

Tuks rugby team fired up

'I also believe in encouraging the guys around me and try and put them in the best position to play the game with which they are comfortable.'

The start of a brand new chapter is how Denzel Hill viewed the team's first Varsity Cup encounter against the Shimlas from Kovsies on 29 January at Tuks.

Hill was recently appointed captain of Tuks' Varsity Cup team for 2018 by the new coach, David Manuel.

Tuks is the defending Varsity Cup champions.

Hill is adamant that he and his teammates would not fall into the trap of reminiscing about what happened last year.

"To be honest, we are not concerned about the past and what teams think about us. The last chapter has been written and we've closed that book.

"I will admit we have taken a lot of confidence from what happened last year, but now we are at the start of the new book which I hope is going to be equally as exciting," he said.

Hill rated Kovsies as a tough nut to crack.

"The biggest mistake we could make is to underestimate them.

"Kovsies are very good with the ball in hand and have mastered the art of exploiting the opposition's weaknesses by taking the ball wide.

"However, we're not going to be obsessed with what Kovsies does or doesn't do," he said before the game.

"We're going to stick to a game plan that suits us. It will entail trying to keep the ball in play for as long as it's possible."

Sadly, the Shimlas overpowered the Tuks team in a 19-17 victory on Monday night.

Captaining teams is nothing new to Hill.

He captained the Blue Bulls under-21 team last and quite a few other teams throughout his playing career.

He admitted that being the leader came with responsibilities.

"I won't describe myself as a natural leader. It is something I have to work on continuously.

"I try and lead by example, but there is more to captaining than just putting your body on the line.

"I also believe in encouraging the guys around me and try and put them in the best position to play the game with which they are comfortable and want to play," said the big loose forward.

Hill said he believed there was a good balance of experience and debutants in the Tuks team.

He could just be one of the fastest loose forwards in the Varsity Cup Tournament.

At Jeppe High School, he used to be a sprinter.

He was not sure as to what exactly his best time in the 100m was, but guessed it could have been around 11s – not shabby for someone who is 1.91m tall and weighs 101kg.

Asked this week, he was quite frank about why he played rugby.

"I really love playing rugby.

"My most significant motivation is to make my family proud.

"Rugby is also a way for me to support and make a difference for my family."

Hill finished his Bcom Marketing degree last year and is now working on a postgraduate diploma in the field of entrepreneurship.



Denzel Hill, the Tuks Varsity Cup captain.

Photo: Reg Caldecott.