

UNITED RUGBY CHAMPIONSHIP

New Stormer Kolisi goes the extra mile – literally

DUDLEY CARSTENS

SOME people are just built differently. Made to stand out. Made to make an impact and light up a room wherever they go.

You know the type – the person who travels halfway across the world just to be with his new teammates without even getting to play in his new jersey.

New Stormers recruit Siya Kolisi is that guy. The Springbok captain proved as much at the weekend, turning up in Ireland, as his new team prepared for their opening United Rugby Championship (URC) match against Connacht.

“As soon as he found out he wasn’t playing [for the Springboks against Australia on Sunday], he asked if he could join us,” said Stormers forwards coach Rito Hlungwani of Kolisi, who joined from the Sharks at the start of the new season. “The Springboks, thankfully, allowed him to come join us and spend a bit of time getting to know some of the youngsters [in the squad], and we were quite happy with that.”

The impression Kolisi made on his new teammates is one that will stay with them for a long time.

Despite not playing in the match, he warmed up with them and got involved from the get-go.

“It was so cool [to have Siya joining us],” said a wide-eyed Hacjivah Dayimani in an online media conference from Ireland yesterday.

“The week before, preparation [for the weekend] was normal – we didn’t know he was coming, and he opted to come and support and train and wanted to get involved. We saw him in the team meeting. It was super cool for us – we felt the energy from the moment he walked in. He was trying to get the chaps up and bring positivity. From training until after the game, it was special – especially before the game, where he spoke to the guys and



SPRINGBOK captain Siya Kolisi is back at the Stormers where he started his career. | BackpagePix

said, ‘Do not stress or tense up.’

“It was really cool for us to see him joining us with that experience. A lot of the guys look up to him and look forward to playing with him.”

Kolisi’s magic worked a treat as the Stormers beat Connacht 29-15. And while the Stormers camp is mum on whether he will be involved in Friday’s match against Edinburgh in Scotland, there is no doubt that his presence will already be a boost to his teammates.

“What he really wanted to do was bond with the guys,” added Hlungwani.

“The best way to bond is when you’re on tour. It’s really good for the players to see he is not this Springbok captain, superstar-type player who’s coming to join them, but a humble player who is just like any of them, willing to work hard, willing to belong, willing to get accepted by the team and using actions to get that right ...”

Kolisi is indeed that type of person – the one who will stop traffic just to say hello to you on the other side of the street.

He goes the extra mile.

“It showed in how he travelled from Perth to Dubai, then Dubai to Dublin and then took a bus [to get to the team] – it just shows the type of guy he is, and it’s something that we all respect and appreciate,” added Hlungwani.

“It brings a team together even more and shows this guy is hungry to play for the Stormers. He is a very good example, and I hope a lot of boys can learn from that.”

CRICKET

A special day for the Miller household

MICHAEL SHERMAN

IT MAY have been written in the stars that David Miller had his mother Jenny’s name on his shirt during the Proteas’ Pink Day ODI win over Australia at the Wanderers on Sunday, as the veteran left-hander notched up the highest score of his career.

Miller bludgeoned 142 from 93 balls with 12 fours and nine sixes as the Proteas posted 365/9 batting first. Though he was ably assisted by Temba Bavuma, who scored 103, it was an especially poignant moment for Miller, who was named Player of the Match.

Pink Day was dedicated to honouring breast cancer survivors, and Miller’s mother, Jenny, is one such inspiring story.

With Miller now the oldest player in the Proteas setup at 37, family seems to mean that much more for the South African stalwart.

“This year was really cool because they personalised the shirts with breast cancer survivors around the country,” said Miller in his post-match press conference.

“It was a special day for all the ladies, and it’s been a great initiative over the years.

“Having this one today was really emotional. I don’t think my mom has stopped crying for the last 24 hours. It’s been a really cool day having my mom and dad here supporting. Topping it off with Player of the Match and doing well makes it extra special, more so for her.”

With his mother’s health journey weighing heavily on his mind, the knock at the Wanderers may rank as the most special of his career, Miller hinted.



DAVID Miller smashed a career-best 142 off 93 balls to lead the Proteas past Australia on Pink Day, wearing his mother Jenny’s name to honour her breast cancer victory. | BackpagePix

“It’s been a tough couple of years, and to celebrate the challenges they’ve been through on a day like this makes it really special for them,” he added.

“She said to me earlier, ‘I don’t have enough make-up today because it keeps falling off!’

“They’re very happy and proud. They’ve been there from day one for me, so it’s obviously very special.”

As the long-standing mainstay of the Proteas middle order, Miller is still fighting for his place in the squad for the World Cup on home soil next year against an influx of raw talent in the form of Tristan Stubbs, Matthew Breetzke and Dewald Brevis.

Miller is also no longer a nationally contracted player for Cricket South Africa, choosing to make the most of his twilight years by competing in various lucrative T20 leagues across the globe. That is why the timing of his latest century could not have been more significant.

“Every single game for me – whether for South Africa or domestically – I just want to contribute in the best way that I can and make an impact,” he said.

“Having been around for a long time, it’s important to lead from the front and put my hand up. I was pretty hungry today to get that right after the first game.

“There’s no guarantee of making a World Cup – there never is. There’s a lot of hard work I personally need to put in and keep contributing. At the end of the day, it is what it is, and I’m really looking forward to what lies ahead.”

The Proteas face Australia in the third and final ODI at Senwes Park in Potchefstroom tomorrow.

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Iconic Paarl Stadium Becomes the Official Home of ARI King’s Cup South Africa

The world-renowned football and entertainment franchise has officially arrived on the African continent, bringing the prestigious ARI King’s Cup to the greater Cape Town region in February 2027.

The tournament has established the newly transformed ARI King’s Cup Stadium in Paarl as its permanent South African home. Beyond staging high-stakes match play, the venue will serve as a continuous epicenter for deep social impact, grassroots community upliftment, and sports philanthropy across the Western Cape.

Stadium Acquisition & Leadership

The landmark transition of the Paarl venue into the permanent ARI King’s Cup Stadium marks a pivotal step in expanding world-class multi-sport infrastructure in South Africa. Under the leadership of Chief Operating Officer Mohamed Saib, the executive team is spearheading the venue’s strategic transformation, driving tournament execution, and establishing dedicated regional outreach programs across the Cape Winelands.

Adding distinguished national star power to the initiative, South African football royalty and 1996 AFCON winner Mark Fish joins the organization as the official Brand Ambassador, while acclaimed South African television personality and model Shashi Naidoo will serve as the master of ceremonies, hosting the event throughout its historic run.

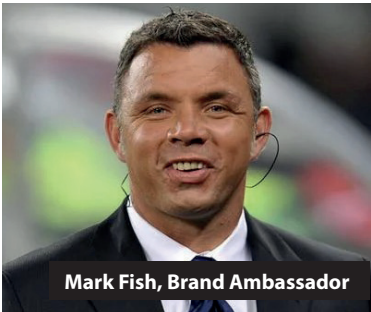
Eight Elite International Teams

The South African tournament will feature eight powerhouse squads combining football royalty, sporting icons, entertainers, and special guests:

- Red Rock Royals (Dubai)
- Capital Gold Red Devils
- BW Saints (India)
- Odisha Kings FC (India)
- Clear Water Knights (USA)
- Betlife Angels (Slovakia)
- AIG Fab Stars (United Kingdom)
- KheloYar Giants (United Kingdom)

Clashes Reignited: Decades of Bad Blood on the Pitch

Trophies are already won, but pride



Mark Fish, Brand Ambassador



Shashi Naidoo, Master of Ceremonies

never retires. Old rivalries reignite with venom in Paarl as English football’s fiercest feud detonates in the Capital Gold Red Devils vs. Betlife Angels showdown—pitting the Manchester United legends grit of Luis Nani, Juan Sebastián Verón, and Antonio Valencia, led from the front on the Manchester side by team captain Mohamed Saib, against the lethal Liverpool firepower of Robbie Fowler, Michael Owen, and Steve McManaman, with South Africa’s own combat champion Dricus du Plessis lining up on the Liverpool side to back the Merseyside charge. Alongside an explosive El Clásico collision featuring Ronaldinho, Xavi Hernández, and Rivaldo facing down Real Madrid icons Marcelo, Fernando Morientes, and Michel Salgado, this isn’t a gentle exhibition—it’s an authentic war of attrition where no one is pulling out of a tackle.

Headline Football Legends & Star Roster

Showcasing celebrated icons from top European clubs—including Manchester United, Liverpool, Real Madrid, Barcelona, Valencia, and Paris Saint-Germain—the South African edition brings together a world-class player roster:

- Ronaldinho
- Rivaldo
- Marcelo
- Xavi Hernández



- Fernando Morientes
- Michel Salgado
- Luis Nani
- Juan Sebastián Verón
- Antonio Valencia
- Robbie Fowler
- Michael Owen
- Steve McManaman
- David James
- Gaizka Mendieta
- Bernard Mendy
- Marouane Fellaini
- Moustapha Hadji

Alongside many other international legends.

The King’s Guards & The ARI HalfTime Show

Adding an electric entertainment layer to the sporting action, the King’s Guards segment bridges elite athletics and global entertainment. Organizers are currently in conversation with UFC Light Heavyweight Champion Alex Pereira, South African combat star Dricus du Plessis, and Hollywood icons Will Smith and Jason Statham.

During the interval, the arena will host the exclusive ARI HalfTime Show, highlighting the ARI brand. For this South African edition, organizers are in conversation with global hitmakers Michael Bublé and Afrobeat superstar Rema to headline the mid-match musical showcase.

A Deep Commitment to Philanthropy & Youth Development

At its core, the ARI King’s Cup in South Africa is built upon a profound philanthropic foundation. The tournament leverages the unifying reach of world football to drive measurable, long-term social change across the region.

Throughout the event window, participating football legends will personally conduct extensive coaching and mentorship clinics directly on the pitch for underserved local youth, instilling athletic fundamentals, discipline, and inspiration. Paired with major charitable drives, community development initiatives, and foundation engagements hosted inside the stadium, the event is dedicated to empowering local communities, funding youth sports programs, and establishing a lasting humanitarian legacy throughout Paarl and the Western Cape.

February 2027 marks a defining turning point for South African sports entertainment. As the global spotlight turns to ARI King’s Cup Stadium, the convergence of world football legends, cultural icons, and purposeful grassroots philanthropy will not only ignite the pitch, but create an enduring legacy of inspiration and opportunity across the Western Cape for generations to come.



Robbie Fowler

M. Saib