



EST 1863

MARITZBURG COLLEGE



2025

28 MARCH-01 APRIL

#DIRECTINGPOTENTIAL



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MARITZBURG COLLEGE

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MESSAGE FROM THE ACTING HEADMASTER

It is a great pleasure for Maritzburg College to host the Skonk Nicholson Rugby Festival and to welcome 20 teams and their supporters to our campus.

We sincerely hope that all who participate or spectate will enjoy all that is great in schoolboy sport, viz. the camaraderie, team-spirit, passion, commitment and sportsmanship.

These were all noble ideals fostered in his rugby teams over 35 seasons by the late Mr Nicholson himself – ones of which we today need to be more mindful than ever.



A special word of thanks goes to the following: Director of Rugby Mr H Marnitz, the master-in-charge of rugby Mr S Stopford, the tournament director Mr L Smorfitt, our events manager Ms R Barnard, Granny Macs Catering, Mrs S Upfold and the Maritzburg College Marketing team, the school's Estates team, and all the first aiders and other helpers, for all their hard work in making this festival a reality.

Of course, a special welcome to the home of the Red-Black-White goes to all the players, coaches, managers and parents – we hope you have an enjoyable stay on our campus.

I trust that you will all enjoy the few days' rugby, and wish you safe travels back home.

Yours sincerely

MR MM MARWICK
ACTING HEADMASTER



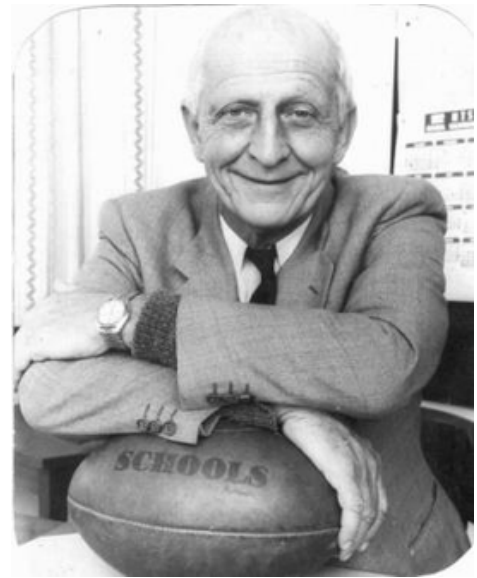
PROGRAMME

Date	Time	Event
28 March 2025	After 15:00 PM	Arrival of teams
	15:00 - 17:00	Registration and dorm allocation at Forder Oval
	17:30 - 18:30	Dinner for players, chaperones, and bus drivers in the dining hall
	From 18:00	Welcome functions for coaching staff at the Kent Pavilion
29 March 2025	06:30 - 07:30	Breakfast for players, chaperones, and bus drivers in the dining hall
	07:00 - 08:00	Breakfast for coaching staff in the Victoria Hall
	12:00 - 13:30	Lunch for players, chaperones, and bus drivers in the dining hall
	12:00 - 13:30	Lunch for coaching staff in the Victoria Hall
	17:30 - 18:30	Dinner for players, chaperones, and bus drivers in the dining hall
	From 18:00	Functions for coaching staff at the Kent Pavilion
30 March 2025	08:00 - 09:00	Breakfast for players, chaperones, and bus drivers in the dining hall
	08:00 - 09:00	Breakfast for coaching staff in the Victoria Hall
	Lunch	Pre-order packed lunch or Braai pack
	17:30 - 18:30	Dinner for players, chaperones, coaches, and bus drivers in the dining hall
31 March 2025	06:30 - 07:30	Breakfast for players, chaperones, and bus drivers in the dining hall
	07:00 - 08:00	Breakfast for coaching staff in the Victoria Hall
	12:00 - 13:30	Lunch for players, chaperones, and bus drivers in the dining hall
	12:00 - 13:30	Lunch for coaching staff in the Victoria Hall
	17:30 - 18:30	Dinner for players, chaperones, and bus drivers in the dining hall
	From 18:00	Functions for coaching staff at the Kent Pavilion
1 April 2025	05:45 - 07:30	Breakfast for players, chaperones, and bus drivers in the dining hall
Laundry Service	Wash 1:	Dinner drop-off 29th; Breakfast pick-up 30th
	Wash 2:	Dinner drop-off 31st ; Breakfast pick-up 1st
Boarding House	Quiet time after 21:00	Lights out after 22:00

PROFILE OF SKONK: THE GREAT 'SKONKWAAN'

James Mervyn Nicholson (the Skonk came later) was born in Underberg, Natal, on 6 February 1917, and grew up on the family farm in that district. In due course, he was sent to the Durban Preparatory High School, from whence he proceeded to the Durban High School (DHS). His father was a great friend of the legendary DHS Head Master, Mr AS 'Madevu' Langley, and so young Mervyn was sent to DHS, rather than to Maritzburg College, which was also a family school. He enjoyed a

remarkably successful stint at DHS, and matriculated in 1935 in a blaze of glory: he was Head Prefect, captain of the First XV, the First XI and the athletics team, captain of the Natal Schools' XV, and Senior Cadet Officer. It was as a young standard six (grade 8) boarder at DHS that he earned his famous nickname of 'Skonk': the then Head Prefect, M Bennett, recognised young Nicholson's spirited nature, referring to him as 'Skonkwaan', which was the name of a bull on the Bennett farm in Mooi River, meaning 'tent-peg'. This was in due course shortened to 'Skonk', and so it has remained ever since.



Having completed his studies cum laude at the erstwhile Natal University College (NUC) in Pietermaritzburg, Skonk started out his academic teaching career at his alma mater, DHS, immediately before the Second World War broke out. During the war, he served as an instructor (sergeant-major), before being demobilised out of the SA Army in 1944 due to injury. Much to the disappointment of the redoubtable Head Master of DHS, Col 'Betsy' Martin MC (himself an Old Collegian), Skonk was in that year sent by the Natal Education authorities to Maritzburg College, where he for the next two generations taught Geography and coached the First XV (1948-1982). Indeed, in 1944 the youthful Skonk found himself the subject of a heated dispute between Col Martin and the equally pugnacious Headmaster of College, the famous Mr JW 'John-Willie' Hudson, who also wanted to enjoy the services of the talented young master. "Boy!" the redoubtable John-Willie boomed at the youthful schoolmaster, "you are staying at College." And so it was.

Under Skonk's leadership, College came to be one of the rugby powerhouses in SA, producing 14 unbeaten First XVs and countless Natal and SA Schools' players during his 35 seasons at the helm. Over the passage of years, Skonk coached many players who played provincial and international rugby, including at least 10 Natal flyhalves alone! These players include Keith Oxlee, Brian Irvine (captain of the Junior Springboks), Ormie Taylor and Andy van der Watt, and, after his formal retirement, Joel Stransky, Jeremy Thomson, Pieter Dixon and Butch James. Nearby to the Kent Pavilion at College, overlooking the school's main rugby field, Goldstone's, stands the Nicholson Arch, which was erected in 1982, the year of Skonk's retirement. It is a cherished tradition for each First XV player, as he steams onto the pitch, to reach up and touch the apex of the arch, in mute tribute to College's own 'Mr Rugby'.

Skonk garnered many awards and tributes in the course of a long and distinguished career as a teacher and a sports coach, including the Gold Medal of the SA Geographical Society - for his outstanding contribution to geography - and civic honours by the Pietermaritzburg City Council - for "Long and Outstanding Service to Education and Sport".

Skonk Nicholson sadly passed away in 2011 and will always be fondly remembered, by all who knew him.



U14 FIXTURES FOR SNRF 2025:

Day 1
29 March

08:00	Hoerskool Centurion	vs	Westville
09:15	Monnas	vs	Kearsney
10:30	HTS Middelburg	vs	PBHS
12:00-13:30	LUNCH		
13:30	Northwood	vs	Jeppe
14:45	Zwartkop	vs	Maritzburg College

Day 2
31 March

08:00	Kearsney	vs	Zwartkop
09:15	HTS Middelburg	vs	Jeppe
10:30	Hoerskool Centurion	vs	Maritzburg College
12:00-13:30	LUNCH		
13:30	PBHS	vs	Westville
14:45	Northwood	vs	Monnas

Day 3
1 April

07:00	Kearsney	vs	PBHS
08:15	Hoerskool Centurion	vs	Jeppe
9:30	Northwood	vs	HTS Middelburg
10:45	Maritzburg College	vs	Monnas
	NO BREAK		
12:00	Westville	vs	Zwartkop

SNOW'S
SNOW'S

SCAN THIS QR
CODE FOR
RESULTS



U16 FIXTURES FOR SNRF 2025:

Day 1
29 March

08:00	Northwood	vs	Duineveld
09:15	Westville	vs	HTS Middelburg
10:30	Zwartkop	vs	Maritzburg College
12:00-13:30	LUNCH		
13:30	Westville B	vs	Maritzburg College B
14:45	Hoerskool Centurion	vs	Sentraal

Day 2
31 March

08:00	HTS Middelburg	vs	Maritzburg College B
09:15	Westville	vs	Duineveld
10:30	Northwood	vs	Zwartkop
12:00-13:30	LUNCH		
13:30	Hoerskool Centurion	vs	Westville B
14:45	Sentraal	vs	Maritzburg College

Day 3
1 April

07:00	Duineveld	vs	Maritzburg College B
08:15	Sentraal	vs	Westville B
09:30	Northwood	vs	HTS Middelburg
10:45	Hoerskool Centurion	vs	Maritzburg College
	NO BREAK		
12:00	Zwartkop	vs	Westville

GOLDSTONE'S

SCAN THIS QR
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RESULTS



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TOURNAMENT RULES

General Information:

1. Each team will consist of 23 players.
2. Each team will play three games, as determined by the organisers.
3. Coastal teams will play against Inland teams as far as possible.
4. There will be one rest day after the first day's matches.
5. Boksmart forms should be presented 30min before the start of the match to the match officials.
6. Coaches must remain in technical box for the duration of the game.

Match Duration:

1. U14 matches will have 25 minutes per half (running time).
2. U16 matches will have 30 minutes per half (running time).

Player and Substitution Rules:

1. Eight reserves are allowed, including three front rows (mandatory).
2. Rolling substitutions are allowed, with a maximum of 12 changes per match.
- If the maximum number of substitutions (12) has been reached and a front-row player is injured, an exception may be made, allowing up to 15 substitutions to ensure safety.
- If injuries in the first match prevent a team from fielding three front-rows in subsequent matches, "uncontested scrums" will be permitted. This decision must be made by consensus between the referee and the coaches of both teams, emphasising good sportsmanship.

Disciplinary Actions:

1. Yellow cards will result in the player being off the field for 5 minutes.
2. Red cards:
 - The player will be off the field for 10 minutes and must then be replaced by a reserve.
 - If all reserves have been used, a previously substituted player may return to the field.
 - The player's conduct will then be addressed through the tournament's internal disciplinary process.

Additional Notes:

1. The organisers request that all participants and staff prioritise safety, sportsmanship, and fairness throughout the tournament.
2. Referees will enforce all rules in accordance with current school rugby regulations and any tournament-specific guidelines.

MARITZBURG COLLEGE

LIGHTNING WARNING/ PRECAUTIONS

Maritzburg College has an automated lightning siren which is linked to a satellite system and is self-activated when the lightning in our area is active. There are two types of alerts; the first is a long sounding siren which means take cover immediately, the second is a series of short blasts which means that the lightning has cleared and it is safe to go out. We take the safety of our boys, staff, parents, and community seriously, and ask that the following be adhered to should the siren go off:

What to do when the warning siren sounds

- Immediately proceed to take cover and shelter (not under a tree).
- All sport / outdoor activities must stop immediately.
- SHELTER AREAS:
 - Barns' / Pape's/ Goldstone's/ Snow's = High Performance Centre (HPC) / Kent Pavilion
 - Lamond's / Nicholson's / Leach's = HPC
 - Swimming Pool / Tennis Courts = BE / Howies Hut/OCC
 - AB Jackson Fields = Astro stadium / BE / Soccer Office
 - Camps Drift = Canoe Club
- Remain in the shelter areas until you hear the ALL CLEAR siren.

What must NOT HAPPEN when the siren sounds

- Boys must not continue practicing or playing.
- No duck-diving or any playing on fields whatsoever.
- No walking around.
- Do not stand under a tree.
- Stay away from pools/ puddles of water.
- Stay out of open spaces (fields/car parks).

Where are the sirens / warning lights

- On the roof of HPC and on the roof of Nathan House in the Boarding Establishment.

WARNING SIRENS / LIGHTS PROCEDURES

- Lightning warning and evacuate
- LED Light on tower above the HPC and Nathan House will start flashing.
- If you see the light flashing – it is not safe to be out.
- The ALL CLEAR siren will be a series of short bursts and the lights will be switched off.

During storms / heavy weather – please make a habit of checking the warning light to see if you may have missed a siren. If the light is off – it is safe to be on the fields.

Thank you



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HISTORY OF RUGBY

Early Years

Founded in 1863, Maritzburg College played its first rugby match in 1870, against Hermannsburg. Playing on the old Market Square in the centre of town under Winchester Rules, College won by two goals to nil, in the first recorded rugby match played in the old Colony of Natal (let alone the whole of Africa – but that’s another story altogether).

Rugby quickly became the game of choice at College and, apart from a short period of time in the 1880s and 1890s, when football enjoyed a considerable following, has remained the most popular winter sport at College.



The 1900 College First XV, captained by AS “Madevu” Langley, with its prized silver-ware – the Murray Cup. The dapper figure on the right is the headmaster, Mr RD Clark (MA) (Oxon).

Three Old Collegians appeared in the 1924 Springbok team to take on the touring British Lions: Bertram Vanderplank (front row, second right), Walter Clarkson (middle row, far left) and Bill Payn (middle of the middle row). The much-loved, versatile Payn represented what is today KZN at five sports, and famously ran the 1922 Comrades Marathon in his rugby boots.



A stand-out player in the early years was strapping farm boy, Philip Nel, who was the First XV captain and all-powerful head prefect of the school in 1921. Nel captained the Springbok team on its all-conquering tour of Australia and New Zealand in 1937. It remains the only Springbok team in history to have defeated the All Blacks in New Zealand. Such was the quality of the play of his imperious team that it was given the tongue-in-cheek accolade of being “the greatest team to leave New Zealand’s shores”. On the ship returning home, Nel formally announced his retirement from Springbok rugby by throwing his trusty old rugger boots into the sea. Like Alexander the Great, he had no more worlds to conquer.



The captain of the 1937 Springboks to New Zealand, Philip Nel (OC 1921) (far right), introduces a local dignitary to his team, during his team’s triumphant tour of Australasia. The future rugby boss, Dr Danie Craven, appears second from the left.

Enter the Skonkwaan

Although rugby enjoyed great prestige in the first few decades of the 20th Century, the appointment as First XV coach in 1948 of Mr JM “Skonk” Nicholson was the great catalyst for future success. Skonk’s effect was immediate: his 1948 side lost only to old rivals, Durban High School, and in the following year Skonk (himself a former head prefect of “School”) produced his first unbeaten team. He retired in 1982, after 35 seasons as the coach of the First XV. During that time, 22 of his teams were unbeaten or lost only one match.



Skonk Nicholson poses with some of the senior members of his unbeaten 1963 Centenary XV, which included a record 10 Natal Schools' players, was unbeaten in a 17-match season, and set many records. The players are (from left to right) Andre Bruyns (future provincial cricketer), Anthony Egner (future Natal flyhalf), Colin Marsh (future MD of Shell SA), Andrew van der Watt (future Springbok winger) and David Anderson (captain).

Last 50 years

Outstanding teams in the last five decades include the 1972 First XV, which supplied 10 Craven Week players and conceded only one try in 19 matches; the 1978 First XV, which won all of its matches; the record-breaking 1985 team, which won all of its 18 matches, including a 44-0 triumph over Bishops and a 10-4 win over a Grey College side brimming with five SA Schools' caps; the 1987 side that included SA Schools' captain Brenton Catterall and three other SA Schools' players; and the 1988 First XV, which won all 15 of its fixtures.

Despite the retirement of the much-loved Mr Nicholson in 1982, that decade was a period of almost unbroken triumph for Maritzburg College rugby, and from 1981-1990 losses were suffered only against Glenwood (twice), Hilton and DHS (once each) among KZN schools.

This rugby success continued into the 1990s, with the 1994 team delivering an unbeaten season against all South African teams, losing only to Gisborne BHS in the final of the World Schools' Tournament in Bowral, Australia. Another highlight of the decade was the unbeaten 1995 side, which enjoyed wins over Ermelo, Selborne, Grey High and Paul Roos Gymnasium, and big wins over Glenwood (61-13), Westville (62-6) and Kearsney (43-3). Skippered by Zane Aszalos, the 1995 XV contained two SA Schools' captains – Pieter Dixon (1995) and Richard Kelly (1996).

By 2022, the explosion of professional rugby around the world meant that the number of Old Collegians playing the sport on the international stage had increased dramatically, and Maritzburg College alumni have in the last 30 years won caps for the Springboks (including Joel Stransky, Butch James, Peter Grant, Jesse Kriel and Ntuthuko Mchunu), England, USA, Italy, Germany, Cyprus and Spain.

For decades, the school's redoubtable Chief Induna, Zablon Kwelha, was a loyal supporter of the First XV. He travelled widely by bus with the Maritzburg College boys to watch them play, often taking bets on their success with his contemporaries at DHS and Glenwood. An unofficial adviser to his great friend, Mr Nicholson, he fervently held the view that each College First XV should contain at least one red-headed player – "For extra fire!"



#PROARISETFOCIS

2018 First XV captain and 2022 Springbok prop vs Wales, Ntuthuko Mchunu, gallops across Goldstone's, during a 70m dash towards the Michaelhouse try-line. On 9 July 2022, he came off the bench to represent the Springboks in the 2nd test vs Wales – in doing so, becoming Maritzburg College's 320th international cap.



It's a College try, and the bashers fly high on Basher Ridge!

#COLLEGEFIRE

A determined Phiwayinko "Rambo" Kubheka led his 1st XV to a commanding 83-10 victory over Clifton in the 1st home winter fixture of 2024.



Current 1st XV coach, Mr K Elder (OC 2013), lunges to score - much to the jubilation of some supporters - in the pulsating clash between the schools' First XV's on Reunion Day 2013. 2011 RWC Final referee, Craig Jounert (OC 1995), is well-placed to award the try. The match was won 40-44 by Glenwood, after a titanic struggle in front of about 8 000 spectators.

CONTACT DETAILS

Tournament Director: **Liam Smorfitt**
smorfittl@mcollege.co.za
0844744838

First Aid: **Cherize Singh**
singhc@mcollege.co.za

FIELD CO-ORDINATORS

Goldstone's & Snow's **Jaco Taljaard**

MEAL INFORMATION

Breakfast 07:00-08:00

Lunch 12:00-13:30

Supper 17:00-18:30

Players

All players' meals are in the Keith Guise-Brown Dining Hall

Coaches:

All coach and manager meals are in the Victoria Hall.

