



Telford pupils kick-off South African Rugby Tour fundraising campaign

A fundraising campaign to support an ambitious rugby tour of South Africa in 2023 has been kicked-off by pupils of Haberdashers' Abraham Darby Academy in Madeley, Telford.

Working with teachers, parents and school governors, the pupils have set themselves a target of £10,000 to fund a life-changing sporting trip to one of the Southern Hemisphere's hotbeds of Rugby Union.

For the next year or so, a squad of 21 players from Years 10+11 will be learning and implementing new business skills alongside their rugby training as they lead the efforts to turn a dream into reality.

However, Mr Will Bennett, Abraham Darby Academy's Head of Rugby, explains that this is no ordinary trip and they are far from an ordinary school rugby team.

"The idea of playing rugby within Shropshire a few years ago, never mind playing rugby in South Africa, was previously out of the question," says Will.

"But the school has since embraced the sport of rugby as a channel for good. Using it to develop personal and team skills, provide discipline, inspire hard work and endeavour, and offer new horizons to show young people that there are genuine career and life opportunities when secondary education is finished.

"Rugby is being used as a vehicle to raise aspirations and academic results within the Academy. The success of our rugby teams is infectious and the players are fast becoming role models for other pupils."

As well playing rugby, the planned trip to South Africa will offer pupils other potentially life-changing challenges such as a safari and shark diving.

"This trip has huge potential to increase aspirations, expose young people to a different culture and widen their perspectives – for some it will be a life-changing event."



Read more about the school, the players and the support being offered:

About Abraham Darby Academy's relationship with rugby

Abraham Darby Academy has a rich rugby past. In the 1970s and 1980s it was a powerhouse in the local Telford area and competed against some of the best sides in the Midlands.

With a change in leadership in the late 1990s the school moved away from a focus on rugby. Fifteen years later, it has gone full circle and now finds itself playing rugby to the highest standards once more.

In the past ten years the school has introduced a challenging rugby programme that sees all age groups training on a weekly basis, taking part in national and local competitions, as well as being the only state school in Shropshire to take part in Saturday rugby fixtures. [The current year ten and eleven squad are County finalists.](#)

This group of young men have shown great amounts of dedication which has positively impacted upon their studies within the academy.



Fundraising feat: Abraham Darby Academy's Year 10+11 rugby players with South Africa 2023 on their minds



How Rugby changed my life by Chrishome Afryrie

Playing with pride

My Name is Chrishome Afryrie, and I am proud to say I play for the u15 rugby team. All the hard work we have put in recently has resulted in a County Cup win against Oswestry School. Back in year 6 I did not even know the sport of rugby existed until our first training session in year 7. In year 7 I was not good at rugby, I got tired easily and could barely last half a game. Covid affected the season in year 9 but I personally worked hard on my fitness, I am now currently in the u16 Worcester Warriors Academy.

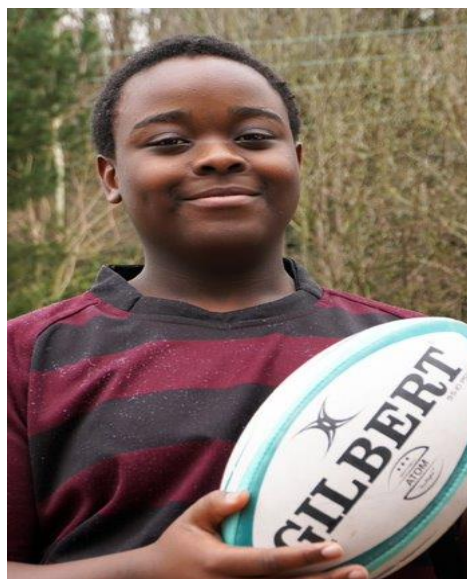
Rugby has changed my life in a sense because it has taught me the value of teamwork and to do whatever you can for the success of the team, I am excited and lucky to be going on the once in a lifetime tour to South Africa.



How Rugby is broadening my horizons – by Junior Sengo

Playing with pride

Hello, my name is Junior Sengo and I am part of the under 15s rugby team. I am so proud of how far our team has come since our very first match in year 10 to the county cup finals which we won. This team has become my second family and there is nothing I wouldn't do for the lads. I joined the rugby team in year 7 just to give it a try not knowing how far I would take it. In year 7 I was a





very small very fat and very lazy, don't know what my coaches saw in me, but they encouraged me to always keep going and good thing I listened to them because next year hopefully we will be going south Africa to play rugby. It will be our final goodbye to Abraham Darby rugby, so we must out with a bang.

How Rugby has changed me as a person – by Harry Housley

Playing with pride

. Because of my love of rugby, I chose Haberdashers Abraham Darby Academy for my secondary school, despite it not being my catchment school. This meant I had to appeal to get in and I was thrilled when I was offered a place.

I have been part of the rugby team throughout my 5 years at school, in various roles and positions. I was lucky enough to earn player of the year in year 8 in recognition of the training and hard work that I had put in.

During the COVID-19 period we struggled with rugby training and fixtures, however we were able to tour to Ireland which was an amazing experience. We looked up to the older age group boys at school I

aspired to reach the same level of them during these experiences. Having the sixth forms boys with us coaching too, reinforced the level of commitment that is demonstrated by players and coaching staff to ensure that we have every opportunity to succeed. This is something that has stayed with me through each year of playing rugby. The tours have helped to develop my resilience and independence alongside playing some fantastic rugby with a variety of different teams.

Due to the high level of coaching and support from school I was then lucky enough to be taken onto the Worcester Warriors Player Development Group team. Again, this was celebrated and supported in school and although I am not part of this group now, it has enabled me to bring the level of commitment and training back to school and the Year 11 team. The discipline, dedication, and respect that I have been taught on the rugby pitch has helped me to develop the same skills within the academic side of school. This is





something which is encouraged and valued from all sides of the rugby staff and players and is the ethos of the rugby teams over the years.

The pinnacle of Year 11, alongside playing some excellent rugby in both 15's and 7's in some awesome locations, such as Oakham, Rosslyn Park and top grammar school across the West Midlands, was being awarded Clubman of the Year and earning my full colours! Over the past few years, I have watched the older boys earn these prestigious awards and listened to their stories. These have been inspirational and have helped push me on to achieve this myself. This could only have been done with the constant personal, emotional and rugby support from the entire coaching team at school. Helping me to believe in myself, particularly in times where I have doubted myself and my rugby! For this I will always be grateful.

The prospect of the South Africa tour is truly amazing! I listened carefully to the boys who went before me in awe as they described their experiences and I understand that this would not be possible at all without the hard work and dedication of the rugby coaching staff team and the other adults who help to promote, organise, fund raise and build this once in a lifetime experience become a reality. Sponsorship is extremely important in these things as it can make a tour become one of the best times of your life, as kits are provided, and experiences are organised. Rugby is made for the memories, and this is where they are made.

A successful trip to South Africa in 2023 will change many young people's lives. To help fund the trip in any way possible, you can contact Will Bennet: will.bennett@taw.org.uk or via phone 01952 386000.

