

Hoër Tegniese Skool Vereeniging



FOUNDATION: 1937
MOTTO: WORSTEL EN OORWIN (STRUGGLE AND CONQUER)
ADDRESS: PRIVATE BAG XI,
VEREENIGING 1930



School History

In 1926 teaching was done in technical and commercial subjects in the old Selbourne Hall. In 1935 building started on a Technical and Commercial School in Beaconsfield Avenue. Jan Hofmeyr, the Minister of Education, opened the school in 1935. The first head of the new school, WG Daly, opened the doors to 17 pupils in 1937. The fifth head, C Oosthuizen, moved the school to its new home in Beethoven Street at the end of 1978. From 1979 the school was solely a technical school and the old school in Beaconsfield Avenue became a Technical College. In 1996 the current principal, Dries van Heerden, took over from MJ Dippenaar. Van Heerden has played a leading role in schools rugby in South Africa and is presently the chairman of the national body.

Rugby at Vereeniging

From 1994 onwards the school began to stand up to the top rugby schools in South Africa. Since then, 96 of the school's players have been to Craven Week and seven have played for SA Schools: Corrie Steenkamp, Ettiene Barnard, Bakkies Botha, Johan Oberholzer, Rudi Dames, Jano Vermaak and Zander de Kok. All of these players were also selected for SA Under-19, as well as Frank Louw. Since 1994 HTS Vereeniging, known as the Tekkies, have won the Falcons League nine times. In 1994-95 and 1997 they won the Vaaldriehoek League.

From 1998 to 2000, they won the league, and again in 2002 and 2004. In 2005 they played in the league finals. They have consistently been amongst the top school teams in South Africa and have done well in cup competitions north of the Vaal, reaching the final in 1999. Tradition plays a big role in the school's success. The First XV players are capped each year, a great rugby tradition.

The school believes that the pillars on which its rugby stands are pride, tradition, discipline and the striving for excellence. Bakkies Botha is by far the school's most notable Old Boy. He captained his school, the Falcons Craven Week side and SA Schools. He then played for SA Under-19, SA Under-21, the SA "A" team and eventually for the Springboks, forming the world's foremost lock pairing with fellow Bull, Victor Matfield. Other players who have done well are flank Ettiene Barnard (Lions and Cats), lock Stefan Britz (Blue Bulls), scrumhalf Rudi Dames (SA Under-19 and Wildebeest), flank Frank Louw (SA Under-19 and the Leopards), and scrumhalf Jano Vermaak (Lions and Cats). Gert Muller and Zander de Kok are both currently contracted to the Lions. So much of the school's recent success is due to its current headmaster, Dries van Heerden, and head coach, André Smith. He arrived at HTS vereeniging in 1993, at a time when rugby at the school had a fairly low profile. Rugby pride and tradition was instilled, and has clearly worked. Since 1994 the school has been the league winner eight times. First XV matches now attract between 5 000 and 7 000 spectators. Former provincial player André Smit has also been recently in the school's rugby involved, and since 1994 the school has produced more than 100 provincial players. Under Dries van Heerden and the coaching staff, Tekkies can look ahead to a bright future.



Internationals

South Africa:
Bakkies Botha

"I spent most of my high school at HTS Middelburg before the principle of HTS Vereeniging offered me the opportunity to play there. So the move was purely a rugby one, but it worked in that I made the team, and captained the 1998 SA Schools side. But Geo Cronje and Gerrie Britz kept me out of the Under-21 team!"

I don't feel the intensity between a Bok game and a schools game differs. Obviously, there are different factors and contexts, but I find schools rugby incredibly competitive; even sometimes too aggressive. The enjoyment is sometimes compromised for the results, and there's no doubt schools rugby should be competitive, but not at the risk of enjoying the game."

— Bakkies Botha (1998)

"There was a particularly good bond between Bakkies and myself since he stayed with me in 1998 when he came from Middelburg. I knew even then that we would become a Springbok. Because of the rugby politics in 1998, he nearly didn't make the Falcon schools team, but by the end of the year he had played for the Falcons and captained the SA Schools team."

Rudi Dames (1998–99) is the best school captain that I have ever encountered, and this includes all the SA Schools and Under-19 teams that I have coached. He had the ability to extract everything from the players.

Jano Vermaak (2002–03) is an example for every young rugby player, and is proof that hard work brings success. He spares no effort to improve himself as a rugby player. His loyalty towards the school and the game is exceptional. As a Grade 8 youngster he was barely brick-high and said that he wanted to play wing. I told the Under-14 coach to rather play him at scrumhalf. Now he plays there for the Lions. With his potential and hard work, he will also become a Bok."

— Dries van Heerden (headmaster,
former SA Schools coach and selector)