



# Upington High School



**FOUNDED: 1896**

**MOTTO: ARBOR BONA FRUCTUM BONUM  
(A GOOD TREE BEARS GOOD FRUIT)**

**ADDRESS: CORNER OF LE ROUX AND  
PARK STREET, UPINGTON**

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## School History

A primary school overseen by one teacher and his wife was the first formal initiative, taken in 1885, that would later develop into Upington High School. A year later the school, with its 102 pupils, was already too big for the little church building that housed them. A decision was made to build a proper school building and on 24 June 1899 a tender specified that "75 000 well-baked bricks should be delivered before 1 November", and that "rocks, sand and soil must be delivered by ox wagon before 15 September". The tender of 900 pounds was accepted and the building began. The school grew and, like most schools in South Africa at the time, was continually hindered by lack of space. The final building additions to the school were made in 1971. Today, Upington High School is spread over large grounds. The school has 610 pupils, 278 of whom are boys. As the town is a developing agricultural and industrial oasis in the arid Northern Cape, so too does Upington High School stand out for its excellent academic and cultural standards — and, of course, its impressive rugby record.

## Rugby at Upington

Upington, being so isolated, has to travel great distances for its rugby derbies, but the biggest derby is certainly the local game against Duineveld. Two matches are played between the schools every year — the Klein Interjol and the Groot Interjol. The former is a League fixture, but it is the latter which is the final and most important game of the season. It has been a traditional fixture since 1968. It is a typical local derby where the whole community is involved — either as spectators, sponsors, Old Boys, supporters or referees. Interjol traditions dominate the week leading up to the game. There is the "Big Brag" and poster competitions, sing-songs, Old-Boy reunions, the Interjol dance on the evening before the game and several other "spirit-building" events for players and coaches. All in all, it is the week when Upington comes alive and readies itself for the highlight of the year. Upington High School has had more success in the derby over the years and won the Interjol from 1997 to 2006. A memorable game took place in 2005. Upington were trailing 9-13 going into the last two minutes of the game. However, a fierce ruck saw Upington emerge with the ball, and quick thinking (and even quicker hands) saw the ball double-skipped to wing Tokkie Noeth, who ran in to score the winning try.

A number of teams have stood out over the years, but according to legendary coach, Dirk Kapp, the 1999 side was particularly good. They beat some of the country's best, including Pedrie Wannenburg's Oakdale side. In its long history, Upington has produced many special rugby players,

*"I was born in a small town in Namibia and went to school there until my Standard 7 year. But in that year my coach told me I had a good chance to go to Upington High School, and they were keen for me to join them. Without any doubts, I packed my stuff and was gone a week later. It was the best decision I have made, moving that 300km down to Upington. In Namibia, I didn't even play 10 games a year; at Upington I was playing over 20 games, and had excellent coaching. Upington High School laid an excellent rugby foundation for my future."*

**— Rowan Walters (2003–05, Free State)**



of which have gone on to wear Springbok colours. Willem Barnard played two Tests, against New Zealand in 1949 and Wales in 1951. Daantjie Rossouw also played two Tests, in 1953. Their most recognised Bok must be Tiaan Strauss. He played 15 Tests from 1992 to 1994 for the Boks and later represented Australia. His inherited countrymen were particularly impressed by his (rumoured) early rugby training of tackling live Wildebeest from off his motorbike. A number of other Old Boys have played rugby for Super14 and Currie Cup sides. Among them are Tommie Dixon (Boland), Wicus Blaauw (Leopards and Vodacom Stormers, who Upington coach Dirk Kapp believes is a future Bok), Riaan van Niekerk (Northern Transvaal and Griquas), Hendrik Loots (Boland), Dantes Liebenberg (Griquas), Riaan Kotzé (Boland, a 1976 matriculant and the school's current headmaster), Barney Voster (SWD) and Herklaas Engelbrecht (Griquas).

Upington plays in the Big Schools League, and thus has numerous derbies against teams from all over the country. The games against Duineveld, Noord-Kaap and Diamantveld of Kimberley, and Sand du Plessis of Bloemfontein, are all highlights on the fixture list. A derby against Jim Fouché has also begun, and matches against the "big" rugby schools like Ermelo, Grey PE, Framesby and Nelspruit are common.

## Internationals

### South Africa:

Tiaan Strauss, Willem Barnard,  
Daantjie Rossouw

### Namibia:

Johan Barnard, Johan Nel,  
Hendrik Dames, Wicus  
Blaauw, Pieter Nell,  
Japsie Blaauw



*"Tiaan Strauss finished at Upington in 1983. He was the captain of the First XV and an outstanding leader. He could play anywhere, and actually was a centre at school. He only moved to eighth man after school."*

*With only 130 boys playing rugby and eight teams to fill, we are very lucky in that we have committed and coachable boys, and this makes up for our lack in numbers."*

**— Dirk Kapp (coach for 18 years)**