ATHLETE PROFILE

MAUBA BORIS ESAIE MESSAN

Special Olympics UNITY CUP PRESENTED BY Coca-Cola

3 JULY 2010 • CAPE TOWN, SOUTH AFRICA

AGE: 21

HOMETOWN: Anengourou

COUNTRY: Cote D'Ivoire

POSITION: Midfielder

STORY: Mauba has always had a passion for football and has been playing for more than 15 years. When he was young he tried to befriend anyone who had a football. Unfortunately, his intellectual disability kept many of his peers from accepting him. As a youngster he spent a lot of time at home, where his parents gave him a football of his own to keep him busy. To Mauba that football was a gift "of deliverance" that allowed him to grow in to the athlete he has become today.

Today the 21 year-old, offensive midfielder is respected by his peers, teammates and supporters for his accomplishments. Despite his I.D., he has been invited to participate in many local football tournaments, where he has played alongside other youth without ID. He also participated in the SO Cote D'Ivoire National games in 2008 and the 2009 regional games.

His coaches say that he is very dedicated and has a strong character. In addition to participating with Special Olympics, Mauba is a student in Cote D'Ivoire. He's an ambitious young man who says that football gives him a sense of fulfillment. His dream is to play in front of thousands of spectators which he hopes to do at the Unity Cup in South Africa. Mauba says that Special Olympics has helped him to overcome his shyness, to forget his disability and to be able to express himself in public. He cannot wait to play in the Unity Cup!