

# Hectic Bok tour an incredible experience for Dispatch journos

**Sidestepping through the crowd, late for the pinnacle Webb Ellis Cup lift by Springbok captain Siya Kolisi, reporters Rosa-Karoo Loewe and Tammy Fray were lost**

**ROSA-KAROO LOEWE, ZIYANDA ZWENI and ANATHI WULUSHE**

In the blazing heat of Sunday afternoon, black Clear View fencing separated screaming fans from the stage erected outside the East London City Hall, and the sweating, frenzied Daily Dispatch and GO! Express journalists were on the wrong side.

They pushed past the now empty green Springbok bus, where minutes before an East London woman had launched her lips at Springbok captain Siya Kolisi, and screamed at the SAPS guards inside the premises, waving their coveted media passes to be let in.

The city hall was similarly packed with a bizarre mix of officials and the public. They followed the music through the building and into the sun outside.

They had missed it. Dejected and disappointed, Loewe and Fray stood on the inside of a taped-off pathway leading from the stage into the building.

Then the Rugby World Cup champions walked off the platform and straight towards them.

Manie Libbok, Steven Kitshoff, Jaden Hendrikse, Lukhanyiso Am, Duane Vermeulen, Makazole Mapimpi and Ox Nche trying to obscure the Webb Ellis Cup with an iPad...

And Kolisi, exhausted but dignified, signed final posters for his fans.

These fleeting moments were captured in the images, videos and live streams for thousands of viewers, from a tiny team of local journos.

Dispatch sports reporter Anathi Wulushe, 23, from Mdantsane, revelled in the experience of covering the tour, from the Boks landing at the King Phalo Airport on Saturday to the full tour across the metro on Sunday.

Wulushe said: "It was an incredible experience."

"I've been a journalist for a year-and-a-half and it was the first time getting to see the Springboks face-to-face."

"To be able to interact with them at the hotel, and the airport, to be a few metres away from them, was amazing."

A major challenge for the media describing the pandemonium on Sunday was the administrative miscommunication.

At the Garden Court Hotel, the media was informed that a third green bus was still in Durban due to protest action, which meant only 10 people would be squashed alongside the sponsors on their bus.

"We nearly didn't make it on; we had to make our own way there," said Loewe. "Had we not been on the bus, we would not have been able to go live on Facebook to let people know where the bus was during the tour."

"If we had not done that, it wouldn't have been a full tour for us as the Daily Dispatch."

In the last few minutes before de-



**WINNING TEAM!** Dispatch reporters Rosa-Karoo Loewe (left) and Ziyanda Zweni were part of a team of journalists who spent seven hours traversing the Buffalo City Metro covering the Springbok trophy tour on Sunday. Picture: SUPPLIED

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parture, organisers conceded, and let those with accreditation cram onto the second bus, jostling on the side rails for position.

"We had to think outside the box to make our way there, and we needed to."

"You want people to have the same experience that you are having, and to be able to do that was a great honour."

Fray, Loewe and Wulushe worked from inside the bus for more than seven hours to capture content, even when their bus lost sight of the waving Boks and never recovered the dis-

ance. Daily Dispatch court reporter Ziyanda Zweni swapped between vehicles, finally riding in an open white bakkie to the city hall.

Zweni's video of Kolisi lifting the Webb Ellis Cup at the city hall has more than 150,000 views on Facebook.

Zweni said: "I got lost in Mdantsane in NU15 during the parade taking pictures."

"In the craziness, I couldn't find my lift."

"Luckily, I had stashed some cash in my pocket and took a taxi to NU6 where the bus was slowed by the throngs of fans."

"I ran after it, caught another lift with colleagues and the day went on."

"Initially I wasn't part of the crew set to cover the tour, but I wanted to be in the thick of things, to see the heroes, and getting to actually write the story

was a blessing for me." The procession's delayed start and slow drive through packed streets meant the tour was cut short — the Boks had a plane to catch.

Zweni said: "This tour brought us together in a way I had never seen."

"One of the elderly people I spoke with, Talita Mavuya, watched the tour with her grandchildren."

"She wanted them to be inspired by the Boks and build their future towards something positive, unlike many young people who end up engaging in substance abuse."

"I held back tears of joy. Children as young as five ran after the bus for kilometres on end, especially in places such as Mdantsane and Duncan Village."

"I can only hope one day one of those children will make it into the Springboks or any national sports team."

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