it is a study of human life.

#### The Sampling and Sampling Procedures

The total sample for the semi-structured, in-depth interviews for this study comprised 10 participants, all of who are soccer followers. The participants were chosen on the basis of their typicality and availability as key factors. Out of the ten participants, seven were males while three were females. All the selected participants were informed about the topic under investigation. The snowballing sampling technique was used to select the participants; those that met the inclusion criteria set for this study. This is the technique where one participant refers the researchers to another participant. In this study, the researchers arrived at this number of participants by first requesting team managers to provide their club's number one fan, who gave the names of the potential subjects to be interviewed.

#### Data Gathering Technique

The data for this study was gathered by means of field notes from participant observations in South African stadiums and semi-structured, in-depth interviews conducted with ten soccer followers of varying social status, namely, soccer fans, teammates, team managers, soccer commentators and team coaches. The researchers observed the use of soccer players' nicknames during the match play and outside the field of play as a way of expressing positive feelings for these players. The aim of the interviews was to complement the field notes with

participant observations. Both individual and group interviews were conducted by the researchers at a place chosen by the participants. The interviews were voice recorded using a Marantz PMD-661 field recorder with a WH-30 Shure head worn microphone in quiet rooms. During the interviews, participants were asked a range of questions including why nicknames are given, reasons why some players are given more than one nickname, and factors considered when giving a player a nickname.

### DISCUSSION

Following is a discussion of the nicknames that form the core of this paper. In the discussion the researchers will give examples of nicknames that suit the type under review.

#### Nicknames Relating to Behavior Traits

The nicknames acquired in this category reflect the bearer's behavioral traits as seen and judged by soccer spectators, sports journalists, soccer commentators, fellow players and even community members. Players may earn their nicknames because of their behavior traits. Chauke (2005: 131) is of the opinion that these types of nicknames "are frequently used to warn against an acceptable mode of behavior or dispute any allegation leveled against an individual member of the family or community". In the following paragraphs, nicknames relating to behavior traits will be discussed.

#### *Jabu Mahlangu*

*Jabu Mahlangu* was previously known as *Jabu Pule*. *Mahlangu* was given three nicknames at different times of his soccer career. He was considered a playmaker in all the teams he played for during the time he was active in football. His first nickname, "*Shuffle the Pack*" was bestowed upon him because of the manner in which he was bold when facing opponents. He did not have respect for his opponents whether young or old, he often moved from centre to forward dismantling and disorganizing his opponents with his dribbling ability. It was easy for him to 'shuffle the pack' because of his speed, his spectacular and graceful moves, passes and as well as scoring. His nickname made him bold enough to shuffle his packed opponents by taking over

the game and make something happen at any time his team was under pressure.

The second nickname given to *Jabu* was “*Ngwana wa Tshwenya*”. *Ngwana wa Tshwenya* is a Sotho phrase which can literally be translated to “*troublesome child*”. This is an imposed negative nickname, which is generally used for expressing disapproval for *Jabu*’s behavior in order to discourage him from his bad behavior and attitudes. This imposed nickname was coined out of his social behavior. Participant 9 alluded that the fans were discontent with the behavioral character displayed by *Mahlangu*, especially when he is nowhere to be found during crucial games. The researchers observed that because of the offensive nature of this nickname, it is generally used without his approval.

The third nickname was, “*Lost and Found*”. Due to his troublesome character in the field of play, *Jabu* was always nowhere to be found especially when his team needed him the most. He would disappear from practice as well as games. Then the team would declare him as ‘*Lost*’. Two to three days later, he would resurface and people would tell stories about his disappearance. Then his teammates, team managers and fans would declare him ‘*Found*’. Hence the nickname, “*Lost and Found*”.

### Nicknames Relating to Physical Character

This category of nicknaming is characterized by names, which are given to most physically strong players or those with strong character. Kahari (1990: 283) is of the view that such nicknames usually sum up the individual’s physical character or shape.

#### *Johannes Makhathini*

Johannes earned his nickname, “*Roadblock*” as a “token of positive identification” because of his style of defending, which made any condition difficult for his opponents to progress through his position to the goal post of his goalkeeper. It was apparent that his nickname was symbolic in the sense that he was like a roadblock set by the police or military personnel for his opponents. In fact, where police has set a roadblock it is not easy to pass without being thoroughly checked and searched.

*Roadblock*’s legendary toughness and ability to play the whole game without showing any

sign of tiredness made his nickname to be more like the real roadblock. He could even endure great pains and continue to play after a serious injury. Like a roadblock set by the police, he was an obstacle to his opponents for advancement to score goals. In cases where some balls passed via another defender’s side, and almost found the target, he would clear the ball off the line to prevent what was a sure goal. This was an indication that he was indeed a roadblock. Because this nickname celebrated his ability, he readily accepted it to motivate him to excel in the field of play. It suffices to say that this nickname took huge proportions and it has replaced and erased his real name.

#### *Tonic Chabalala*

Participants are of the opinion that at times a player can be given a nickname in accordance with the language, which he speaks. This way of nicknaming is regarded as a practice that is carefully thought out in advance (Yesufu 1996). However, this nickname should symbolize the manner in which this player performs his duties in the field of play. The two nicknames given to *Tonic Chabalala* serve as examples of such names.

*Tonic* was given his first nickname, “*Nyama a yi dluli*”, a Xitsonga expression, which could be literally translated to mean ‘meat does not pass’. Resultantly, the name bearer was given this nickname because he was a skillful central defender of note during his time in football. Like security that would not allow meat to pass his vicinity without permission, *Chabalala* would not allow any player to pass through to his goalkeeper, either to attempt or to score a goal. He used to handle troublesome strikers with his techniques of defending.

The second nickname given to *Tonic* was “*Hosi ya mina*”. This nickname could be literally translated to mean ‘*my chief*’. According to the participants, this nickname was given to him by one of the soccer commentators. Herbert (1992) supports this view by indicating that “nicknames may be either self-selected by an individual or imposed by others”. A chief is a respected person in the community just as *Chabalala* was respected in the soccer field. When you go to him (the chief) you have to bow as a sign of respect to your leader. *Hosi ya mina* was a hard tackling defender, who was always respected by

strikers from other clubs. According to participant 3, *Hosi ya mina* was a solid defender like a rock and worked very hard to lead (*Hosi*) his teammates especially the defenders.

This discussion revealed that in Xitsonga like in other African cultures, the show of respect (*nhlonipho*) is unidirectional, it is directed towards the higher status person, that is, the high above one in the social hierarchy (de Kadt 1998). Thus, the players of other clubs would call *Hosi ya mina* and show him much respect because of his nickname.

### Nicknames in the Field of Play

In order to provide meaningful nicknames related to the field of play, it is helpful to mention that this type of nickname transforms personal expression into collective expression as it fosters a sense of belonging, group dimension and identification (Chauke 2005). In some instances these nicknames are humorous and make life very interesting as it serves as a source of entertainment, removal of stress and tensions in the work environment (Turner 2000).

#### *Patrick Pule Ntsoelengoe*

Patrick *Ntsoelengoe* was regarded as one of the greatest and most talented players in the South African soccer fraternity. Patrick's father, Daniel *Ntsoelengoe* who was also a soccer player is the one who inspired the affectionate nickname "*Ace*" for his son. In the playing cards, *Ace* is the main card that changes things to turn in your favor. So it was the case with *Ace Ntsoelengoe* because he was a very important player to all the teams he played for during his time in football.

He became a key figure in the Kaizer Chiefs Club because of his incredible playing skills. Because of his natural skills in football, it was difficult for other players to take the ball away from him. He was a middle fielder of note who constantly pushed forward into attacking positions and often scored more goals, more than other strikers. Participant 2 avers, "*Ace* was a very good player like the ace in a deck of cards when playing at a casino. Everybody wants to have that card, so it was in his case, every team wanted to have him on their team list".

*Ace* always wanted to have his team to have a point at the end of every game. This nickname

was later given to other famous players such as Joel "*Ace*" *Mnini*, Donald "*Ace*" *Khuse*, Brown Phillip "*Ace*" *Kabote*, Alfred "*Ace*" *Mgedeza* and *Oupa* "*Ace*" *Manyisa*. In general, the participants were of the view that as it is an acceptable practice to give a nickname to other players, when Ntsoelengoe retired from football he gave Donald *Khuse* his nickname (*Ace*) and the t-shirt number 12 he was using at Kaizer Chiefs Club.

*Ace's* style of playing was very unique. His style earned him another nickname bestowed to him by his followers, namely "*Mabheka Phantsi genge zambala*" literally translated to mean 'looking down like a potato'. This was so because while playing, he could hardly look at either his teammates or his opponents. Rather, he would look down, hence "*Mabheka Phantsi*", where the ball was. Surprisingly, when he passed the ball to his teammates, it would go straight to their legs as if he was throwing them using his hands. While looking down, "*Mabheka phantsi*" was very perfect in his dribbling, shooting, attacking, defending as well as scoring. Participant 5 argued that *Ace* was not different from any well renowned international players you can think of.

#### *Mark Mayambela*

The origins of some nicknames are fascinating. They are often unique at a certain area or club or moment in the history of a player. In fact, when a player moves from one club to the other there is a likelihood of them changing the nickname. This is influenced by the change of style of play in a new club. *Mayambela* is one of the players who earned several colorful nicknames because of his large following and supporters in football. Herbert (1992) is of the view that colorful nicknames are given to popular figures that enjoy a large following or support in the community.

Mark *Mayambela* is one of the players who have been given various nicknames. A number of grounds can be distinguished in an attempt to explain the possibilities of his nicknames. The time he was playing for Bloemfontein Celtic, he was nicknamed "*Scara*". Participant 10 says that this nickname was bestowed to him because of "his ball juggling skills, which always confused his opponents and make him difficult to mark". Participant 8 makes it clear that the nickname was given to him because there were other soccer stars who played a similar style like him before. Football stars such as Eric "*Scara*" *Sono*, Abso-

lom “*Scara*” *Nthithwa* and Emmanuel “*Scara*” *Ngobeza* also bore the same nickname.

However, when he later moved to other clubs, this nickname (*Scara*) was no longer prominent to his new followers. He then acquired a new nickname, “*Professor*”. Some of his followers called him *Professor*. Like an expert in the particular field of study, Mark is regarded as an expert in the field of play because of his skillful manner of playing. His style of handling the ball, which pleases the crowd, shows that he is very talented. Although natural in his style of playing, participant 7 indicated that *Mayambela*’s style of playing always has a deep relationship with that of *Mlungisi* “*Professor*” *Ngubane* who was also a soccer star years before *Mayambela*. He further alluded to the fact that this is the reason why he was nicknamed *Professor* by his fans.

Another nickname given to *Mayambela* is, “*Umsaba ungamazi*” which is like a totem, which could literally be translated to mean ‘fear of the unknown’. The nickname was given to him because he played for different clubs trying to look for greener pastures.

From the data collected from participant 10, it emerges that some soccer followers gave this player “the ever wasteful” as a nickname. The same goes to participant 4 who alluded that this nickname was given to *Mayambela* because like any other player, at times he is out of form and he wasted so many balls in favor of his opponents. However, it was noticed in this study that this nickname did not appeal to most of the participants since it has a negative impact on this favorite player.

In a nutshell, it appears that there exists consensus amongst the participants interviewed that all these nicknames have a role to play in motivating this player to play the way he does. Moreover, there appears to be a shift in the style of play depending on the club he plays for and the nickname given to him at that particular moment. This is a clear indication that there is no cut and dry rules in giving nicknames to soccer players.

#### ***Johannes Fetsi Molatedi***

*Johannes Molatedi* is a retired South African soccer midfielder who played for Moroka Swallows, Kaizer Chiefs, and Seven Stars. He began his soccer career at Moroka Swallows in 1981. After *Molatedi* won the Mainstay Cup in 1983 he requested a transfer to the club he sup-

ported as a boy, Kaizer Chiefs. He also joined Seven Stars. At Seven Stars his stardom began to wane and he retired in 2000.

*Molatedi* earned himself two nicknames during his soccer career. He was given the first nickname, “*Chippa*”. *Molatedi* was nicknamed *Chippa* after he went to one of the training sessions at Moroka Swallows wearing his younger brother’s track top with the nickname *Chippa* inscribed on it. To be honest, the nickname belonged to his younger brother Daniel who was also a footballer. Other soccer stars that bear the same nickname of *Chippa* are Eric *Chippa Chauke*, Steve *Chippa Lekoelea*, *Nkosinathi Chippa Nhleko* and Phil *Chippa Masinga*. The second nickname earned by *Molatedi* was “*Telephone Exchange*”. This nickname was symbolic to the style of his playing. The manner in which he distributed balls to his teammates was like a person working at the telephone switchboard. Apart from been a skillful distributor of balls, he was one of the most skillful dribblers, finishers and a free kick specialist. He was multitalented.

After retirement, he coached amateur teams in *Matatiele* and returned to Johannesburg in 2002. He runs the Ormonde Soccer Academy with players from Xavier Reefs and Ormonde View

#### ***Mandla Sithole***

Sithole was one of the fastest runners and goal poachers in the field during his soccer career. He was nicknamed “*Metroblitz*” after a fast commuter train to Soweto. *Metroblitz* was an experimental high-speed interurban commuter train, which travelled between Soweto and Johannesburg. His fast speed was linked to the *Metroblitz* train, which was one of the fastest in South Africa before the introduction of the Gautrain. This nickname was bestowed to him because of his fast speed; one could not easily catch him when holding the ball. Participant 6 indicated that “*Metroblitz* was like spitfire, once he has the ball in his position he ran so fast to score goals. I can also compare him with a lightning once in front of the goalposts. He was always problematic to his opponents, in particular, defenders”.

Similar to his style of running very fast with the ball, is *Tlou Sigolela*. The following paragraphs discuss his nickname.

#### ***Pinto Tlou Segolela***

*Segolela* has three nicknames, “*Socks*” “*Gautrain*” and “*headless chicken*”. With re-

spect to the nickname “*Socks*” bestowed to *Segolela*, there is no evidence as to why this nickname was given to him. Tlou further earned himself a nickname *Gautrain*. Gautrain is a fast railway system in the Gauteng Province in South Africa. It is regarded as the biggest and fastest train in Africa. This train links Johannesburg, Pretoria, Ekurhuleni and the O.R. Tambo International Airport.

It is apparent from the data that participants sometimes demonstrate their negative moods by giving a player a sarcastic nickname, which shows their anger in a manner in which a player plays. Segolela was also nicknamed “*Headless Chicken*” by fans of other clubs because at times his fast speed did not yield positive results as expected by both his team and the followers. In the data collected for the study, it has been seen that participant 5 pointed out that some of Segolela’s runs were not productive. He sometimes ran like a headless chicken, which is without a direction, hence the nickname *Headless Chicken*.

#### ***Ephraim Matsilele Sono***

*Sono* was one of the most feared and revered players in the field of play who earned himself many nicknames. *Sono*’s soccer career had an unusual beginning; during a match that he attended one of the Orlando Pirates’ regular players was absent and *Sono* was requested to stand in for him. He soon gained fame for his all-round ability, dribbling and accurate passing.

*Sono* played for the old and famous Orlando Pirates club before buying his own team. The first nickname that he earned was ‘*Jomo*’, which most people think is his real name, after the first president of Kenya, *Jomo Kenyatta*. As the son of Eric *Scara Sono* he was seen as the heir apparent at Pirates. He was given the nickname *Jomo*, which means “burning spear” by an Orlando Pirates fan, who saw in him the same leadership qualities as those of *Kenyatta*.

*Sono* is also known by the nickname, ‘*Troublemaker*’ because of his dribbling skills and goal scoring talent. He would pass a number of defenders with ease. He was a thorn in the flesh of his opponents. He always sent his opponents the wrong way and maneuvered to score the most important goals for his club. He was also nicknamed ‘*the Black Prince*’, ‘*Mjomana*’ and ‘*Bra J*’. The nickname ‘*the Black Prince*’ refers to a renowned military commander. *Sono* was named

‘*the Black Prince*’ because of his command over the ball in the field of play. The nicknames ‘*Mjomana*’ and ‘*Bra J*’ are derived from the name *Jomo*.

After his successful stint at Orlando Pirates, *Sono* went to the United States of America, where, in 1977, he played for the New York Cosmos. At Cosmos, one of his teammates was the legendary Pele. In 1978, *Sono* played for the Colorado Caribous. At the end of the season, the Caribous changed its name to the Atlanta Chiefs where he played with another South African soccer star of the time, Kaizer *Motaung*. *Sono* completed his stint in North America playing for the Toronto Blizzard. After his soccer career in the USA ended, *Sono* returned home, where he purchased the Highlands Park Club in 1982. He renamed it *Jomo Cosmos* in honor of his old team in America. He is now both the club owner and coach.

*Sono* has also taken a leading role in discovering and developing new football talent. He was also a technical advisor to the *Bafana Bafana*’s head coach, Clive Barker during the 1996 African Nations Cup. To add to his glorious soccer career, *Sono* served as a caretaker coach for *Bafana Bafana* on three occasions, namely, the African Nations Cup tournament in Burkina Faso in 1998, and Egypt in 2000 and the FIFA World Cup in South Korea and Japan in 2002. *Sono* has also built up a reputation as a successful businessman.

#### ***Jerry Skhosana***

*Skhosana* is one of the former South African footballers that was popular for goal poaching. Playing most of his soccer career at Orlando Pirates, *Skhosana* was an assumed Pirates’ fierce rival Kaizer Chiefs’ fan but also had great performances for his team at the Soweto derbies. He was nicknamed ‘*Legs of Thunder*’ after a champion racehorse. This nickname was also given to him because of how he was difficult to be marked and tackled by his opponents. His legs were referred to thunder because of his speed, and his spectacular and graceful moves, passes and scoring. His goals were fast like a bolt of lightning. This feat also earned him the second nickname, “*Jambo Jet*”. He was one of the greatest strikers in the South Africa’s Premier Soccer League who always played his heart out during his soccer career.

In 1999, he joined the Chinese side Yunnan Hongta, but left the club after only two months due to a problem with his signing on fee. He is considered one of highly recommended talent scouts. He has discovered household players such as *Teko Modise* of Mamelodi Sundowns and *Thabo Matlaba* of Orlando Pirates. Presently, *Skhosana* serves a soccer analyst for Super Sport.

### **Soccer Stars with Nicknames Associated with Music**

The unshakeable bond between sport and music is reportedly very strong. Current musicians and their popular hits have also been borrowed by soccer fans to honor their favorite players. Soccer stars have earned themselves nicknames associated with music. They are nicknamed after popular pop and *kwaito* songs.

#### **Noel Cousins**

Cousins was one of the popular Arcadia Shepherds and Moroka Swallows players. His adoring fans bestowed on him the nickname "*Phinda Mzala*" which can be loosely translated to "*do it again, cousin*". This Moroka Swallows hit man earned the nickname from the *Stimela* song titled "*Phinda Mzala*". The song means 'do it again, cousin'. The fans always expected him to score goals, hence the nickname.

Cousins' football style was simple but effective. He possessed no fancy frills, but had a deadly finish, which made him one of the most consistent strikers of his generation. Cousins was very consistent in scoring goals, explosive and comfortable with both feet. Among his other achievements, Cousins won the 1987 NPSL Top Goalscorer Award with 28 league goals and four cup strikes. He was also voted the Players' Player of the Season in the same year.

#### **Dennis Lota**

*Lota* was a Zambian International star who played for Zanaco, Nchanga Rangers, Kabwe Warriors and Konkola Blades in Zambia before trekking to FC Sion in Switzerland. He started his professional soccer career with Zanaco FC of Zambia in 1989 before leaving for Nchanga Rangers at the beginning of the 1991 season. At Nchanga he established a midfield partnership

with *Abeauty Kunda*. He later left to join Kabwe Warriors after a failed attempt to rejoin Zanaco. At Warriors, he never settled and left after one season to join Konkola Blades. It was at Konkola where the late brother to *Kalusha Bwalya*, Benjamin transformed *Lota* to a lethal striker who went to win the golden boot in 1995 and later became a strong target for international clubs. He joined FC Sion in Switzerland.

Upon leaving FC Sion, *Lota* joined Orlando Pirates in South Africa, where his prowess in front of the goal and particularly his celebration (rubbing his palms against each other), earned him the nickname "*Chisa Mpama*" (loosely translated to "*hot clap*" in isiZulu). The nickname '*Chisa Mpama*' by the Orlando Pirates supporters was derived from a popular hit song by *Senyaka Kekana*. Whenever he scored, *Lota* would celebrate by rubbing his palms together. In South Africa, he also starred for Amazulu and Moroka Swallows.

*Lota* was also part of the Zambian African Nations Cup team in 1996, 1998, 2000 and 2002. In March 2011, the Moroka Swallows Football Club had elevated *Lota* to one of the assistant coaches (Dennis *Lota* at National-Football-Teams-com.)

### **CONCLUSION**

Participants in this study reported that there are numerous factors to be considered when giving and popularizing a nickname for a soccer player. In most cases, participants reported that the style, behavior, commitment or totem of a player could be the major motivations for a particular nickname to be given to a player. Through the observation technique, this study also confirmed that soccer players are given nicknames differently depending on the way they play or behave. Responses to the interviews conducted indicated that there is no longer creativity in honoring these modern heroes in soccer these days as compared to some years back. Overall though, most participants felt that soccer players should continue to be given nicknames because they play a pivotal role in motivating the players to display their exceptional skills.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on the findings, this paper recommends that in giving a soccer player a nickname,

consideration should be mostly on the playing style or totem of the player. This should be used to motivate him to display his exceptional skills. It is recommended for the nickname-givers that offensive nicknames should be avoided since they would demoralize the player from playing good football.

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