



South African Rugby League

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Press Release

The South African Rugby Leagues national side, the Rhinos are set to embark on Australian shores and play two International matches in Sydney and to take part in development training with Manly Warringah, Canterbury Bankstown and Penrith Panthers.

This is an historic tour for the SARL as it is the first time since 1963 that South Africa's national rugby league side has toured Australia.

The Rhinos will depart from OR Tambo to Sydney on **Wednesday the 22nd of April 2015** and return to South Africa on **Monday the 4th of May 2015** and it has all been made possible by our valued relationship with our major sponsors, Steeden (South Africa) and Hooters (Australia).

Tour Details

The Rhinos will be staying for the whole tour duration at the NSWRL Institute of Sport in Narrabeen, Sydney. During the tour, the SARL Rhinos will benefit from in depth coaching sessions with NRL clubs, Canterbury Bulldogs, Manly Warringah and Penrith Panthers. The opportunity to receive such expert coaching will undoubtedly benefit the Rhinos in their quest for 2017 Rugby League World Cup qualification in the UAE in October this year.

Two South African youth development players (Dwayne Botma & Ruan Du Preez) will join the Rhinos on tour and gain valuable experience.

For the first time, the SARL has permitted the inclusion of 5 heritage players based in Australia to play for the Rhinos.

The South African Rugby League invites you to be part of this tour by covering news from our arrival at Sydney International airport to training sessions with Canterbury, Manly and Penrith through to both our matches against the Philippines and Pacific Islands - Niue.

Hopefully this South African Rugby League tour to Australia will become an annual event.

Match 1

SA Rhinos versus Philippines – Sunday (26 April) – 4pm kick off – Hammondville oval, Moorebank.

Match 2

SA Rhinos versus Niue – Saturday night (2 May) - 7 pm kick off – Campbelltown Stadium.

The Niue match is to be played on the international stand-alone weekend where no NRL matches will be played.

With Australia v New Zealand in Brisbane, Papua New Guinea v Fiji and Tonga v Samoa at the Gold coast – South Africa versus Niue will be the biggest game in Sydney that weekend.

The following local players will be in the Rhino-touring squad:

Botes Ronald, Coetzer Jean, De Beer Wilhelmus, Joubert Attie, Joubert Juba, Joubert Tommie, Langenhoven Lee, Oosthuysen Jean-Di, Prinsloo Rudolf, Raubenheimer Nardus, Snell Brandon, Terblanche Jaice, Vd Merwe Andries, Viljoen Marcelle, Wells Rupert, Botma Dwayne, Du Preez Ruan, De Jager Pieter.

The following Australian based players will join the Rhino-touring squad in Australia:

Frei Brendan, Gillham Shane, Harris Halvor, Mzembe Gideon & De Reuck Darryn.

The SARL Rhino Management will consist of-

Mulder, Drikkie (Rhino-Director), Greige Brian (Rhino Coach), De Witt Addie (Rhino Trainer), Oosthuysen John (Rhino Team Manager), Vorster Trudie (Medical Ordinance).

SARL Background:

For more than 50 years the South African (SA) rugby league player had to take it on the chin as an “outcast sport” participating in a sporting code that was earmarked to assist players in a financial capacity.

Players like the famous Tom van Vollenhoven and Jan Prinsloo as stalwarts, could never participate in the code locally without being banned from playing the 15-Man Code (Union) again. All of this just because they got financial assistance to play the game that they loved! What is so hilarious is that today’s union players get financial contracts and that the RL player is still in an amateur-mode!

Although the ban was lifted in 1994, RL had to battle on all fronts such as single-minded coaches and parents from school-, student- to senior- level to allow the code-RL to be recognized at those levels.

The national sport authority (SASCOC) unfortunately down-graded the sport code RL when SASCOC took over the administration from NOCSA (previous SA sporting authority) by re-allocated RL as a subsidiary sport of the opposing sporting code, 15-man code (Union). This action not only became a big obstacle in the sponsorship-association with local companies for SARL but also created a big gap in the development-phase for RL-coaches. This “down-grading” process created a lot of unhappiness and is now being opposed and discussed at national & international levels. Hopefully with the back-up of the international shareholders such as the international Rugby League Federation (RLiF) and its affiliates, will SASCOC accept our status as a sporting code of its own. Accepting RL as a national sporting code will mean a lot to RL-members fighting for justice and fairness of this loving sport.

Being a full member of RLIF (only 12 full members), SARL and its members are still a club-based, community involved orientated. A lot of efforts are placed on getting a foothold in the SA-sporting-arena. With the aid of sponsors, an association of development is earmarked for the future whereby only the players can benefit and gain status.

SARL Dir of Coaching & Development Fanie Bredenhann

RL in South Africa needs to compete at a more professional level. Internationally, SA has been earmarked to become another competitive country in the 13-man code.

For the sporting code-Rugby League to grow in South Africa, a need, such as international benchmarking, is of great importance. Measuring the local player against international competition helps also creating a more professional approach. This does not only serve as evaluating the standard of the local player but also creates an incentive route to gain and develop more new players to the sporting code.

With the 2017 World Cup as incentive, (South African Rugby League - SARL) needs to pull all stops to overcome stumbling block, assist and guide the national coaching staff & players to compete at the highest level and qualify for World Cup-participation.

A “Dream Squad” to represent South Africa is in a building-phase. Making opportunities, not only accessible for local players but also to embrace international based players will be a priority task. Using international experience will only speed-up the process.

An invitation to play a once-off game against the Pacific Islands, in Australia, escalated to the extent that additional opportunities of a life-time have been blessed onto SARL, such as-

- Playing another national squad, such as the Philippines national squad in Sydney, Australia.
- For the rest of the 10-day tour the SARL national side (The Rhinos) will be assisted with in-depth development training toward World Cup qualification (earmarked for October 2015 in UAE), at the Sydney Super Clubs such as the Canterbury Bulldogs, Penrith Panthers & Mainly Sea Eagles! This opportunity to receive such expert advice will surely boost our endeavour to assist our upcoming RL-players with the best guidance the world can give in this sporting environment.
- Two under-age players (Dwayne Botma & Ruan Du Preez) will join the senior touring squad to experience the standards of their counterparts in Australia. Hopefully they will become the future

ambassadors in what can be done if you participate in such ventures with the assistance and aid of more stakeholders.

- The opportunity to play the 2 international games in Australia also allowed SARL to make use of 5 SA-heritage players based in Australia. They will join the SA-touring squad and strengthen the squad with expertise.

Such opportunities to advance the development strategy of the local SA-sporting-environment with another sport code (such as 13-Man- Rugby League Code) and gaining foot-hold on South African soil to assist youngster to have more opportunities to represent their country later at international level will be the key-objective in the forthcoming seasons.

Gaining more sponsorship-assistance is also one of the key objectives within SARL to ensure that less financial burden will be placed on the shoulder's (or "wallet") of the individual participating player representing South Africa at international level. With the exchange rate as a big obstacle all stops are pulled to assist local amateur players to participate in international endeavours.