

Rugby as a platform for transformation, not just entertainment

Andrew Johnson

Rugby Players for Jesus (Also known as Rugby Players and Supporters for Jesus) is a community of rugby players, supporters, and believers united by our faith in Jesus Christ and our love for the game of rugby.

It all began when I was invited to share my testimony at a breakfast gathering in Mossel Bay in early 2023. Hosted by a former police colleague and provincial rugby player, the event was a divine appointment.

What followed was a deep conviction: that rugby could be a vehicle for transformation, and that God was calling me — and others — to use the sport to build His Kingdom.

From that seed of faith, Rugby Players for Jesus was born.

With a small, prayerful steering committee, we organized our first official event on October 28, 2023, coinciding with the Springboks' Rugby World Cup victory. It was more than coincidence— it was confirmation.

Our driving scripture is “do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may obtain it.” — 1 Corinthians 9:24

This verse captures the competitive spirit of rugby and the spiritual race we are all running.

It reminds us that while only one team wins the World Cup, every believer can win the eternal prize in Christ — if we run with purpose, discipline, and faith.

Our group does not function by rigid rules or strict structures. Instead, we are led by the Holy Spirit, allowing God to direct us — knowing that direction may shift as He leads.

We are not about religion We are about relationship with Jesus.

Not about rules, but about redemption.

At our core, we are spirit-led, Christ-centred and rugby-inspired.

We are committed to use rugby as a platform to advance the Kingdom of God, to share testimonies that reveal how faith has transformed lives — from the field to the heart, to enrich communities through outreach, mentorship, and spiritual encouragement.

Our outreach work includes speaking at churches, men's groups, youth groups, and schools, offering hope in a world that often feels hopeless.

Through this we promote a robust moral life and vital Christian character, especially among the youth.

There is a rising need for authentic, grounded role models who live their faith boldly but humbly. Young people today are bombarded with false identities and temporary pleasures.

Through shared testimonies, we reveal a better way — a life rooted in Christ.

We teach that faith is not weakness. It is strength under control.

Morality is not outdated. It is the foundation for a meaningful life.

Character matters as much as capability.

Scriptures which inspire us are Philippians 4:13 – “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.”

This reminds us that whether on the pitch or in life, our strength does not come from ourselves—it comes from Christ.

Hebrews 12:1-2 – “Let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith...”

A call to run our race faithfully, with Jesus at the centre.

We see a future where rugby becomes a platform for transformation, not just entertainment.

One where players, coaches, and fans form a Christ-centred network, encouraging one another across provinces and beyond.

Young people discover their identity in Christ, not just in performance.

Communities are uplifted through love, service, and sport.

We are 100% community funded. Every donation, every prayer, every shared testimony is a building block for this mission.

Every contribution helps us reach more lives, one heart at a time.

Whether you are a player, pastor, teacher, parent, or fan — you can be part of the team.

We welcome sponsors, speaking invitations, volunteers, and prayer warriors.

Our core verse is 1 Corinthians 9:24” Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may obtain it.”

Whether it is through outspoken players, quiet strength on the field, or shared prayers in the locker room, we aim to walk the walk — not just talk the talk.

We see a future where faith and sport are not separate but beautifully intertwined. Where testimonies flow from the field, where communities are uplifted, and where young adults find purpose, identity, and hope in Christ.

We are not here to preach from the sidelines. We are here to get in the game — spiritually and physically.

Our lives are our message.

And we invite others to walk the walk with us, because hope is real, faith is powerful, and Jesus is the way.

Join us on the journey — both on and off the field — as we pursue Christ with the same passion we bring to the game.

Andrew Johnson is a former Eastern Province player and founder of Rugby Players for Jesus.