



Rugby's Caring Hands

2024 IMPACT REPORT

FOREWORD: DE JONGH BORCHARDT

Building Depth Together



Last year, the Springboks showed true determination and resilience in one of the most difficult seasons ever for the national team, ending up with 11 victories in 13 Tests and at the same time, strategically developing the next generation of international stars, an opportunity that was lost in 2020.

Their mantra was to focus not only on performance on the field, but also on building lasting depth within the team. As a result, 12 players made their Test debuts while Rassie Erasmus fielded changed teams in every Test, using 50 players in the season.

While much of the attention was fixed on our players and their pursuit of excellence, the true strength of any team lies not just in its players, but in the broader ecosystem that surrounds them.

And what works for the Boks, is exactly the same for the Chris Burger Petro Jackson Players' Fund. They have been equally committed to cultivating the depth of their own support squad, which is crucial for the long-term success and sustainability of the Fund's efforts.

As we reflect on 2024, it is clear that the growth of the

Players' Fund extends far beyond simply supporting the immediate needs of their recipients. They have worked tirelessly to enhance their network of partners, sponsors, donors, and other stakeholders. They know they can't only rely on current successes, but they also have to lay the groundwork for the future.

Like with the Boks, their supporters are the lifeblood of the Fund's initiatives, and they are deeply grateful for the trust and investment they continue to make.

In the same way that Rassie and his team have built depth in the Bok ranks, the Fund are focused on broadening and strengthening the depth of their own support squad - every new sponsor, every partner, and every donor helps solidify the foundation upon which they stand.

In order to continue making a meaningful impact, they have to ensure that their partner network is engaged while expanding — spanning beyond the borders of South Africa into the global rugby community.

The strategic emphasis on growing their footprint internationally by hosting events in the United Kingdom

is not only expanding their reach, but also making new connections that will fuel the future success of the Fund and the people they serve.

Like Erasmus and the Boks, the Fund is also looking to the future. It's about more than just numbers, it's about creating a network of passionate supporters, dedicated partners, and committed donors who are engaged in helping those who lost so much playing rugby.

They need to ensure their recipients' futures are taken care of, something the Players' Fund has been doing for decades, while committing to making yet another step up. They can be incredibly proud of what they have achieved so far, and everyone involved must be excited for the journey ahead.

The Players' Fund is truly a testament to the power of community, dedication, and shared purpose in creating a lasting legacy.

This report showcases their progress, highlights their success, and emphasises the importance of the ongoing support that will help them achieve even greater things in the years to come. Long may it last.

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CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Jean de Villiers



As we reflect on 2024, it is with immense gratitude that we acknowledge the dedication and commitment of everyone involved in the Players' Fund. This year has been one of both challenges and achievements, reinforcing our purpose of supporting those whose lives have been permanently changed by rugby-related catastrophic injuries on the field.

The Fund remains steadfast in its mission to provide life-changing assistance to our recipients, ensuring they receive mobility aids, home modifications, and medical support tailored to their individual needs. This is only possible through the generosity and support of the wider rugby community, corporate partners, and donors who continue to believe in our work.

Acknowledging Our Trustees and Team

The Fund would not be successful without the invaluable guidance and dedication of our Trustees. We were fortunate to welcome two new trustees to the Fund in 2024 – Debra Barnes and Siseko Jafta – who brought new skillsets to our already strong board. We are grateful to have them as part of The Players' Fund team. To all of our Trustees, your leadership has ensured that we remain focused and effective in our role, providing support where it is needed. Your expertise and commitment to the Fund's mission have played a crucial role in shaping our initiatives and securing our sustainability.

Our operational team deserves special recognition. Mark Kritzinger, our CEO, continues to lead with passion and determination, ensuring that the Fund remains a vital pillar of support for injured players. Shoneé Cornelissen, our Injured Player Welfare Officer, has built strong relationships with recipients, ensuring that their needs are met with care and compassion. Aashia Hendricks, our General and Financial Administrator, plays a crucial role in managing the Fund's operations, ensuring that financial accountability and administrative tasks run smoothly. Their hard work and dedication have been instrumental in the Fund's continued success.

Our Support Squad

Beyond our Trustees and operational team, we must extend our sincere thanks to the many individuals who form our Support Squad. This includes those who attend our fundraising events, make donations, participate in campaigns, and spread awareness about our cause. Your generosity and involvement are the backbone of our work. Without you, we would not be able to continue providing the level of care and assistance that our recipients need. Your contributions – big or small – have a lasting impact on the lives of those we support.

Recognising Our Partners and Suppliers

The work of the Players' Fund would not be possible without the dedicated support of our long-standing suppliers and

partners whose continued commitment to preferential rates ensures the sustainability of our work. From those who provide essential medical equipment and mobility aids to rehabilitation professionals and healthcare providers who help our recipients regain independence, we are deeply grateful. Your commitment to working alongside us ensures that injured players receive the best possible care and resources to enhance their quality of life.

Looking Ahead

As we move into 2025, we remain committed to our core mission – partnering, for life, with rugby players who have suffered catastrophic injuries and ensuring they receive the support they need. We will continue to strengthen our partnerships, grow our support base, and enhance our efforts to provide meaningful assistance to those in our care.

On behalf of the Players' Fund, thank you to every individual, organisation, and partner who has contributed to our success this year. Your support is the foundation upon which we build a future of care, dignity, and hope for our recipients.

Jean de Villiers

Chairman

Chris Burger Petro Jackson Players' Fund

CEO'S REPORT

Importance of the Fund



2024 was a year of incredible impact and success for the Chris Burger Petro Jackson Players' Fund. Our event calendar was packed with excellent engagements, each contributing to our core mission of supporting our recipients.

A Year of Unforgettable Events

In March 2025, Barney's Army and the Players' Fund joined forces to participate in the ABSA Cape Epic, an eight-day, 700-kilometre mountain bike race featuring 16,000 meters of climbing. The team, including former Springbok captain John Smit (the founder of Barney's Army), 2007 World Cup-winning flyhalf Butch James, Mark Ward, Kenrick Brown, Div Nel, Craig Collier, Henry Bushney, Shane Chorley, Coenie Louw and myself, raised R613,000 thanks to the

incredible donations of our Support Squad, equating to R1,000 per kilometre cycled.

We were very happy to reestablish our DHL Stormers Dinner at Kelvin Grove, sponsored by Six Gun Grill and supported by BrightRock – the first since the pandemic and the 17th iteration of this prestigious event. The entire Stormers squad joined 250 guests for an unforgettable evening, with fantastic entertainment from comedian Nik Rabinowitz and our esteemed MCs, Matt Pearce and Dan Retief.

In June, we hosted our annual Springbok Dinner, our flagship event sponsored by Betway, and supported by Southern Sun, SAB, Klipdrift and Nederburg. The entire Springbok squad

was in attendance as they prepared for the two-Test series against Ireland. It was an exceptional evening, again led by Matt Pearce, with several key Springboks sharing stories from the camp. The event raised an impressive R850,000, making it one of our most successful fundraising events to date.

Our Women's Day event has grown into a much-anticipated occasion. Hosted at the Pepperclub Hotel in Cape Town, and sponsored by BrightRock and Empire Fleet, we welcomed several DHL Stormers players and 100 guests for a beautiful breakfast celebrating women in rugby. DHL Stormer Ruhan Nel MC'ed the event, with Rene Naylor and Ezél Vermeulen delivering inspiring speeches, making it an unforgettable morning.



CEO'S REPORT (continued)

In September, we hosted our annual Golf Day, the third since the pandemic, proudly sponsored by Betway, alongside partners SAB, Glenfiddich, and Neethlingshof. The event was a spectacular success, featuring former and current rugby stars, ensuring a fantastic day for all participants.

November has become a pivotal fundraising period with our growing UK events. This year, we hosted three key engagements:

- An exclusive dinner at The Ivy in Richmond, London, featuring Jesse Kriel, Malcolm Marx, John Smit, Hanyani Shimange, and David Flatman.
- The Wolfpack Players' Fund Dinner in Fulham, our home away from home. The event welcomed 150 guests and featured a dynamic panel including Matt Pearce, John Smit, Hanyani Shimange, George Gregan, and Jim Hamilton. This informal yet impactful evening raised £10,000 for the Fund. We eagerly anticipate another Wolfpack event ahead of the Argentina Test at Twickenham in October 2025.
- Our second event in Wales was held at the Walkabout Pub in Cardiff, hosted before the final Springbok Test of the season. We had a full house for breakfast, joined by Bongsi Mbonambi, Canan Moodie, and other Springbok players.

Whilst I was fundraising in the UK winter, Shoneé and her team were braving a different kind of cold. On 17 and 18 November, 2024, four remarkable women – Shoneé Cornelissen, Katherine Persson, Eva Dirksen, and Georgina Smith – undertook an inspiring 66km swim from Miller's Point to Rooi Els and back in Cape Town, South Africa, to raise funds for two severely injured rugby players, Mandla Nyaniso and Marius "MJ" Van Staden, as part of the Waves 4 Wheelchairs Fundraising Challenge. This gruelling open-water relay highlighted Shoneé's third Guinness World

Record, and showcased the team's extraordinary dedication, as they swam in the dark and endured jellyfish stings, and ultimately raised R159,948 to provide crucial equipment for Mandla and MJ. The planned 66km swim took 29 hr 40 min 6 sec to complete and ended up being 78km due to the challenging conditions.

Delivering Impact Where It Matters

At our core, the Players' Fund exists to provide exceptional care to our recipients. Over the past year, we have undertaken deep introspection, refining our objectives through a Theory of Change framework. This process has allowed us to map out our activities, define short, medium, and long-term goals, and ensure we continually enhance our impact. You will find this framework included at the end of this report.

A key focus in 2024 has been strengthening personal connections with our recipients. Shoneé has spent extensive time on the road, visiting 41 recipients across South Africa. Our ambitious goal is to visit all recipients within a 24-month cycle, and we are on track to achieving this. These visits have allowed us to conduct monitoring and evaluation assessments, set future goals, and deepen relationships with those we serve. Shoneé's dedication has been invaluable, and the bonds she has built with our recipients has been enduring, fostering a deep sense of trust, support, and connection.

We have also witnessed remarkable achievements from several recipients throughout the year. Rowan Hermanus had a breakthrough when he was offered a half-day job in HR Administration and started a Project Management course which will be completed in 2026. Gerhard Swarts was offered a position as a Grade 4 teacher in Nelspruit as



well as the Director of Rugby position, and is an accredited BokSmart coach. Anzil Williams completed Grade 10 at his new school in Humansdorp, and in spite of a significant adjustment, he passed with flying colours. Lifa Hlongwa completed and received his BCom degree in Economics and Econometrics. We are incredibly proud of our recipients for continually striving towards incredible achievements.

Our Grateful Thanks to Our Partners

The work we do would not be possible without the generosity of our partners and sponsors. A special thanks to:

- SA Rugby and the Springboks for hosting us in their offices, providing financial support, and granting access to players and departments.
- Betway, our steadfast partner for the past three years, for supporting our Springbok Dinner, Golf Day, and providing additional strategic funding.
- SAB, whose continued contributions, including the spectacular bar setup at our Pretoria Springbok Dinner, have elevated our events, and for ensuring every guest at our Wolfpack event in London enjoyed a Castle Lager – a small but meaningful touch that strengthened our South African community abroad.
- Southern Sun, our accommodation and venue partner around the country.
- Nederburg and Klipdrift for supporting our Evening with the Springboks.
- BrightRock and Empire Fleet for supporting our Women's Day event.
- Kelvin Grove and Six Gun Grill, BrightRock and Sealand for backing our DHL Stormers Dinner.
- Glenfiddich and Neethlingshof for their contributions to our Golf Day.

Strengthening Our Leadership and Global Presence

We are privileged to have an exceptional Board of Trustees whose expertise and networks open doors to invaluable opportunities. In 2024, we warmly welcomed Siseko Jafta (CEO of SSG and a former Sharks player) and Debra Barnes (CEO of Ignite Talent and former Race Director of the Two Oceans Marathon) to our Board. Their diverse skill-sets will enhance our ability to deliver meaningful impact.

Additionally, we are pleased to be part of World Rugby's international working group for charities focused on catastrophic injuries. As a core member, Shoneé and I had the privilege of attending the World Rugby Medical Conference in Lisbon in October. It was enlightening to engage with global experts analysing injury trends and player safety measures. Notably, many South African scientists and researchers are at the forefront of these discussions, shaping the future of rugby safety worldwide.

Our local BokSmart programme has made significant progress, with the successful launch of BokSmart Edge 8. Huge credit must go to Dr Wayne Viljoen, a world-renowned leader in this field, for his outstanding contributions to making rugby safer in South Africa.

A Final Word of Thanks

None of this would be possible without our incredible support squad—whether you are a sponsor, partner, donor, service provider, or friend of the Players' Fund, we are deeply grateful for your role in our journey. Rugby is, at its heart, about community, and the South African rugby community is as strong and committed as ever. Every donation—big or



small—has directly contributed to life-changing support for our recipients in 2024.

As we move into 2025, we remain committed to our Theory of Change, continuously improving our work, and enhancing the impact we deliver. We look forward to seeing many of you at our events and wish you all a successful and fulfilling year ahead.

Mark Kritzing

CEO

Chris Burger Petro Jackson Players' Fund

ACTIVITIES: THE ROLE OF THE PLAYERS' FUND



Although the Players' Fund has long-term support at its core, we are involved with every serious injury in South Africa that is reported from the outset. A serious injury is evaluated over several phases:

Initial Phase - Informed & Aware:

The Players' Funds Injured Player Welfare Officer (IPWO) also acts as the Serious Injury Case Manager (SICM) across all forms of rugby at a national level, and from the moment the SICM is made aware of a catastrophic injury through the BokSmart reporting process, our work as the Players' Fund begins.

Acute Phase:

During the acute phase immediately following a serious injury, the IPWO/SICM contacts the relevant stakeholders to assess the situation. Firstly, with the doctors, referee, medical staff, and first responders to gather as much information on the incident as possible, and secondly with the player's family to reassure parents and friends that they are not alone and of the support that the Fund offers. The IPWO/SICM monitors the situation during the acute phase, keeping all parties informed about the potential outcomes and support required, with the hope that the injury becomes a 'near miss' and that the recipient will make a full recovery. This

is however not always the case and where it is clear these players will not make a recovery, they become recipients of the Fund.

Recipient Phase:

Prior to discharge from hospital, and in consultation with the rehabilitation team, the unique needs of each recipient is assessed, and support is provided that covers the physical, emotional and psychological aspects of the recipient's needs.

SUPPORT PILLARS

1. PROVISION OF EQUIPMENT

We partner with recipients to ensure they have all the equipment they need to lead lives as independently as possible.

2. MODIFICATION TO HOMES

We work together with local builders and suppliers to ensure that recipients' homes are wheelchair friendly and safe.

3. MEDICAL CONSUMABLES

Through our partnership with YMS Medical Suppliers we assist all recipients with medical consumables that they are often not able to access in their communities.

4. SECONDARY REHABILITATION

Regular exercise is critical for physical and mental wellbeing, and we facilitate access for recipients to physiotherapy and other outpatient treatments close to their place of residence.

5. FINANCIAL SUPPORT

Where required, financial support is provided for monthly subsistence, payment of carers, and assisted living facilities for those who cannot live at home.

6. EDUCATION & SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

We encourage recipients to complete or continue their education journeys to remain or become economically active.

7. TRANSPORT FACILITATION

Where possible we contribute to the cost of transport for our recipients when urgent medical attention is required, when clinical appointments are scheduled, or to reach academic institutions for study purposes.

8. PERSONAL CARE & WELLBEING

Our recipients' quality of life is an important aspect of our work with them. Regular home visits and being just a phone call away, means that their needs can be regularly assessed and where possible addressed.

THE TEAM – BOARD OF TRUSTEES AND STAFF





RECIPIENT STORY: **MAWETHU MTUTU**

The story of opportunity

Timing is everything and when one is in the right place at the right time, you just know that it is meant to be. A wonderful opportunity came about for Mawethu Mtutu when he found his work opportunity by attending a game between the Valke and Border a few years ago. Mawethu happened to be wearing an old Chris Burger Petro Jackson branded top and was spotted by an individual who saw an opportunity for him. The two of them exchanged numbers and the individual put him in contact with someone at Supported Employment Enterprises in East London where today, 15 years later, he sews all the clothes that are needed for staff in hospitals, and repairs the linen and woodwork which is exported to Cape Town.

Mawethu was a scrumhalf for Moonlight RFC, where he was injured on the 9 April 1989 at the age of 21 years. He was in a wheelchair for nine months after his injury, before using crutches after an extensive rehabilitation. Today he walks with the aid of one crutch – a remarkable achievement considering he was initially told that he would never walk again. He is incredibly positive and such an inspiration to others,

and proves that with hard work and determination, nothing is impossible.

As the story above suggests, Mawethu was open to an opportunity that came his way, and grabbed it with both hands. Mawethu is married with three boys aged, 17, 20 and 28. His love for rugby continues, and he coaches the U19 Homeboys RFC three times a week.



BOKSMART



Rugby Safety numbers as at 28 February 2025



<p>01 201 596 Number trained since inception</p> <p>119 236 first-time certified</p> <p>82 360 recertifications.</p>	<p>02 65 466 <i>MyBokSmart</i> Online registrations</p>	<p>03 2 258 Schools and Clubs registrations</p>	<p>05 46 829 people currently busy with or having <i>MyBokSmart</i> Medical Course participation numbers</p> <p>Breakdown:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Concussion Management in the professional game: 3 457. 2. Concussion education: 7 990. 3. Emergency Action Plan: 2 647. 4. Head, neck, and spine injury management: 3 165. 5. Referees Pre-match Checklist: 2 670. 6. Rugby Safety messaging with a bit of humour: 2 227. 7. Safety in the playing environment and EAPs: 2 292. 8. Saying no to banned substances: 2 309. 9. The Concussion Blue Card System: 2 949. 10. 'Concussion Management in the Professional Game 2024' 1 387. NEW 11. 'Concussion Education 2024' 1 749. NEW 12. An Introduction to 'ACTIVATE' 1 814. NEW 13. The BokSmart SpineLine 525. NEW 14. Rapid Reduction Technique 10. NEW – still in testing; not released yet
<p>06 Tackle Height Change Educational Module participation numbers:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Current: 11 638. 2. Completed: 6 374. 		<p>04 11 973 people currently busy with or having completed <i>BokSmart</i> 8 online (7 502 <i>MyBokSmart</i> completions).</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. 2 881 Certifications (38%). b. 4 621 Recertifications (62%). 	
<p>BokSmart 7 ran from 1st August 2022 and was officially terminated on 31st July 2024. BokSmart 8 successfully rolled out on 1 August 2024, with new material and resources, which included new Certification Cards, Concussion Guides and Infographics, which are usable online and are mobile friendly. These items were redesigned to digital formats since we no longer are creating hard copy versions and have gone mainly digital and App-based with our education and informational offerings.</p>	<p>the Tackle-Height Change Education Module (Part 1), (4) a detailed Law-driven initiative to reinforce how to implement and manage the new Tackle-Height Laws (Part 2), (5) a focused section on safety in women's rugby, (6) an updated Concussion-management section, and (7) an operational closing of the course, while demonstrating how the end-user can maximise their experience on the <i>MyBokSmart</i> App. This remains freely accessible to all who register on <i>MyBokSmart</i>.</p>		
<p>The Course was finalised with (1) a broader introduction section, followed by (2) a focused section on head, neck, and spine injury patterns, (3)</p>	<p>In 2024, we had 13194 BokSmart Course Completions between the two BokSmart 7 and 8 courses.</p>		

BOKSMART (continued)

Incidents (combined school and club)

In 2024, we had eleven acute spinal cord injuries (ASCI), four cardiovascular events (CVI), one fatality from Natural Causes (NC), one fatality from a rib fracture and punctured lung – Other Mechanisms (OM), and four traumatic brain injuries (TBI).

- ASCI = 6 'Near Misses', 3 Quadriplegics, 2 Fatalities
- TBI = 4 'Near Misses'
- CVI = 3 Fatalities, 1 'Near Miss'
- NC = 1 Fatality
- OM = 1 Fatality

Rugby-Event Mechanisms of injury:

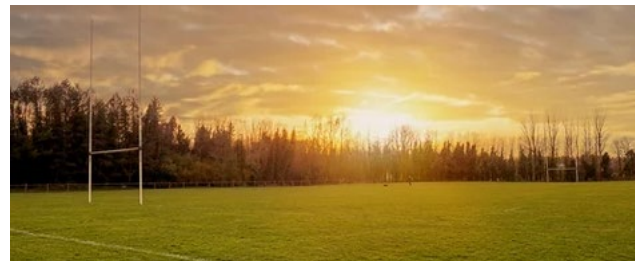
- Tackler:
 - PERMANENT
 - ASCI – Quadriplegics (1)
 - NOT PERMANENT
 - ASCI – Near Misses (1)
 - TBI – Near Misses (4)
- Ball Carrier:
 - PERMANENT
 - ASCI – Fatal (2)
 - NOT PERMANENT
 - Near Misses (3)
- Scrum:
 - PERMANENT
 - ASCI – Quadriplegics (1)
 - NOT PERMANENT
 - Near Misses (2)
- Collision:
 - PERMANENT
 - ASCI – Quadriplegics (1)

#VisionZero! 'One is simply one too many!'



MyBokSmart

SportsCap, our Official Software Partner of BokSmart, in 2024, continued to help us maximise our reach in the digital space and we are immensely grateful for their continued support and altruistic approach to help us do what we do. **MyBokSmart** (<https://my.boksmart.com>) has 2258 school and club registrations, where they can manage, and integrate their rugby coaches, referees, and team medical staff on **MyBokSmart**.



Who is BokSmart for?

Historically BokSmart focused on coaches and referees. With the move to digital, we have already amassed 65466 registrations on **MyBokSmart**, where the content is now accessible to all rugby stakeholders, i.e. coaches, referees, medical staff, players, parents, schools, and clubs. The more rugby people start communicating in the same 'rugby safety' language, the better the chances of being successful in keeping catastrophic injury numbers down.

It is however worth reminding oneself that rugby is indeed a contact-collision sport, and with that comes some level of risk (albeit rare), of catastrophic injuries. Our job is while trying to maintain the integrity of the game, to limit that risk. This does however require that everyone involved in rugby work together to put their players welfare, health, and well-being, first and foremost.

Dr Wayne Viljoen
Senior Manager Rugby Safety



RECIPIENT STORY: GERHARD SWARTS

Paying it forward

Gerhard Swarts has had his fair share of ups and downs, but has maintained a strong mindset even on the darkest of days, and has never lost sight of the light at the end of the tunnel. Gerhard, a former inside centre, was just 15, when he was injured on 15 March 2003. He obtained his Honours in Sport and Recreation in 2013, and went on to become the Technical Advisor for the Valke Rugby Union. He is passionate about rugby and is a BokSmart accredited coach. Shortly after becoming a Grade 4 teacher at a school in Middelburg in 2024, he was made the Director of Rugby.

He has his own vehicle that has been modified to ensure that he is independent and mobile, and it is truly incredible to watch how he manages the levers and mechanics. Gerhard is giving back to rugby in a way where he promotes the safety of the game to players and students. As the Director of Rugby at his school, he advocates the importance of safety, and is a true ambassador of the BokSmart programme. He remains positive in all that he does and is always up for a challenge. He attends the school rugby

practices and is diligent in his own daily exercise routine. Gerhard has shown true grit and has proved that hard work can lead to many exciting opportunities.



INCIDENTS, INJURY AND IMPACT

Shoneé Cornelissen



The year 2024 was one of reconnection, relationship-building, and strategic planning to ensure our recipients receive the best possible care. Rugby's Caring Hands remains the heart of the Players' Fund, and over the past year, 42 visits were conducted, offering support in health, exercise, and mental well-being, where key areas of guidance and encouragement made a tangible difference. The importance of each visit allows for mobility equipment to be assessed, home environments to be evaluated, and the health and well-being of our recipients is understood, ensuring that our recipients needs are met and circumstances are in check.

We sadly had to say goodbye to four of our recipients, who will be deeply missed. However, in a moment of hope and celebration, we parted ways with another recipient due to his remarkable recovery having regained full bladder, bowel, and sexual function, marking an incredible milestone.

We extend our deepest gratitude to ER24 for their continued support with the BokSmart Spine agreement. Their role in identifying and assisting with catastrophic injuries remains critical to ensuring players receive the care they need. Concussions continue to be the most common injury, with 82 cases reported across all age groups. This underscores the ongoing need for awareness, education, and proactive intervention through the BokSmart Safety programme.

The Players' Fund family grew this year, welcoming three new recipients:

Heinrich Erasmus (35, Oudtshoorn), a former prop for Bridgeton Rugby Club, sustained a C4/C5 bifacet dislocation, resulting in a complete spinal cord injury. The Fund assisted with a bathroom renovation, ensuring he had a fully accessible home after completing three months of secondary rehabilitation.

Mandla Nyaniso (36, East London), a former hooker for Bombers Rugby Club, sustained a C6/C7 bifacet dislocation. Mandla was transferred from Frere Hospital to our partner, Nuturehealth in Beacon Bay, where he received 16 weeks of rehabilitation. He will need a manual wheelchair, a specialised mattress and cushion when he moves in with his cousin, who will be taking care of him.

MJ Van Staden (17, Nelspruit), played outside centre for Hoërskool Nelspruit and sustained a C5 complete spinal cord injury. MJ was moved from MCare Hospital in Nelspruit to Muelmed in Pretoria to a more specialised spinal unit where he underwent 12 weeks of rehabilitation. He was discharged on 15 November, and returned to his gran's farm 30km outside of Nelspruit. The Fund has assisted with a manual wheelchair, specialised cushion and commode.

Secondary rehabilitation remains a cornerstone of recovery, offering both physical and mental benefits. This year, we witnessed the impact of resilience and education through Anzil Williams, who faced the challenge of changing schools after his injury in September 2023. With determination and

a positive mindset, he successfully completed Grade 10 with flying colours. We look forward to supporting him through the next two years as he works toward his matriculation.

A heartfelt thank you to our incredible sponsors who came on board and made our Winter Warmer Hampers truly special for our recipients. The warmth of a Jonsson Workwear jacket was deeply appreciated, paired with the soothing touch of Shzen's aftershave balm. PURA kept everyone refreshed with their hydration drink, while THIRSTI added a touch of luxury with a beautiful towel. Thank you to The Courier Guy for delivering these packages to all corners of the country. Your generosity made a real impact, bringing comfort and care to those in need!

The rugby community never disappoints and came together in 2024, showing unwavering support for injured players and honouring those we lost. The generosity and dedication of our Support Squad have been nothing short of inspiring. Your selfless contributions, whether through time, effort, or resources, allow us to continue assisting recipients with their essential needs.

From the bottom of my heart, thank you. Your commitment to our cause makes a lasting impact, and we look forward to continuing this journey together.

Shoneé Cornelissen
Injured Player Welfare Officer



RECIPIENT STORY: JZAUN DREYER

Unstoppable drive

Jzaun Dreyer is not defined by the catastrophic rugby injury that left him paralysed in his teenage years, but by the unstoppable drive to turn the corner and live a rich and remarkable life. Playing on the left wing for President High School's First XV against Hoërskool Brandwag on 15 March 2006, Jzaun set off on a trademark run when he was hit in a double tackle. The 16-year-old suffered a broken neck and was left a C5/6 incomplete quadriplegic. For an active teenager, there's no greater heartbreak and challenge than to cope with such a debilitating injury. It requires a second drastic change, a mental shift, and Jzaun's turning point came extraordinarily quickly.

"It was absolutely devastating, but being born into a military family, I've always had a no-nonsense outlook on life and that's what helped me," said Jzaun, who is now 34 years old. With the support of his family, he went the extra mile during and after his six months at Netcare Rehabilitation Hospital in Auckland Park. "I refused to go to a 'special' school and returned to my old school that was in no way wheelchair friendly. Friends and teachers carried me up three floors to make sure I attended my classes, and I finished Matric" Jzaun said.

He decided to go into the financial industry and completed his NQF 5, NQF 6 and Regulatory exams through FNB, where he became a manager at the age of 21. He then had a short stint at African Bank before joining OUTsurance

in 2016 and has cemented himself as one of the company's best sales advisors and is being promoted to Sales Manager. He also owns his own business. "I'm very blessed to be a business owner. During lockdown, my wife came up with a business model where we go to clients' premises offering full valets as well as wash-and-go services. It took off like a wildfire as people were so scared to go to car washes because of the number of people who wash a single vehicle adding to a higher risk of infection". Jzaun also has his SA Motorsport licence, and he heads up his own race team, JD Racing SA (which is also the name of his mobile detailing and carwash business), and using a hand-control driving aid, he's been tearing up tracks in and around Gauteng in the Vilaca Racing Series since 2018.

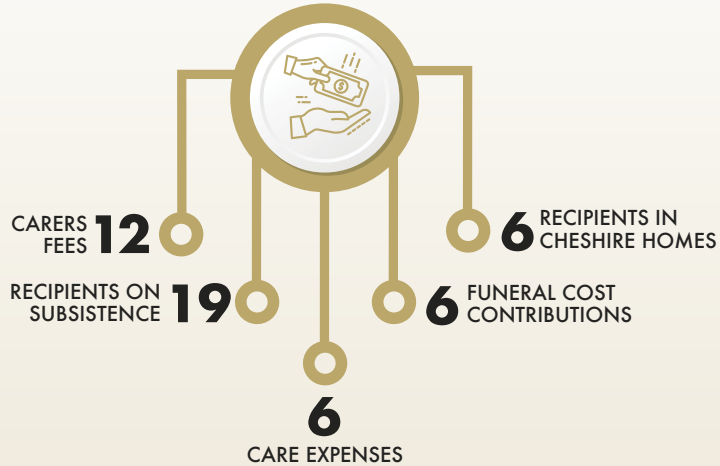
He's still a big rugby lover and represented the Leopards in the National Wheelchair Rugby Tournament, while he also made a name for himself as a comedian and featured on Comedy Central.

However, his biggest love is his wife, Anzelle. "Anzelle's my source of strength, my best friend and my biggest supporter. They have a little baby boy who is 6 months old. He believes that being independent is the most important goal for any person with a disability. "Having the mind and willpower will only get you so far; having the tools will enable you to finish the job, so I'm extremely grateful to the Players' Fund,"

YEAR IN NUMBERS

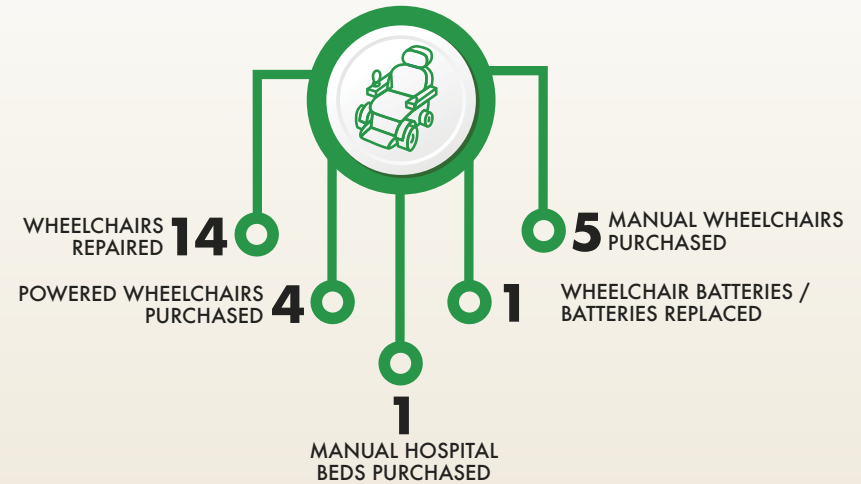
R1,123,922

FINANCIAL SUPPORT



R877,108

PROVISION & REPAIRS OF EQUIPMENT



R42,875

TRANSPORT FACILITATION



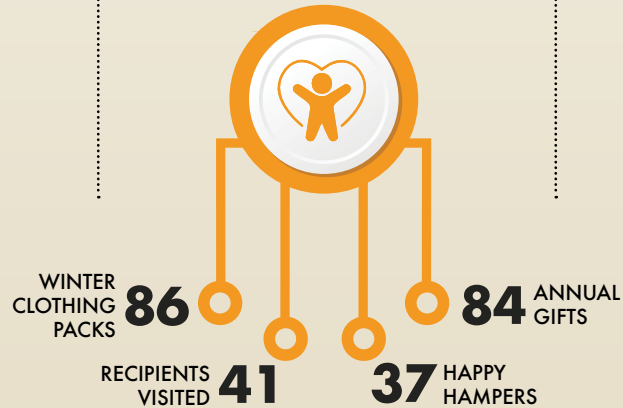
R254,325

MODIFICATION TO HOMES



R271,617

PERSONAL CARE & WELLBEING



R69,405

ON SECONDARY REHABILITATION



R145,824

ON MEDICAL CONSUMABLES



#SUPPORTSQUAD

Fundraising, Collaboration and Partnerships



We are very grateful for all our sponsors, partners, and donors, big and small, that make it possible for us to deliver the work we do. Our #SupportSquad is a vital part of our community, and this report is written especially for you. Thank you for your ongoing support, it means the world to us.



IN MEMORIA

Recipient Deaths 2024



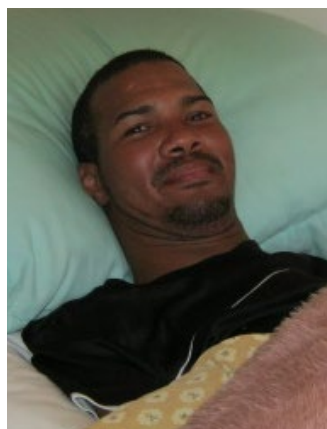
JAMES HILL

Injured: 25 May 1996, at the age of 25, while playing for Collegians Wasps Rugby Club in Pietermaritzburg. James obtained a Masters in Veterinary Medicine: Clinical Diagnostics, as a distance student of Onderstepoort, and qualified as a Veterinary Specialist in 2010. He started working in a private laboratory in Pietermaritzburg and subsequently became a partner.



DONOVAN BOTHA

Injured: 27 June 2009, at the age of 17, while playing for Montague's 3rd XV. Donovan was always full of positivity despite his injury and enjoyed exploring on the computer. He was extremely diligent with his diet and choice of nutrition, as it had made a huge difference with his diabetes and kidneys.



NICO ALFRED

Injured: 12 April 2003 at the age of 18 while playing for Clanwilliam Senior Secondary. He lived in Lamberts Bay with his parents, and had a goal to be employed and independent.



HENRY AFRIKANER

Injured: 06 October 2007, at the age of 28, while playing for Klipheuwel Rugby Club. Henry loved to paint and was kept busy delivering 10 paintings a year, which were sent all over the world as a means of income.

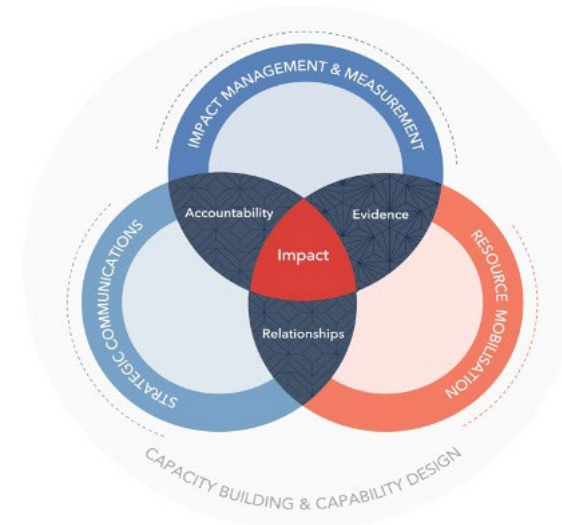
THEORY OF CHANGE



The Theory of Change is a framework that helps us map out how and why our actions lead to meaningful impact. It requires deep introspection – looking at the history of our activities, understanding the lessons we’ve learned, and critically assessing how our efforts contribute to the long-term outcomes we aim to achieve.

By using this approach, we clearly define our goals, identify the steps needed to reach them, and measure the difference we make in the lives of those we support. It ensures that every programme, partnership, and resource is directed towards creating lasting change.

This structured way of thinking helps us stay accountable, adapt when needed, and continuously improve our efforts. It allows us to track our progress while sharing our impact with our supporters, partners, and the wider community – demonstrating that together, we are making a real difference.



Our first iteration of the Players’ Fund Theory of Change is both authentic and aspirational, and we intend to use it as a guide to help make decisions and ensure that we are striving towards our newly defined impact goals.

THEORY OF CHANGE (continued)

RECIPIENT DEFINITION: A recipient of the Players' Fund (TPF) is a rugby player who has suffered a catastrophic injury, such as spinal cord damage resulting in paralysis, during a rugby match. These individuals receive financial, medical, and emotional support from the Fund to help them navigate the challenges of living with a life-changing injury. The Fund provides assistance for their rehabilitation, home modifications, medical equipment, and overall well being, ensuring they have the necessary resources to maintain a quality of life and reintegrate into society.

FOCUS AREAS & ACTIVITIES

OUTPUTS

IMMEDIATE OUTCOMES (<12 MONTHS)

INTERMEDIATE OUTCOMES (12 - 36 MONTHS)

TARGET OUTCOMES (36+ MONTHS)

IMPACT GOALS

CARE

- Provision of mobility equipment.
- Accessibility and safety modifications to home.
- Medical consumable allocations.
- Secondary rehabilitation including functional recovery, adaptive strategies, and psychosocial support.
- Partnering education and skills development journeys.
- Personal care and wellbeing.
- Financial support.
- Transport facilitation.



- Recipients are provided with all the essential equipment they need for daily living.
- Homes are adapted to ensure accessibility and safety.
- Recipients receive crucial medical consumables to support their health and care needs.
- Recipients have access to vital outpatient treatments such as physiotherapy, biokinetics, & psychological care.
- Guidance is provided for daily personal care tasks and hygiene routines.
- Recipients are encouraged and supported to pursue their education and personal development.
- Regular home visits, phone calls, and messages keep recipients connected and supported, with direct access to Players' Fund staff.
- Financial support is available for living expenses, carers, assisted living, transport to medical appointments, and educational needs.

- **Emotional Resilience:** Psychological support and consistent communication reduce isolation and anxiety.
- **Increased Independence:** Recipients gain independence through access to essential equipment and modifications.
- **Enhanced Safety and Comfort:** Home adaptations create safer and more accessible living environments.
- **Improved Physical Health:** Regular therapy and medical care improves physical recovery and rehabilitation.
- **Improved Quality of Life:** Personal care assistance enhances recipients' well-being and daily living conditions.
- **Educational Continuity:** Ongoing support enables recipients to continue their education without disruption.
- **Financial Relief:** Financial aid provides immediate relief for living expenses and transport needs.

- **Emotional Resilience:** Recipients develop strong coping skills, leading to greater emotional wellbeing.
- **Sustained Independence:** Recipients manage daily tasks with minimal support, promoting long-term self-sufficiency.
- **Continued Safety and Comfort:** Adapted homes provide lasting safety and mobility.
- **Improved Physical Function:** Recipients experience enhanced mobility and physical strength, increasing autonomy.
- **Increased Social Participation:** Recipients engage more in social, community, and vocational activities, rebuilding connections.
- **Educational and Career Progress:** Recipients advance in education or explore new career opportunities, fostering growth.
- **Financial Stability:** Recipients achieve greater financial security, enabling independence and access to necessary resources.

- **Long-Term Independence and Mobility:** Recipients achieve autonomy in daily life, maintaining physical health and mobility with minimal assistance.
- **Sustained Safety and Wellbeing:** Recipients live in safe, accessible environments, enjoying emotional stability and wellbeing.
- **Community and Social Integration:** Recipients are fully engaged in social, community, and vocational activities, fostering meaningful connections and active participation.
- **Educational and Financial Independence:** Recipients complete education, pursue fulfilling careers, and achieve sustainable financial independence for long-term stability.

Empowered, Fulfilled, Independent Lives:

Recipients achieve autonomy, living safely and independently with sustained physical and emotional wellbeing. They are fully integrated into their communities, actively participating in social and vocational activities, while achieving educational and financial independence for lasting stability and fulfilment.



PREVENTION

- Co-founders of the BokSmart National Rugby Safety Program.
- Data collection for all catastrophic injuries to support research and insights.
- Education and Awareness Campaigns.
- Rehabilitation and Injury Management Guidance.
- Collaboration with Rugby Governing Bodies and International Charities.

- TPF actively encourages all coaches, referees, medical service providers, players, and other stakeholders to be BokSmart certified.
- TPF collects and reports on injury data, which in turn supports research into injury trends, prevention methods, and safety measures, and uses data to refine safety interventions.
- TPF advocates for and supports the presence of trained medical staff at matches and training to provide immediate care.
- TPF offers resources, guidance, and support to players, families, coaches, and medical staff on injury management and post-injury care to reduce long-term impact.
- TPF works with local and international rugby governing bodies to advocate for and implement safety-focused policies.

- **Increased Rugby Safety Protocol Awareness:** There is an increase in awareness and understanding of the BokSmart rugby safety initiatives among players, coaches, medical service providers and other stakeholders.
- **Decrease in Catastrophic Injuries:** The increased awareness of the BokSmart protocols and the Rapid Reduction Technique leads to fewer instances of catastrophic injuries.
- **Injury Pattern Insights:** An enhanced understanding of injury patterns is developed through comprehensive data collection, providing insight into key risk factors.
- **Increased Medical Presence:** Increased availability and awareness of medical resource requirements at all levels of rugby.

- **Evidence driven safety measures** are introduced, leading to improved injury prevention strategies based on injury trends.
- **Injury Reduction:** Implementation of safer playing laws, strategies and techniques leads to a measurable reduction in catastrophic injuries.
- **Improved catastrophic injury outcomes** through adherence to best practice on field management and better access to medical support.
- **Improved compliance** with all safety regulations, leading to a measurable decline in catastrophic injuries.

- Continuous refinement of safety protocols through ongoing research and data analysis, resulting in a sustained reduction in catastrophic injuries.
- A culture of safety, injury prevention, and player welfare embedded in the rugby community, leading to a long-lasting reduction in catastrophic injuries.
- Sustained reduction in catastrophic injury severity as a result of effective injury management.
- Players experience sustained long-term physical health and function due to effective medical intervention and rehabilitation.

Global Advocacy for Safer Rugby:

Through proactive advocacy, intervention, and leadership, the Players' Fund fosters a safer, well-informed rugby culture, influencing safety practices across South Africa and internationally to reduce catastrophic injuries in the sport.



FUNDING

- Engaging businesses and corporates to provide financial sponsorships or donations.
- Applying for grants from institutions, foundations, and government bodies.
- Cultivating relationships with individual donors through appeals, newsletters, and personal outreach.
- Running campaigns through platforms like GivenGain, social media, and other digital avenues to encourage public donations.
- Hosting golf days, dinners, auctions, and other fundraising events to raise money and increase awareness.
- Selling branded merchandise to generate funds.



- TPF secures new or renewed financial commitments from businesses and sponsors.
- Grant funding is received from foundations or institutions.
- The list of engaged individual donors increases and donations from individual contributors are received.
- Our Support Squad participates in events to fundraise for the Players' Fund.
- Income and awareness are generated through hosted fundraising events.
- Income is generated from selling branded merchandise.

- **Increased Financial Stability:** Sufficient funds are raised to cover immediate needs such as mobility equipment, medical consumables, home modifications, and rehabilitation for recipients.
- **Improved Awareness:** Increased visibility of TPF and its mission through events, corporate partnerships, and public campaigns.
- **Expanded Donor Network:** An increase in individual donors and corporate sponsors showing immediate interest in supporting the cause.
- **Immediate Care Provision:** Enhanced capacity to provide urgent support to recently injured players, such as purchasing equipment and providing medical assistance.

- **Ongoing Financial Security:** TPF maintains a stable flow of funding, ensuring ongoing support for recipients and new injury cases.
- **Stronger Corporate Relationships:** Deeper engagement with corporate partners, leading to multi-year sponsorship commitments or large financial contributions.
- **Broadened Public Support:** An expanded and more engaged public donor base, with a growing number of recurring donors.
- **Enhanced Program Capacity:** Increased capacity to support a larger number of recipients and expand services offered.

- **Financial Sustainability:** TPF achieves long-term financial sustainability, enabling continuous support for all current and future recipients.
- **Endowment or Reserve Funds:** Endowment or reserve funds are sufficient to provide long-term financial security and support.
- **Increased Influence in Rugby Safety:** The Fund's visibility and financial resources allow it to take a more active role in advocacy, influencing rugby safety policies and standards globally.
- **Comprehensive Support for Recipients:** The Fund expands its scope to provide holistic, long-term support, including career training, financial assistance, and community integration for injured players.
- **Excellent Care:** Current and future recipients receive ongoing, excellent care from TPF.

Sustainable Support and Advocacy:

The Players' Fund achieves financial sustainability ensuring continuous, excellent care and holistic support for all recipients. This empowers the Fund to lead in rugby safety advocacy while expanding its capacity to provide comprehensive assistance, including career development and financial aid.



CHRIS BURGER
**PLAYERS
FUND**
PETRO JACKSON
Rugby's Caring Hands



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