

Springboks are gunned down by young Dragons

12 HGK

**DATELINE:
CAPE TOWN**

HAMILTONS, aka Hammies, was founded in 1887 and is recognised as being the oldest rugby club in South Africa.

The club's ground is situated on the Green Point Common, which lies in the northern part of Cape Town between Table Mountain and the Atlantic Seaboard.

The club has a proud and noble history and so it was fitting that it was here on a cold August evening under fading floodlights that the Pencoed Comprehensive School Rugby team would play their "test" match against the Hammies Under-20 side.

A long day, was about to come to its climax. That afternoon, we had travelled to Robben Island, where Nelson Mandela had been imprisoned.

We had met one of the ex-prisoners, who showed us around the prison camp and told us of the horrible conditions that the prisoners had to put up with.

LEWIS STEWARD, a pupil at Pencoed Comprehensive, reports on a great Welsh victory in South Africa, where he is touring with the school rugby squad

Robben Island was amazing, but thinking about the prison camp didn't stop us preparing for the vital match against the Hamilton under-20s team, the real reason that we were here in Cape Town.

We had been in South Africa for six days. We had trained hard at the High Performance Centre in Pretoria, but the last couple of days in Cape Town had been a bit more relaxing.

However, that was about to change. As soon as we got on the coach for the short trip from our hotel to the ground, all the fun had to stop.

It wasn't a holiday any more - it was our test match!

We weren't only representing Pencoed, we were representing WALES - it was a feeling I will never forget!

Arriving at Hamilton Rugby Club ended two years of waiting and it was time to face the

music. Expectations were high as we warmed up and then as Mr King, our coach, brought us into the changing rooms to have a last team talk together, we all knew it was possible to beat the opposition.

Mr King inspired us: he told us that our parents and our school would be proud of us and with the Dragon on our chest, we knew that they would.

Running onto the pitch, with a small band of Welsh supporters cheering us on, was the best experience I have ever had; it was amazing.

The game seemed to go past so quickly. The Hamilton players were big and strong, driving hard through the rucks and mauls and hitting us hard in the tackles.

They played open rugby, running at our backs at speed. But we worked hard, put our game plan into place and slowly but surely took control of the game.

We ran hard, tackled

with a ferocity that surprised the opposition and won ball from them time and time again.

Although the evening was cold, our backs ran with ball in hand, opening up their defence on numerous occasions.

And when the final whistle was blown, the score read: Hamilton 12 - Pencoed 18. We had won!

The scoreboard didn't reflect the effort and control that we had exerted in the game but it was a well-fought win. Our small band of supporters cheered us off the pitch, with the Welsh flag waving proudly over us.

The coaches were full of praise; we congratulated each other and went to the changing rooms to change, relieved that it was over, but ecstatic that we had won.

On a cold night in South Africa, among the historic photographs and memorabilia in Hamilton's clubhouse, the Welsh flag flew proud and the strains of *Calon Lan* and *Delilah* rang out.

We had travelled 6,000 miles and beaten the Springboks in their own backyard.

What a game - what a feeling!