



HILTON COLLEGE



view from the

Dugout

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Your perspective, the way you see things, will very often determine your success. Perspective after all determines your attitude and your attitude your motivation to achieve. In sport (and life) this can be directly applied to the competition arena when facing a bigger, stronger opponent. This scenario can be viewed from two perspectives – a mighty challenge or a great opportunity. Neither is wrong really but it's more a case of which is better. Experience suggests that, for the “underdog” the thing that makes all the difference is perceiving opposition as not just a challenge to overcome but an opportunity to succeed or to prove oneself. The the recent TS Galaxy Nedbank Cup victory over Kaiser Chiefs is a classic sporting example.

Not much more needs to be said really but if you haven't read 1 Samuel 17 in the Bible then you haven't heard the greatest story ever told on perspective, challenge and opportunity. Yes, it's the story of David and Goliath. What the Israelite army saw in Goliath was a battle hardened giant, a highly trained a war hero who couldn't be defeated - an impossible challenge. What David saw was a target he couldn't miss. What you perceive is what you believe and what you believe is very often what will happen.

Coming into the Maritzburg College winter sport fixture was a mighty challenge for our comparatively small school - but a great opportunity just the same. We have had a successful season thus far but this fixture, against the strongest rugby and hockey school in KZN, was going to be the ultimate test. Not least of all the intensity and physicality, for which “College” teams are famed, would be our greatest test. A challenge and an opportunity.

In hockey, the day started superbly on the Water Based Astro with the U14A grabbing a 2 – 1 win right at the death. The U14C also performed admirably in a close match which we eventually lost 1 – 3. The second round of fixtures saw the 5th and U16C go down but the momentum in the A teams kept going with the U16A defeating their opponents 1 – 0. This was an incredibly close encounter with both teams creating excellent opportunities to score. The rest of the day was epitomized by hard fought matches and although Maritzburg College won the majority of these games the scores were relatively close. One of our best teams on the day was the U14D team. These “little” chaps played their heart out for their school but narrowly lost in the end (0 - 1).



Our team of the day was the 1st XI. The boys were in an indomitable mood on Saturday showing excellent focus and intent from the start. Such was our assertiveness that not many could argue that there was only one team in the match for most of the match. It was our vault-like defense that smothered the Maritzburg College attacking options so effectively that it created an excellent platform to attack, which we did with regularity

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and good effect. This led to three outstanding goals, one in each of the first three quarters to give us a commanding 3 – 0 lead at that stage.

In the last quarter, a shift in our defensive shape allowed Maritzburg College more time on the ball. To their credit, they never gave up but pushed even harder to find their opening goal. Numerous chances went their way but our shot-stopper, John Turner, was an impassable wall, his impressive display ensuring a clean sheet for the White. In the end an exceptional 3 – 0 win and one for the history books against our old rivals.



Our rugby club also got off to a great start on Saturday with our U14A young-guns securing an excellent win on Lombard. Having sprinted out the blocks we cruised to a commanding lead by the half. This, however, seemed in jeopardy in the second half after Maritzburg College launched repeated attacks to narrow the score significantly and give them hope for an incredible come-back. It wasn't to be as we closed out 33 – 26 winners. Two incredible matches to watch were the U15B and U14B matches. After applying all of the early pressure our U15B's eventually took the lead early in the second half after an intercept try (5 – 0). Maritzburg College then replied with a goal of their own - patience on the ball creating a rare line-break for the visitors (5 – 7). Our boys were never out of it and on the stroke of full time a penalty was awarded in our favour, some distance out from goal. Unfortunately, the resulting (outstanding) kick shaved the underside of the crossbar which sealed the victory for the visitors. An excellent performance from our brave boys.



The U15A, having been in the game for such long periods of time, will be disappointed and somewhat perplexed by their result. Admittedly their opponents, who have been playing good rugby all season, were incredible on the day and they thoroughly deserved the win. The U16A team match was a brutal affair with neither team giving an inch on defense. The low scoring nature of the game was testament to this and in the end the draw was a fair result for two top teams. The 3rds (13 – 10) and 4ths (10 – 19) continue to outperform expectation this season. Backing down for no one, they have played some exciting rugby week-in and week-out. Much like our U15A the 2nd team will be disappointed with their second half performance. Although closely fought in the first half, the Hoop and Badge had the ascendancy at that stage – the key to their success being their possession statistics. Unforced errors in the second stanza meant we lost the possession battle and Maritzburg College then made full use of their chances through some exciting backline play.

Coming into the 1st XV match our boys had an awesome opportunity to beat Maritzburg College for the second consecutive year; a feat of historical significance. There was no better chance to do so playing on our home ground but we knew that the battle would be an intense one. What we weren't quite prepared for was the level of physicality Maritzburg College would bring to the contest. Forcing us onto the back foot from the start, we were made to play for long periods deep

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in our half. We were doing ourselves no favours defensively and were it not for some brave cover defense we may well have been a long way behind from early on.



Maritzburg College were in fact the first to score after a penalty tap-and-go saw one of their players glide through our dallying defense and under the poles (0 – 7). An excellent counter attack soon thereafter forced our first score, a penalty from close range. Penalties were then exchanged (10 – 6). With the half time break approaching we discovered the strength of our driving maul and from it a sly blind side break put Tanaka Matsa away for try from 40m out, Teichmann the provider. 11 – 10 the score at the half. The White started the second half far better than the first. Playing to their strengths they put more pressure on the visitors whose error count gradually increased. This translated into a kickable penalty which took us ahead 14 – 10, a score that remained locked for most of the half. The decisive blow came with 8 minutes to play. A scrum in center field set up a strike down the right side. The move, perfectly executed, saw talismanic winger Tanaka Matsa, supplied in space once more – and making no mistakes he eluded diving defenders to score in the corner. Just as impressive was Ruan Wilmans’ conversion kick from the sideline taking us 11 clear. Despite our healthy lead the last minutes remained tense. The Maritzburg College boys refused to give up and

eventually after full-time had elapsed they crashed over our line from close range for what was to be a consolation try. 21 – 17 the final score – a famous result for the 1st XV.

Much has been said of our results against Maritzburg College this past weekend. On one side we celebrate the wins we achieved in the “higher” teams. One cannot argue that victories across both sports at 1st team level is very impressive indeed and let alone the A teams in the lower age groups. These must be some of our best results against this school in our long history (well in the past 30 years anyway). On the reverse, we acknowledge that Maritzburg College were better than us down-the-line. As is normally the case, their immense depth of talent won them the majority of matches played. Regardless of our victories or theirs, I must say how very proud I am of ALL of our results on the day – win or lose. And, looking at our past results against this school, I am especially proud of our “lower” teams who played with such pride and courage. Well done team Hilton – we have come a long way.



Tony Shuttleworth
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