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GUEST NAME: MS JANINE VAN WYK – SOUTH AFRICAN PROFESSIONAL FOOTBALLER

SPEAKER	TRANSCRIPTION
DR. MALKA	Hello, I'm Dr. Amaleya Goneos-Malka, welcome to 'Womanity – Women in Unity'. The show that celebrates prominent and ordinary African Women's milestone achievements in their struggles for liberation, self-emancipation, human rights, democracy, racism, socio-economic class division and gender based violence.
DR. MALKA	Joining us on the line today is professional footballer, South African National Team player who has captained the National side, representing the country in two Olympics as well as South Africa's debut at the FIFA Women's World Cup, Founder of the JWV Girls Football Club; Janine van Wyk. She is here as part of our focus on Women in Sport to talk about her journey as well as development in football for women. Welcome to the show Janine!
JANINE VAN WYK	Thank you so much, thank for having me.
DR. MALKA	To start with, I understand that part of your accolades, you are the most capped footballer in South Africa, male or female, and the most capped African woman. So can you walk us through some of your career highlights?
JANINE VAN WYK	Ya it feels good to be named the most capped player in South Africa. I honestly never thought that I would get to this stage in my career, you know, because there's a lot of twists and turns in terms of women's football, you know, in the country as well as globally and I honestly thought that, you know, I would never set a record like I have by being the most capped player, but looking back on my career I think one of my main highlights is last year when we qualified for the first ever FIFA Women's World Cup as a nation, as South Africa, and that is something that I have dreamt about my whole career, since the day I started playing football. You know I used to watch men's football and the men's world cups and I never imagined myself playing at such a high level for my country at such a stage as a world cup, so that is probably one of my main highlights as a football player, but then you get ones like playing at the Olympics, representing your country at the Olympic Games, which I see as probably the second best competition in sports and in football, for women's football in South Africa and then there are smaller ones, you know, beating Nigeria for the very first time in history in 2012 and me being the only goal scorer of that game. So there are a few little ones and then, you know, off the pitch it would be meeting Mr. Nelson Mandela in 2006.
DR. MALKA	Thanks for sharing some of those career highlights. I have to say, when I was doing the, you know, the prep work for this show, there were apparently 1.2 billion people, so almost 14% of the world's population who watched the 2019 Women's FIFA Cup in France and when you think of numbers like that you'd almost imagine that women's football is well established, but I realised that the first FIFA Women's World Cup was only held in 1991 in China, you mentioned representing South Africa in the Olympics and I believe you twice represented the country, but the first Olympics to accept women's football was only in 1996. So, in terms of your development as a player, you've also been incredibly instrumental in terms of developing South African National women's football team.

JANINE VAN WYK	Ya definitely, I mean it's taken a while for women's football to, you know, really catch fire in the world and I think it's only been the past five or probably ten years that women's football has been on the radar and a lot of people taking interest in women's football and I feel currently it is probably the most fastest growing sport in the world and many people are taking interesting in it; there's a lot of girls now partaking whereas before when I used to play there were hardly any girls that played the game or believed that they...it is, you know, a game for men and women and back then it was just a male...considered as a male dominant sport. So it's amazing how I've come through the ranks, how I've seen change in the game and interest in women's football, not only from the female point of view, but globally, you know, Sasol coming on board and sponsoring women footballers, brands such as Nike, Adidas coming on board and sponsoring the athletes, so it's amazing the breakthrough that this sport has made in terms of women's...in terms of the women's game. So for me I think I saw that opportunity and I grabbed it with both hands, giving back to the sport by creating my own development and football programme for young girls, because I saw a lot of interest in the sport but there was just not enough platforms for these young girls to partake in the sport and that is one of the main reasons I have established a women's football club and a women's football programme for these girls to have an opportunity to play a sport that they truly love and are passionate about.
DR. MALKA	And I'd like to touch base a little bit more on the football club and the give back component, but if we could stay with you for a moment; I would imagine that starting out must have been quite challenging to find a girls team when you started your career?
JANINE VAN WYK	Yes definitely, it was really tough. I started playing with the boys from age of six until fourteen and when I hit...when I reached that age where, you know, the boys became a lot stronger and physically faster than me I couldn't compete with them, I needed to find a girls team to play for and in the area that I lived there were really no girls that played the game, it was always hockey or netball and I really had to dig deep and go and find a team, a ladies team to play for and a ladies league and the only team I could really find was in the rural areas, in the Eastern side of Gauteng, which is in Springs and that was played in a township called Kwa-Thema in Springs in the East Rand and ya it was very challenging for me being the only white girl in this team and the only white girl in the whole of the league. But my passion was there, my love for the game was there and nothing really at that time would stop me from playing the game and that is where I grew up playing with women and female football players and I think if I didn't go through those stages I wouldn't be the kind of person I am, the kind of player I am today because of all those challenges that I faced.
DR. MALKA	And from club team you then went on to the national team where you've been since 2005, so that's fifteen years; you then took a...would it be a club offer in America for the Houston Dash, in 2016, and then a brief stint in Denmark for Fortuna Hjørring.
JANINE VAN WYK	Yes, you got it right Hjørring.
DR. MALKA	How did all of that come about, because playing soccer at local level, going to the national team and then expanding your footprint internationally?
JANINE VAN WYK	Ya, I think it started developing once we reached the Olympic stage as a country, as a nation participating in such big events where you're playing teams from worldwide and in 2016 I had a really good tournament in Rio for the Olympic...in the Olympic Games and that is where I got...I caught the

	<p>eye of one of the coaches in the US team, Houston Dash, and then in 2017 I was offered a contract to go and play abroad and that for me was also another highlight for me because I was the first one to go abroad and play in the US League and in a professionally structured league. So ya, I was, you know, over the moon when I got you know picked out from such a massive team and a massive league like that or I mean you can already tell by just the US National team how big of a league it is because they all compete in that league, so it's highly competitive and for any football player you want to play in the best league possible in the world and that for me is one of the highlights and obviously after coming back from the Houston Dash after two years, I stuck around and got another offer in Denmark to go and play for Fortuna Hjørring and things didn't go as planned because I got injured at the COSAFA tournament in August last year and that was just after I signed a contract with Fortuna. So, when I went over it was quite a battle because I couldn't train, I couldn't really play with the team and because of the struggle with my injury and when they expected me to be back in January, you know, the injury took longer than expected and we came to a mutual agreement that, you know, we would terminate the contract and hopefully something would be in the near future when I'm ready to play again, but, for now I think you know I'm back in the country and just now that the National Women's League has kicked off for South Africa for the first time in South Africa, that is something that I had you know dreamt about as a player as well, having our own professional set-up in our own country and although it is not professional yet, but it is semi-pro, it's something that we have waited for as professional athletes, as professional football players in our country. That is where my head is at, at the moment by staying in the country and playing in the National League.</p>
DR. MALKA	And I would imagine, when you were talking about the US League and how all players aim to participate in this, that by establishing a national league in South Africa, this is going to really give a boost to women's soccer?
JANINE VAN WYK	Ya, most definitely, it has already and the year...well it was launched in 2019 in August....
DR. MALKA	...that's....
JANINE VAN WYK	...so I think there's a couple of games left to go....
DR. MALKA	...that's only last year though....
JANINE VAN WYK	...yes, so it's very, very new. So I mean all the women playing in it currently are doing extremely well, the games are being televised on TV, I mean one game a week will be televised on TV, so women's football is out there, it is exposed, it is starting to be recognised in our country on club level because a lot of people, you know, don't know that there are club teams...women club teams in our country, they know more about Banyana Banyana and the Under 20's, but they don't really know where these players play so now that it's being broadcasted on television I mean a lot of people are now recognising, you know, the club teams that we currently have in our country.
DR. MALKA	And how many women would you say currently play?
JANINE VAN WYK	From a young age or in the league?
DR. MALKA	Within the league?
JANINE VAN WYK	In the league there's about probably up to 2000 / 3000 girls participating in the league, that is national, so it's teams from the best team in Cape Town, there's currently only twelve teams participating in this league so there's still four more spots which one of my club team, JWV, has been promoted to, to play in the next national women's league kick-off, which will be kicked-off

	in June. So there's...ya, it is growing and there are still four spots for the league to be completed.
DR. MALKA	Congratulations!
JANINE VAN WYK	Well thank you!
DR. MALKA	Talking about your club; you established it in 2013 and you really seem, in the conversation thus far, to be conscious about giving back to the sport and developing subsequent generations of female footballers; tell us about your motivations for starting the club.
JANINE VAN WYK	Well, one of the main reasons is just because I never had that opportunity growing up to play in a comfortable environment playing a sport that I love, you know, every year it was a challenge for me to get through to play in order to just, you know, enjoy the game and one of the reasons was just to give young girls an opportunity and a platform to play the sport that they love in a comfortable environment and there's a lot of parents that wouldn't allow their girls to play with the boys and that is, you know, having such a set-up like JVW, you know, you come down where it's just a club full of female football players playing in female leagues, but also just being surrounded by girls and they feel most comfortable and the reason being the National Team Captain I just thought that for me that there's so many youngsters that look up to me as their role model and it is important for me to set the example and be their example in order to give back to the game and share my knowledge and share my expertise with these young and upcoming, rising football stars that will soon be our, you know, national team players for Banyana Banyana. So, I just want to be out there and just love to see each, you know, girl child do what they love to do and in playing football.
DR. MALKA	And you've got such a fantastic tagline of " <i>talk with your feet, play with your heart</i> " it's really inspirational.
JANINE VAN WYK	Ya definitely, I mean that is something that I came up with, it's more like showing what you can actually do with your feet instead of just telling people who you are, what you're about, it doesn't matter who you are or where you come from, it's all about what you can do with your feet and show people who you are by just doing what you love to do and talk with your heart obviously...."<i>talk with your feet, play with your heart</i>" is just how passionate you really are about the sport and just giving your best every single day.
DR. MALKA	And in the club, how...what age do people start it, because you spoke about entry level, you also spoke about building up to absorb women into the national team?
JANINE VAN WYK	Yes, we start at age twelve because there are so many youngsters that are still currently playing with the boys, there are not many leagues that, you know, six-year-old girls can play in, so they start off with the boys and when they get older and they feel uncomfortable playing with the boys, they turn to JVW which has a girls team starting from age twelve. So we have under 12's, we have under 15's, we have under 16's, we have under 19's and then an open team where, you know, anyone that is really good enough, even if she's 16 years old, she will play in the open team and play in the National Women's League, which is obviously the first team for the JVW Club.
DR. MALKA	And with the club, again, a lot of clubs are male owned, you've started initiating this club; did you invest into it as a business?
JANINE VAN WYK	It started off with something small, something just giving back to the community and having girls, you know, drawing out the girls from the schools, the talented girls, to come and play and grow in the sport and help them grow but now I mean we started off with only 23 girls in 2012 and right now we're sitting on 97 girls partaking in the club. So it is...has been a massive growth to us seeing so many girls playing the sport and it has now

	<p>really become a business, it's become grand, everyone knows JVW's, that it's Janine van Wyk National Team Captain Football Club, so it's really become a big brand and not just a football club. So it is now on the business side of things, we are obviously trying to get endorsements and sponsorships on board in order to pay our first team players and run like a professional club, but that will take some time, that is obviously the vision for us as a football club, but for now, I mean everyone just plays for the sake of loving the game and being passionate about it, but that is obviously something we will work towards and to make it a business owned club.</p>
DR. MALKA	<p>Because that's part of the challenge, that often talent has to have a day job to finance their sport.</p>
JANINE VAN WYK	<p>Ya definitely, I mean I paid for the club out of my own pocket and still today there are obviously some brands out there, equipment brands, ball brands that help us along the way in order to sustain the football club, but in terms of playing kits, I mean that is obviously what comes out from what we...what comes in from the players, they pay a small fee in order to play football, just like any other football club around; that we just put back into the club in order to buy them, you know, football gear to play in and tracksuits for the winter, so everything really goes back into the club.</p>
<p>AD BREAK</p>	
DR. MALKA	<p>Today we are talking to Janine van Wyk who is Captain of the South African National Women's Football Team; Banyana Banyana. We would love to receive your comments on Twitter: @WomaniTalk.</p>
DR. MALKA	<p>In the previous segment of the show Janine shared some of her career highlights, both as a player for the national team, as well as a developer of women's football in South Africa through the creation of her own football club.</p>
DR. MALKA	<p>You spoke about your responsibilities of being a role model, of giving back to the sport, of being Banyana Banyana's captain and having held this role, you are a leader within your team and leading the country onto the field both locally as well as internationally and also you spoke about the fact that you were abroad playing in other countries but you're still part of the national team; so soccer is a team sport, but the reality is that many players live and play for clubs that are not necessarily in the same geography, so as captain how do you galvanise and bring everyone together to build team spirit, to still create enthusiasm as well as the support?</p>
JANINE VAN WYK	<p>Ya well I think firstly as a leader you've got to be enthusiastic about what you do. You've got to believe in your teammates and the people that you are working with and you've got to guide them through, you know, their strengths, their weaknesses and I feel just like a leader or any coach, you've got to, you know, know each player's role and personal...on a personal level in order to get the most out of that person and I think everyone has different personalities and if you can deal with it in a way or a sense that, you know, makes them the most comfortable, I think that is when you can get the best out of them and I think for me as a leader, as captain of the national team dealing with my teammates, I think that is something that I have really concentrated on, is building good relationships with each and every single individual because if I give an instruction, you know, I want players to trust me with the instruction that I give. So if I give them my time, you know, and allow them to get to know me as a person and I allow myself to get to know them on a personal level, you know, work just becomes so much easier and I think that is the way I have...what's been working for me as a leader, is just getting to know the people that you work with on a personal level and you know build that trust amongst the two of you.</p>

DR. MALKA	It's interesting, I was just reading a paper this morning, on social capital and how being able to connect, establish trust, establish rapport; how that really has a tremendously positive impact in the work environment.
JANINE VAN WYK	Ya that is true and you know trust is one of the main things in order for anything to really work out, is build trust, so that is a huge factor in my role as a leader.
DR. MALKA	We've spoken about your, let's say ingredients, of getting to international level from starting out, identifying a team to play with, then coming into the national team; as someone who competes with some of the most successful athletes in your field and participating at the forefront of international competition, I'd imagine that it's given you great insights in terms of other factors that are required to stay at the top of your game. What would you say some of those have been?
JANINE VAN WYK	I think it's being, on a daily basis, being the best that you can be and not really looking at other people and try and compete with other people. I think you've got to be the best you can be and believe in your abilities, I mean that's what I always preach to the youngsters is don't look at the next person's success and what they've done or just be who you are and set goals for yourself and target for yourself in order to achieve them and there you're right, I've been...I've rubbed shoulders with one of the best players in the world, Carli Lloyd, Megan Rapinoe and all those top-class athletes but again they don't have...I don't see them have the ability that I have and obviously successful people have different abilities and qualities. So, if you believe in your own quality and your own abilities and you just work with what you have and you set your targets, set small targets for yourself, I think those are the things that really do stand out for yourself, instead of looking at others and what they have done and accomplished in their careers or fields.
DR. MALKA	There's a lot of self-confidence that comes into this mix and I'd imagine that part of when, in the JVW Football Club with the girls, that's one of the attributes that we continuously hear that girls need to build confidence and by being in an environment where they can develop that trait, it also has ripple effects that are positive in other areas of their lives, so not just within the sporting space.
JANINE VAN WYK	Ya definitely, I mean especially with the youngsters that we work with at football, it comes with, you know, building trust with your teammates, it comes with having confidence within yourself. Living a healthy lifestyle, doing the right thing and the main reason is just keeping them out of mischief and out of...off the streets, doing the wrong things. So I think belief through sports, you know, you are able to build a successful life for yourself and you are able to learn values about life and that is one thing that we really teach these girls and it comes from my knowledge and experiences as well that you'll face a lot of hardships, you'll get, you know, try and...people will try and draw you into, you know, trouble and you tend to just lose sight of your dreams. So that's something that we continuously work with, with these youngsters at the football club, not only focusing on the football side but, you know, trying to manage every single playing as an individual and try and teach them about the values in life and what sport has to offer.
DR. MALKA	And as you develop the youth and going out, we've spoken about the National League, we've spoken about creating more opportunities for girls and we also spoke about the progression of the National Team to Olympics and onto FIFA World Cup; what do you think needs to be done to increase visibility of female soccer or of women's sport?
JANINE VAN WYK	Well obviously I can only speak in my field but, you know, a lot of people really need to, especially corporates, need to invest in a woman's game and it is growing so much and I think one of the main topics a lot of people are talking about is equality and that for me is true but, you know, years ago,

	<p>years ago it was always only men that used to play the sports and you never really find women that played much or it wasn't really something that the public took interest in, but now I feel that we are on an equal platform, we might not get paid on an equal platform just yet, but in terms of recognition, you know, people know about women's football, people know about women's sport in the world and they support it and they invest in it. So I think there needs to be more development structures, if I speak in my field in football, for girls I think there needs to be more development structures laid out for the young girls to play in; you hear about the Barcelona Academy, the Manchester United Academy has so many hundreds and thousands of academies for boys in order for the sport to grow and that needs to be done the same way for girls but that will obviously take a lot of time, a lot of years to establish, but you've got to start somewhere and I feel I have done my partalready by creating this development programme for girls and I think if there's more, especially in our country, you know, women's football in our country can grow enormously as well.</p>
DR. MALKA	<p>And when you talk about the years that things take and the interest, so we've got the development angle which is really building up the talent base, but then there's also an incredible part of football is the fan base and being able to have the spectators and coming to watch the games or seeing games televised; I think that sometimes it's almost like the charisma and the joy of watching the game that helps accelerate the development, because if more people are watching, they're almost creating a pressure and demand to see more.</p>
JANINE VAN WYK	<p>Ya I think so, I think same with the National League that just started kicking off for the Women's league I think is being televised on television, people get to see it more. I think a year or two ago no-one really knew about, you know, women's clubs in South Africa, like I said before, they only knew about the national team but they never really understood where these girls play on a daily basis in order to, you know, be selected for the national team. So now that it's been broadcast a lot of people are taking more interest to know where are the games are being played, when are the games being played, so there's more numbers coming down to the stadiums and I think for...if you take for example for the national teams ten years ago there weren't really many, you know, supporters, the fan base wasn't that high for Banyana Banyana per se. So now you look, after us qualifying for two Olympic Games, us doing well in the African Cup of Nations and then making our debut at the FIFA Women's World Cup, you know, you walk in the street and everyone recognises you, everyone wants to know where you play, everyone wants to come and support you and when they hear of a national Banyana Banyana playing at a certain particular stadium, that stadium will fill up with numbers. So it is growing, it's just about being, you know, more out there and being more exposed to the public in order for them to really come out and support the women.</p>
DR. MALKA	<p>Well you've certainly been a path finder and there's a fantastic legacy that you are developing behind you. Turning towards more of a personal perspective, one of the questions that I ask all my guests is about the factors that they consider have contributed to their success. Some people speak about hard work, a particular person in their life; others talk about perseverance, in your opinion, what would you say have been some of the key drivers to your success?</p>
JANINE VAN WYK	<p>I think one of the key things for me that has pushed me through is my passion for the game, you know, there are many people that would just give up with the challenges that I have faced in my career, but it just kept me going because I love the sport so much and I wouldn't see my life without it and I have people obviously a support structure around me, my family that's</p>

	supported me throughout my journey in football and the coaches that pushed me to my limits and if I didn't have that, if I didn't have the passion I don't think I would be where I am today, to see the success of others, you know, in the game because I am so passionate and I get such satisfaction seeing, you know, youngsters coming out there and being called up for the national team knowing that I have really contributed to that and all comes down to the passion of the game and the love for the game, ya, I think that is one of the key things that got me to where I am today.
DR. MALKA	It must be really rewarding and proud moments to see young people develop after you've touched them in a way.
JANINE VAN WYK	Ya, definitely.
DR. MALKA	What would you say have been some of the best lessons that you've learned in your career?
JANINE VAN WYK	Best lessons I think is, you know, as an athlete you will always be criticised, you will always be judged on what you do, you know, and success really never comes easy and definitely success is not for the lazy and not for the weak. You've got to really push through everything, all the barriers that come your way, the more successful you are the more, you know, people criticise you for what you do and those are the lessons that I have learned throughout my career and the difficulties that you face is only preparing you for something bigger and better and in order to deal with it at the moment when it arrives. So those are things that really happened to me in my career, facing the challenges and overcoming them in a way that you get the support from the people around you and I mean there were days where I wanted to just throw in the towel but if I didn't have that support next to me, if I didn't have that passion that drove me, you know, to just go one more time again, I wouldn't be as successful as I am today.
DR. MALKA	Those drivers extend beyond talent and who would you say have been some of the key role models or influences in your life?
JANINE VAN WYK	I think for me, when I was young it was mostly you know male football players because I used to watch them on television all the time and I wanted to be as successful as they were at the time; there weren't really many female footballers that I looked up to because it wasn't really out there and then when Fran Hilton-Smith, she was a technical director at SAFA, she is the one that really pushed me and got me the ladies team, found the ladies team that I eventually, you know, started playing with and she was the one that believed in me, she was at every single game I played and watched me every single game and guided me in the right direction. She was the lady that helped me through everything that all the difficulties and then there's obviously one of the coaches, I mean if you're an athlete and you don't have a coach that you look up to, I mean, then you still need to carry on until you find that coach and you know mine came in 2014 when Vera Pauw came into coach the Banyana Banyana team and she just changed my career completely, she believed in me so much, she was one of the reasons how I got a contract abroad by, you know, speaking to her contacts or the coach that called me for Houston Dash to keep an eye on me and she just, you know, taught me so much and brought out the best in me and those are the kind of people that you need to have by your side, people that really bring out the best in you, people that will continue to push you to your limits and for the right reasons. So, ya those are the people that really made me believe in myself and got me to where I am.
DR. MALKA	It sounds like a great support structure to have in your corner and like you said, they're pushing the right buttons so that you excel in your discipline and game.

JANINE VAN WYK	Definitely.
DR. MALKA	And lastly, as we close out the conversation today, could you share a few words of inspiration that you'd like to share with women and young ladies in the continent who are listening to us?
JANINE VAN WYK	Ya I would just say that you need to set targets for yourself, believe in your ability in whatever it is that you want to achieve in life or who you want to become and never let anything stop you from reaching your dream. I know it sounds cliché but never, ever give up, there will be a time and a moment that you will taste success and it will be so sweet that you want, you know, more out of your career, out of your life. So you just continue going, no matter how tough it gets, no matter how long it takes, you just continue believing in yourself and one day you will reach success.
DR. MALKA	Well, you are certainly living proof of not giving up and the accolades and the achievements that you've managed to accumulate to be where you are today. So thank you so much for joining us, we really appreciate your time and wish you well with the rehabilitation and taking on your next task of pushing through with the National Soccer League for Women in South Africa.
JANINE VAN WYK	Thank you so much, thanks for your time and listening to me and I hope that I can change more lives for women's footballers in our country.
	PROGRAMME END