

**HELGE SCHÜTZ**

THE sixth round of the Namibian Club Rugby league takes place tomorrow with a young Unam team sitting pretty at the top of the log. After five rounds, Unam are on 16 points from five matches, of which they have won three, drawn one and lost one.

Wanderers, the only team to have defeated Unam so far, are second on 14 points from four matches, as are the defending champions United, who have an inferior points aggregate.

Unam have improved in recent years but have been too inconsistent and have never reached the end-of-season play-offs.

Now, with former national coach Johan Diergaardt at the helm, they have become a force to be reckoned with and some believe they

can go all the way and win the title this year.

Diergaardt, who last coached Namibia at the 2011 Rugby World Cup, said it was great to be back in coaching.

"I have been out of rugby for three years – the break has been good for me but I must say I missed coaching rugby. It's always a privilege to work with young players and it's exciting to be part of it again," he said.

"Our motto is just to play better in each match and to see where it takes us. I think United and Wanderers will be the favourites this year – they have put in impressive performances lately and will have to be beaten, but I'm positive we can reach the semi-finals," he said.

Diergaardt said his structures are starting to take root while the players had a newfound belief in them.

"Unam's problem was that they were never consistent. They were always up and down and they were not disciplined enough – we had to improve the discipline on and off the field. We have a lot of young and inexperienced players but we are more structured now and the players are starting to implement the game plan and believe in our structure," he said.

"But we also made some good signings and strengthened our squad with some national U-20 players like Daniel Arries, Mahepisa Tjeriko and Donovan Kandjili. It's a nice challenge to try and get them to reach their full potential. I can see there has been an improvement every week," he added.

Tomorrow they travel to Rehoboth to take on Rehoboth and Diergaardt said they can expect a tough encounter.

"Reho Falcons are always dangerous and especially on their home field in front of their supporters they will be tough to beat. We are just focussing on our game plan and defence – if we get that right the rest will fall into place."

Unam have a few injuries and prop Hauta Veii, lock Mahepisa Tjeriko and hooker Rico van Wyk will be unavailable for tomorrow's match.

But they have a few players returning from the national squad

like lock Max Kajiteko, centre Daniel Arries and wing Silvano Benkes and Diergaardt believes they have the depth to still field a strong side.

"We have quite a lot of depth, so it will give some other players a chance to stake their claim, while our national players have also returned for this match," he said.

In other matches tomorrow, Rehoboth Rugby Club host Wanderers in Rehoboth while United host Kudus at Trustco United Park.

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**Arrows relish underdog role**

**• STAFF REPORTER**

ELEVEN Arrows coach Dankie Hepundja says his side are not under pressure to win tomorrow's Bidvest Namibia Cup semi-final against Tigers given that their opponents are favourites to progress to the final.

He believes the underdog tag will work in his team's favour as they seek to reach their first final since 2011.

Hepundja, who was assistant to then Arrows coach Congo Hindjou when they won the FA Cup in 2011, said his charges perform best when little is expected of them.

"We are the underdogs but that does not mean it will be a walk in the park for Tigers. We know they will be tough and they are favourites and they have all the pressure to win which can give us room to execute our plan on the day," Hepundja says.

The coach added that his squad can emulate the class of

mulated a wealth of experience through their well-documented tribulations in the league this season. Tomorrow's game will demonstrate their positive momentum and character, he said.

"The boys have really impressed and surprised all this season and we are preparing well for the semi-finals and we aim to progress to the final. We respect Tigers and we know what to expect from them. We will have to work very hard to progress and we have to dig deep," said Hepundja.

Tomorrow's football festival will start with an assortment of entertainment as early as 10h00 when the gates open at the Sam Nujoma Stadium.

Eleven Arrows will face Tigers at 12h00 in the first semi-final, with African Stars and Orlando Pirates battling for a final berth in the second match at 14h30.

Tickets are available for N\$30 each at Computicket outlets in Shoprite and Checkers outlets