



Francois Pienaar 🇿🇦 South Africa

South Africa's Iconic Rugby World Cup Winning Captain & Leader – Helped Unite A Nation With Former President Nelson Mandela

Fee Range € 23,000 - 57,000

Francois Pienaar

- South Africa's **iconic Rugby World Cup-winning Captain** who helped President Nelson Mandela to unite their country
- Instrumental in professionalizing rugby worldwide
- The message of **'The Power of Sport'** and what good sport can do socially, politically and economically
- **Exemplary leadership qualities** reflected on change and progress made in South Africa since 1995

Francois Pienaar led the Springboks, South Africa's rugby team, to victory in the 1995 World Cup, helping Nelson Mandela unite South Africa. **He won 29 caps playing for his country and uniquely all of them as Captain.**

"It was under his inspiring leadership that rugby became the pride of the entire country, his leadership extended beyond the field of rugby and he truly represents all South Africans. Under his inspiring leadership a nation was brought together." – **Nelson Mandela**

Pienaar was born in 1967 in Vereeniging, South Africa. In 1993, he joined the national rugby team, the Springboks. **The country was in a state of unrest.** Nelson Mandela was navigating away from apartheid and saw rugby as a way to unite South Africans behind a common cause.

Pienaar helped by leading the Springboks to victory in the 1995 World Cup. His achievement in sport on such an international level during Nelson Mandela's post-apartheid presidency **was instrumental in helping unite all South African people behind a common cause.**

“What happened was Nelson Mandela said “thank you very much for what you’ve done for South Africa” but I said “thank you for what you’ve done”. “I almost felt like hugging him but it wasn’t appropriate, I guess.” Then I lifted the trophy which was unbelievable. I can’t describe the feeling as I wouldn’t do it justice.” **François Pienaar**

Between 1994 and 1995, South Africa was going through a historic transition away from apartheid. Nelson Mandela and F.W. De Klerk were carefully steering the country from minority white rule to majority black rule through difficult and sometimes treacherous negotiations. **During this time, Mandela had taken an interest in rugby.** The Springboks had only one colored player on the squad, Chester Williams.

As both South Africa and its national rugby team entered international mainstream news, **Francois Pienaar realized that his individual participation in rugby and the team transcended mere sport.** He used his elevated position to advocate for national reconciliation stating that **the team represented the entire nation of South Africa, not just the white minority.**

Nelson Mandela encouraged the nation's black population to get behind the previously detested Springbok team as South Africa hosted the 1995 Rugby Union World cup.

The Home Rugby World Cup Win

The Springboks were **seeded ninth in the World Cup tournament** and not expected to dethrone incumbent champions Australia. But in a stunning match, they defeated the Australians in the first round, 27-18. Then in successive games, the Springboks defeated Romania, Canada, Western Samoa, and France.

South Africa and New Zealand met in the final at Ellis Park Stadium in Johannesburg. Francois played in an extended game despite an injury to his calf muscle. The Springboks were ahead 9-6 at halftime, but New Zealand evened the score at 9-all in the second half and the score remained unchanged at match end forcing the game into extra time.

Both teams scored in the first half of extra time, but South Africa finally scored a drop goal to win the final 15 to 12. **In what has become one of the most iconic moments in sport, Nelson Mandela, wearing a Springbok rugby jersey with Pienaar's number**, presented the William Webb Ellis Cup to the South African team captain Pienaar to the delight of the 65,000 capacity crowd.

During the aftermath of the victory, Francois Pienaar's charisma and leadership abilities propelled him to international recognition for his playing talents and God-like status in his home country where rugby is considered a religion. **He proved himself to be an inspirational leader and one of the men who could claim to have helped unite South Africa behind a common cause.**

François lives in South Africa with his wife, Nerine and two sons, one of whom Nelson Mandela was his godfather. He has co-authored an autobiography, 'Rainbow Warrior', and serves as a commentator for ITV Sport. He is active in charity work with 'Sargent Cancer Care for Children' and the 'Reach for a Dream Foundation' in South Africa. The 2009 film 'Invictus', directed by Clint Eastwood starred Morgan Freeman as Nelson Mandela and **Matt Damon as François Pienaar.**

Francois Pienaar Speaking

Francois delivers a moving and inspiring presentation on how he led the South African Rugby Team against all odds to lift the Rugby World Cup in 1995. Nelson Mandela had brought the Rugby World Cup to South Africa to use it to showcase the end of apartheid to the people of South Africa and to the rest of the world. **He chose to Francois to lead this effort and against all odds** with the world watching and the plan succeeded.

François Pienaar will discuss the defining moments with Mandela on discovering that he had been chosen to lead the national team with this anterior objective of uniting a nation running behind his team's performance.

Importantly he discusses the effect that **his team (working privately to a plan with Nelson Mandela)** could and would have on an entire nation, helping to not only unite a country but also very publicly show the world that apartheid was over. François finishes by speaking on the **lasting effects** that this great moment in world sport had on the **future of South Africa** and the **wider goal of ending racism internationally.**

Client Testimonials

CEO Heineken Ireland



"Thank you for joining us at our Heineken Ireland Conference. People are still talking about our great day but in particular about your talk which inspired us all so much. I wish you a fantastic year ahead and hope our paths cross again."

John Lawton - Director of Marketing Enersys Motive Power Europe, Middle East & Africa



"We hired Francois Pienaar to give a motivational speech at our recent Global Sales Conference. The booking was made through Jonathan Curran at ProMotivate and the booking process was smooth throughout with Jonathan giving us responsive service on all the finer detail. Francois is a delightful person to deal with - genuine, humble and showed a real interest in what we did as a business. He was quickly able to get a handle on what we needed and was able to blend his skills on the rugby field and in business life to draw similarities with our key needs of 'team building, empowering our people and leadership skills. He delivered a gripping story that was intermingled with humour and emotion - he kept the audience gripped at all times. He invited questions at the end of his speech and he handled in the same professional manner. I would strongly recommend Francois to any prospective client who is looking for a genuine and professional speaker."

President Nelson Mandela



"It was under his inspiring leadership that rugby became the pride of the entire country, his leadership extended beyond the field of rugby and he truly represents all South Africans. Under his inspiring leadership a nation was brought together."