

Tuks crowned the king of Varsity hockey

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Tuks' men's hockey team surprised friend and foe by convincingly beating Maties last week in Stellenbosch in the Varsity Hockey final.

Although it came as a surprise to many, Tuks's 5-0 victory did not just happen. It was two years in the making.

Tuks' captain Peabo Lembethe said after Tuks lost against the University of Johannesburg in the 2016 Varsity final, their coach Guy Elliott already started planning as to how Tuks was going to win the next tournament.

"Nothing was left to chance. We started working harder during training, focusing on getting stronger and fitter in the gym. More importantly, over the last two years Guy kept on reminding us that if we take care of the small stuff, the bigger picture would take care of itself.

"Last night we reaped the dividends of our commitment. I am chuffed as to how we played. All credit must go to our coaching staff," said Lembethe.

Tuks was the dominant team right from the start of the final. Within the first seven minutes, Sam Mvimbi outfoxed Maties defence with brilliant foot and stick work to score a two-point goal.

For the next 23 minutes Tuks never relented and Maties had to pull out all the stops to prevent another goal from being scored. However, something had to give. The continuous pressure led to Maties conceding a penalty-stroke just before half-time. Bradley Sherwood made no mistake to take the score to 3-0.

The second half saw the two teams more evenly matched. Maties had opportunities to score, but goalkeeper Hendrik Kriek was up to the challenge.

Steve Paolo scored Tuks' third goal during the "Powerplay" to give Tuks a 5-0 lead.

Apart from Sherwood, who seems to step up to the plate every time it matters, Mark Chong also impressed last night with his continuous work rate. It looked as if he never

got tired.

According to Lembethe, the plan was to put Maties under pressure from the start.

"In our previous games, we tended to be reactive in our play. When we scored, we settled down to see what our opponents were going to do or we only upped our game after conceding a goal.

"Tonight we took the game to Maties for the duration of the match," the captain said shortly after the final whistle.

Elliott was rightfully quite emotional after his team's success.

"What will stick with me forever is not winning the trophy and medals but my journey with the players and the coaching staff.

"Everybody played their part and that is why this is such a special memory," he said.

Tuks has so far won three of the four Varsity Tournaments. They are also the cricket and athletics champions. Last year Tuks won seven tournaments in total.



Tuks celebrating winning the Varsity Hockey title against Maties in Stellenbosch.