

Adidas and Orlando Pirates collaborate with Thebe Magugu on new jersey design

Orlando Pirates and Adidas have released the official Home and Away jersey for the 23/24 season in collaboration with South African fashion designer Thebe Magugu.



Adidas, Orlando Pirates and Thebe Magugu have released a new design. Source: Supplied.

In step with the zeitgeist, the collaboration marks the latest marriage of performance sportswear and streetwear. Globally the cultural overlap between sport and fashion continues its meteoric rise as we see the iconic football jersey used as a creative canvas moving the wearer seamlessly from the pitch to the streets.

African design

The design partnership sees Orlando Pirates championing the best of African design talent and showcasing creative innovation from the continent on a global stage.

"A football jersey stands as a powerful emblem of pride and togetherness, binding Buccaneers from diverse backgrounds into a unified force. As we set forth on a new football season, that includes the CAF Champions League, we carry Thebe Magugu's exceptional creation on our shoulders, a true testament to our proudly South African identity and unity," said Thandi Merafe, media and PR manager at Orlando Pirates.



Growing up in the South African cities of Kimberley and Johannesburg, Magugu draws upon Africa's storied past, complex present and imagined future. In 2019, he took home the distinguished LVMH Prize for Young Designers, marking the first time a designer from the African continent had won the industry's most prestigious talent prize.

"Global sport is a phenomenon that will continue to rise," says Magugu. "It's fascinating to see other industries align uniquely to become a part of it – from music to luxury fashion. My brand is all about exploring and bringing to light unique facets of our history and culture, and none has left more of an impact than the legacy of Orlando Pirates, and I am honoured to contribute so significantly to that history."

Two new designs

The Orlando Pirates x Thebe Magugu 23/24 range consists of two new designs: a Home jersey (Black) and an Away jersey (Pistachio Green). Both feature the legendary Orlando Pirates skull and crossbow logo reimagined to incorporate a captivating maze pattern. The jersey rounds off with a Thebe Magugu back-neck sign-off and a unique raised crest.



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"I felt like it was important to hear the Orlando Pirates story before I began designing," explains Magugu. "A tale of perseverance, fighting against the odds to become one of the most recognised figureheads in global sports. This idea of persistence is why I decided to treat the iconic skull logo as a maze. To symbolise the long and winding journey the team has travelled to land them here".

Speaking to the scaled-up skull on the front of the jersey, Magugu wanted to add a confrontational and intimidating edge that communicated power without saying a word. "The shorts continue the bone and maze motif, referencing the thigh bone, making the whole kit a sort of internal X-Ray," he adds.

Recycled

Crafted from 100% recycled materials, the new jersey merges sustainability with cutting-edge innovation including moisture-wicking AEROREADY and Climalite's apparel technology. Designed to keep athletes cool and dry, the features effectively manage perspiration distribution and enhance airflow.

"With our shared passion for pushing boundaries, this collaboration is sure to deliver a disruptive design and performance-enhancing apparel that will inspire our players to reach new heights. Get ready to witness the fusion of football, fashion and innovation as we embark on this remarkable journey together," said Kate Woods, senior brand director at Adidas South Africa.

Orlando Pirates x Thebe Magugu 23/24 jerseys will be available to purchase on 27 July at 9:00 online at adidas.co.za/pirates or in-store at selected adidas, Orlando Pirates stores, and selected retail outlets. Available in mens, womens and kids sizes.

Players will debut the 2023/4 jersey on the field in Stellenbosch on Saturday 5 August.

"Football is a unifier - people from very different backgrounds, races, religions, and beliefs are all bound in their common love of the phenomenon. It brings out passion, love, hurt - things that speak to the human condition. For this reason, I think

global sports is an important societal pillar; it reminds us of our humanity," says Magugu.

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