

Historical Review of ARABIAN COLLEGE RFC



By:

The late Alwee Alexander

FOREWORD

The Arabian College Rugby Football Club name comes from as far back as 1867, when groups of players in Cape Town, in the Malay area known as the Bo-Kaap decided to form two rugby football teams. The one was Good Hopes Rugby Football Club and the other was Arabian College Rugby Football Club.

During the early 1900's when part of the Jardine and Jabaar families settled in Kimberley, Abdulla Jardine (father of the late Tima Alexander) and Mr A Sello (my great grandfather) was part of a group of people who established the Arabian College Rugby Football Club in 1903 in the Malay Camp of Kimberley.

I am the eldest son of the late Moosa Aysen, grandson of the late Jaynie Aysen, and great grandson of the late Mr A Sello - founder member of Arabian College Rugby Football Club. I am 4th generation and like our fore-fathers, we were born with a rugby ball in our hands. Rugby flows strongly in our veins, and yet today, our children know nothing about this, and that is the sad thing. This great sport of rugby has unified our communities, strengthened our brotherhood and presented our youth with a healthy alternative and way of life. The ACRFC was also a basis for educating each other, from the disciplines of club rules, behavior, dress-code, meeting procedure, public speaking and finances to general administration. In our adult lives, in our professional careers and businesses, what we apply today is a product of what we learnt at ACRFC.

The Kimberley community shares a mutual passion for rugby, a passion which drives us to be rugby players. This passion that we share has brought us together from different walks of life. Let us value and cherish the friendships which we have made through rugby, as they are founded in the strong common ground of brotherhood, which lasts forever. This brotherhood has been re-ignited with the 2015 Reunion of the ACRFC, and we trust that we will stay in touch for life.

I am privileged to participate in the efforts of capturing the history and memoirs of this great club, and it is only fitting to release a publication to share with the community of Kimberley and the rest of our sporting world.

FAISAL AYSEN



HISTORY OF ARABIAN COLLEGE RFC

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HISTORY OF ARABIAN COLLEGE RFC

In the confines of Kassiem's Barber, Malay Camp, in 1903 the idea of forming the Arabian College Rugby Football Club, was conceived by a group of men either on their way to pick up the gold lining Johannesburg's streets or set on finding the diamonds embedded in Kimberley's pavements.

These pioneers included the likes of 'Malboetie' Jabaar, 'Janathal' Jonathan Hermanus, 'Moeliat' Davids, Abdulla Jardine, 'Tapie' Hendricks, Taliep Edrose, 'Boeta' Land, Moosa Aysen, Mr A Sello, O Nun, Ayob Aysen, 'Gooduifie' Fredericks, Willie Barnes, B Williams, Eshaam Effendi, Dirkie Warley, 'Biel' Van Heerden, Cader brothers, D Caterberg, A Pasha, H Hendricks, T Taylor, H Palm, C Smith, Frederick's and S Michael.

Besides starting a rugby club these pioneers also assured that a rich larder of tales and anecdotes remained behind for today's community to feast upon.

Of 'Janathal' Hermanus it is said that even though tackled and fast nearing the ground he still managed to "sit kick a drop kick", which enabled Arabian College to beat the then invincible Universal side and also capture the Cup.

The club has indeed produced its laager of greats such as Abdulla Jardine, who it was claimed could move through a field of daisies without damaging one of them, or as the late Dirkie Warley often said - a "perfect" stand-off (flyhalf).

Another was 'Biel' Van Heerden, a center built in the mould of Frik Du Preez, who was the scourge of many teams, both club and provincial, when he turned on his blistering speed.

The late 1930's and early 1940's saw the emergence of the most talked about Arabian College side whose players brought immense glory to the club. Players such as the very first ACRFC and GW Springbok, Patan Ebden who was built solid as a rock and it was said that the seams of his rugby pants just managed to contain his rugged physique, and Doella Abass, who had the temperament like an Irishman, running the daylights out of his opposite number.

Or the three Barnes' brothers, Marley, Salie and Edries, who filled the flyhalf, scrumhalf and centre positions respectively. They made the game of rugby so simple, regurgitating the many tricks their father had taught them, in his strict disciplinarian manner.

Other players who dominated this era as they displayed their rugby finesse were 'Bunny' Hermanus, 'Mana' Lottering, Salie Adams, Charles Snyders, Janie Aysen, 'Sampie' Fredericks, 'Mai' Aysen, 'Jessie' Mills, 'Dingetjie' Du Plessis, George Isaacs, Dicky Fritz, 'Pan' Herman, and a host of others too numerous to mention.

During the late 1960's the club was accorded the honour of having two of their players, Gesant Jardine and Alwie Aysen, representing the South African Rugby Union in test games against a SA Black XV. These two players thus equaled the feat of one of Arabian College's stalwarts 'Patan' Ebden, who played in the first coloured Springbok side in 1939. In the late eighties Faizel Adams, son of Boeta Doesie Adams and grandson of Patan Ebden, brought glory to ACRFC with selection in the North Zone XV, SARU Junior Team (captain) and selection in the SARU Team. Winston Du Plessis (grandson of Oom 'Dingetjie' Du Plessis), also gained selection into the SARU Junior Team during the GWRFU Centenary celebration

Year. Naaim Samaai and Fayzel Mahri were also selected for the North Zone XV with Winston Du Plessis and Faizel Adams as captain.

Players who represented Griqualand West are in abundance. But those ones who can be mentioned with pride (excluding names mentioned before, as many of them could naturally never be replaced in a Griqua side) are, Moosa Aysen, Rashad Alexander, 'Boetie' Jardine, 'Doesie' Adams, Rashad Adams, D Daya, 'Ching' Calmeyer, Doela Richards, 'Balli' Richards, 'Baby' Richards, Tasliem Alexander, and later, Allie Alexander, Alwee Alexander, Hennie Paulse, Nick Jansen, Roland Hermanus, Salie Mahri, Phaldi Cader, Ron Engelbrecht, Yasien Snyders, Keith Connor, 'Buks' Cader, Stalin King, 'Moeks' Gool, Tom Jossie, Boy Alexander, and the club's youngest ever Griqua, Charles 'Chaiks' Hermanus at the age of 16 our youngest ever Griqua player. Into the 1980's Griqua selections included players like Marcus Limburgh, Sharfy and Gym Alexander, Faizel Adams, Shaheed Manie, Ganief Mills, Fayzel Mahri, Stafford Jacobs, Winston Du Plessis, Tashrique Wilkinson, Mark King, Koebie Snyders, Pat and Don Paulse, Shariff Mahri, Henna Oliphant, Riyaad Alexander, Shaheed Alexander, Ishaam Alexander, Dean Snyders, Ishaam Alexander.

On the administrative side, the club was well endowed with the brilliance of men like Doella Abass, "Baby" Richards also Life Vice President, Jaynie Aysen (Grandson of founder member Mr A Sello), Latief Hunter, V Pitt, V Amsterdam, Moosa Aysen (Snr), Moosa Aysen (Jnr), Salie Adams, Deeru Diya, Amien Aysen, Rashad Adams, Roger Henderson, Kader Osman, Salie Mahri, Boy Alexander, Frikkie Norman, Zane Panker, Attie Thomas, Joe Samson, Alwee Alexander (chairman 75th anniversary) and Henry Paulse. And into the 1980's included Gerald Carlo, Pat and Don Paulse, Eugene Jacobs, Fuad Aysen, Mann Adams, Riyaan Richards, Azies Alexander.

It is indeed with pride that Arabian College acknowledged the life president of the club, Mr Doella Abass who also sat in the president's chair at South African Rugby Union for 17 years. Mr Abass held the post of SARU Secretary for 23 years.

The services rendered by these administrators in the past have all contributed to make this club a great club, with a great tradition.

"They stamped upon me where I lay,
How could I rise and kick away,
Me thought, 'this is but gruesome play'."

A poetic minded sports correspondent wrote about rugby football in a Cape newspaper in 1862, and his description aptly describes the play of Arabian College from its Malay Camp days.

Indeed, they are known to "almost crush their opponents into clay".

During the late 1970's and 1980's Arabian College acquired the nickname "The Bees" ("Die Bye" in Afrikaans), for their ability to swarm all over the field of play.

In 1978 Arabian College Rugby Football Club celebrated their finest hour, the 75th Anniversary of the club.

ACRFC - Ramadaan:

It was amazing that annually the ACRFC would close down for the fasting month of Ramadaan and then emerge with spiritual strength and hunger which made them more competitive than ever. More amazing was the fact that our Non-Muslim team-mates would sacrifice their own passion for this beautiful game which we all love during our fasting period. So committed were the ACRFC players that they would train for the last 2 weeks of Ramadaan late at night after Ramadaan prayers even in the heart of winter. This is a true testament of the comradery and the selfless sacrifice of the non-Muslim members of ACRFC.

Unique ACRFC / GWRFU Characters:

Gesant Jardine, Boetie Jardine, Sharty 'Eier' Jardine, Boy Alexander, Drox Alexander, James Van Diemen, Dr Nackerdien, Pat Paulse, Koebie Snyders, Sharfy Alexander, Louis Slabbert, Pat Paulse, Boeta Mokes Aysen, Boeta Jaynie Aysen, Boeta Darra Warley, Saan Alexander, Shorty Albertus and his wife, Mrs Martin, Piet Baardman, Jimmy 'Jumbo' Brooker (said to be the only player to goal and drop kick from his own 22 yard line), Marcus Limburgh.

Memorable Rugby Games:

In terms of rugby games, the most memorable event is most definitely the celebration of the ACRFC 75th Anniversary in 1978 at the Union Grounds. The late Alwee and his Executive had this brilliant idea to fly in players from across South Africa who was selected to represent a SARU Invitation 15 to play against an ACRFC Invitation 15, thereby having the best of the best displaying their skills in Kimberley. SARU greats who were part of the

selection included Cassiem Jabaar, Faick 'Blatjang' Davids, the Toefy Brothers, Salie Fredericks, Peter Jooste - Captain, Yusuf Davids, Desmond Kramer, Dan Cheeky Watson, Norman Xhoxo, Themba Lubwaba, Peter Makata, Clive Thomas, Cassiem Jabaar, Basie Abass. Local players from GWRFU included the Late Alwee himself as flyhalf, Chris Ludick, Bernie Bennet, Phaldi Cader, Bucks Damons, Bucks Cader, Roland Hermanus, Toby Ferris, Charles Hermanus, Gym Alexander, Ganief Mills, Boy Alexander, Mann Adams, Tommie Jossie, Yunos Gool, Rodney Jacobs and Richard Jacobs. The ACRFC Invitation Team won this thrilling encounter courtesy of a try by Boy Alexander late in the game.

The other event of significance was the GWRFU Centenary Celebrations which was held in Cape Town in 1987 (so sad that the local supporters lost out) and the Top 8 Club Finals of which ACRFC was the only team from GWRFU to qualify.

The GWRFU Seven-A-Side tournaments were also exciting times with individual skills displayed by players in this short format of the game.

May the Legacy and contributions of all the ACRFC sporting greats live on in our memories.

ACRF - Club, Family, Trendsetters, Pioneers:

As a team ACRFC was always well identified from head to toe, with the club badge clearly displayed on all items including tog bags, a feature which displayed the discipline which the late Alwee enforced on the team players and members. Other GWRFU clubs noticed this discipline and soon picked up on the trend. ACRFC always had a policy of no practice, no meeting, no fees - no play, regardless of how good a player you may be. ACRFC was by no means a normal club, we operated as an integrated family unit and supported each other by all means. Team mates really cared for each other and looked out to protect the next person. Those who know will tell you of the support in sickness, injury, celebration and death, how the club stood together to render support. We remember the times at the Kimberley hospital when the club members and supporters would crowd the hospital to visit or support one of our own. Of course with perks of quick service rendered by the Late Malam Thomas and Leela Alexander as nurses. This care came along with generous hearts and open wallets, where we would not leave anyone behind, even if it meant personal contributions to assist a team mate with flight and accommodation costs. ACRFC was the first 'coloured' club to leave the shores of SA, the first to sail by ship from Cape Town to East London and Durban, the first to have air travel as a mode of transport, to have aerobics as part of the fitness programme.

As a club, ACRFC definitely stood out among the best in SARU. In terms of producing players of high quality who went on to represent at SARU level, ACRFC produced at least six

springboks. On the SARU administrative side, the club had the best of the best in the late Mr AR Abass who served as President and Secretary for a combine period of over 35 years, and Mr Baby Richards who was at the helm of the SARU Referees Association for many years. At a provincial level Mr Abass served as Secretary and President, Mr Baby Richards served as Chairman of the Referees Association and President of GWRFU, Mr Pat Paulse served as Vice Chairman, the late Mr Alwee Alexander served as Secretary, Chairman, Selector and Coach, Mr Thomas Jossie and Mr Henry Paulse served as Secretary and a host of other ACRFC representatives. The Cader Family Rugby profile and that of others emphasise the greatness of ACRFC in that the late Dr Danie Craven marveled at the style of play and operations of ACRFC and how much he learnt about rugby from his frequent visits to the tailor shop of the late Mr Ebrahim (Babes) Cader.

Back in the 80's the late Mr Alwee Alexander and Mr Attie Thomas was approached by the management of Athenians Ladies Hockey Club to assist their players with fitness training. Early morning Sundays were sacrificed whereby ACRFC players were kitted with hockey sticks to assist the ladies to play at a higher pace. And then of course, Athenians went on to dominate GW Ladies hockey for a few years.

With the influence of Dr Norman Mahraj and Dr Nolan Macdonald who approached Mr Salie Mahri about the possibility of forming men's hockey teams, ***this led to the revival of men's hockey and boy's schools hockey in Kimberley.*** ACRFC players who made the initial GW Mens hockey team were Salie Mahri, Attie Thomas, Alwee Alexander, Drox Alexander, Ismael Mills (now in Australia), Roland Hermanus, Charles Hermanus, Gym Alexander, Stafford Jacobs and Sharfy Alexander. Most of the ACRFC players were also selected to play for GWRFU and the obvious choice was to play rugby for GWRFU. The late Alwee Alexander and Salie Mahri also served on the initial executive of the GWMH.

Social Calendar Highlights:

A highlight for all sporting Kimberlites on the events calendar was the annual ACRFC Dinner Dance, where a Miss Arabian College and 2 Princesses were crowned. We do recall that the late Aunty Koelsum Hermanus who was a very grand lady, wife of the late great Uncle Buns Hermanus was once crowned 'Mother Glamorous' at one of our annual balls.

Later on, also the brainchild of the late Alwee Alexander and his executive, was the annual ACRFC Sportsman of the Year Ball, where sportsmen and ladies from all sporting codes were nominated by their respective unions and honoured by the ACRFC where a committee would choose the overall winner and two runners up.

People of Kimberley will recall that the gentle giant Mr Piet Van Wyk (Rugby) and the Late Brian Hermanus (Swimming) was of the first recipients of the overall ACRFC Sportsmen of the Year winner's trophy.

Well known to all and one of the greatest rugby prospects to receive the GWRFU rugby nomination was the great Eric 'Bucks' Damons and Ferosa Joseph also received a nomination for swimming. Winners in the Rugby categories also included Yusef Alexander, Faizel Adams and Phaldi Cader.

Support from the ACRFC Women:

Behind every great man is an even greater woman. Throughout our rugby playing days we were all very well supported by the late Mrs Ragma Adams, Ouma Dita Adams, Mama Tima Alexander, Mrs Leela Alexander - wife of the late Alwee, Mrs Dorea Alexander, Aunty Mona Mills, Mrs Bielam Mahri, Mrs Vivian Paulse, Mrs Miena Norman, Aunty Frieda Adams, Aunty Dawn Cader, the late Aunty Aysha Aysen, Mrs Bahia Aysen, Mrs Sadia Richards, Mrs Sabeera Alexander, the late Mrs Fagma Alexander, Mrs Sheila Warley, Mrs Mymoena Thomas, Mrs Jurayma Osman, Mrs Denise Connor, Mrs Riffa Aysen, the late Ms Trish Hermanus, the late Aunty Koelsum Hermanus, the late Aunty Gawa Waggie, the late Mrs Malam Thomas, the late Mrs Shenaaz Adams and many more, too many to mention.

Who can forget all the pots of food and the 'currie feed' sales to fund most of the ACRFC activities, thereby subsidising the players on uniforms, jerseys, tracksuits and trip fares.

ACRFC on Tour:

In the early 1980's Alwee Alexander and his executive embarked on a mission to have ACRFC on a Tour Of Europe with stops in West Germany, Wales, Scotland, Ireland, England, Amsterdam and France. One of the highlights of this tour was attending a four nation's rugby match at the famed Cardiff Arms Park in Wales. ACRFC always travelled in style from hiring a luxury bus to flying to destinations such as Cape Town, Johannesburg and Durban. Countless good moments are shared when ACRFC club members reminisce about the good old days and the life experiences encountered on the numerous trips which the club undertook. The senior citizens happily share moments of the club going on a week-long tour of the Eastern Cape which included camping on the beach, with Mr Starlin King and the late Mr Gesant Jardine as the chefs.

ACRFC sibling members:-

Jardine Bros

Gesant, Boetie, and Sharty (nephew) & Abdulla, Ebrahiem, Mogammet, Idrees Jabaar (cousin)

Aysen Bros

Amien, Moosa & Mokes (son of Boeta Jainie), Alwie, Salie, Igsaan (nephews) & Saligh (son of Amien), Fuad and Yaseen (sons of Boeta Alwee) & Faisal (son of Boeta Moosa), Noel and Eric, Boeta Mai

Adams Bros

Shorty, Faried, Majiet, Oufie (Boeta Salie's sons)
Mann, Faizel (Boeta Doesie's son's) & Doesie, Gamat,

Fredericks Bros

Taliep, Aziz (Wiele), Ebrahim, Abduragmaan, Sampie, Ganief

Cader Bros

Phaldi, Faried, Fagme all sons of Boeta Billy Cader and Ballie, Ebrahim (Babes) Cader

Mahri Bros

Salie & Braim, Shariff & Isgaak, Fazel & Yusef, Boeta Oesman, Sulleiman

Snyders Bros

Yasien, Salie, Yakhoub (sons of Uncle Charles, Jan) & Avril, Dean (sons of Russell Snyders)

Paulse Bros

Henry, Patrick, Don and Eugene Jacobs

Alexander Bros

Achmat Boy, Abdulla Drox, Alwee, Abduragiem Gym, Sharfy, Yusef, Azies and Stafford Jacobs

Igsaan, Tasliem, Rashart, Allie & Nadeem, Riyaad (grandsons), Boeta Nasirien, Shaheed, Ishaam

Oliphant Bros

Hansie, Carel, Willie, Railoon, Henna

Hermanus Bros

Roland, Charles both sons of Uncle Buns, Janathal

Jinnah Bros

Abu, Gama, Ahmed

Gool Bros

Moegsien, Yunos, Yusuf, & Hoosain, Dulla, Gamja, Abu

Johnson Bros

Alfonso, Ivor

Toffar Bros

Dickie, Yunus, Razak

Du Plessis Bros

Brian, Speedy & Winston, Oom Dingetjie

Thomas Bros

Attie, Raymond & Robert (nephew), Russell (nephew)

Barnes Bros

Malie, Edrees, & Salie (nephew)

Sulliman Bros

Zayheed, Mohamed (sons of Boeta Sollie)

Richards Bros

Baby, Doela, Ballie, Gani, Gesant & Ficky & Ashraf & Shaheen(sons) Riyaan

ACRFC Players Nicknames and interesting sayings:

Most of these nicknames and sayings will sound very familiar to many.

Boy, Drox, Scott, Frik, Lighty, Noon, Kef, Kaf, Kaffis, Uiltjie, Manneljie, Doesie, Kaka, Henna, Pienie, Pienkie, Meester, Bunny, Doela, Fi, Faya, Fai, Phalla, Bucks, Tucksy, Joe, Birdie, Ket, Attie, Moeka, Moeksa, Boera, Mini, Beer, Beera, Gym, Stockville, Winna, Tash, Miley, Staf, Jinna, Doc, Boelie, Baby, Sakes, Gaiks, Yas, Avva - Boney, Doep, Speedy, Polla, Braimpy, Foe, Brood, Japie, Ashie, Fiekie, Wiele, Bills, Gaggies, Jake,

Kop, Mack, Miles, Zoins, Goola, Deena, Vleis, Gakkie, Connie, Polla, Shorty, Boeta Darra, Jumua, Dingetjie, Tallai, Sal, Dickie, Brama, Ginna, Limmies, ManJack.

Interesting sayings, some in Afrikaans -

uppela, gee hom 'n kleintjie, al agt, huggala, heaverins according to plan, stiek hom, gee hom die gap, maak toe, 13 man, ek bo jy gaan onder, white line, palle, maak skoon, settle hom, fetch, nou Sharty, kom boys, binne, buite, 'loop' Mann, fetch, hoek toe.

Support from the community:-

Throughout the years, the club would not have been able to survive without the support and generosity of business sponsors like MD Stores, Family Fashions, Bachelors, Mr Deeru Daya of Numain Distributors, K&B Stores, Ebbies Fashion House, Pit Stop, Fainman's Furnitures, Kemo Hotel, Assembly Hotel, Kim-By-Night, the Obaray Butcheries, Le Mans, Tas & Saan Alexander's Shops and many more too numerous to mention.

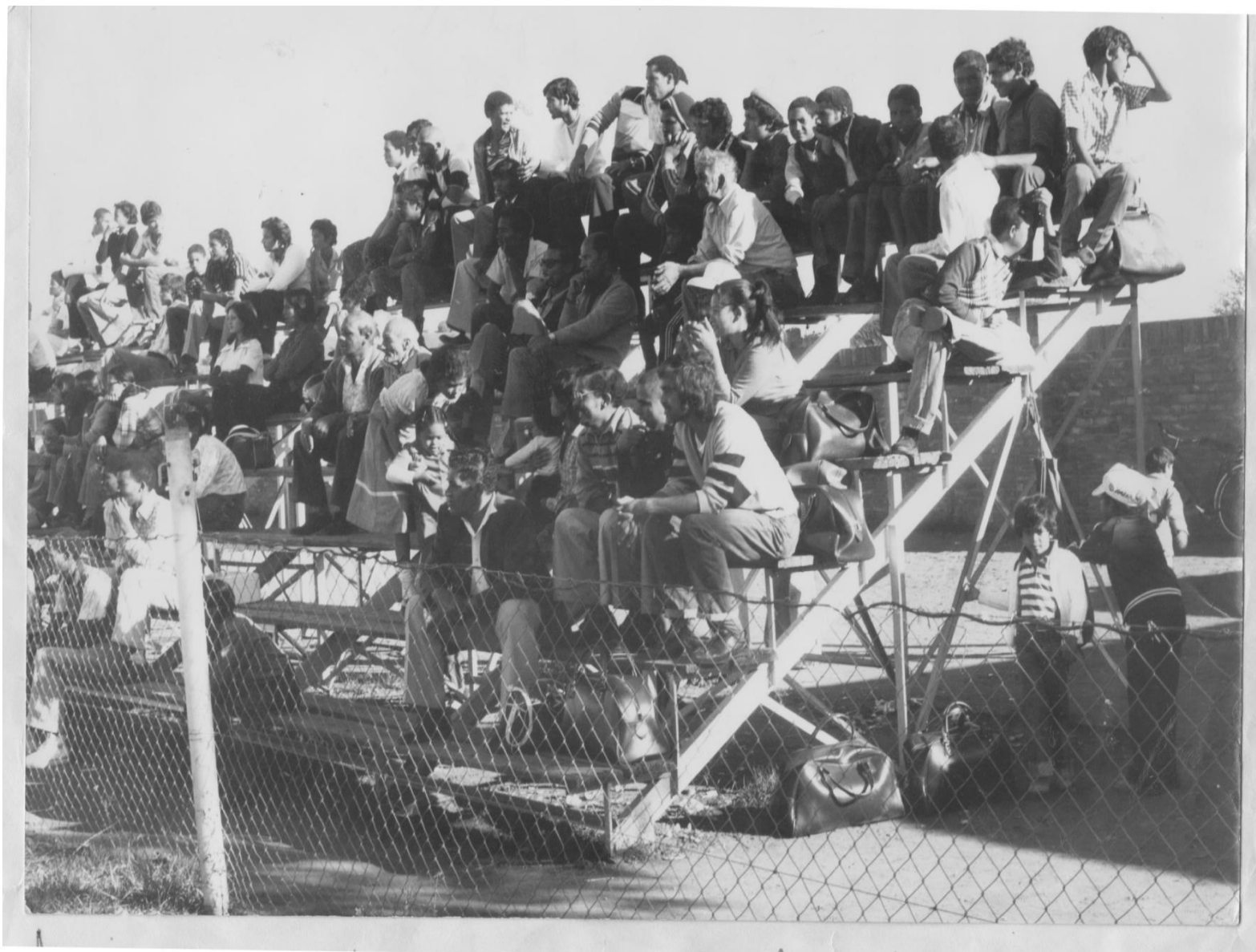
Unification in sport:

Sadly though, unification came about in the early 1990's and led to the merging of GWRFU teams with GWRB teams, which sadly led to the loss of over 150 years of GWRFU history into clubs which existed for less than half the history of these clubs. Sadly, Arabian College merged with Hoffe Park Rugby Club, Young Collegians also merged with another club.

A travesty of justice was also that the unified GWRU chose not to honour so many of the ACRFC players and officials who did great service for GWRFU i.e. Mr Thomas Jossie (GWRFU Secretary), Mr Pat Paulse (GWRFU Vice Chairman), Mr Zane Panker, Mr Henry Paulse (GWRFU Secretary), the late Alwee Alexander (Chairman, Secretary, Coach, Selector, Manager), Mr Roland Hermanus (GWRFU Captain), Mr Frikkie Norman (GWRFU Secretary and Vice Chairman) to name a few.

To those whose names are not recorded or their feats not mentioned, the omission is purely unintentional. They know that they formed an integral part of this celebrated review of the Red, White and Green.





ACRFC GRAND STAND — UNION GROUNDS