

BRIEF HISTORY OF THE WANDERERS RUGBY FOOTBALL CLUB

It does not seem clear as to who actually started the Wanderers Club. Let's leave that to the historians (cricket and rugby claim to be founders).

In the winter of 1887 a club was established to accommodate various sports. Zingari club and the Rand Wanderers Club held a meeting. The Rand Wanderers Rugby Club and the Wanderers Cricket Club were amongst those who attended.

They decided to merge and formed the club called Rand Wanderers Club. This name was decided upon as most members were wanderers on the gold fields in search of riches. J.G.Currey was the first chairman of the Wanderers committee.

Only rugby was initially played. Mr. Jacob Swart from Kimberley arrived and things soon changed. Because of various oversights the club came to nought soon after starting – no grounds for one. But it was soon revived by the committee. The grounds were in the 'cbd' and we still have Wanderers Street to remind us of the first place. Rand Wanderers Rugby Club joined the new Wanderers Club.

Charles L. Anderson was the first secretary and also rugby captain. He was instructed to obtain a set of maroon jerseys. There were no available jerseys so he wrote to his friend in Cape Town, Billy Simkins. Hamilton's club was approached as they had the only available stock. These were sent to the Wanderers and the colours of scarlet, black and gold are still used today. Another version is that the colours of the Zingari club was black, red and gold signifying out of the darkness through fire into light.

In 1889 the Right Honorable S.T.P. Kruger, the State President became the first Patron of the Club. On the 13th March 1889 27 gentlemen met and formed the Wanderers Sporting and Athletic Club.

In 1889 C.L. Anderson captained the first Transvaal team at the Interprovincial tournament in Kimberley. In 1889 Wanderers came second in the Pirates Grand Challenge Competition.

In 1902 they won the competition under the captaincy of Charlie Jones. In 1905 they were once again winners. In 1983 after a long wait we were winners again.

Wanderers represented Transvaal in the Toyota club tournament in Durban in 1984. Ex All Black Murray Mexted deserves special mention as one of the better players. In 1987 we were once again invited to the tournament. Many prominent players and administrators came from the ranks of the Wanderers Rugby Club including D. Frew, Fred Smollan, Des Sinclair, Syd Nomis, Chick Henderson, Peter Swanson, John Robbie and Rudolf Straeuli to name but a few.

The 'A' ground at the old Wanderers was only 'turfed' in 1922. In 1923 the union splashed out to prepare the grounds for grassing. No money was left over for a motorised lawnmower, so a flock of sheep was purchased to do the job.

Wanderers has had mixed fortunes over the years, being in and out of the Pirates league. More recently we are playing in the Senior Grand Challenge Competition fielding 3 senior teams and an under21/20 side (made up mainly of development players from Alexander). In 2010 the under21's fared badly, the 3rd team won their league, 2nds were placed 5th and the 1st xv lost in the semi-finals. 2011 once again saw mixed results – the under21's were placed 9th, 3rds were 5th on the log, 2nds lost in a semi-final while the 1st xv was placed 5th.

Going forward we can only improve and hopefully regain entry into the Pirates Grand Challenge. This is our 125th year of existence and are planning big things for the future. We have a new coaching team including Neil Kalify and John Girnum with ex-Springbok Dean Hall assisting as a technical advisor. All three are ex Wanderers players.