

# The Third Oupa Lehulere Soccer Tournament

By Senzo Mboweni

10 December 2024

The Oupa Lehulere Soccer Tournament, now in its third year, has become an important event in promoting social justice and non-violence through sport. This annual tournament brings together different groups of people, including out-of-school youth, school learners, social justice organisations, and NGOs, to compete in a friendly and inclusive game. The main aspect of the tournament is its commitment to including women, which required that all participating teams must consist of at least 50% female players. This intentional effort creates a safe space for women to participate and promote equality.

This year's tournament took place on 19 October 2024 at Newtown Park in Newtown, Johannesburg, as part of the 16th Jozi Book Fair. The tournament brought together 16 teams, including eight teams for adults and 8 teams for school youth.

Before the games began, all teams gathered around the field to receive instructions on the rules and format of the tournament. Rules outlined stated that each team will play a 5-a-side match, with each game lasting 10 minutes, divided into two 5-minute halves, all teams must have 50% women playing in the field, and the winning team will advance to the next round until they reach the finals.

After the rules were outlined, everyone was excited and ready to play. The games were super entertaining, with many goals scored. The organisation of the tournament was impressive, with excellent officiation and equal treatment of all teams and genders.

In the end, Snake Park won the adult league, while Centurion College took home the wins in the school youth category. Both teams played three games to reach the final and were awarded prizes, including t-shirts and books.

Keabetsoe Kole, a player from Maokeng Advice and Resource Centre based in Free State, expressed her happiness in participating in the tournament. She says, she played for Snake Park and the soccer match made her very happy because she is old, but she got an opportunity to play at her old age. She appreciated the friendly and inclusive atmosphere, which allowed people of all genders and ages to participate. As someone who traveled from the Free State to participate, Kole felt proud that she represented the Free State well.

Custodio, from Centurion College, said that the small field and short game time presented some challenges. But he was grateful for the opportunity to play and for his school to win the school youth top prize. He also appreciated the fact that the tournament provided a platform for females to participate in sports.

The Third Oupa Lehulere Soccer Tournament was a truly vibrant and exciting tournament, filled with energy, passion, and a sense of community. The tournament's unique blend of gender balance made for an unforgettable experience.

*This article was submitted on 04 December 2024. You may republish this article, so long as you credit the authors and Karibu! Online ([www.Karibu.org.za](http://www.Karibu.org.za)), and do not change the text. Please include a link back to the original article.*