

## SA's Supa Strikas go global

At 5pm today, Friday 7 November, a group of creative artists from Cape Town will be glued to SABC2 to watch characters they have crafted and shaped with love and flair over the past seven years come to life in the first of half-hour animation episodes of Supa Strikas.

Scattered throughout South Africa in solidarity with them will be the millions of loyal fans who have throughout this time been following the trials and triumphs of their favourite football team in the print version of the comic, which is distributed as a monthly 24-page insert into the Sunday Times and as a weekly one-page strip in the Sunday Times Magazine.

The even more heart-lifting part of this home-grown success story is its global appeal and reach. Apart from South Africa, the animated show will be broadcast in 15 countries across Africa, Latin America and Europe starting in November 2008. The action-packed soccer animation will air in South Africa, Namibia, Botswana, Zambia, Kenya, Uganda, Cameroon, Nigeria, Colombia, Panama, Honduras, El Salvador, Guatemala, Malaysia, Turkey and Poland.

The show tells the story of Shakes and his team-mates taking on the world's best teams in the Super League, the toughest league on earth, while they entertain their fans with their on- and off-pitch flair and action. It is a refreshingly feel-good serialised story of a young boy realising and living his dream against all odds. The story brings a message of hope and inspiration to young kids and adults alike across the globe.

The timing of the animation as an extension to the brand comes right on the brink of South Africa and the rest of the continent gearing up for 2 years of soccer fever with the Confederations Cup and 2010 FIFA World Cup.

"This is just the start of what we hope are even bigger things to come," says Strika Entertainment Executive Director, Olive Power. "We firmly believe this series will take the brand to new levels of popularity among the youth all over the world, and the process showcase some of South Africa's best creative talent," he added, praising the creative team for their efforts.

Strika Entertainment managed to secure a significant portion of the production funding from longstanding title sponsor, Caltex, who have also agreed to fund a second series, which will be ready for broadcast coinciding with the 2010 FIFA World Cup.

According to Power the animation is a natural progression from the print version, of which more than 1.4 million copies are distributed monthly. He says the series has also been sold to broadcasters outside of the countries where Supa Strikas has a presence through the print comic as a result of the high quality and universal entertainment appeal. The animation is currently showcased at Mipcom, the world premier audiovisual content market in Cannes, where broadcasters from across the globe gather to buy program content.

"The full-length animated series has been our dream since we started the print comic in 2001, and it is something our fans have been asking for as well," says Power.

Coinciding with the launch of the animation, a range of branded merchandise will be available in the form of a clothing range in Mr Price and Edgars stores, and Supa Strikas drinks and snacks to follow early next year.

The company will also launch the print version in Egypt, Mauritius, Reunion, Malaysia and Brazil during 2009.