

# Kroonstad

Kroonstad, so they say, took its name from a horse called Kroon. Kroon belonged to the great Voortrekker leader Sarel Cilliers, whose museum is in the town. Poor Kroon fell into a pothole in a stream and drowned. The stream was called Kroonspruit, and when a town was established there in 1855 it was called Kroonstad. For a while in 1900 it was the capital of the Orange Free State as the government withdrew from Bloemfontein and the invading British. Kroonstad grew to greater prominence with the discovery of the Free State goldfields in 1938 when an intended borehole on the farm St Helena struck gold. A gold rush ensued. Industries followed and a farming community developed. The Northern Free State, south of the Vaal River is a well-watered grassland, good for supporting cattle and growing maize. It remains, apart from the mineshafts, a good agricultural area.



## Die Afrikaanse Hoërskool



**FOUNDED:** 1957  
**MOTTO:** WERK VEREDEL  
(WORK ENNOBLES)  
**ADDRESS:** DU TOIT STREET,  
KROONSTAD  
**WWW.ROOISKOOL.CO.ZA**



### School History

There are two prominent schools in Kroonstad, both of which are known by their colours. Die Afrikaanse Hoërskool is known as the Rooiskool (the Red School). Founded in 1957, the school now has 560 pupils, of which 240 are boys. A hostel provides accommodation for 200 pupils.

### Rooiskool Rugby

Since 1957 the school has had three coaches. Piet Hertzog coached from 1957 to 1981. Jerry Erasmus then took over the coaching reigns and Gert Kotzé was coach from 1981 to 2001. From 2002 to 2008, Erasmus coached with Eric Scriven. Their record is excellent. Since 1964, when the first Craven Week took place, Rooies has had 65 Craven Week players, of whom three — Braam Els, Dirk van Niekerk and Jaco Barnard — played in three consecutive Craven Weeks. Jaco Barnard and Rodney van Cuuren were selected for SA Schools. Three Old Boys have played for South Africa: Jan Schlebusch, Kulu Ferreira and Braam Els. In the Nineties, the First XV was unbeaten twice. It won the Northern Free State league in 1993, 1994, 1995 and 1997. In 1991 it lost in the final. From 2003 to 2007 it dominated the league, winning for five consecutive years. In 2005, it lost only one game — to Virginia Rugby Academy. The big rivalry is against neighbours Kroonstad High School — the Blouskool (the Blue School). That's the big one that brings thousands of onlookers to the match. A crowd of 20 000 is not unusual.

## Internationals

### South Africa:

Jan Schlebusch, Kulu Ferreira, Braam Els

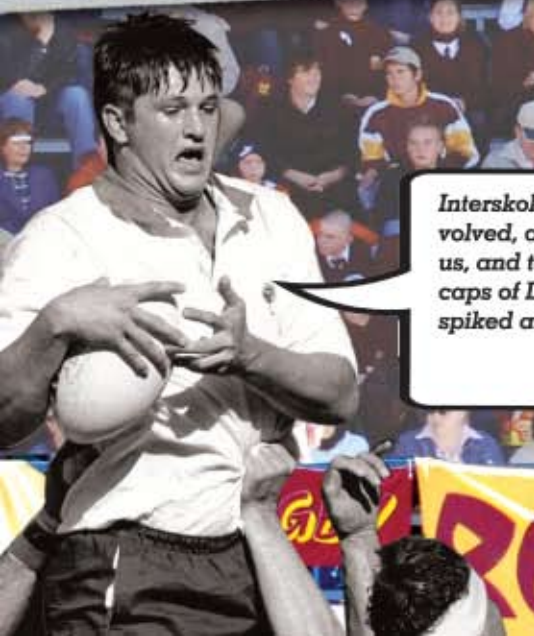
*"We've had some great success recently. In the last ten years, we've had an 87% win rate, and have won the Griffons league most seasons. Excellent players like Jaco Barnard and Braam Els, among others, tend to arise out of that kind of success and rugby."*

— Jerry Erasmus

(Coach for 25 years from 1982 to 2007)

*"Rooiskool is a small school and when I was there it generally struggled for numbers and good coaches. But school spirit and rugby interest was grown through the derby against Blousskool. It was a town issue that divided the town — though in a good-spirited way — in a similar manner in which Paarl is divided when Paarl Boys and Paarl Gym play each other. The Rooies-Bloues derby has been a good thing for Kroonstad rugby and it will be around for a long time to come because it is fueled by the right rugby spirit."*

— Kulu Ferreira (1975-77)



*Interskole has an awesome atmosphere. The whole school was involved, and crowds of 10 000 were common. Jerry Erasmus coached us, and taught me so much about the game. We initiated the new caps of Die Rooiskool First Team by giving them a hiding with a spiked athletics boot! It was all part of the team-building process!*

— Braam Els (1988-90)

**ROOIES = TOPS**