



# MATIES RUGBY ANNUAL REPORT 2024



**MATIES  
SPORT**



# MATIES SPORT

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## OUR VISION

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To be the number one University rugby club in the world known for academic and sport excellence

## OUR MISSION

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To be a relevant modern club that represents University excellence globally, positively contributes to campus life and society and engages students, alumni and the local community.

## OUR STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

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- Create revenue opportunities to drive sustainability and growth
- Create access and opportunity to all persons
- To build a digital ecosystem
- To position Maties for a future in the global rugby landscape



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## FOREWORD

Dear SRFC members,

The year 2024 marked significant growth for our Club across multiple fronts. As John C. Maxwell wisely said, “Change is inevitable; growth is optional.” Amidst the changes around us, we embraced the responsibility to steer the Club toward our vision, focusing on priority objectives to drive us forward.

This journey didn’t start this year, but we’ve made strong progress. Throughout this report, we’ll share our advancements, but it’s equally important to highlight *how* we are achieving them. By focusing on value-enhancing activities, we’ve established clear management systems with defined indicators. This clarity not only shows where we aim to go but also how we intend to get there, helping us stay accountable and measure our progress effectively.

In a shifting landscape, knowing our core identity while remaining adaptable is essential. We regularly assess our actions, implementing systems that give us both direction and flexibility to adjust as needed.

Performance remains our top priority, and our goals are closely aligned with the strategic objectives of the University and Maties Sport. This alignment is something we take pride in, as it enhances our capabilities and positions us to contribute meaningfully to the broader



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mission. We're grateful to our University colleagues and leaders for their support in our shared journey. The slogan "forward together" truly resonates within Maties Rugby.

We are immensely proud of our student-athletes who balance their rigorous academic and athletic commitments, inspiring us daily to strive for excellence. Their dedication is a constant reminder of why we love what we do. This year, our alumni provided crucial support, especially in securing sponsorships, while donors continued to fund our student-athletes' education. Our sponsors enable us to grow toward our vision, and we are deeply thankful for their partnership.

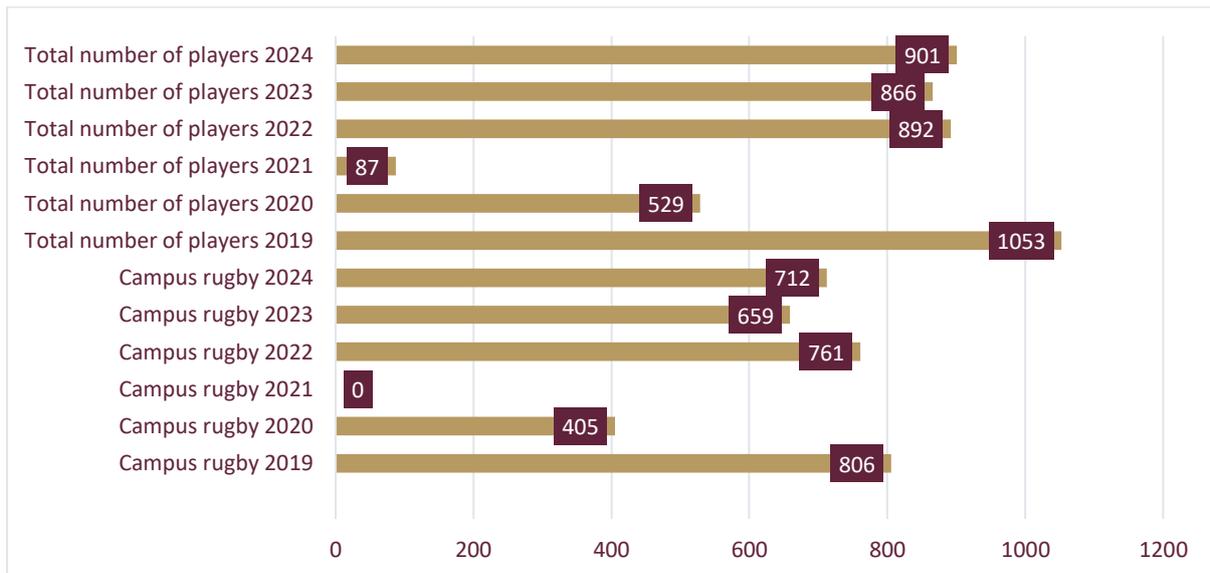
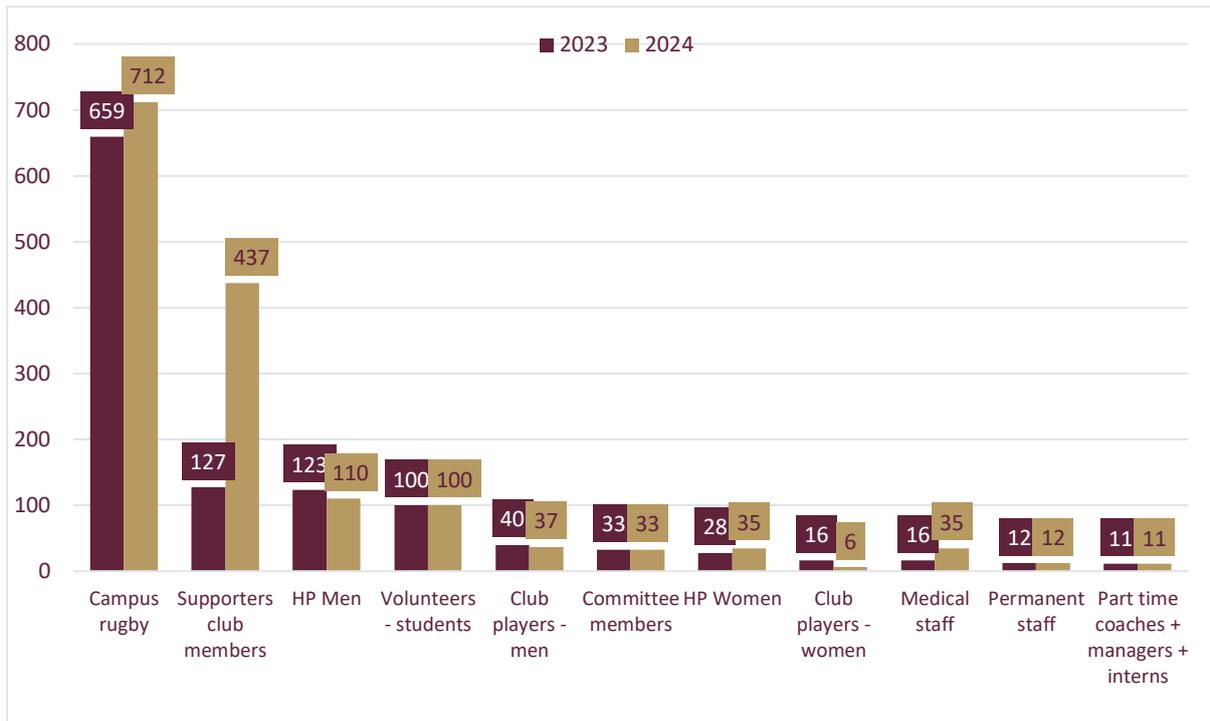
We are grateful to everyone who contributes to this Club's success—from Campus Rugby coaches, Residence Heads to Campus Rugby players, our committees and President and Vice-President who bring passion to all areas of our Club. Our Rugby Club staff worked tirelessly this year, and we thank them for their unwavering commitment.

The growth we've seen in 2024 strengthens our belief that we are poised for a bright future in the coming years.





## MATIES RUGBY AT A GLANCE





## OUR STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

| Commercialisation  | Inclusivity                            | Digitisation                            | Global presence  |
|--|--|---|--|
| Create revenue opportunities to drive sustainability and growth                    | Access and opportunity to all persons  | Improve information sharing             | Position Maties Rugby for a future in the global rugby landscape |
| Profitable events tailored match day offering / client satisfaction / sportainment | Campus Rugby New Products Social event | Build digital audience / fan engagement | International opposition   |
| Sponsorship  | Coaching academy Local community       | Develop data management systems         | Knowledge Sharing  |
| Supporters club  | Women's rugby                          | Digital broadcast solution              | Player exchange  |

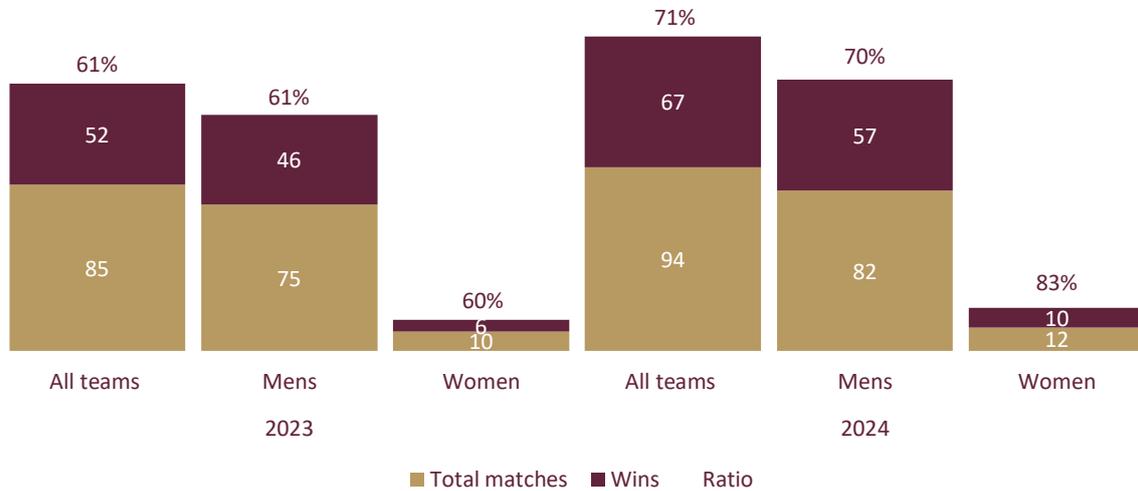
## PERFORMANCE ON-FIELD 2024

| Team            | Played | Won | Drawn | Lost | Bonus | Points | Final log position | Final standing  |
|-----------------|--------|-----|-------|------|-------|--------|--------------------|---|
| VC Men          | 8      | 6   | 0     | 2    | 4     | 28     | 2nd                | Losing Semi-Finalists (lost 38-24 to UFS in the Semi-Final)       |
| Young Guns      | 7      | 3   | 0     | 4    | 5     | 17     | 2nd                | Losing Semi-Finalists (lost 39-17 to UFS in the Semi-Final)       |
| VC Women        | 4      | 3   | 0     | 1    | 1     | 10     | 1st                | Runners-up (lost 37-31 to UFH in the Final)                       |
| Maties          | 16     | 11  | 0     | 5    | 13    | 53     | 4th                | Losing Semi-Finalists (lost 33-19 to Hamiltons in the Semi-Final) |
| Victorians      | 14     | 11  | 0     | 3    | 12    | 56     | 2nd                | 8 points behind league winners (False Bay)                        |
| Cravens         | 14     | 10  | 1     | 3    | 9     | 51     | 4th                | 6 points behind league winners (Durbell)                          |
| Junior Maties   | 14     | 11  | 1     | 2    | 9     | 55     | 4th                | 10 points behind league winners (Hamiltons)                       |
| Women's Club    | 2      | 2   | 0     | 0    | 2     | 10     | 6th                | 2nd half of the season clashed with USSA preparations.            |
| USSA Men's 15s  | 3      | 3   | 0     | 0    | 0     | 0      | Winners            | Winners (beat UFS 32-19 in the Final)                             |
| USSA Men's 7s   | 6      | 2   | 0     | 4    | 0     | 0      | 13th               | Beat TUT 40-5 in the Shield Final                                 |
| USSA Women's 7s | 6      | 5   | 0     | 1    | 0     | 9      | 2nd                | Runners-up (lost 26-0 to NWU in the final)                        |





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Our win percentage increased from last year, but we won only 1 out of 12 trophies. We are not satisfied with this and have implemented steps to ensure improvement. This starts with recruitment and then includes retention. We have focussed on recruiting quality first years, early detection, and communication with all players who played at a high level at school and have been granted admission into the University. We aim to increase our depth by ensuring we decrease the number of players leaving to other clubs whilst being students and the players who stop playing. We regularly monitor the players and our coaching with metrics against which progression is measured. Individual skills coaching and conditioning have priority. In 2022, we used 36 players in the Varsity Cup; 3 were non-bursary holders. In 2023, we used 38 players; again, three were non-bursary holders. This year we used 31 players; one was a non-bursary holder.

On average, 2.3 players out of 35 are non-bursary holders in the last three years. This then emphasises two things. One, the 31 players used this year, points to good work done by our trainer and medical staff. Two, recruitment and retention of our bursary holders are essential. We ensure that we identify and capture all players who played rugby at school and have a high probability of wanting to play again, for depth. This depth will be used throughout the year. The first team potentially plays 30 matches without friendlies. We





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used 63 players throughout the year this year for the first team, as in the latter part of the year, we had many players playing for Western Province, and we lost players due to injury.

## 2024 Highlights

- Only club to have a team in all three VC semi-finals.
- The Women's team played in the final of the VC.
- The Men's senior first team defended their University Sport SA (USSA) title.
- Women's team played in the final of the University Sport SA (USSA) sevens tournament.
- The Men's senior first team played in the semi-final of the Western Province Super League A.

## International Players

- Four new former Maties Players were selected for the Springboks this year. Edwill van der Merwe, Ben-Jason Dixon, Andre-Hugo Venter and Jordan Hendrikse's inclusion in the national side brings the Club's total to 186 Springboks.
- Former Matie Bianca Augustyn was selected to represent the South African Sevens Women's team
- Current student athletes Ankia Viljoen and Elme Kruger represented South Africa at the FISU sevens tournament.
- Current student athletes Ezekiel Ngobeni, Herman Lubbe and CJ Erasmus represented South Africa at under twenty level.





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## Provincial Players

- 27 former Maties playing in the URC and European Challenge, with an additional 42 playing in the Currie Cup:
  - A total of 15 players in the Stormers squad
- 20 Current Maties players in total in the DHL WP U19, U21 and Currie Cup teams:
  - U19 – 7 Maties
  - U21 – 7 Maties
  - IPL – 3 Maties
  - CC – 6 Maties

## OFF-FIELD

| MATIES RUGBY ACADEMICS (2023) |                |                  |
|-------------------------------|----------------|------------------|
| Team                          | No of Students | Credits Passed % |
| HP Men Seniors                | 33             | 79%              |
| HP Women's                    | 28             | 86%              |
| HP Men Juniors                | 22             | 78%              |
| <b>Total pass percentage</b>  |                | <b>81%</b>       |

Highlights of our off-field work include the academic performance of our student-athletes. We stay committed to our holistic approach, ensuring that student-athletes finish their degrees and leave the club with a degree and as well-rounded individuals.

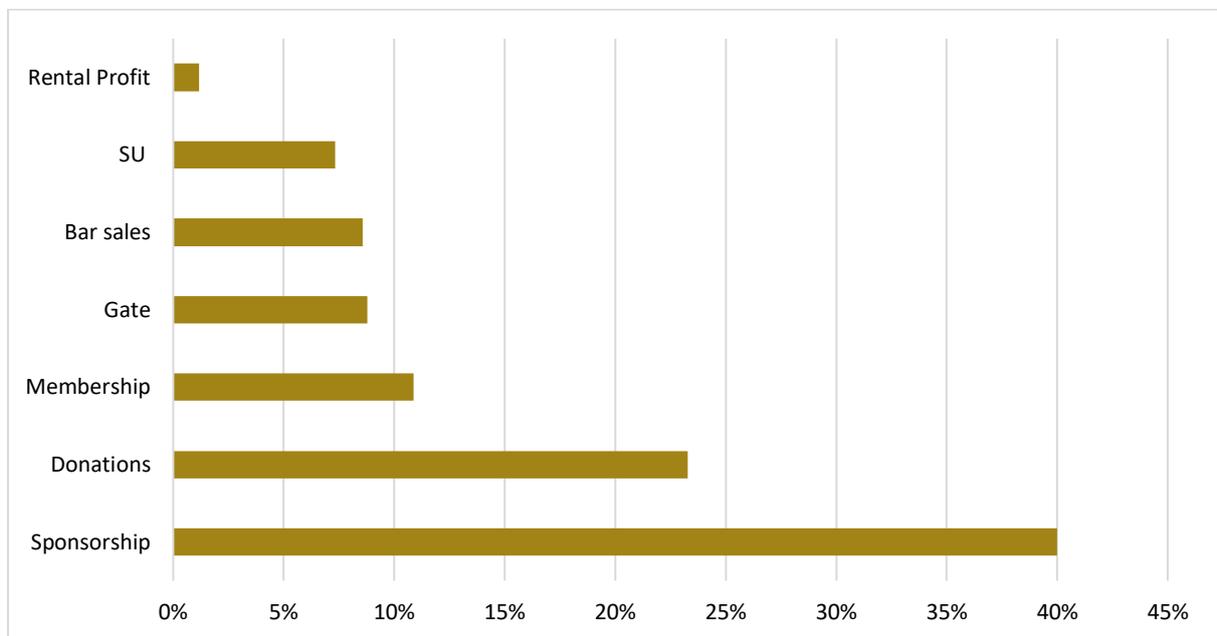




**PERFORMANCE AGAINST OUR STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK**

| <b>COMMERCIALISATION</b>  |  |
|---|--|
| Create revenue opportunities to drive sustainability and growth                             |  |
| Profitable events<br>Tailored match day offering<br>/ client satisfaction /<br>sportainment | SA Rugby<br>Stormers<br>Campus Rugby<br>Varsity Cup                                    |
| Sponsorship   | Campus Rugby<br>Left Sleeve VC<br>Pouring Rights<br>VIK<br>Advertisement Boards<br>FNB |
| Supporters club   | 437 members<br>24 Maties, 413 Pokkel   |

**Income Streams**





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## Events

The Danie Craven stadium hosted several noteworthy events in the past year. The most notable being the URC match Stormers versus Glasgow and the World Rugby U/20 Championship. The income we generate through the beverage sales is a substantial income stream. We are hosting the USSA 7's tournament in 2025 and are looking to partner again with the Stormers when Cape Town Stadium is unavailable.

## Donations

We want to thank all donors for their donations towards the educational bursaries of our student-athletes. Maties Sport also contributes towards this funding, and with these contributions, the club had a total of 98 bursary holders. The women's team had a total of 31 bursaries, we had 34 Young Guns on bursaries and 33 senior men.

## Supporters Club

The Supporters Club membership grew significantly this year compared to last year. This was due to a significant increase in the number of student members who bought the Pokkel package. Currently, ninety-five per cent of the packages sold are Pokkel packages. The package proved very popular amongst students. To increase our total membership, we will focus on growing the package and introducing new tailor-made packages for ex-players and general supporters.

## Sponsorship

This was an area of focus for 2024. The Club has eleven sponsors, including VIK and advertising space sponsors. Of these, nine were new signings this year. The most notable sponsors were our Campus Rugby sponsor Adam Piper, SAB, Hi-Tec (sleeve sponsor), and PenBev. We also signed a new headline sponsor, Mitchum, for 2025, whom we are very excited to partner with.



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## Gate

The Varsity Cup amounts to more than 99% of this revenue stream. We had, on average, 57% attendance against capacity for 2024. This indicates a slight increase of seven per cent. The first match, similar to last year, was at total capacity. The home semi-final had meagre attendance, which can be attributed to an earlier kick off, which made it difficult for students to attend. Increasing attendance will be the focus next year. Our planning has already started, and we are investigating ways to improve this. The layout with a vendor village at the back of the open stand proved popular, but we are constantly concentrating on improving the match day experience.

## Inclusivity

| INCLUSIVITY                           |  |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| Access and opportunity to all persons |  |
| Campus Rugby                          | New season and team structure.<br>Larger event offering.                                     |
| Women's rugby                         | Finalist VC<br>Finalist USSA 7's<br>Decrease in number of club players (non-bursary holders) |

| CAMPUS RUGBY WINNERS |                 |                               |
|----------------------|-----------------|-------------------------------|
| Competition          | Winners         | Finals Score                  |
| 1st League           | Helderberg 1    | Helderberg 19 – 17 Helshoogte |
| 2nd League           | Rubix Vikings 2 | Rubix 28 – 12 Elsenburg       |
| 3rd League           | Academia 2      | Academia 12 – 7 Dagbreek      |
| U20 Tournament       | Dagbreek U20    | Dagbreek 18 - 15 Elsenburg    |
| 10s Tournament       | Huis Marais 10s | Huis Marais 10 - 0 Elsenburg  |





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| League       | Teams     | Matches Played | Forfeits | Tries      | Deficit Points Avg. | Uncontested scrums |
|--------------|-----------|----------------|----------|------------|---------------------|--------------------|
| 1st league   | 12        | 60             | 5        | 283        | 18,5                | 19                 |
| 2nd league   | 10        | 32             | 3        | 129        | 23,7                | 17                 |
| 3rd league   | 4         | 13             | 1        | 44         | 12,4                | N/A                |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>26</b> | <b>105</b>     | <b>9</b> | <b>456</b> | <b>18,2</b>         | <b>36</b>          |

## Campus Rugby

Campus Rugby had one of its best years in a while. We started a new competition format and season structure, which proved very successful. Our membership grew from 659 to 712; an exciting statistic is that our CSC students or day students number grew by 40, which was where we wanted to focus on ensuring growth in the numbers. Our project of making campus rugby a social event proved very popular. The average spectator count at Campus Rugby increased from last year, with 3000 spectators on Derby Day and the finals. Playing the first and second leagues on a Friday provided spectators with a more extensive offering while ensuring teams could train in squads. We played a total of 152 matches (including the U20 tournament, 10s tournament and the leagues).

This year, 112 ACI players participated in our various competitions. We want to ensure that our recreational program is accessible to all, and this measurement keeps us accountable for our aim of inclusivity and diversity. We started a minor Women's six-down league, which provides gender diversity and will hopefully become an important source of players for our high-performance women's squad. The number of matches forfeited decreased from last year, which was an important objective. The number of matches with uncontested scrums was also a focus; although we decreased both, it will remain a competition objective for next year.





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## Highlights

- Derby days, 3000+ spectators
- Finals day 3000 spectators
- Campus Rugby All Stars versus Cardiff
- Improved match day offering
- Decrease in matches forfeited

## Digitisation

| Media                                   |                                      |
|---|--------------------------------------|
| Build digital ecosystem                 |                                      |
| Build digital audience / fan engagement | Social media 22% growth in followers |
| Newsletter                              | Mobile friendly newsletter           |
| Digital broadcast solution              | SLA, Derby matches, CR finals        |

## Social Media

This year, Maties Rugby’s social media strategy has focused on engaging and involving the online community in all aspects of the club. Through various campaigns and content—from informal training footage to formal coach introductions—we’ve aimed to make followers feel included. The “Rugby Roots” initiative, launched recently, allows fans to connect with Maties Rugby coaches and players, learning about their experiences, coaching methods, and sportsmanship.





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Our efforts supported our sponsors like Eikestad Mall, SAB, Hi-Tech, and WePlayAsOne, have significantly boosted engagement and following. The Maties Rugby Facebook page grew by 19% (from 17,000 to 21,000 followers), while Instagram saw a 25% increase (from 21,000 to 28,000 followers). This growth shows our content resonates, fostering a strong, connected community—a key goal for Maties Rugby. We look forward to building on this success in 2025.

### Media / Newsletter

We launched a newsletter this year. It is mobile-friendly, which makes it easy to distribute. The newsletter aims to keep our supporters informed and give some insight. It will be distributed bi-monthly and is something we hope will be widely read and keep our Maties Family engaged closer to the Club.

### Digital Broadcast Solution

A total of 40 matches were streamed – 30 Campus Rugby and 10 SLA matches. In the first round of Campus Rugby, the most viewed match was Helshoogte vs Simonsberg/Olympus (1 101 views). In total the viewership was between 5 000 – 8 000 for SLA and 2 300 for the Campus Rugby final.

### Global Presence

| GLOBAL PRESENCE  |  |
|--|--|
| Position Maties Rugby for a future in the global rugby landscape |  |
| International opposition   | Cardiff University   |
| Player exchange  | 7 International students playing for club - 4 Italians and 3 French players were part of program |
| FISU 2026 World University Championship Rugby Sevens             | Won the bid to host the tournament   |





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### **International Opposition**

The Cardiff University match allowed our Campus Rugby players to test themselves against international opposition. The function afterwards and the spirit of the encounter allowed for good interaction and the building of new relationships.

### **International Competition**

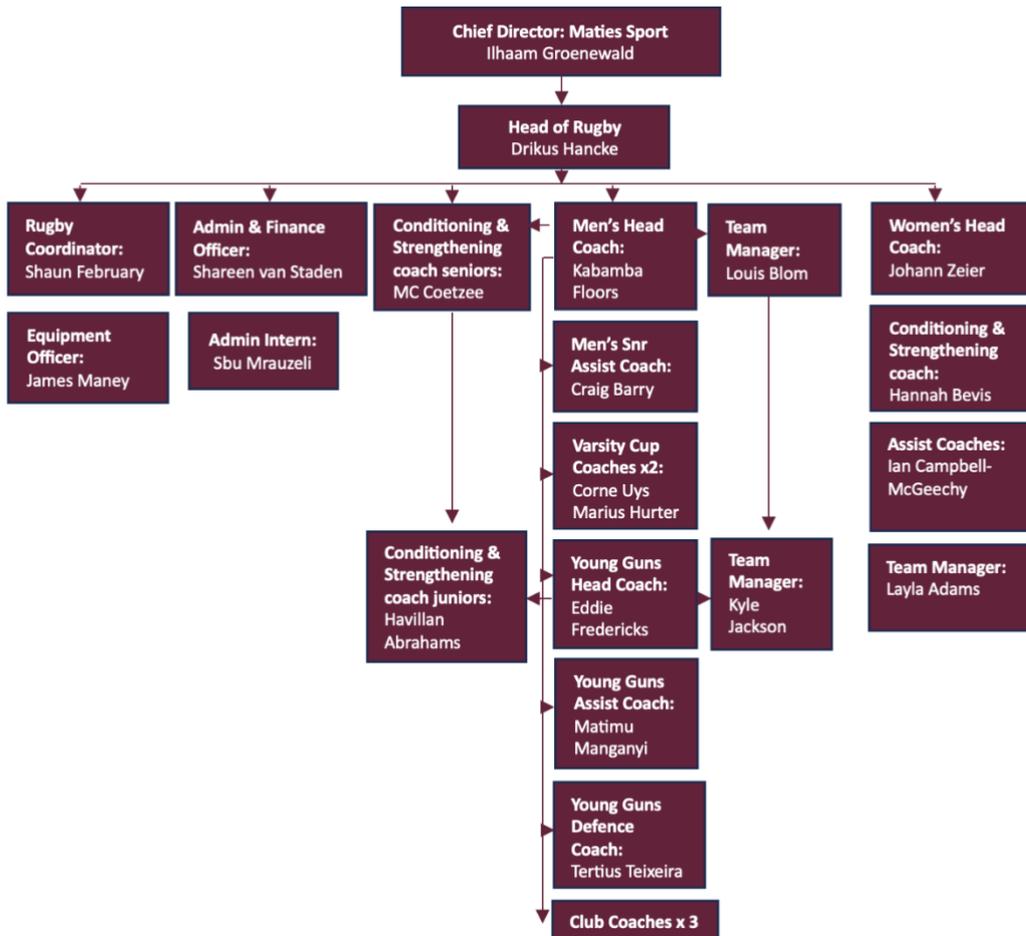
We are very proud to have won the bid to host this prestigious international tournament. We were a big team involved in securing this bid with Maties Sport and USSA. This student international sevens tournament is held every second year, and teams worldwide participate. It is a prestigious event that attracts participants and followers globally. We hope that this tournament will aid in positioning Maties Rugby and Maties Sport globally to enhance our global presence and partnerships.



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## Human Resources



### New Appointments

- Clinton van Rensburg – Young Guns Head Coach
- Aneesah Adams – Women’s Team Head Coach
- Johnwin Lewis – Facilities Coordinator
- Keagan September – Admin Intern
- Courtney de Klerk – Social Media Student Intern





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## GOVERNANCE

### Club Leadership

|                |                                    |
|----------------|------------------------------------|
| Charl Cronje   | - President                        |
| Pierre Viviers | - Vice President                   |
| Drikus Hancke  | - Head of Rugby                    |
| Rhys Fulford   | - Men's senior team representative |
| Liza Slabbert  | - Women's team representative      |

### Danie Craven Bursary Fund Committee

|                 |                 |
|-----------------|-----------------|
| Hans Scriba     | - Chairman      |
| Drikus Hancke   | - Head of Rugby |
| Sean Surmon     | - Maties Sport  |
| Tiaan Strauss   | Chris Norton    |
| Wulrich van Wyk | Riaan Basson    |
| Conrad Burke    |                 |

### Supporters Club Committee

|                |                 |
|----------------|-----------------|
| Hans Scriba    | - Chairman      |
| Drikus Hancke  | - Head of Rugby |
| Ferdi van Dyk  | - Secretary     |
| Neil de Kock   | Chris Norton    |
| Morgan Newman  | Buks van Rooyen |
| Gio Aplon      | Bianca Augustyn |
| Marvin Koopman |                 |



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## THANK YOU / ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- Our sponsors, without whom we would not be able to perform and deliver a service of a high standard to our student-athletes.
  - Adam Piper - Campus Rugby
  - Hi-Tec - VC Left sleeve
  - AbInbev - Pouring Rights
  - PenBev - Pouring Rights
  - Eikestad Mall - VIK
  - FNB - VC
  - WebTickets - VIK
  - Exness - Advertising Space
  - Ramble - VIK
  - Heineken - VIK
  - Byers - VIK
  
- All donors donating towards the Bursary Fund.
  - Abax
  - Ad Outpost
  - Andre Haasbroek
  - Bryn Morse
  - Craven Golf Day
  - George Rautenbach
  - Hennie Mentz
  - Leon Lourens
  - Martin Kriegler
  - Michiel le Roux Jnr
  - Piet Mouton
  - Ross Kerkhoff
  - Stan du Plessis
  - Werner Gey van Pittius (UK)
  - Wynand Meyer
  - Adam Piper
  - Andre du Plessis
  - Attacq
  - Callie Esterhuysen
  - De Klerk Van Gend
  - Hein Brand
  - Johan Barnard (Momentum Namibia)
  - Marius van Rooyen
  - Martin Versfeld
  - Oud Maties Golfklub Gauteng
  - Robert Roux
  - Rugby Educational Foundation (REF)
  - Tertius Cilliers
  - Willem Roos



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- Ilhaam Groenewald, the Chief Director of Maties Sport, for her guidance and support throughout the year.
- Charl Cronje and Doctor Pierre Viviers for their guidance and passion for the club.
- The rest of the committees for their time and input.
- The DAR office for fundraising and support.
- Maties Sport Events for the time and effort in delivering our significant events.
- Maties Media for guidance and help in running our social media pages.
- The High-Performance Unit for being part of our teams and conditioning them for success.
- The Residences and PSO's taking part in Campus Rugby for their administration and passion for rugby.
- CHS for the medical service.
- SAS physiotherapy for service to our teams.
- All members of the LOC teams for our events.
- Student volunteers who provide us increased capacity.
- The Centre for Sports Leadership and Department of Social Impact and Transformation for your help with the Coaching Academy.
- Facilities management for maintaining our facility.
- Andy De Bruyn and Danville Brown for aid in financial administration.
- The rest of the Maties Sport SMT for aid with university governance and policies.





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## PRIZE WINNERS MATIES RUGBY AWARDS EVENING

### Hi-Tec Varsity Cup Awards

- Hi-Tec Young Guns Player of the Competition - Grant de Jager  
Hi-Tec Varsity Cup Player of the Competition - Ankia Viljoen  
Hi-Tec Varsity Cup Player of the Competition - Louw Nel

### Individual Awards

- Women's Sevens Player of the Year - Elizabeth Slabbert  
Men's Sevens Player of the Year - Mitchell Labberte  
Cravens Player of the Year - Wyatt Strydom  
Victorians Player of the Year - Mitchell Labberte  
  
Junior Forward of the Year - Herman Lubbe  
Junior Back of the Year - Eldridge Jack  
  
Women's Forward of the Year - Sesethu Ntamnani  
Women's Back of the Year - Zelmari Pretorius  
  
Senior Forward of the Year - Fortune Mpofu  
Senior Back of the year - Aydon Topley  
  
Junior Player of the Year - Ezekiel Ngobeni  
Women's Player of the Year - Elme Kruger  
Senior Player of the Year - Vernon Matongo  
  
Black Label Junior Players' Player of the Year - Eldridge Jack  
Black Label Women's Players' Player of the Year - Elizabeth Slabbert  
Black Label Senior Players' Player of the Year - Aydon Topley



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**Special Awards, Coach of the year and Club Member Awards**

|                                 |                      |
|---------------------------------|----------------------|
| 50 1 <sup>st</sup> Team Caps    | - Mckyle Volmoer     |
|                                 | - De Wet Marais      |
| Coach of the year               | - Kabamba Floors     |
| Women's Club Member of the Year | - Elizabeth Slabbert |
| Senior Club Member of the Year  | - Matthew Gray       |



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## CLOSING

As our student-athletes are finishing with their exams, we wish them every success. To our alumni, supporters, lifelong members, donors, sponsors, University colleagues, and the entire Matie and rugby community, we extend our warmest wishes for a joyous festive season. Next year is a milestone—the 150th anniversary of Maties Rugby—and it promises to be a landmark year.

We are driven by passion, commitment, and an unwavering dedication to leading Maties Rugby as a modern, impactful university rugby club. Our purpose remains clear and powerful:

- To be the home of rugby for Stellenbosch University students and the wider Stellenbosch community.
- To provide entertainment and excitement for students, alumni, sports lovers, and the community at large.
- To lead university rugby on a global stage, emphasizing holistic player development and pioneering new, evidence-based ways to elevate the game.
- To use sport as a platform to address social issues and inspire others through the values of our club and the spirit of rugby.

We look forward to an extraordinary year ahead and are excited to continue our journey with you—our valued community—into a future filled with purpose, passion, and promise.

**CHARL CRONJE**  
SRFC President

**DRIKUS HANCKE**  
Head of Rugby



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