



# THE RISE OF AFRICAN RUGBY

APO Group, Official partner of Rugby Africa

## Women in rugby KEY FIGURES

- **Female rugby players**  
Increased by 50% in the space of a year
- **Breakdown - Rugby players**  
+ 20% of rugby players are women and girls in Africa
- **General managers**  
Rugby Australia has recently appointed their new CEO who became the first female chief executive of a major Australian Rugby code. But did you know that **3 African rugby unions are chaired by women**, and Rugby Africa's general manager is also a woman?

When it comes to the biggest rugby nations, it would be easy to assume that the most fanatical supporters would be found in the old guard of England, New Zealand and South Africa. But few countries can rival the passion and energy of African rugby.

### AFRICA, RUGBY'S NEW PASSIONATE FRONTIER

In a continent known for great footballing nations, the oval ball has been Africa's best kept secret for decades and the love affair continues to blossom.

**Rugby is the fastest growing sport in Africa.** The popularity of the sports discipline is booming all over the continent and continued growth is expected.

In 2002, only six African countries were playing rugby regularly, and today, **there are 38**.

**In Ghana**, the Muslim community have embraced the game and make up **over 50% of female participants**.

**Did you know that the number of African women and girls** playing rugby has **increased by 50%** between 2016 and 2017. In 2017, 20% of rugby players in Africa are women and girls.

# DID YOU KNOW?

## AFRICAN RUGBY IS ON THE RISE AND IT IS HERE TO STAY

In 2017, growth in player registration in the African nations (excluding South Africa) was 66%, against an overall global increase of 27%. Countries with the quickest growth in total number of players between 2016 and 2017 were Mauritius, Nigeria, Madagascar, Namibia and South Africa.

These numbers are echoed by the real passion for rugby across the continent.

**Madagascar** is a perfect illustration of this passion. With rugby as their national sport, they have **more rugby clubs per capita than any other country with 160 clubs in the capital Antananarivo alone**. Crowds for their international matches can top 40 000 people, and kids play rugby in the streets, dreaming of becoming the next national hero.

**There are twice as many rugby clubs per capita in South Africa than in France.**

**Rugby is taught in more than 22.000 schools** throughout the continent in 2017, up from 18.000 in 2016 (+25%). **Africa is rapidly becoming the world's largest youth pool with 60% of the continent's population under the age of 24 - and that number is predicted to grow.**

## AFRICAN CHAMPIONS

**Out of 105 countries playing rugby competitively, one-third are African countries.**

**In Kenya**, the Men's 7s team were recently ranked as high as 7 in the world in the top ten and competes regularly near the top of the world game. **Ghana is now ranked 9 in 7s rugby - and are undefeated in XV's** against their traditionally stronger local rivals Togo and Benin.

Rugby talents are everywhere in the continent and France is already starting to **tap into the concept and have recruited and nationalized African players** from former territories.

**2018 is pivotal year for African champions.** The **Rugby Africa Gold Cup** doubles as a qualifier for the 2019 Rugby World Cup in Japan. **Up to three African countries** could represent the continent at the World Cup. The **Africa Rugby 7s tournament will act as a qualifier for the 2020 Olympics.** **One African country** will represent the continent at the Olympic Games.

## KEY FIGURES

- **Registration growth**  
+66% in 2017 against an overall global increase of 27%
- **Registration growth in Senegal from 2012 to 2017** : +292%
- **Registration growth in Nigeria from 2012 to 2017**: +282%
- **N° of clubs in Madagascar**  
The country alone has 520+ clubs
- **8 African teams are ranked in men's XV's Top 50 rugby teams**
- **Men's XV's rugby**  
A high percentage of African nations are recognized as "rugby-playing" (38 out of 54 countries (70%))
- **2017 World ranking - Men's XV's rugby**  
Namibia is currently ranked at a lofty 23rd in the world

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