



MEDIA RELEASE

Commercial Club Bandits



Mohamed Ntumba

It is with sadness and disappointment that the Albury-Wodonga Commercial Club Bandits announce that earlier this evening the coaching staff and Board were informed that 2012 Championship centre Mohamed Ntumba (Momo) had requested a release from his contract, effective immediately, due to an ongoing injury concern.

While key personnel within the Club have been aware of the injury for some time we are very disappointed for Momo that combined efforts with him and our medical teams have been unsuccessful and that this has placed Momo in the difficult position of having to balance the interests of his team, his longer term fitness and future playing prospects.

Momo first approached coaching staff in April to advise of knee pain, which was unrelated to previous surgery in 2013. The club acted quickly to put a treatment plan in place and maintained close dialogues with all concerned; however, it has not been able to get Momo back to anywhere near his best. Without extended rest this will be an ongoing concern and hamper his future prospects in 2015 and beyond. This has been incredibly frustrating for Momo who prides himself on consistent output as well as to his friends in the Club who understand how talented he is.

Typical to his nature, Momo has decided to place his team, Club and coaches first by making this decision. The timing of the decision also enables the club time to look for a suitable replacement during the next week before resumption of the season after the June long weekend.

Head Coach Brad Chalmers said "I am just shattered and really disappointed for Momo and all of the team that Mo's body has let him down. I just feel for him so much, he has been a warrior for our club, a tremendous person and team mate for two and a half seasons and his ability to push through pain is as high as I have seen in a player. When a guy like Momo comes to you and says '*coach my body has let me down*', I just knew it wasn't good. To Momo's credit he has committed to doing everything he could to improve it over the last month or so and pushed through the pain as he always does, but I think not being able to be the dominant force physically and statistically that he expects to be has led him to this position. I fully agree now that rest and further rehab is his only option with the big picture in mind".

Head Coach Brad Chalmers went onto say that this has weighed heavily on Momo as he feels he is letting people down in the current situation especially given his role is vital to our success. "I know Momo is keen to play for many years to come, as he should be, and getting his injury right now is critical so he can bounce back quickly and re-establish himself as a force wherever he chooses to play in the next phase of his career" Chalmers said.

Club President Michael Mack said "the club wishes to acknowledge Momo's incredible contribution and that we will always hold him in the highest regard as an individual and athlete. Momo was instrumental in helping the men's program improve so much in such a small period of time and this has allowed him to leave a lasting legacy within our organisation and in the community that others will find hard to replicate. The man's integrity, character and commitment to his club, team mates and coaches is first class and what we feel all athletes should aspire to. Momo's work ethic, play, physicality and mental toughness will be missed, as will his wonderful personal attributes. We are saying goodbye to a great friend and colleague too".

Mack went onto say that he understand this news will be a blow to the club, fans and wider community given Momo has been so fully embraced; however, he has our 100% support and appreciation for taking this position. "We will continue to support Momo where we can and are wishing him a speedy recovery and all the very best for the future. The next step is for the coaching staff and key committee members to work overtime to find and integrate a suitable replacement in time for our next home game on June 14 so that we get as much as possible out of the second half of the season, with an eye to 2015 as well" Mack said.