

# Tuks team finally wins elusive trophy

**While Tuks' fifteen-men rugby team earlier this year lost their title as Varsity Cup champion, the sevens team made up for it this past weekend by being crowned new Varsity sevens champion.**

Guts, determination and clinical precision led to the Tuks men's sevens rugby team winning the Varsity Tournament for the first time ever.

Tuks beat the defending champions UJ 19-14 in the final.

To say that the team was dominant would be a definite understatement. In six games during the tournament they scored 201 points and conceded a mere 50. More impressive is that Tuks scored 31 tries and only conceded eight.

From the very first moment the whistle blew in the pool game against UJ, the UP-Tuks players proved they were men on a mission. It was a case of one for all and all for one for every minute spent on the field.

The two teams met again in the final. With less than a minute left to play, Tuks were trailing 14-7, and few would have backed them to win, but being runners-up was never going to be good enough for the students from Pretoria.

During the last power play, it took one moment of brilliance by Lorenzo Cloete to make all the long hours spent training pay dividends. When he got the ball, he kept a cool head and with a cheeky grubber kick caught the UJ defenders off guard. He collected the ball again and with an impressive burst of speed scored a ten pointer. The conversion was a mere formality.

Captain Lourens Pretorius, who had put in a dominant run to score his team's first try in the final was justifiably elated by the final



The players and management of the Tuks sevens rugby team celebrate after winning the Varsity Sevens Tournament for the first time ever.

result. It was the fifth time that he played the Varsity Tournament but his first time being victorious. In 2015, he played for the Tuks team that lost in the final against Kovsies.

He ascribed his team's success to have taken the lessons learned during the USSA Tournament to heart.

"We finished fifth at USSA's after losing only one game. I would say that was the turning point for all of us. We knew we were better than the results showed. We had

something to prove. To finally being able to lift the Varsity Trophy is special," said Pretorius after the final.

"The tougher the battle, the sweeter the victory. It must be one of the best performances ever by a Tuks sevens side. And to be able to contribute in a small way to our victory made the whole experience so much more rewarding," said Dewald Naudé, who impressed throughout the tournament with his fleet-footedness and uncanny ability

to wriggle through the smallest of gaps to score tries.

According to Tuks' coach, Dabeon Dragoender, the team prevailed because they stuck to the processes which led to the players being able to dominate on the field.

"I am really impressed with our defence. To concede only eight tries in six games really show how hungry and committed the players were. They were also brilliant with ball in hand," Dragoender concluded.