

Press Release

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A GAME CHANGING OPENING CEREMONY AT THE TRANSNET RURAL AND FARM SCHOOLS SPORT TOURNAMENT

Sports stars, dignitaries and celebrities inspire South African youth

The prestigious Transnet Rural and Farm Schools Tournament opening ceremony took place last night on 6 October 2014 at the Germiston Stadium in Gauteng and was a huge success with learners, coaches, and sports officials.

“This programme is about recognising and acknowledging achievement and celebrating success by all our sportsmen and women. We want to show all South Africans that we are praising the spirit of human triumph and not mediocrity,” says Mr. Mafika Mkwanazi, the Transnet Board Chairman, speaking at the launch.

This sporting event begins every year with over 22 000 learners across the country competing in inter-house challenges, leaving just 2 000 of the best sporting champions to battle it out at this three day long National Tournament.

But the Transnet Rural Sport and Farm Schools Sport Tournament is more than just winning competitions. It’s about shaping South Africa’s youth, making dreams come true and initiating social change.

“Winning brings us instant gratification but at the same time, we must also value the recognition of good sportsmanship... It develops a person’s moral, ethical and spiritual values, because the highest standards which are practiced in this field will be absorbed into one’s personality and become a code of ethics.”

A number of inspiring local and sporting celebrities attended the opening ceremony to support South Africa’s youth, such as Cece, Itumeleng Khune and Jabu Pule.

The master of ceremonies for the event was Hulisani Rhavele, better known as “Cece”, a former-presenter from SABC 1’s very popular Yo-TV show called Wildroom.

According to Cece, the Transnet Foundation has given the rural and farm school pupils a real opportunity to shine and show their skills, and this three day tournament gives them the platform they need to show us all how much they have learnt.

Joining Cece was Itumeleng Khune, captain of Bafana Bafana and Kaizer Chiefs. Speaking at the event, he shared a personal and humbling experience, illustrating that with hard work and determination, anything is possible.

Khune said that like many of the learners sitting in the grand stands, he was one of them. When he was younger, he would sit and watch the game, looking up to sports stars such as Jabu Pule and dream about becoming a great soccer player. Now he's playing and captaining the national team and showing everyone involved that determination can make all your hopes a reality.

Retired Bafana Bafana and SuperSport United player, Jabu Pule was also at the opening ceremony, along with the Department of Basic Education Deputy Director, Dr. Granville Whittle.

As many people realise, South Africa is rich in sporting talent but much of its potential sits undiscovered and remains to be identified, nurtured and developed. This is why Transnet has made an effort to turn this around using the Tournament as a starting ground for many of these youths.

Studies have shown team sports have a positive impact on the development of young people. Overall, they do better academically, and are more likely to matriculate, get a tertiary education or learn a trade and find jobs. Children who participate in these group activities attend more school, get into less trouble and are closer to their community.

"We at Transnet are dedicated to building a healthier, better educated, safer and skilled population that is positive about our country and motivated to grab the opportunities that empower them to live fulfilled lives. And to our learners...may you continue to live by your passion in sport," finishes Mkhwanazi.

Over the next two days, there will be tournaments for netball, football, athletics and the recently introduced for its benefits for cognitive development – chess. These games are played by girls and boys between the ages of 13 and 19, all of them coached by trained staff. Participants can look forward to a gala dinner and a prize giving after all the tournaments have been completed.

For more information on the Rural and Farm Schools Sport Programme, please contact Sibusiso Ngomane on 078 098 9546 or visit www.transnetfoundation.co.za/csi-portfolios/sports.html

For pictures of the opening ceremony of the Rural and Farm Schools Sport Tournament, please refer to the below link. Alternatively, you can also request a high resolution image.

<http://www.fullcirclepublic.co.za/transnet/index.html>

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Issued on behalf of the Transnet Foundation.

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