

PRINCIPAL'S MESSAGE ASSEMBLY: FRIDAY 16TH FEBRUARY 2018

Last week I attended the funeral service of Clive van Ryneveld who died at the age of 89. He was educated at Bishops and is one of the finest all-round sportsman that the school has ever produced. He was head boy in 1946 and captained SA Schools at cricket in 1945. He went on to become a Rhodes Scholar and while in the UK represented England at rugby. He was one of the best centres of post war years. On his return to South Africa his rugby career was cut short by injury and he turned his attention to cricket and was selected for the Springbok cricket team to tour England in 1951. He captained South Africa and in total played 19 tests. Not only was he a brilliant sportsman but his life was characterised by championing for human rights and social justice, he was a founder member of the Progressive Party in 1959.

Why am I telling you about Clive van Ryneveld? Well, I think it important that we can honour old boys like him who can inspire us all to greater things. What I really want to highlight though is something which one of his sons said in his eulogy to his father. He said that his father would not have enjoyed playing sport in the modern era with its cut-throat and "win at all costs" attitude. He was a true gentleman of the game. He had a sharp sense of fair play; an example of this was in a test match against Australia in Durban in 1958. In a critical moment in the test he refused to appeal after running out their best batsman, Neil Harvey. Harvey was walking back to his crease after a South African fielder deceived him by pretending that the ball had gone for four and then hurled the ball back at Clive van Ryneveld who was at the stumps. He refused to remove the bails, this sporting gesture probably cost South Africa the match. I wonder what Clive van Ryneveld would have thought about the current state of sport at schools and the hype around winning at all costs, school sports ranking and the like.

I am sure that he played sport to win, just as we do, but I know that he would have believed that sport is about much more than winning. Sport is about good sportsmanship. Always play fair, follow the rules of the game, respect and accept the decisions of the referees and umpires and treat the opposition with respect. Most importantly sport should be fun, you will never have the opportunity to play school sport again with your friends and against schools that by and large have the same ethos as we do.

So, let us honour Clive van Ryneveld by following his example in the way we play our sport.