

# How money moves rugby schoolboys

Principals meet to sign anti-poaching document

PREGA GOVENDER

WEALTHY schools and rugby unions are poaching top black rugby players from schools across South Africa and offering them free tuition, accommodation and air tickets.

The poaching has prompted 24 state boys' schools to formulate a sports charter to ban the practice. The schools are expected to sign the document early next year.

The principals of four top rugby-playing schools in East London recently penned a document outlining their frustration at losing talented players to schools in KwaZulu-Natal and Gauteng.

The Sunday Times has established that 37 pupils were poached in recent years from five schools in the Eastern Cape and Boland. Those that lost players this year included:

- Eight pupils from Hoërskool Menlopark in Pretoria moved to Hoërskool Garsfontein;

- Aston Fortuin left Queens College in Queenstown to join Southdowns College in Irene;

- Xolisa Guma opted to move from Hoërskool Swartland in Malmesbury to Maritzburg College in Pietermaritzburg after considering an offer from the Blue Bulls to move to Pretoria;

- Somila Jho left Dale College in King William's Town for Kingswood College in Grahams-town; and

- Andell Loubser left Drostyd Technical High School in Worcester to join Hoërskool Menlopark in August.

Hudson Park High School principal Roy Hewett said pupils were approached in "a clandestine way" either at or after the tournament for South Africa's top under-16 school rugby players, the Grant Khomo Week.

"They are made financial offers which include free schooling and clothing. It [poaching] inculcates the wrong values in impressionable youngsters who haven't reached maturity."

Queen's College principal Brendan Grant said it could only be through "trickery" that a "Queenian" would leave the school before completing matric.

Dale College principal Mike Eddy said Jho, a first team rugby player, left the school two days

## Company pays pupils' bills

A NONPROFIT organisation is forking out R1.2-million a year to help a school train 20 underprivileged pupils to become top sportsmen.

Garsieland is assisting Hoërskool Garsfontein in Pretoria to develop two black and 18 coloured pupils by paying R62 000 a year towards each pupil's tuition and accommodation costs.

Five of the pupils are from Gauteng, two are from North West and the remaining 13 are from the Western Cape. The pupils are between the ages of 14 and 18.

Garsieland's director, Gustav Theunissen, said five of the pupils, who will complete matric at the end of the year, have already secured contracts with the Cheetahs, Sharks, Lions and Blue Bulls clubs.

before the start of his grade 11 final exams. "I... know that there must be some sort of carrot dangled," he said.

The principal of Hoërskool Swartland, Dirk Marais, described Guma as the under-16 team's star winger. He said the pupil was in tears this week when

**“We educate them and hand them back to the Bulls. Obviously, we use them in our sports side**

he called him to say he was unhappy at Maritzburg College and was missing Swartland.

Guma confirmed that he was not paying any tuition or boarding fees, an annual amount of nearly R70 000. He said the Blue Bulls had offered him pocket money of R1 000 a month. He has been at his new school for five weeks.

"There are plans to fly me to Cape Town twice every term from

next year to see my parents."

He said Maritzburg College was "a very good school. There's a good coach taking care of me. But I feel like I back-stabbed the people who were always there for me."

Kingswood College head Jon Trafford said in a statement that Jho's family had decided to move him to the school.

"It would be fair to say we do, like every good school, endeavour to attract talented pupils to the college when they show interest, but we do not tout for talent."

Dean van der Watt, academic head for rugby at Hoërskool Menlopark, denied that the school had poached Loubser.

"A businessman wanted to put Andell in Pretoria and he chose to come to Menlopark," he said.

Vernon Rorich, principal of Southdowns College, said the Blue Bulls rugby union gave players' names to the school.

"We then accommodate them, we educate them and hand them back to the Bulls. Obviously, we use them in our sports side."

He said Fortuin had been appointed head boy of the school for next year.

King Edward VII principal David Lovatt said his school did not go "shopping" for rugby players, but Glenwood High School's principal, Trevor Kershaw, confirmed that his school actively recruited players.

However, he said it tried to sign up younger boys to develop.

Ten boys from Gauteng, the Western Cape and the Eastern Cape, whom he described as "special talents", will be attending the school next year. "Some are full payers, some part-payers and some full bursary," he said.

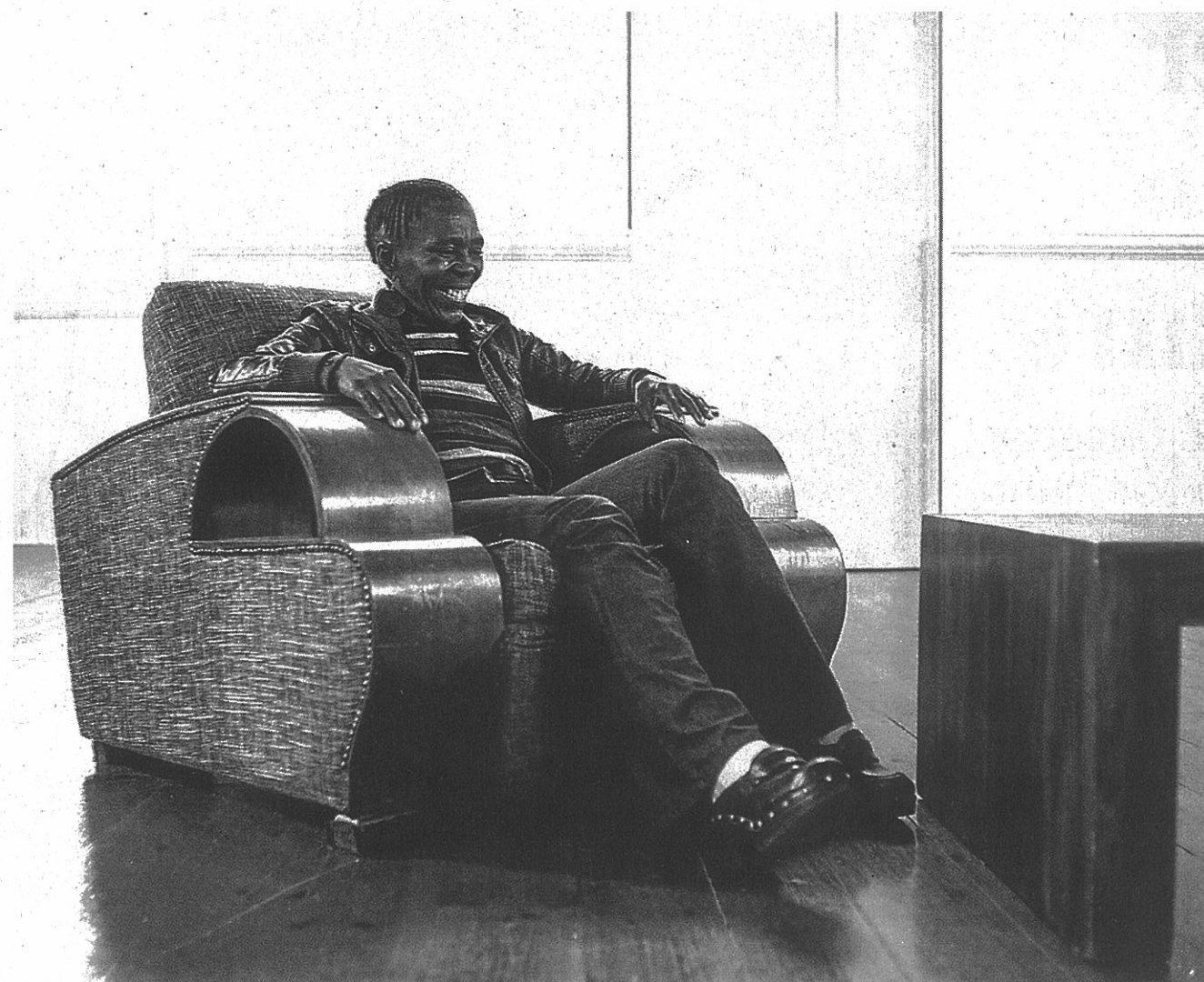
Gavin Melville, chairman of the Sharks youth rugby management committee, said the club did not poach rugby players.

"Most of the top schools around the country are poaching each other's players," he said.

Xander Janse van Rensburg, the Blue Bulls' high performance manager, said the club believed in giving talented players an opportunity to develop.

"I don't see it as poaching. If we identify a talented player and we feel it's viable for him to move, we will move him."

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INSPIRATION: Evelina Tshabalala refused to accept defeat in the face of misfortune

Picture: GARY VAN WYK

## These feet were made for running

THEKISO ANTHONY LEFIFI

EVELINA Tshabalala, the daughter of a fourth-generation farmworker of Harrismith in the Free State, defied the odds to become a long-distance runner — and an inspiration to many.

Tshabalala had her first son at the age of 17 in 1982. Her second son was born in 1991, but he drowned at the age of 13 during an epilepsy attack.

In her early twenties, she witnessed her father being shot and killed.

Then, when she was 34, she was diagnosed HIV-positive after she had noticed a deterioration in her health.

Tshabalala, whose 21 Icons poster is published in the R17 edition of the Sunday Times this week, faced these shocks head-on.

She always loved running and participated in it at

school, but she took up the discipline in earnest when she moved to Cape Town in her teens.

While working as a cleaner, she was also chasing her dreams.

She ran — and won — her first two competitive races barefoot on the same day, aged 19. The first, a 10km run in Sea Point, Cape Town, earned her R500; the second was a 5km race in Pinelands in the afternoon. She used her winnings to buy a pair of running shoes.

She did not regard the absence of shoes as an excuse not to run, because Zola Budd, a champion marathon runner at the time and her heroine, also ran barefoot.

Tshabalala, now 48, has also scaled three of the world's highest mountains: Kilimanjaro in Tanzania, Elbrus in Russia and Aconcagua in Argentina.

After Kilimanjaro, she got to meet her ultimate hero, Nelson Mandela.

Today, Tshabalala dedicates her time to helping children in her community in the Joe Slovo settlement in Cape Town. She coaches them in running to keep them

**“Despite everything life throws at her, she picks herself up**

off the streets and away from drugs and other perils.

She is available by phone 24 hours a day to give advice and support to people with HIV, and through her example she has helped many to carry on with their lives in a positive manner.

In the eyes of filmmaker,

photographer and founder of 21 Icons Adrian Steirn, it is this bravery in the face of challenges that makes her an iconic human being.

For his portrait of her, Steirn used a double exposure to capture her kneeling, head down, and on her feet in a forward-running movement.

"The portrait is all about a woman who just won't give up. Despite everything life throws at her every day, she picks herself up and keeps running forward," said Steirn.

The signed version of the portrait will be auctioned at the end of the series and the proceeds donated to Tshabalala's charity of choice.

At 6.57 tonight, SABC3 will show a short film about the making of the portrait, which was shot in a Cape Town studio.

## Dismissed judge takes fight to JSC committee

PREGA GOVENDER

AN advocate has lodged a complaint against the deputy judge president of the High Court in Johannesburg, Phineas Mojapelo, after he was "dishonourably" dismissed as an acting judge.

Etienne du Toit SC from the Johannesburg bar submitted a list of 13 complaints against Mojapelo to the judicial conduct committee, which considers complaints against judges. The committee falls under the Judicial Service Commission.

In his 32-page affidavit, Du Toit said the complaints stemmed from events that took place in 2005 when he was an acting judge in the High Court in Johannesburg.

He performed the last of his "residual" judicial duties in November last year.

Du Toit's problems started after he asked interpreters to take an oath before the start of every new criminal trial over which he presided.

The interpreters objected to this and wrote to Mojapelo, requesting Du Toit to "align himself with the correct procedure" followed in the court "before a situation is reached where he will have no interpreter to assist him".

Du Toit said Mojapelo wanted his opinion on the letter and he told the judge it was "improper and contemptuous".

Du Toit advised Mojapelo that "there could be no question of anybody being either humiliated or embarrassed" by taking the oath and he had assumed that Mojapelo would deal with the matter.

He accused Mojapelo of repeated interference with his judicial independence that was "designed to unduly hasten the conclusion of my part-heard criminal cases and my departure from the criminal courts, culminating in my eventual dishonourable dismissal at his instance".

He said Mojapelo had also placed additional pressure on him by giving him two days in which to submit a list of his reserved judgments and partly heard matters.

Judicial Services Commission spokesman CP Fourie said the conduct committee would consider the complaints and take them further, if necessary.