

**02 August 2017**

**Orlando Pirates to defend their Engen Knockout Challenge title.**

The draw for the Johannesburg leg of the 2017 Engen Knockout Challenge took place on 25 July at the Sunnyside Park Hotel. The eagerly anticipated tournament takes place from 04 – 06 August at the Wits Marks Park Sports Complex.

Johannesburg's football fraternity were out in force for the draw. In attendance were Vice-President of SAFA Johannesburg, Jimmy Bakos; Engen Knockout Challenge Johannesburg Tournament Director, Montsho Matlala; 2017 Engen Knockout Challenge Johannesburg Ambassador, Daine Klate; as well as South African football legend Dillon Shepherd.

Coaches of participating teams from as far afield as Pretoria and Polokwane were also present to witness the event and to discover who their opponents are in the group stages of the prestigious under-17 football event.

Speaking at the draw, Engen's CSI Coordinator: Gauteng, Thandi Manqana urged the young players who participate in the tournament to use it as a stepping stone to launch their professional careers. "This is where it all starts for you, and Engen is delighted to be a part of the development of tomorrow's stars," said Manqana.

Vice-President of SAFA Johannesburg, Jimmy Bakos lauded Engen's commitment to football development.

"I would like to thank Engen for bringing a tournament of this stature to Johannesburg. This tournament plays an important role in the development of young football player's careers as it showcases the best talent from across the Gauteng region at one venue," said Bakos.

He added: "Not only has Engen, via the Engen Knockout Challenge, assisted in the development of our local players, local football administrators have also benefited by being involved in the organisation of a major tournament like the Engen Knockout Challenge."

The Engen Knockout Challenge Ambassador for Johannesburg, Daine Klate said he was proud to be associated with the tournament and encouraged the players participating to use the Engen Knockout Challenge as a platform to showcase their footballing talent.

"Make the most of each opportunity, work hard, love the game and stay focussed. Your journey starts here," said Klate.

Reigning Engen Knockout Johannesburg Champions, Orlando Pirates were drawn in Group Two, alongside SuperSport United, Highlands Park and Bopelo FC.

The groups are as follows: -

Group 1 – Wits Juniors, Southern LFA, Bidvest Wits and Platinum Stars

Group 2 – Highlands Park, Orlando Pirates, SuperSport United and Bopelo FC

Group 3 – Kaizer Chiefs, Soweto All Stars, Mamelodi Sundowns and Dlamini Xi Experience FC

Group 4 – TUKS, Axton Panorama FC, Stars of Africa Academy and School of Excellence

Scouts from clubs across South Africa and abroad have been seen at the Engen Knockout Challenge tournaments over the years, all looking to unearth the next star player.

The winners of the regional Engen Knockout Challenge events will battle it out in the Engen Champ of Champs later in the year to determine the overall national champions.

The dates for the Engen Knockout Challenge are as follows:

**Johannesburg**

- Date: 04 - 06 Aug 2017
- Venue: Wits Marks Park Sports Complex,
- Host Club: Wits AFC

The Engen Knockout Challenge Champion's per region thus far are: -

- Cape Town                      Old Mutual Academy
- Port Elizabeth                Shining Stars
- Durban                          Durban FC Academy
- Bloemfontein                Virginia Sports Academy

For the players participating in the 2017 Engen Knockout Challenge, the message is clear - "Your Journey Starts Here"!

**#EKOC2017, #YourJourneyStartsHere and #EngenSoccer**

For more information visit: [www.engen.co.za](http://www.engen.co.za)