

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?



Marie Davies

SHAUN PLATFORD

Second Row. 1996-98. 35 appearances, 4 tries.

Shaun's Rugby Honours

Represented Natal Schools 1985, 1986.

Representative Honours

University of KwaZulu Natal 'Blue'
University 'Colours' Award.

Provincial 'Colours' for Natal in 1991.

Natal Sharks 1991-93.

Currie Cup Championship medal 1992.

South African Barbarians 1992.

Played sporadically in 1993-94 before retiring due to illness.

Coming out of retirement in 1996 to join Bedford Blues. Other South Africans who joined the club in 1996 - Rudi Straeuli and Heinz Pfluger.

South African Shaun and Scott Murray were a formidable second row partnership during Shaun's two seasons at Goldington Road. Shaun was a great lineout jumper and a skilful all round player.

SHAUN IN 1996



Shaun's father was born in Norwich and moved to Zambia as an agricultural engineer in the early 60s. He met his South African wife there and Shaun was born in Zambia in 1968. The family relocated to South Africa in 1973 to what is now known as KwaZulu Natal.

Shaun always recalls that he was fortunate to have a quietly confident mentor in his father although he never pressured him to take up sport as a profession. Shaun only took part in sport in school because it was compulsory, but always found himself in his school's very successful 'A' team. Indeed he decided at 16 to give up rugby, but the school's Vice Principal was a rugby fanatic and the rugby coach naturally turned down his 'request to give up'. Shaun went on to play in the 1st team and represent the province.

And so to professional rugby and Goldington Road where he joined other South Africans in a formidable team that gained promotion in 1998.

Here are some of Shaun's memories of his two seasons at Bedford.

'My most impressive Bedford game memory has to be the 77-3 drubbing of Coventry in 1997. Coventry was our closest rival in the league during that season. We'd had two weeks of miserable training weather and had to be relegated to gym training. The rest is history!



DIFFERENT KIT - FAMILIAR PLAYERS



1997-98 SHAUN BACK ROW, 5TH FROM RIGHT

Then there's the pitch. You certainly didn't want to play up the slope if you were tired!

I have to mention the great post match interaction with Bedford's faithful supporters. Life both on and off the field was excellent. The social life at Goldington Road was great and Jen and I spent two memorable years in England and made many friends.

Back in Durban I went into IT for a few years. Our son Josh arrived and I decided to try something new. I became involved in sports coaching and set up sports training academy structures at a school in Durban, before I was offered a job in Internet Solutions, a prominent ISP company in South Africa, where I became the regional Operations Manager.'

In September Shaun wrote to us with an update of his life now.

'Our son Josh is nineteen now and has finished school. His plan was to do a Graphical Media degree, but he has decided to have a gap year

because of the COVID lockdowns we have now endured for the last eighteen months. In school his sporting passion was cricket. He played for the 1st X1 since he was in Grade 9 and just came short of his 100th 1st team appearance for the school before COVID interfered.

He started playing rugby last year and found a new sports passion.



JOSH PLATFORD - LIKE FATHER, LIKE SON!

He was asked to try out for the Natal Sharks U20 squad and participated with them for ten weeks before we were locked down again!

My wife Jen is still a teacher. Our friends in Bedford will remember she taught in Wootton Upper School for two years when we were in Bedford. Jen is now a Guidance Counsellor at Crawford Schools and has been there for 23 years.

Our business has been amalgamated and consolidated over the years and we are now a single business under Dimension Data, but my role is pretty much the same. I have been with the company for the last 16 years and we continue to do quite a lot of consolidation with our parent company NTT Global.

Sportswise we have been rather 'off the boil' because of our lockdown status. However, we still enjoy, when we can, the beaches, life outdoors and cycling.

My new passion is now Adventure Biking (motorcycle) across our vast landscape. I have a KTM 1190 off-roader that we often take for a day out and 'get dirty' over 500kms.

Jen, Josh and I send our best wishes to Bedford and we hope you have a great season.'



JEN AND SHAUN