Clubs warmed up as Rugby Tournament returns to Soweto

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Johannesburg and Soweto sports fans can brace themselves for more sensational rugby action as the Soweto Rugby Tournament makes its awaited return to the township from 26-29 April.

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The tournament will kick-off with a Gala Dinner on the evening of April 26th at the Braamfischerville Sports Complex, with the games commencing on the 27th, from the same venue as well as the Dobsonville Stadium, in Soweto.

Soweto Rugby Tournament is an annual event organized by the Soweto Rugby Club in partnership with the Gauteng Department of Sport, Arts, Culture and Recreation (GD-SACR) and the City of Johannesburg, aimed at showcasing up and coming talent and developing future stars of the game.

Says the Gauteng MEC for Sport, Arts Culture and Recreation Lebogang Maile "In endorsing and supporting the tournament GD-SACR is buoyed by its mandate to ensure access, increased participation and transformation of the sports among others in order to promote nation building and social cohesion among the people of the province and ultimately South Africa".

Hosts Soweto Rugby Club have a second chance at reclaiming their pride at this year's tournament following their heavy defeat by Eastern Cape's Eye of The Tiger, who won 41-5 in the final to seal an emphatic victory during last year's tournament.

This year's competition promises to be an epic battle with a total of 12 teams including teams from Gauteng and the rest of the country all resolved to be the last standing.

The tournament will also feature under-13 and under-14 categories from the participating clubs.

Teams partaking in this year's tournament include: Kirkwood (Eastern Cape), Eldoranians, Matlosana Rugby Academy (North West), Alexandra, Atteridgeville, Maccabi Jewish Team, Soshanguve, Eden Park, Eye Of The Tiger (Eastern Cape), Soweto Rugby Club and 2 Gauteng Invitation teams.

According to MEC Maile, the partnership with rugby at this level of development is important in that "the initiative with the Soweto Rugby Club is one of our most significant efforts in ensuring that rugby is developed and embraced by all".

"We don't want to only talk about township spectatorship of rugby when big teams come to play in Soweto as happened in the recent past, but we also want to talk about it because the township people also play it right to the top", added MEC Maile.

Also featured in one of the opening fixtures of the tournament will be an exhibition match between Soweto Rugby Legends XI against Ex-Professional Legends XI, where fans will get to watch yester-year's heroes like Gcobani Bobo (Lions, The Sharks) and Kaya Malotana (Springboks, Border, and Lions) among others.