



After they were dethroned by NWU-Pukke last year, the Tuks Varsity Cricket team will do everything in their power to reclaim the title in the next two weeks. Photo: Mario van de Wall

Tuks cricket team is going back to Potch

Varsity Cricket returns to Potchefstroom in 2018, from 29 January to 3 February, and North-West University (NWU) will be out to strongly defend their T20 title in the eight-team competition.

NWU lifted the elusive Varsity Cricket trophy in 2017, after defeating UP-Tuks by four wickets at Senwes Park.

Expect a cricket carnival, with the tournament more than willingly sharing Potchefstroom with the celebration of the new academic year and Jool.

Senwes Park, NWU-Puk Oval and Ibbies Oval will be the stage for one of South Africa's greatest cricket shows.

The first round of fixtures will take place on 29 January at 14:00.

The crowd will be treated to a repeat of last year's final as NWU take on 2017's runners-up, UP-Tuks (University of Pretoria).

UWC (University of the Western Cape) will go head-to-head with their Western Province rivals Maties (University of Stellenbosch), while UJ (University of Johannesburg) will look to get the better of the Port Elizabeth-based Madibaz (Nelson Mandela University).

The first day of Varsity Cricket 2018 will end with an exciting match-up between CUT (Central University of Technology) and UCT (University of Cape Town).

CUT joins the competition this year after knocking out Kopsies (University of the Free State) at the University Sports South Africa qualifier in October 2017.

The Power Play Plus rule promises to the spark up the competition once again.

The rule gives the batting team double points during an over of their choice and allows the batting side to select the bowler they would like to face.

The Power Play Plus rule also states that if a wicket is lost, the batting side loses five runs.

Varsity Cricket Code Manager Jana Arlow is excited about the prospect of the 2018 season and how the competition benefits South African cricket as a whole.

"Last year we had record attendance at Varsity Cricket, so I am really looking forward to see if we can get even bigger crowds in this year's competition," said Arlow.

"The benefits to national cricket development are obvious, with eight of the leading cricket-playing tertiary institutions challenging each other in a highly competitive professional environment."

Two past players, both from UP-Tuks, have moved through the ranks of varsity cricket to represent the South African national team, with Aiden Markram (Varsity Cricket 2015) and Lungi Ngidi (Varsity Cricket 2015 and 2016) both donning the green and gold.

All matches played at Senwes Park on Wednesday, 31 January; Friday, 2 February and Saturday, 3 February will be televised on SuperSport channel 210.

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