

{ PROFILE }

AS a boy, Springbok rugby flanker Siya Kolisi befriended a brick because his family couldn't afford toys. He grew up in Zwide, Port Elizabeth, where soccer was the most popular sport, but he took to rugby because his boxer father loved it. He never imagined he'd play for his country one day.

The township streets were his universe until he was spotted at a local game for his club, African Bombers, and given a scholarship to PE's Grey High, a school known for producing sporting legends. Since running out for DHL Stormers in 2011, the 100kg, 1.87m flanker has emerged as one of the team's most promising players.

His Bok debut against Scotland in Nelspruit last June earned him Man of the Match. Rags to riches stuff ... except Kolisi, 23, hasn't quite got it made yet. Selected for the June Bok squad, he has spent most of the season on the bench. But he is determined to become a great Springbok in his own right.

My grandmother raised me. Sometimes she didn't eat to make sure I had food. I was nine when she died. She'd become really sick and I couldn't go to school anymore because I had to look after her. It was just the two of us when she died.

I thought she'd come back. I still don't think I've accepted it. My aunt took care of me after my grandmother's death, but she died when I was in the hostel at Grey. My mother also died when I was a teenager. She was just a teenager herself when she had me. It was heartbreaking.

I didn't see my younger brother and sister again. They were sent to an orphanage after my mother's death. And then I found them by chance, eight years later, when I



BIG BROTHER: Springbok flanker Siya Kolisi at the Dan Qeque Stadium in his home town of Zwide

Picture: KARL SHOEMAKER

Forward thinking

Siya Kolisi talks to **Tiara Walters** about focus, family and feeling invincible

'My sister walked up to me & started touching my face. I was stunned. She had spoken about me at school.'

went home recently. The Boks were playing Port Elizabeth and I'd bumped into a cousin who said he knew where they were.

They were living with a carer in Zwide, who recognised me instantly, because my brother, now 11, and I are the spitting image of each other. The highlight was meeting my eight-year-old sister. She walked up to me and started touching my face.

Apparently she'd spoken about me at school. I was stunned. Then she curled into my lap, and just lay on my chest. I've just bought a home in Pinelands, and they'll move in with me next year.

I'm going through a tough time in my career. I'm not performing at all. I know what I'm capable of. Perhaps I settled into a comfort zone. Finding my family and so on, and buying the house. Now I have to put my focus back on rugby.

It's hard to make the Springboks team, but it's even harder to stay there. You have to perform all the time. There's always someone else who wants to be where you are.

It's about who has the most fire.

I'm the breadwinner. My father and uncles don't work — and there are my brother and sister now too, so I'm not just playing for myself.

When I ran out for the Boks against Scotland I felt invincible. I was playing with giants like Bryan Habana, and (captain) Jean de Villiers. Of all the players, I guess I admire Jean most. He's a confidante off the field, and knows how to be a captain.

During my first game, we were behind at some point. I was freaking out. Scotland had scored just before half time. And then Jean rounded us up and started laughing. He said, "Boys, let's just have

fun. We're going back and that's all we'll do." I thought like a different person then. The captain was smiling, after all. We won that game. It was the best experience of my life.

More can be done to develop young township players. I've designed team jerseys and tracksuits for my old club, the African Bombers, to motivate them to play harder. The first team will have their own special tracksuit.

I have a tattoo of a poem a little boy from the UK wrote after seeing me play. He wrote: "Born in a cold metal shack / No food to eat, no shoes to wear / Spotted on a rocky grassless field / Fearing no other player / An orphan living

with his old gran / Wins a place at the school / Where there is no black, no white / Everybody is Grey / Now a Stormer / Now a Springbok / Runs with courage / Fearing no other player."

You should pick the best players for the Boks if you want the team to win. I wouldn't want to be chosen because of my colour. If I'm not good enough, I shouldn't be picked.

The Boks are going to win the 2015 World Cup. We've been improving every year. The guys are working hard. Heyneke Meyer gives credit when it's due, but he always wants better. You can never be too perfect. **LS**

Advertorial

Relief from Joint Pain

NEW

Is osteoarthritis an inevitable result of wear and tear on the joints as you age? If you've been diagnosed with osteoarthritis, you're not alone. In South Africa it is estimated that more than 3 million people suffer from the most common joint disease worldwide.



Dr Jon Patricios, president of the South African Sports Medicine Association and director of Morningside Sports Medicine explains, "Active people will likely suffer from wear and tear of the joints as they age. Some

are more prone such as those who have injured their joints. Unfortunately there is no cure because cartilage cannot be replaced. We are left having to manage the condition to reduce pain and swelling."



Treatments for osteoarthritis

If you have osteoarthritis, it is best to work together with your doctor or physiotherapist to develop a strategy to look after the life span of your joints.

A proven option is: **Flexiseq**, a joint lubricating gel which recently became available in South Africa. This is a new drug-free

osteoarthritis is a degenerative joint disease characterised by a lack of cartilage in the affected joint. Cartilage provides a shock absorbing and lubricating surface for the joint to fulfil its movement function. So if cartilage is depleted or if lubrication is reduced, movement becomes more difficult and increased friction between the bones results in pain and inflammation.

Despite the high incidence, there haven't been any significant medical advances - until recently. **Flexiseq**, a drug-free gel, has been proven to help lubricate joints.

treatment option proven to be effective in relieving pain associated with osteoarthritis in extensive clinical trials including over 4000 patients. The gel incorporates innovative nano technology which enables lubricating phospholipids to travel through the skin to coat the surface of the cartilage. This joint lubricating action relieves pain and assists increased joint mobility.

Being a drug-free treatment it has proven safe and does not interact with any other drugs.



Flexiseq vesicles supplement the phospholipids in the joint, aiding mobility and reducing inflammation.

Says Dr Jon Patricios, "This is a most interesting new approach to treating joint pain. The physical mode of action and the lack of an active pharmaceutical ingredient make it safe and the clinical trials show efficacy. **Flexiseq** will be a useful treatment which can be used in conjunction with drugs or to help those patients who do not tolerate drug treatment or who are at risk of side effects. I have a number of patients currently trialling the product who have responded well which is most promising."

Available from Dis-Chem and pharmacies
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076 769 9169 / info@skymedsa.co.za

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