

WHERE ARE THEY NOW? 

by Marie Davies



## NICK FENTON-WELLS

2012-16. Back Row. 69 appearances. 11 tries.

**Captain for two seasons  
2014-15 and 2015-16**

Nick is the only South African to be on the Scrum Hall Honours Board as captain of Bedford, although Rudi Strauli and Andre Fox may have captained some games while playing for us. The South African connection at the club certainly became strong in the professional era.

**Nick writes:-**

'I was born in Cape Town, South Africa. My parents are both entrepreneurs and have their own businesses set up in Cape Town. My brother and I are three years apart and he and his family also live in England. In 2018 we started our own gym Torque Training in Bristol.

I grew up with strong family rugby connections. My uncle coached me through preparatory school and also in my early years of club rugby. My other uncle coached Boland, Western Province, Stade Francais and the Springboks (in the late 90s and early 2000s). I remember my aunt (who sadly passed away when I was 12) used to do all my uncle's rugby stats for him by hand when he was coaching Boland in the Currie Cup.

I started playing rugby when I was seven, but because I had an older brother I was used for many rugby drills prior to that. I played throughout school but the system for junior rugby is slightly different back home. Club rugby at age grade is basically non-existent. It's all about school rugby. Two of the most memorable games I remember watching from my childhood were the opening match of the 1995 RWC against Australia and the South Africa victory over the All Blacks in the final to win the 1995 RWC. (Of course, another Bedford Blues South African Rudi Strauli was in that team).

Aside from those two, obviously, the 2007 and 2019 RWC Finals were very memorable, especially as I

was fortunate to play with John Smit and Siya Kolisi during my rugby career.

Growing up, we were encouraged to play as many sports as possible. In Prep. School I played cricket, rugby, squash and represented my school at swimming. At High School, I represented Western Province at age group level in cricket and squash. I was absolutely gutted when I didn't get selected for Western Province at rugby after reaching a final trial of thirty. I was one of the six who didn't make it! Ha-ha!

When I was 18, I enjoyed some club rugby in Dublin before moving back to Cape Town to study and play for my university team. I had some great coaches at club level (our university team played at club level) and I'd say that there were vast similarities between them and Mike at the Blues. In terms of enjoyment, those years in Cape Town and my seasons at Goldington Road were probably my favourites.



NICK IN ACTION



2014-15. NICK, CAPTAIN

I moved to the UK for rugby in 2012, joining Saracens for six months as 'medical joker'. This changed to two years, I got married, had a child and the six months has changed to eleven years. There were a few bits in between, but those are best spoken of over a pint!

Towards the end of my first season at Saracens, players returned from injury and I became surplus to requirements. I was offered an opportunity to play regular rugby at Bedford Blues and it was a great move for me. We narrowly lost to Newcastle Falcons in the play-off finals.

I genuinely believe that my whole time at Bedford was one enjoyable memory. We maybe had a bit of a dip in form, but when a club like Bedford punches way above its weight, it is inevitable that players will get snapped up by Premiership clubs and that's what happened. However, Top 4 was achieved again in the 2015-16 season.

Enjoyable memories off the field are too many to mention, but I won't forget the pre-season trip to Belfast. Probably best leave it there! We also had good trips to the races and some really enjoyable golf days.

I'd be lying if I said I am good at staying in touch, but I've had a few good laughs with Gully and Charlie Clare and I bumped into Joe Vandermolen in Twickenham. Unfortunately, with family, work



NICK MAKES A BREAK V LONDON SCOTTISH

and living in the West Country, it's been increasingly more difficult to meet up.

I spent some time as Team Manager at Bristol Bears after I finished playing for them and started another business consulting for a rugby event at Twickenham Stadium. Now I am full-time in the corporate world of EY. It's certainly an interesting change to what I am used to, but I am really enjoying it.

Skye and I now have a little boy, Leo and a Sprocker Spaniel. We are enjoying life in the West Country. I don't doubt that we will continue to venture further south towards the coast as time goes on, but for now we are very happy living in Bristol.

I am delighted to see that the Blues are having a good season and I am certainly looking forward to visiting Goldington Road in May, seeing everyone again and catching up over a few beers.'



NICK, SKYE AND LEO