

The day a soccer legend died

by Mohanoe Khiba

Klerksdorp Record, Khuma - It wasn't the first time that South African football fans were touched by sad news in the football fraternity on 13 January.

A disaster in football history happened on 13 January when a stampede at Oppenheimer Stadion in a "friendly" game between Kaizer Chiefs and Orlando Pirates left several people dead.

This year, again on 13 January, football fans were shocked to hear about the death of the former Bafana Bafana striker, Pillemon Raul 'Chippa' Masinga (49).

Klerksdorp Record can confirm that Masinga started complaining about pain in August 2018 and he started to lose weight.

Last month he was admitted to Tshepong Hospital before he was transferred to Baragwanath Hospital. He was diagnosed with cancer. His wife, Ntombi Nombewu, always believed that Masinga was a fighter and that he will pull through.

News of his death in Parktown Hospital, Johannesburg came as a shock to his family, friends and the entire nation.

This former Leeds United striker has lost his battle with the illness.

Dignitaries like Minister of Sport and Recreation- Thokozile Xasa, North West MECs Education and Sport Development- Sello Lehari, Public Works and Roads- Oageng Molapisi, his friend- Doctor Khumalo already

visited the home of Masinga in Khuma to pay their respects.

He will always be remembered for one of the biggest moments in football history, when he scored the crucial goal that sent Mzansi to the 1998 Fifa World Cup in France.

Masinga's first memorial service will be held in Gauteng on Friday 18 January and the second one in Klerksdorp on Tuesday 22 January, while his funeral service will be held locally on Thursday 24 January.

According to the family spokesperson, Majoro Nguphane, one of the reasons for next week is that there's still a pending application for the state funeral from the president to be cleared.

MEC Lehari said Masinga worked hard for the province, so they are there to bury him. "He had since been appointed at my department as an ambassador of the Maize Cup for almost three years. He did com-

munity and schools clinics together with the marketing of the cup. He is indeed a soccer legend," MEC added.

Masinga was part of the Bafana Bafana squad that won the 1996 Africa Cup of Nations. He firstly played in the mining industry for teams like Kwapeni FC and Buffels United before Jomo Sono scouted him to his team, Jomo Cosmos and then later Mamelodi Sundowns.

He then went abroad to join Leeds United, then St Gallen in Switzerland, Salernitana and Bari in Italy and Al Wahda in the United Arab Emirates.



Chippa and his younger brother, Ernest Masinga.