

# Visa Rugby Legend

## Joel Stransky



Joel Stransky will forever have a place in Rugby World Cup history following his breathtaking drop goal in extra time at the Rugby World Cup 1995 Final at Ellis Park, Johannesburg, South Africa. Joel made his test debut for South Africa (Springboks) in 1993 against Australia at fly half. He would be capped a further 21 times for his country, but the highlight of his career was undoubtedly winning the Rugby World Cup 1995.

Amazingly Joel had not kicked a drop goal for the Springboks prior to the tournament, yet he would go on to kick three – none more important than the one in extra time which, according to the then Springbok captain François Pienaar, Joel had to take from completely the wrong side of the field when a set play failed. At full time the Springboks and New Zealand's All Blacks were tied nine points each, but after the end of extra time, Joel's drop goal proved the difference as the Springboks emerged victorious 15-12, and Rugby World Cup Champions.

Joel was born in Johannesburg, South Africa and educated at Maritzburg College one of the top rugby schools in the country. Joel came to the attention of South Africans as a promising fly half in 1987 as a 19 year old when he made his first class debut for Northern Transvaal whilst doing his national service, replacing the injured Naas Botha. He was a member of the successful Natal team that clinched South Africa's national championship, the Currie Cup, for the first time in its history. He was noted for his excellent back play and tactical awareness. Joel went on to score a record number of points that season, 304 in all matches. Following his international debut, Joel played for Western Province for three seasons from 1994 to 1996, including the inaugural Super 12 competition. 1996 was the year that Joel won his twenty-second and final cap against New Zealand. During his career, Joel scored 240 points for his country including six tries.

In 1997, Joel moved to the United Kingdom to play for English Premiership team Leicester Tigers and scored a club record of 459 points that season, a hundred of which came in his first eight games. Leicester went on to win the English Premiership the following season, but Joel's career was cut short when a long-term knee problem forced him to retire in 1999.

Joel returned to South Africa and now works as a rugby union television commentator for South African sports channel *Supersport*.

