

Tendai 'Beast' Mtawarira announces retirement from international rugby

Having just helped the Springboks win its third Rugby World Cup champions title in Japan, Tendai 'Beast' Mtawarira will no longer play international rugby.

The 34-year-old veteran of 117 tests confirmed his decision to retire from international rugby after a monumental performance in his final match.



12 years of senior rugby

In a trademark scrumming performance from the front ranker, the Springbok pack forced a succession of penalties from their opponents, many of them conceded by Mtawarira's direct opponent. It crowned a storied career for the Springboks' and Cell C Sharks' 'gentle giant'.

Mtawarira made his senior provincial debut for the Cell C Sharks in 2006 and won his first Springbok cap in 2008, setting records on the way.

'Beast' became the third most-capped Springbok (behind Victor Matfield and Bryan Habana), the most capped prop, made the most appearances for a South African Vodacom Super Rugby team (159) and won the Rugby World Cup (2019), Tri-Nations (2009), Castle Lager Rugby Championship (2019), a series against the British & Irish Lions (2009) and the Currie Cup (2008, 2010 and 2013).

"I've been privileged to play this great game and achieve many career goals over the last 12 years of playing senior rugby," said Mtawarira.



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We'll miss you in green and gold

"I've been blessed to have been part of teams that achieved so much success over the years, and I have many memories to cherish forever, but I can honestly say that winning the Rugby World Cup is the perfect ending and cherry on top.

"I am grateful for the opportunities afforded to me by many top coaches at the Springboks and the Sharks, and grateful to my numerous teammates in green and gold, and black and white, over the years.

"But most of all, to my wife Kuziva, and our two beautiful children, Talumba and Wangu, for sacrificing so much to allow me to chase my dreams. I really appreciate it immensely.

"I would also like to thank my parents, other family and friends, for their support over the years – I could not have done this without you."

Mark Alexander, President of SA Rugby, paid tribute to Mtawarira, who made his Springbok debut in the second Test against Wales in Pretoria in 2008 and played his last match in green and gold in Yokohama last Saturday.

“‘Beast’ is someone who never complained, always put in the hard work and simply got on with his job in his typically unassuming way,” said Alexander.

“When he first got an opportunity at the Sharks, he rode a bicycle to training, which perfectly sums up not only his humbleness but his desire to make it to the top. He worked very hard to achieve what he has and we’re all very proud of him.

“‘Beast’, thank you for what you’ve done for South African rugby, to show that Springboks can indeed be gentle giants, and for never putting your own interests above that of the team. We salute you and will miss you in green and gold.”

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