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# The Ghost, goals and glory: Getting to know the Soweto Derby with Suzuki

Few football rivalries command the attention of South Africa quite like the Soweto Derby.

On Saturday, 31 October, Orlando Pirates and Kaizer Chiefs will face-off at Johannesburg's FNB Stadium, bringing generations of football loyalty, fierce competition and plenty of noise to a time-honoured fixture that means far more than the final score. With Halloween falling on derby day, this year's clash also carries an extra twist as the timing is rather fitting for the legions of diehard Orlando Pirates supporters, who are affectionately known as *The Ghost*.

As the club's official vehicle partner and Official Premium Sleeve Partner, Suzuki Auto South Africa takes a closer look at what makes the Soweto Derby such a big part of South African football.

## Why does the Soweto Derby bring a nation to a standstill?

The Soweto Derby is the name given to a football match between Orlando Pirates and Kaizer Chiefs, two of South Africa's most recognised and fiercely supported clubs. Both have their roots in Soweto, and when they meet, the result is about much more than points on the league table. For supporters, it's a chance to celebrate their team and claim bragging rights over their biggest rivals. For the wider football community, it's one of the most anticipated fixtures on the local sporting calendar.

## One season, two giants and potentially more than one showdown

The two teams typically meet at least twice during a Betway Premiership season. If they cross paths in a cup competition, such as the Carling Knockout Cup or Nedbank Cup, supporters could have another derby to look forward to. Each meeting adds another chapter to a rivalry that has been part of South African football since the first time they met on the pitch back in 1971.

## Pirates or Chiefs? Why derby day can divide the whole family

For many supporters, choosing between Orlando Pirates and Kaizer Chiefs is a family affair. Allegiance to a team is often passed down through generations, shaped by childhood memories and the relatives who first introduced them to the beautiful game of football.

Come derby day, those loyalties can turn a family lunch, office conversation or WhatsApp group into a friendly battle of predictions, team colours and confident declarations about who will win.

The atmosphere is just as distinctive. Singing, dancing, flags and vuvuzelas create the carnival-like energy associated with the fixture, while the banter often starts long before kick-off. And with this year's derby falling on Halloween, the timing could hardly be more fitting for Orlando Pirates supporters, aka *The Ghost*. Expect plenty of black-and-white pride, cross-armed salutes, lively exchanges with their rivals and a few extra Halloween references along the way.

Of course, confidence counts for little once the whistle blows. When these two teams meet, the result is never a foregone conclusion.

## Almost 90 years of the Buccaneers: The history behind the rivalry

Founded in 1937, Orlando Pirates is one of South Africa's oldest football clubs, with a history spanning almost nine decades. Known as the Buccaneers, the club has built a strong identity and a loyal following over generations.

Kaizer Chiefs was founded in 1970 by former Orlando Pirates player Dr Kaizer Motaung. The emergence of Chiefs added another dimension to South African football, and the rivalry between the two clubs has since become one of the defining stories of the local game.

Their contrasting histories and passionate supporters continue to make the Soweto Derby a compelling sporting occasion.

## From match day to every day: Suzuki is By Your Side

Suzuki Auto South Africa announced its two-year partnership with Orlando Pirates in July 2025, becoming the club's Official Vehicle Partner and Official Premium Sleeve Partner.

It's a fitting partnership between two names with proud histories and ambitious futures. Orlando Pirates has been part of South African football since 1937, while Suzuki's global story spans more than a century.

Since returning to the South African market in 2008, Suzuki has recorded 18 consecutive years of sales growth and established itself as one of the country's leading vehicle brands. Its expanding dealer network and growing customer base reflect the brand's continued success in the local market.

“Partnering with Orlando Pirates gives Suzuki Auto South Africa an opportunity to be part of a club with a proud history and a loyal following,” says Brendon Carpenter, Brand Marketing Manager at Suzuki Auto South Africa.

“At Suzuki, our *By Your Side* promise is about being there for the moments that matter, whether that's getting to the big game, spending time with family or heading off on an overland adventure to enjoy our beautiful country. We're proud to be part of the Pirates journey and look forward to building on this relationship through a shared love of sport and community.”

“For Suzuki, it's about more than having our name on a shirt; it's about celebrating the passion supporters bring to the game and being part of the experiences that make football so special. We look forward to sharing plenty more memorable moments with the Buccaneers and their fans, including what promises to be an exciting Soweto Derby.”

“Fans can join us at the Suzuki stand to explore our vehicles, test their reflexes in our reaction game for a chance to win prizes, and capture the moment at our selfie booth. Bigger, bolder flags and exciting giveaways will add to the match-day spirit. With the game falling on Halloween this year, we're hoping the Buccaneers give their supporters plenty to celebrate – and maybe a few reasons for the opposition to be spooked!” Carpenter concludes.

## From looms to cars: How Suzuki kicked off its legacy

Suzuki's story began in 1909, when founder Michio Suzuki established a loom-making business in Japan. The business grew, and in 1920 it was incorporated as Suzuki Loom Manufacturing Co. Although the company initially focused on textile machinery, Michio Suzuki was keen to diversify, and by 1937 it had developed its first vehicle prototype. The Second World War put those plans on hold, but the ambition to build vehicles was never abandoned.

In 1955, Suzuki launched the Suzulight, a small, affordable front-wheel-drive car designed to make motoring accessible to more people and help mobilise post-war Japan. That practical approach remains central to the brand today, from popular models such as the Swift and Fronx to the go-anywhere Jimny.

Suzuki has also made its mark on two wheels, with iconic motorcycles such as the Katana and Hayabusa, and on the racetrack. From its beginnings in textile machinery to its position as a global vehicle manufacturer, the company has continued to evolve while staying true to its focus on practical, reliable and affordable products.

## When do Pirates and Chiefs kick off?

Mark your calendar for Saturday, 31 October, when Orlando Pirates host Kaizer Chiefs at FNB Stadium in Johannesburg. The Betway Premiership clash is scheduled to kick off at 3.30pm, giving fans plenty of time to soak up the atmosphere before the action begins.

## How can you win your own piece of the derby excitement?

Football is about more than the final score. It's about the people you share the experience with, the traditions you create and the memories that stay with you long after the final whistle.

With demand for Soweto Derby tickets always high, Suzuki is giving five lucky fans the chance to experience the action live. Each winner will receive a pair of tickets, along with a Suzuki x Orlando Pirates giveaway hamper featuring co-branded merchandise. To enter, simply share a photo of your Orlando Pirates gear featuring the Suzuki logo in the comments on one of Suzuki

Auto South Africa's competition posts on Facebook, Instagram or X. It's your chance to show off your Buccaneers pride and be part of the derby-day atmosphere!

**ENDS**

MORE ON ONE OF SA's FASTEST GROWING BRANDS

Suzuki is South Africa's second most popular car brand. It has won the coveted Brand of the Year Award twice, as awarded at the Cars.co.za Consumer Awards, powered by absa, and is the most awarded brand in the Budget Car of the Year category in the same competition. The group is also one of two brands with the most finalists in the history of this competition. Suzuki has had multiple finalists in the South African Car of the Year competition, sponsored by Old Mutual Insurance. In support of its growing client base, this Japanese compact vehicle specialist is continuing to open new dealerships, now standing at 123, including dealerships in Namibia, Botswana, Zimbabwe, Mozambique and Eswatini and dealers in rural areas across Southern Africa.

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