

Boland Rugby announces major sponsorship deal set to fire up flagship club tournament

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Five Proudly South African brands join hands with prominent rugby union ahead of premier club competition.



The Boland Rugby Union is excited to announce Sanlam, Vumatel, Tekkie Town, Santam, and Umbro as its sponsors for the upcoming Sanlam Boland Top 12 Rugby Competition set to kick off on 21 October 2023.

The competition is the pinnacle of recognising rugby talent and excellence in the Boland Rugby Union with 216 registered clubs, 481 club teams, and more than 18,000 registered club players, played across 13 municipalities in the Boland, and the greatest number of rugby-playing schools in South Africa, making it the biggest rugby union in South Africa, not only with player, clubs, and schools but also covering the largest geographical area by any rugby union.

To put the expanse of the Boland Rugby Union into perspective, the two outlying towns in the Sanlam Boland Top 12 alone, Hawston and Vanrhynsdorp, are 382 km apart, a nearly five-hour drive via the R44 and N7.

Twelve teams from six regions including *Weskus*, *Witsentraal*, *Overberg*, *Breelangeberg*, *Swartland*, and *Noordweste* compete in the Boland Rugby's *Grootuitdaag* division during the regular season. The clubs that finish in positions one and two in these six regions qualify for the Sanlam Boland Top 12. Reigning champions Saldanha and Mamre have qualified from the *Weskus* region, last year's runners-up Bella Vista from Ceres and Roses from Wellington will represent *Witsentraal*. At the same time, the *Overberg's* teams will be debutants Grabouw-based Safcol and the experienced coastal side club, Hawston. *Breëlangeberg* region will be aptly represented by Robertson Town and Young Hamiltons with Darling and Wesbank carrying the flag for the *Swartland* region. Vanrhynsdorp Eagles and Delicious are the two clubs that topped the *Noordweste* region.

This momentous sponsorship deal comes off the back of Boland Rugby (Pty) Ltd's equity deal secured with Stellenbosch Academy of Sport ("SAS"), a subsidiary of Remgro Limited, and a consortium comprising companies controlled by the

Motsepe family ("Motsepe Consortium").

These partnerships demonstrate the unwavering support of these proudly South African brands toward the growth and development of rugby in the Boland region. The Sanlam Boland Top 12 is South Africa's largest and best-attended club competition and this year more than 200,000 supporters are expected to back their teams at the 33 matches being played.

"We are delighted to have Sanlam as the main sponsor along with Vumatel, Tekkie Town, Santam, and Umbro as key sponsors for the Sanlam Boland Top 12 Competition. Their commitment to fostering talent and sportsmanship aligns perfectly with the values of Boland Rugby," said Mr Bennie van Rooi, president of the Boland Rugby Union.

This competition is known to be one of the best showcases and platforms for raw and unearthed talent to be spotted. Players like South Africa Men's Sevens trio Jaiden Baron, Shilton van Wyk, and Gurshwin Wehr have all featured in the Sanlam Boland Top 12 in recent years.

This year the competition will feature its very own song that was specially written and composed for the Sanlam Boland Top 12 and will be played ahead of every kick-off. In keeping with the theme of unlocking the region's talent, the song is written and sung by local artist, Rjay & Lkay ft Qhwan. The song will be available on the official Boland Rugby website.

Each match will have loads of entertainment for every member of the family, an MC will be there to entertain and keep the crowd engaged, a Miss Sanlam Boland Top 12 will feature throughout the competition, and dancers at every match. Fans can also look forward to some exciting and unique pre-match, halftime, and post-match sponsorship activations both on the field and on Boland Rugby's social media platforms.

All 33 matches will be streamed live through local streaming partners. These partners have a strong following in the Boland Club Rugby space and this sponsorship enables Boland Rugby to unlock and empower these streamers to deliver an excellent product.

"Sanlam and Santam are honoured to be associated with the Boland Rugby Union and the incredible talent that resides in this region," said Karl Socikwa, group executive market development and sustainability development at Sanlam. "Our sponsorship aims to empower local communities through sports and support the union's mission of nurturing young talent."

Dietlof Maré, CEO of Vumatel and parent company MAZIV, echoed this sentiment, stating, "We believe in the transformative power of sport, and our partnership with the Boland Rugby Union is a testament to our commitment to making a positive impact in the communities we serve. We look forward to a successful journey together."

"We are excited to form part of the sponsors of this great rugby family," said Riaan van Rooyen, CEO of Tekkie Town. "Tekkie Town believes in effecting change in the community, we have a strong presence in the Boland region, and it is partnerships like this that empower us to make a difference at the community level."

About Boland Rugby Union:

Established in 1939, the Boland Rugby Union is the 11th oldest rugby province in South Africa, with the largest base of clubs (216) in South Africa. The Boland Rugby Union represents the biggest geographical rugby area in South Africa, consisting of more than 18,000 club rugby players and has a rich and storied history deeply rooted in the heart of South African rugby. As a dynamic and forward-thinking organisation, it consistently strived for excellence both on and off the field. The Boland Cavaliers, the professional team representing the Boland Rugby Union, is the reigning Currie Cup First Division champions after they secured their sixth title in the 2023 season.

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