

Maritzburg College Sports and Cultural Awards 2025
Address by the Headmaster, Mr Alan Redfern

Good evening, Mr Dlangalala, Mr Colenbrander, members of the governing body, honoured guests, fellow Headmasters, staff, parents, and, most importantly, the young men of Maritzburg College. It is a great pleasure to welcome you all to this year's Sports and Cultural Awards.

Tonight, we gather to celebrate achievement—yes—but just as importantly, we gather to recognise effort, commitment, and the spirit of participation that enriches our College community.

Education, at its best, is about balance. We strive to educate the whole person—mind, body, and character. Academic study provides our boys with the foundation they need for their future, but a truly meaningful education extends far beyond the classroom. It is here, on the playing fields, in the theatres, the music rooms, and the debating chambers, that our boys learn resilience, teamwork, creativity, and discipline—qualities that no textbook can fully teach. As Vince Lombardi once said, *“The price of success is hard work, dedication to the job at hand, and the determination that whether we win or lose, we have applied the best of ourselves.”* These are the very lessons that sport at College instils in our young men, preparing them for life far beyond school.

Sport, in particular, has long been a proud tradition at Maritzburg College. Healthy, competitive sport pushes young men to test their limits, to respect opponents, and to understand that victory is not only about the scoreboard but also about integrity, perseverance, and honour in how the game is played. In learning to win with humility and lose with grace, our boys are being prepared not only for competition but for life itself.

In a world that is increasingly fast-paced and uncertain, schools like ours have the responsibility not only to educate but to anchor young men in values that will endure long after the final whistle has blown or the curtain has fallen. Respect, humility, and resilience are not simply words on a page; they are lived out daily in the way our boys support one another, face challenges, and rise after disappointment. These qualities, nurtured through sport and culture, prepare them to become leaders of integrity in their families, professions, and wider communities.

Equally, our cultural programme enriches the soul of our school. Whether through drama, debating, music, or visual arts, culture provides opportunities for expression, for critical thought, and for imagination to flourish. As Albert Einstein reminded us, *“Logic will get you from A to B. Imagination will take you everywhere.”* These pursuits broaden horizons and strengthen the academic journey, developing empathy, communication skills, and creativity—qualities that employers, universities, and communities value as highly as exam results.

It is also worth reflecting on the role of teamwork, both on and off the field. No individual success exists in isolation. Every try scored, every performance delivered, and every debate won is the result of collective effort—of coaches guiding, parents encouraging, teammates supporting, and staff providing structure and inspiration. When we celebrate our boys tonight, we also celebrate the unseen network of people who make their achievements possible. This spirit of community is one of Maritzburg College's greatest strengths.

It is this balance—academics supported by sport, culture, and values—that lies at the heart of a holistic education. Here at College, we are deeply proud of the breadth of opportunity our boys enjoy, and of the commitment shown by staff, coaches, and parents in making these opportunities possible.

Tonight, we honour those who have excelled, but let us also acknowledge the countless hours of practice, the early mornings, the setbacks overcome, and the friendships forged along the way. These experiences shape character far more than medals and trophies.

Finally, we must remember that our traditions are not just about preserving the past but about inspiring the future. The red, black, and white stand for more than colours on a jersey; they symbolise a legacy of excellence and service stretching back generations. Each young man here is called not only to strive for personal achievement but also to contribute to something bigger than himself. In doing so, he adds his own chapter to the proud story of Maritzburg College, ensuring that those who come after will also find a school rich in opportunity, character, and spirit.

To our award winners: congratulations on your outstanding achievements. You carry the name of College with pride, and you set a fine example for your peers. To all our boys: continue to strive for balance, embrace every opportunity, and remember that a full education is not measured by marks alone, but by the kind of men you are becoming.

Parents, thank you for your unwavering support and encouragement; staff, thank you for your dedication and passion; and boys, thank you for your energy, your commitment, and your willingness to grow.

And so, as we celebrate tonight, let us remember that success is not a destination but a journey. It is found in the courage to try, the humility to learn, and the determination to keep moving forward.

Go forward with courage, live with honour, and always remember that you carry the spirit of College within you.

Pro Aris et Focis