



TRY TIME NEWS



FNB UP-Tuks take on Varsity Shield

AUTHOR: MATTEO CASTELLO

One can assume, with a great deal of certainty, that UP-Tuks will have two non-negotiable goals in their debut season in the FNB Varsity Shield Competition. The first will be to top the log after the pool stage, an achievement that will guarantee automatic Varsity Cup promotion in 2025. But it must not end there as UP-Tuks will also be out to win the Varsity Shield, thus becoming the first member university to claim the two senior men's championship titles up for grabs. Since five-time champions UP-Tuks have been part and parcel of the Varsity Cup Competition since its inception in 2008, there is a real danger that the Varsity Shield newbie can underestimate the extent and degree of difficulty of its 'Make us proud again' mission. True, there is no logical reason why the flagship of the University cannot set the pace in a competition that is less challenging than the Varsity Cup in every instance [being said with all due respect to all the Varsity Cup regulars]. Even though UP-Tuks is the 1st back-to-back Varsity Cup champion who slumped from hero to zero in a single season by not winning a single match in 2023, they know what it takes to be the best. And they would have learned from their disastrous performance last year to

be much more vigilant to any signs of trouble. As is, they will have to be battle-ready, in overdrive, when they travel to the Davidson Stadium in Alice for the opening fixture against Fort Hare on 23 February. The home team's partisan spectators are known for their passion and unwavering attempts to unnerve any visiting team through 'verbal intimidation'. Conditions will be tough, on and off the field, but if UP-Tuks can get over this first hurdle relatively unscathed, they will be off to a solid start. And they can then build on this important cornerstone by showing their class through the brand of rugby they play. It must be clinical and uncompromising as the true champion sees any match as an opportunity to make known his intentions by the way he puts the available 80 minutes to optimal use. As they say: if any opponent deserves to have 50 points scored against them, you give them 60 just to prove a point! All UP-Tuks supporters want their team to be great again and, in this regard, the new Head Coach, Dewey Swartbooi, his support staff, and the Team of 2024 are the tools to make this transformation a reality. We all know that UP-Tuks do not belong in the Varsity Shield Competition and 2024 must be a once-off.

SAVE THE DATE

3 April



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FNB UP-Tuks Womens Rugby Player

Player in Focus: *Sanitha Mkhwanazi*

AUTHOR: NINA EVANNA



Sanitha Mkhwanazi is a new young talent that jumped onto the radar of Tuks Womens Rugby in 2023. Originally from Boksburg this Hoërskool E.G. Jansen pupil excelled in both netball and athletics. With the handling skills she acquired from

netball and the athleticism and speed from athletics, it's no wonder she has the making of a great rugby player.

Her rugby journey started when her and some school friends decided to give 7s rugby a try. After just 5 weeks of training the team competed in their first tournament which they ended up winning. She only later looked at playing 15s in 2023.

Currently enrolled for the Higher Certificate in Sport Science, Sanitha believes a positive attitude is the key to success. She is training at the scrumhalf position for the upcoming Women's Varsity Cup tournament, which kicks off in April, but would be open to the possibility of playing any position in the backline. Having a background in 7s rugby makes it no surprise that Australia women's 7s

star, Madison Levi, is someone that Sanitha looks up to. "She is dedicated, and she plays smart. She brings this positive vibe on the field, plus she steps like a Springbok" says Sanitha.

Sanitha is a player with loads of potential and hopes to go pro in the future, but for now her focus is the Varsity Cup. She hopes that the team can really find each other on the field this season and if all goes well, to bring the Varsity Cup championship to Tuks.



PLAYER FACTS

If you could have any superpower, what would it be? *Super Speed.*

If you were an animal, what animal would you be? *Lion. (Fearless)*

What is your favourite post game meal? *Bacon, Eggs & avo*



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The Fruits of our Labour; Women’s Talent

Drive

AUTHOR: NINA EVANNA

As 2023 neared its end TuksWomensRugby began their search for the next rugby stars. Every year the club hosts a recruitment clinic where players from all over receive an opportunity to showcase their talents to the coaches and possibly scoop up a study bursary. Libbie Janse van Rensburg, womens program coordinator, says ‘Over the past few years this drive has proven to be really fruitful for the club, it allows ladies that wouldn’t normally receive these opportunities a chance to better their futures.’

In 2023 the drive attracted nearly 90 young players who were ready to strut their stuff, but that’s when the hard work for the coaches start. Once the numbers were cut the team began their pre-season training. For the ladies program this time will be a struggle for the next few years as it is something that womens players have not yet been exposed to in the past. However, in the struggles for the club to grow this is something that we will need to work on annually. Another significant struggle is the fact that young women in South Africa do not get exposed to high performance environments, like

they will experience at Tuks. And this means that it takes players a while to get used to balancing training sessions, studies and their social lives.

TuksWomensRugby head coach, Lizanne Jacobs, says she is faced with the same problems this year as in 2023, and that is player commitment, although it has improved, it is a constant work on for the team. She adds that with such a great tournament like the Varsity Cup there is always some pressure. “It’s exciting that women’s rugby has become such a priority in South Africa and I think the future is looking bright.”

The team will also be playing a number of warm-up games in preparations for the Women’s Varsity Cup tournament including some high intensity training sessions with the Bulls Daisies.

FNB UP-Tuks Women will play their first match against FNB Maties at the Danie Craven Stadium on Friday 5 April followed by a home game against FNB UKZN on Friday 12 April.

Tickets are available online at the UP Shop.



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Coaches Corner: *John McFarland*

AUTHOR: VALERIE BELLADONA

John McFarland is an experienced defense coach known for his successful career in rugby. He was a part of Heyneke Meyer's coaching team for the South African national rugby team, the Springboks, from 2012 until the end of the 2015 World Cup. Prior to that, McFarland worked with Meyer at the Bulls, a South African rugby team, from 2001 to 2012.

During his time with the Bulls, McFarland played a significant role in transforming the team from underachievers to three-time champions of the Super Rugby tournament. He and Meyer continued their professional relationship by working together at Stade Français, a French club, and the Houston SaberCats in Major League Rugby (MLR) in the United States.

In 2022, McFarland had successful coaching stints at the University of Pretoria (Tuks), where he helped the team defend their Varsity Cup title, and at the Sharks in the United Rugby Championship. During the MLR off-season, he also contributed to the Canadian national team, adding value to their coaching setup. For McFarland, coaching is not just a job but a calling. He is passionate about making a difference and believes that a strong defense is built on attitude and the quality of tackling. He emphasizes the importance of thorough preparation, including studying the opposition's play-sheet, to neutralize their strengths and establish dominance in the game.

McFarland is no stranger to TuksRugby and has been part of the coaching staff in 2010, 2011, 2012 and 2022 and will now once again be joining the team as coaching consultant. With McFarland re-joining the team it is sure to be an exciting season.



A Message from Antonie Schutte; Tuks YouthRugby Chairman

The Blue Bulls Youth Rugby Association (BBYRA) and TuksYouthRugby (TYR) have done an outreach at Delmas Primary school for some expert coaching and support to the schools coaches. TYR want to thank BBYRA Chairman Referees, Erenst Kruger, TYR Primary Schools Chairman, Marko Calitz, BBYRA IPT coach, Fortune Makapani & Pedrie Kruger, Jenny Venter and Jaco Venter for making the day a great success. The BBYRA is committed to development of players and willing to lend a hand to any team in need of coaching and development. The structures we have built over the years is beneficial to everyone in the rugby communities.

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Upcoming Events





UPCOMING EVENTS

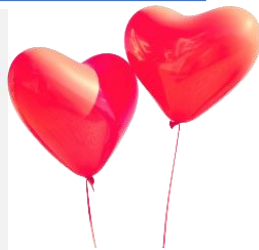


FNB Varsity Shield



2024 Fixtures

DATE	TIME	GAME	VENUE
23 FEB	19:00	FNB UP-Tuks vs FNB UFH	Davidson Stadium
1 MARCH	15:00	FNB UP-Tuks vs FNB CPUT	Tuks Stadium
8 MARCH	19:00	FNB UP-Tuks vs FNB WSU	Sisa Dukashe Stadium
15 MARCH	19:00	FNB UP-Tuks vs FNB Varsity College	Tuks Stadium
22 MARCH	19:00	FNB UP-Tuks vs FNB UKZN	Howard College Stadium
5 APRIL	19:00	FNB UP-Tuks vs FNB TUT	Tuks Stadium
12 APRIL	15:00	FNB UP-Tuks vs FNB Madibaz	Tuks Stadium
19 APRIL		FNB VARSITY SHIELD SEMI-FINAL	
26 APRIL		FNB VARSITY SHIELD FINAL	



FNB Varsity Cup Women's



2024 Fixtures

Date	Time	Game	Venue
5 April	16:30	FNB UP-Tuks Women vs FNB Maties Women	Danie Craven Stadium
12 April	12:30	FNB UP-Tuks Women vs FNB UKZN Women	Tuks Stadium
19 April		FNB VARSITY CUP WOMEN SEMI-FINAL	
26 April		FNB VARSITY CUP WOMEN FINAL	

Mission Statement

Striving to develop quality student-athletes within a high performance environment who will graduate with meaningful degrees.

Preparing young athletes for a life after rugby, competing for championships on and off the field, for future generations to follow.





FNB TuksRugby GOLFDAY

PRESENTED BY TW PROFILE

3 April 2024

Venue
Wingate Country Club

Shotgun Start
11:00

Format
4 Ball Alliance, 2 Scores to Count ,
Scramble Drive

Prices
4 Ball - R4500 (INCL VAT)
Halfway, dinner & playing shirt included
Hole sponsor - R3000 (INCL VAT)
Sponsors are required to provide their own tables and chairs

Entry/ Booking
4-Ball (Click Here) <https://bit.ly/3uekuxn>
Hole Sponsor (Click Here) <https://bit.ly/48m6r6V>

Please note
Entry fees do not cover the cost of a golf cart.
For your golf cart rental, contact Pro Shop at Wingate Country Club, 012 997 1312

