

WORLD CUP CHAMPS 2019 BUT SOMEHOW SO MUCH MORE

The euphoria of lifting the Webb Ellis Trophy for a 3rd time, is almost impossible to describe. Francois Pienaar, Captain of the victorious '95 squad, said that this 2019 win is bigger than the 1995 win. This win comes at a time that South Africans needs a break from the overwhelming, dire situation in South Africa. 2 November 2019 all in the world was well.

Somehow it feels that South African Rugby started in 1995 and so it should. I do not want to take away anything from legends like Naas Botha, Marnetjies Roux, Danie Gerber, Frik Du Preez, Morne Du Plessis and the likes, but 1995 was a turning point in South African Rugby.

1995 was a very delicate time in our very young democracy, Chester Williams was the only player of colour in the Springbok team. The Springboks were the babies in the 1995 World Cup Tournament. By default we were not given a chance to progress past the pool stages. But the world was not ready for what our boys were bringing to the field. And we had a secret weapon, Madiba magic. 24 June 1995 at 15h00 South Africa was united for the first time. And roughly a 100min later, the final whistle was blown and the Springboks were World Champions. The vibe in the South Africa was electric and filled with magic.

However, the magic and unity did not last all that long.

It would take 12 long years before we would be victorious (and united) again. In 2007 in France, John Smit would lift the Webb Ellis trophy again. We went into the final, against England, as the favourites and the Springboks did not disappoint. Transformation was slow, but the magic of being World Cup Champions, united South Africans and again the streets were lined with South Africans, from all walks of life, standing next to each other and cheering our World Champions.

South African Rugby went downhill after 2007, with splashes of victory and fleeting moments of magic. It reflected the situation in South Africa as a whole. South Africa was in the midst of a parallel state being set up (we would only find this out later) that would pave the way for corruption that would nearly destroy our beautiful country. The shock defeat that the Springboks suffered against Japan in the 2015 World Cup Tournament, also, almost destroyed the Springboks.

As difficult as it was, South Africa and the Springboks started to claw back.

Fast forward to 2019, we became the first team in the rugby world to lift the Rugby Championship cup and the World Cup in one year. President Ramaphosa promised a new dawn, and hot off the **#Ramaphosa-phoria**, we left for Japan with Siya Kolisi at the helm of our Springboks.

They brought a renewed belief in magic with them. Although we were the underdogs, going into this final, we had magic, a renewed unity and of course we had Siya Kolisi. Captain Kolisi embodies South Africa and what our democracy should be. In his post-match interview, few South Africans were left untouched by his words and his love for our country.

Siya Kolisi has become the standard-bearer for our country.

Siya Kolisi grew up in a black township, Zwide, just outside Port Elizabeth. He grew up very poor, he worried about what they were going to eat more than what he worried about rugby boots. Siya watched the 2007 World Cup Final in a tavern, he remembered what the win did for the country then. He was determined to win the 2019 World Cup because he knew what it would mean to our country.

We have to believe, with Siya Kolisi, that it is because of our different races and different languages that South Africa can succeed. It is because of our “Rainbow Nation” that South Africa will raise to great heights. The 2019 World Cup winning squad showed us that by working together as a team, as a country, we can be magic and achieve all our goals and dreams. The slogan **#strongertogether**, should stay and become our country’s ethos.

Siya, our first Springbok captain of colour, had a world’s worth of weight on his shoulders. He, not only, had to prove that he belongs in the squad, he had to prove that he can lead our Springboks on and off the field. He had to represent our country. He had to represent where we came from and how far we have come. He had to inspire every South African, not just rugby supporters, but South Africa as a unit, as a country.

Another great Springbok (we will just claim him) legend, Tendai Mtawarira (Beeaaaaassssttt) said, just before the World Cup final, that it really is important that the Springbok team is well represented, and that the team do well in the World Cup tournament. If they do well in the tournament, they will effectively dismantle the perception of a “quota” team.

Our Springbok-World-Cup-Winning-team is amazing and shows us that there is beauty and winning in our Rainbow-nation, if we work together. Because we are truly **#strongertogether**.

The day you plant the seed, is not the day you eat the fruit. Be patient. Be humble. Don’t give up.

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