



0. THE GAME THAT MADE A NATION - Story Preface

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12. MADIBA and PIENAAR - POST-WIN

On the 24th of June, 1995, South Africa bested New Zealand 15-12 in the Rugby World Cup final. In this image, we see Francois Pienaar raising the William Webb Ellis trophy on behalf of his country and his team, the Springboks. Image by David Rogers / Allsport/Gallo Images, online via [TIMES Live of South Africa](#). Image copyright David Rogers, all rights reserved. Provided here as fair use for educational purposes.

Although the All Blacks scored first, taking the lead, [Joel Stransky](#) kicked what would become South Africa's winning points. He knew [the kick](#) was good - "it was too sweet to miss" - and the Boks held firm during the final scrum:

*The 1995 Rugby World Cup final produced more theater than art. It was a grinding game. It was attrition. It was trench warfare, not pretty to watch. But in terms of sheer drama, it couldn't be beat.* (Carlin, [Playing the Enemy](#), page 234.)

As the last second ticked off the game clock, Ellis Park exploded with unbridled joy. The [final score](#) was South Africa 15, New Zealand 12.

Linga Moonsamy later recalled:

*I was with Nelson Mandela for five years, the whole of his presidency, and I never saw him happier. He was so thrilled, so ecstatic. When the final whistle blew the whole suite erupted. If people think we bodyguards are robots, well, they should have seen us when the final whistle went. We too were hugging, and some of us were crying.* (Carlin, page 239.)

After a [reporter asked Pienaar](#) what it was like to have 65,000 people supporting him and the team, Francois replied:

*We didn't have 60,000 fans behind us. We had 43 million South Africans.*

When Mandela [presented the trophy](#), the crowd again shouted his name. As he [thanked Pienaar](#) for what the Springboks did for their country that day, Francois replied:

*No, Madiba. You've got it wrong. Thank you for what you've done for South Africa.*

Nearly everyone - nearly everywhere - in South Africa, was [celebrating](#) and crying. Kobie Coetsee, who had first met with Mandela ten years before - to begin negotiations for the prisoner's freedom - summed up the impact the rugby win had on his country:

*It went beyond everything else that had been accomplished. It was the moment my people, his adversaries, embraced Mandela. It was a moment comparable, I felt then, to the creation of the American nation. It was Mandela's greatest achievement. I saw him and Pienaar there and I wept. I said to myself, "Now it was worth it. All the pain, anything that I have experienced, it was worth it. This endorses the miracle."* (Carlin, page 244.)

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See Learning Tasks for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicActivities/THE-GAME-THAT-MADE-A-NATION-Invictus>

## Media Stream



### Joel Stransky - Winning Kick

Image of Stransky's winning kick, copyright Getty Images, online courtesy The Independent.

View this asset at: <http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Joel-Stransky-Winning-Kick>



### Mandela and Pienaar

Image online, courtesy the Library of South Africa.

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### Springboks Celebrate - June 24, 1995

Video clip from television reportage, June 24, 1995. Online, courtesy YouTube.

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### Springbok Victory from a New Zealand Perspective

Clip from New Zealand television broadcast, June 24, 1995. Online, courtesy YouTube.

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