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WRITTEN & PERFORMED BY MICHAEL CHARTON
("MY FATHER'S COAT")

THE FIRST WORLD CHAMPIONS

THE UNTOLD STORY OF THE 1937 SPRINGBOKS IN NEW ZEALAND

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"I LAUGHED, I CRIED,
BUT MOST OF ALL I FELT AN
OVERWHELMING SENSE OF
PRIDE THAT THESE YOUNG MEN
WERE OUR YOUNG MEN"

"A MOST INCREDIBLE,
INSPIRING, MOVING
80 MINUTES"

"A STORY OF TWO
COUNTRIES UNITED IN
THEIR PASSION FOR
RUGBY, BUT DEEPLY
DIVIDED BY THEIR
POLITICS"

Michael stumbled upon the story of the 1937 Springboks in an old second hand bookstore on Long Street, Cape Town. A chance encounter which has inspired an improbable adventure.

Because what began as the mundane process of tracking down more material on this tour, soon transformed into something bigger: a journey into the heart and heritage of a unique rivalry within a unique sport. Indeed this is the story of a peculiar pastime. A game of contradictions, where intense physical confrontation is carefully balanced by an unlikely value system.

And nowhere are these contradictions more evident, than in the famous rivalry which emerged between the Springboks and the All Blacks in the early 20th century.

For here were two lands, bound tightly by a shared passion for rugby, but also deeply divided by their politics. Countries where rugby has transcended mere sport, so providing the foundations of a fiery rivalry which has at times both torn-apart and united both of our nations.

But 1937 was special. Because the Springboks and the All Blacks had by then asserted their dominance over the rugby world. Yet, through a bizarre sequence of events,

the quest for a champion of world rugby had been left unresolved following their two tied series' of 1921 and 1928. So this third encounter between the world's (then) rugby giants, would be the most anticipated series in the history of the game.

And as if the contest needed more hype, both of those previous tours had been tarnished by unfortunate race incidents, so dictating that this tour would involve far more than just rugby.

Instead, this would emerge as a very human story: A carefully woven narrative involving a motley crew of farmers, students, teachers, and one unlikely banker, who were (for a moment) freed of the throttling political narrative in South Africa, and allowed to express themselves as both rugby players and as human beings. They did so famously, and in the process, captured the imagination of the generation of New Zealanders.

Indeed, even in the midst of this most brutal of rugby rivalries, the sportsmanship and value systems of these teams leap out at you through their characters. A celebration of the chivalry associated with the amateur era, and a powerful reminder, through an emotional sense of nostalgia, what is truly important in life and legacy.



Leolin Petersen, 13,
New Horizons

LEOLIN Petersen is no stranger to these pages, having delivered newsworthy performances on the trampoline and in other gymnastic disciplines since she was just a pup.

She was recently the only girl to be selected nationally for an 18-member SA team to participate in the International Federation of Gymnastics Trampoline World Champs held in Tokyo, Japan during November and December. Leolin's travel, kit, and competition costs are in excess of R35,000.

Her mom's indefatigable efforts to raise funds enabling her daughter's various forays in pursuit of national achievement have been widely publicised, and this time is no different.

Most famous of mom Helen Bezuidenhout's fundraising efforts may be her prolific production of hertzoggies - the traditional coconut and jam confectionary that's been a South African favourite for centuries.

By going to print, Helen had already baked in excess of 270-dozen hertzoggies for the Japan excursion. Not only must the 'cookie bucks' spring for the above-mentioned costs, but the fact that it's sure to be bitterly cold in Japan that time of year, means Leolin needs a bunch of winter clothes.

You haven't lived until you've tasted Helen's hertzoggies, so give her a bell on 060 648 0407 to order, or for banking details if you would like to boost their fundraising efforts with a donation.

Alternatively, sign up for

Saturday's Fun Quiz Night, when this popular event held at Plett Bowling Club will raise funds for this young New Horizons resident.

The action starts at 6pm for 6:30pm on September 7. The cost of R600 per team (max of six members) includes a light supper and there are great prizes to be won.

To book or donate towards Leolin's cause, contact Barry Ricketts at barryricketts48@hotmail.com or on 072 890 6238.



Ellen Kleinsmidt, 17,
Kranshoek

A Grade 11 student at Outeniqua High in George, Ellen Kleinsmidt is a born and bred Plett lass, where she has earned the reputation of the town's foremost go-getter.

Having excelled at most sports throughout her school career so far, including reaching the podium at Athletics SA national championships on numerous occasions, it's possibly on the beach where most townfolk would have witnessed the particular sports gene that has gained her the title of Plett Surf Life Saving Club's Sportswoman of the Year... again.

Invariably, after Nippers (aged 8-14) and SA Lifesaving (U14 to various adult categories) national championships, Ellen has returned to Plett hauling medals for beach sprints and flags, the latter generally regarded as the sport's most spectacular and technically demanding challenge.

Explains Isabelle Brink of Born in Africa, which

first introduced the Family Kleinsmidt to this popular sport: "At the Port Elizabeth Lifesaving Nationals in March this year, Ellen won gold medals for beach sprint and flags, and repeated this incredible feat at the Interprovincial Champs in Cape Town in April.

"Recently, she was selected to represent the Springbok team at the International Lifesaving Champs in Durban from September 25 to October 4, and we wish her the best of luck, while asking the Plett community to support her fundraising efforts."

Isabelle adds that Ellen is a true inspiration to many kids in her Kranshoek community and further afield, as she selflessly assists the Adopt a Swimmer team - "so they, too, can learn to become champions just like Ellen!"

For the 2019 International Surf Rescue Championship, Ellen and her fellow Springboks will stay in Durban for 10 days. Adding up all costs, she needs around R15,000 for this purpose, i.e. transport to Port Elizabeth, flights to Durban and back, accommodation, food, and her Springbok kit.

Ellen is raising funds by selling raffle tickets for amazing prizes and vouchers, so for as little as R20 per ticket, you stand a chance of winning big. Raffle tickets are available from The Table in Plett Main Street or contact mom Delina Kleinsmidt on 076 389 0355 or email info@borninafrica.org for more information.

Readers can also deposit funds straight into the Born in Africa account (reference: Ellen to Durban), account number 6204 929 1298, FNB Plett (branch code 210514 / SWIFT code FIRZAJJ), and it will be paid into the Life Saving SA account to help cover costs.

Says Ellen to CXPRESS readers: "I really appreciate your support and belief in my abilities. I will give it my all to make you proud in Durban." She thanks Plett Surf and Born in Africa for their continued support.



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