



## LET'S FOCUS ON OUR YOUTH

1978: A gold medal was awarded to Tygerberg High School's Tug of War team at the SA championships in Kimberley, South Africa. Our president Anton Rabe is second from the left in the back row.

*Tug of war is a really tough sport if you wish to compete at the highest level. It can also be lots of fun at a recreational and social level, but it only gets harder as we progress to the various competitive levels of our sport.*

Over the years, TWIF have adapted rules and introduced new opportunities for our youth to continue their participation from junior level through to seniors. The introduction of the U23 weight class and expanding the mixed category to both U18 and U23, have also created further opportunities to bridge the gap towards senior level.

In my view it is not the toughness of the sport at a competitive level which is our greatest challenge for youngsters to migrate through the various tiers to senior level. Globally, bridging the post school gap from U18 to being a young adult with work and family responsibilities, remain a bigger challenge.

This is the period when post school qualifications and getting into a first job are more important than anything else. Linked to ever tight-

ening economic challenges, high travel costs and pressure on leave days, linked to long hours of practice seems to rob us from many potential senior champions.

I was exposed to tug of war at a very young age – 8 to be exact – and has ever since (now +50 years!) been privileged to be involved in some way or another on local, provincial, national and international level. My initial exposure was mainly due to the culture of having tug of war at a recreational level in the area where I grew up. I only became involved on a real competitive level in high school and were blessed to have had the opportunity to participate whilst studying at university.

This, I believe is the answer to bridging the ever widening gap between youth and senior tug of war, ie to create opportunities at college and university level in order for interested youngsters to continue

*The family spirit and friendship ethos are at the core of the TWIF global family which, even in this trying Covid-times, unites and joins us over all cultural, economic, spiritual and racial boundaries.*

CONTINUED

their participation at a higher level. Another possibility is for senior clubs de-linked from such institutions, to involve the youth at club level and for national associations to create low budget opportunities at regional and national level. Countries that get this right in some form or other are clearly showing the difference at international level of being consistently within the medal rankings.

My plea to the youth is to also explore participation as officials – you will be the administrators and TWIF judges or recorders of the future. Children, continue to involve your parents and extended families. *Parents, please continue to support your children and create opportunities for them to realise their passion and ambitions in this lovely sport.* There

is a place for everyone somewhere in the many dimensions of this simple, yet so complex sport.

Participation in tug of war requires commitment and passion. The family spirit and friendship ethos are at the core of the TWIF global family which, even in this trying Covid-times, unites and joins us over all cultural, economic, spiritual and racial boundaries.

Lets' continue to participate in whatever way we can – getting involved and remaining involved over a life-time will generously award you with so many experiences and friendships all over the world.

All the best and regards to you all. God Bless.

ANTON RABE *President*

## SWITZERLAND

### How did you first get involved in tug of war?

The first time I came into contact with tug of war was in kindergarten when I was allowed to participate in the school tournament in Mosnang for the first time.

### What was your first competition experience like?

My first competition was in Sins 2016 when I was 13 years old. It was tough and at the same time a nice experience because we reached the second place on the podium and so we could secure the 3rd place in the Swiss Championship ranking.

### What was your first international competition experience like?

That was at the GENSB tournament 2016 in Stans. This was also a nice experience because this was my first competition with my oldest brother but it was only enough for the ungrateful fourth place.

### What is your best memory from your time involved in tug of war?

When I was allowed to win the first victory with the rope pulling club Mosnang.

### What do you think are the most important attributes for a puller to have?

A good puller for me is one who is strong in all areas of the body as well as mentally and does not give up quickly.

### What is your funniest tug of war memory?

When we arrived at the tournament grounds in Luthern and there was snow everywhere. At the end we were even allowed to climb to the top of the podium made of snow.

**What do you like most about tug of war?** I love fighting in a strong team and measuring our strengths with others.

### What would you say to anyone thinking about perhaps giving tug of war a go?

You should be able to rely on the team. You have to work together and not against each other.

**What is your tug of war 'top tip'?** Do not give up - as long as the referee hasn't blown the whistle, everything can still change.

### What are your hopes and dreams for tug of war in the future?

That I can take part in national and international tournaments with the Mosnang Rope Pulling Club and that I can perhaps represent my club in a national team.



Lorin Rüegg

AGE: 17 years

CLUB: Seilziehclub Mosnang

COUNTRY: Switzerland

USUAL POSITION ON THE ROPE: 5





**Fabiola Zumbühl**

AGE: 17 years

CLUB: Seilziehclub-Sins

COUNTRY: Switzerland

USUAL POSITION ON THE ROPE:  
first position

## SWITZERLAND



**How did you first get involved in tug of war?** All of my 6 siblings are in rope pulling and it has been clear to me for a long time that I would also like to do this inspiring sport.

**What was your first competition experience like?** At my first competition, of course, I was very excited. But our team was well prepared and very confident. Finally, we were able to win the day.

**What was your first international competition experience like?**

When I was able to take part in the European Championship in Ireland in 2019, I was of course very proud on the one hand, because I was allowed to go along. But I could hardly hide the nervousness.

**What is your best memory from your time involved in tug of war?**

My most beautiful moment in rope pulling was when I became world champion in the category Mix U23.

**What do you think are the most important attributes for a puller to have?** That you have to accept defeats together as a team, but of course

you can also be happy about victories together.

**What is your funniest tug of war memory?** Rope pulling in the snow in Luthern.

**What do you like most about tug of war?** Spending time together in training and tournaments with rope pulling friends.

**What would you say to anyone thinking about perhaps giving tug of war a go?**

Just give it a try. At first, you may think it's not for you anyway, but you have to try it first.

**What is your tug of war 'top tip'?** To push yourself to top performances but of course also to listen to the team and to stick together.

**What are your hopes and dreams for tug of war in the future?**

I hope for many participations in World Championships. I am also very much looking forward to the International Tournament in Sins.

## USA



**Trinity Long**

AGE: 15

Muddy River Tug Club

COUNTRY: United States

(LeClaire, Iowa)

USUAL POSITION ON THE ROPE:

I am usually in the front or towards the front but sometimes I am in a back spot.

I am really flexible and can pull wherever our team needs me most.

**What was your first competition experience like?** When I was younger, I pulled in the kid's tug at tournaments and at Tug Fest in LeClaire, Iowa. It was fun and I looked forward to it every time. My first real competition was at Nationals in Monroe, Wisconsin. I was very excited but also nervous to be part of the adult team.

**What is your best memory from your time being involved with tug of war?**

My greatest experience was tugging at Irish Fest and being able to pull with the Swedish Coed team. I met many new friends and made memories that I will never forget. I was so excited that they asked me to pull with them!

**What do you think are the most important attributes for a puller to have?** Stamina and a positive mindset! Be determined to give it your all no matter what. If you go out on the rope thinking you are going to lose, you just set yourself up to fail. I always go out with positivity and give it 100%!

**What is your funniest memory from tug of war?** A couple of years ago we celebrated USTOWA's 40th Anniversary in Madison (WI). It poured down rain for most of the event so everyone was filthy and covered in mud. After all of the pulling was done my brother picked me up and threw me into a huge mud puddle. We all had such a great time with so many good friends.

**What do you like most about tug of war?** I like hanging out with my teammates and competing against the other teams in USTOWA and from around the world. I have enjoyed learning from people who have been involved with tug of war for a long time.

**What would you say to anyone thinking about giving tug of war a go?** *Go for it!!* You get to compete and meet people from all over the world and it's a lot of fun!

**What is your tug of war 'top tip'?** Train hard and leave it all on the rope! If you put in the hard work and determination in the end you will be a better athlete and a stronger person.

**What are your hopes and dreams for tug of war?** My whole family is involved in tug of war. My Dad was a puller and now he helps coach my brothers and I. I want more people to become interested in this sport and fall in love with it the way I have, so that we can watch it grow. Most of all, I would love to see tug of war in the Olympics again!



**Isaac Wild**

AGE: 21

CLUB: Oregon Tuggers

COUNTRY: USA

USUAL POSITION: I am usually placed somewhere towards the middle or rear of the rope.

---

## USA



**How did you get involved in tug of war?** A good friend of mine had mentioned tug of war to me, so I decided to give it a try shortly after.

**What was your first competition experience like?** I never thought I could be in really good shape yet feel so out of shape after only a few minutes on the rope.

**What is your first international competition experience like?** Unfortunately I haven't had the opportunity to compete outside of the United States yet.

**What is your best memory from your time involved in tug of war?** I would have to say it would be meeting the Irish boys. I thought it was very cool to be able to meet people with a different history than my own.

**What do you think are the most important attributes for a puller to have?** I would have to say the most important attribute of any puller would have to be that you have to be mentally tough. For example a famous Henry Ford quote "Whether you think you can or you can't, you're right."

**What do you like most about tug of war?** I would have to say that I like the fact that you have to work as a team for every inch gained or lost.

**What would you say to anyone thinking about perhaps giving tug of war a go?** I would say what's the worst that could happen? You really never know whether you're gonna like something unless you give it a try.

**What is your tug of war 'top tip'?** Stay low and be patient!

**What are your hopes and dreams for tug of war in the future?** My hopes are that tug of war eventually gets more publicity and eventually grows into a larger sport.

## VIETNAM



**Bui Thi Thanh Huyen**

AGE: 23

CLUB: Team One HCMC Vietnam

COUNTRY: Vietnam

USUAL POSITION ON THE ROPE:

1st – 2nd – 3rd

**How did you first get involved in the tug of war?** The first time I knew about tug of war was when I was 15. On that day, I intended to go home after class, and my physical education teacher called me back and informed me that I was chosen to become a member of the school team.

**What was your first competition experience like?** I felt nervous because this was the first time I represented the school to participate in the tournament, which was held annually in my area.

**What was your first international competition experience like?** My first international championship tournament was the ASIA and ASEAN tug of war Championship in 2017, which was held in Thailand. I was excited and always looked forward to the competition date. This occasion was a milestone in my life and was a good opportunity for me to gain more experience in competition.

**What is your best memory from your time involved in the tug of war?**

Of all the trips that my team and I went on to participate in championships the one I enjoyed the most was outside Ho Chi Minh City. This time we lived together; we played hard to win, we explored new things and we enjoyed the valuable time with each other.

**What do you think are the most important attributes for a puller to have?** Unite - when we are in a match, eight people become one. It shows their power and how they understand each other and this leads them to win.

**What is your funniest tug of war memory?** Most of the time I train with my team to get ready for upcoming tournaments, besides many exhausting exercises, my teammates always joke with each other to make the atmosphere more relaxed and effective.

**What do you like most about the tug of war?** I love tug of war because this sport is teamwork. Each work in different jobs but each person has the same passion for the rope.



**What would you say to anyone thinking about perhaps giving tug of war a go?** I always say that tug of war is not only a traditional game in Vietnam. Nowadays, tug of war is a professional sport played in lots of countries in the world. They train seriously and play professionally. Many international tournaments are held annually in many places and invite many other countries to participate.

**What are your hopes and dreams for tug of war in the future?** Tug of war could become an official sport, not only in the area sports festival but also at The Summer Olympic Games.





**Jacob Hudson**  
 AGE: 18  
 CLUB: York tug of war  
 COUNTRY: England  
 USUAL POSITION ON THE ROPE: 7

**ENGLAND**

**How did you first get involved in tug of war?**

first got involved through my dad the who is the anchor and chairman of York tug of war. I started with pulling with York and with my local Young Farmers team.

**What was your first competition experience like?**

My first experience was great, the thrill and the buzz was amazing off winning an end. Everyone who I met was friendly and encouraging and a good laugh.

**What was your first international competition**

**experience like?** My first international competition was in England 2017. It was one my best experiences with tug of war. It was really cool to see how different countries pull from all around the world. I met loads of people from other countries and it was a great laugh on a night after the competitions when socialising with them.

**What is your best memory from your time involved in tug of war?** My best memory would be 2018 nationals when pulling with York and took a bronze medal home with me, this would also be my most proud moment also.

**What is your funniest tug of war memory?** Funniest tug of war moment would be GENSB 2019 in England, it was a great laugh on the night and being able to have a beer with other pullers from different countries.

**What do you like most about tug of war?** The best part of tug of war for me is when I'm on the rope and you start to pull backwards and the crowd gets louder and the adrenaline kicks in - definitely the best part for me.

**What would you say to anyone thinking about perhaps giving tug of war a go?**

Come down and give it a go - socialise with as many people as you can and just enjoy yourself. Pullers are a good set of people all looking out for one another and having a good time.

**What is your tug of war 'top tip'?** Eat healthy and stay light.

**What are your hopes and dreams for tug of war in the future?** A dream I've wanted since the start is to have a group of 10 lads together all around 24 years of age, training as a team at least twice a week together and going to the worlds and getting that gold medal. Would easily be one of the best moments of my life if I could achieve that.



**Lina Lindquist Olsson**  
 AGE: 21 years old  
 CLUB: Brunnsbergs IF  
 COUNTRY: Sweden  
 USUAL POSITION ON THE ROPE: 7

**SWEDEN**



**How did you first get involved in tug of war?** I followed my friend on one of the workouts that Brunnsbergs IF had.

**What was your first competition experience like?** Fun, hard and challenging. I'd never experienced this kind of sport before, so I was on adrenaline all day.

**What was your first international competition experience like?** It was almost the same as my first competition but with even more adrenaline. Best thing about it was to compete with pullers from all over Sweden, not only from Brunnsberg.

**What is your best memory from your time involved in tug of war?** The best memory is when we were in Ireland in 2019 and we pulled in U23 ladies, we finally got that silver medal.

**What do you think are the most important attributes for a puller to have?** A strong mind, like to challenge yourself and love teamwork.

**What is your funniest tug of war memory?** I think it was when we pulled mix in Sweden, we were in the bronze match. The puller in front of me suddenly sat on my boot and I couldn't move backwards with the team so things got a bit stressful for a second but then we won. We laughed afterwards at the situation.

**What do you like most about tug of war?** The challenge and team building.

**What would you say to anyone thinking about perhaps giving tug of war a go?** Absolutely, try it for at least 10 workouts then you'll see what makes you want to continue.

**What is your tug of war 'top tip'?** Trust your team and always remember that when you're tired, someone on the other side is also tired.

**What are your hopes and dreams for tug of war in the future?** My own dream is to continue to compete for Sweden and make it to the World Games. And for the future I hope that we'll continue to be an amazing sport with good people in it.



**Emil Andersson**

AGE: 18

CLUB: Brunnsbergs IF Dragkamp

COUNTRY: Sweden

USUAL POSITION ON THE ROPE:

Somewhere between number 1-4, depending on which team

I compete with.

**How did you first get involved in tug of war?**

The club visited my school when I was 10 years old and since then I have practised the sport. Both my parents were active in the club once in the past, so they and my whole family have supported me a lot and I am really thankful for that.

**What was your first competition experience like?** I don't remember so much from my first competition.

I know it was in 2012 at a youth competition during the Swedish national championships, and as it seems I thought it was enjoyable because I am still practising it.

**What was your first international competition experience like?** The first time I competed at international level was at the GENSB tournament in Stans, 2016. I think we lost every match, so the results were not good but we were young and didn't have high expectations. It is never fun to lose but we had some extremely enjoyable days over that weekend.

**What is your best memory from your time involved in tug of war?** The World Championships in Cape Town was a great one. It was my debut in the national team that was something special. The travel was long and nervous because of those strict rules for us who were under 18 to get into the country. But we nailed it and the week was perfect with some excellent work by the hosters. The views and weather there didn't make the experience worse.

**What do you think are the most important attributes for a puller to have?** To have a strong mind and never give up when the pain is out of your head.

**What is your funniest tug of war memory?** Hard question, there are many to choose from. Last summer we had the opportunity to train and had a lot of fun with the team, despite the challenging times we are in. It was great to have

something to look forward to, and I would say it was the best and funniest training season for me.

**What do you like most about tug of war?** To feel the team spirit and to win the tough matches as a team is unbeatable.

**What would you say to anyone thinking about perhaps giving tug of war a go?** That you must give it a try. It is a sport where you need strength, fitness, tactics and the most important of them all, timing through the whole team.

**What is your tug of war 'top tip'?** I think the importance of pulling with a sharpened brain is enormous. You need to have both eyes on your own team and at the same time know what your competitors are doing.

**What are your hopes and dreams for tug of war in the future?** I hope and believe the whole sport will develop in a great way. For myself, I of course want to reach the top of the podium at the international highest level.

## PAKISTAN

**How did you first get involved in tug of war?** In 2017, I was in 2nd year of my college and there was a intercollegiate championship.

**What was your first competition experience like?** My team got 2nd position in the first competition and as victory always feels great we were so happy and at the same time I got greedy to secure the 1st position next year and that's how my journey started.

**What was your first international competition experience like?** It was in Colombo, Srilanka and the experience was beyond the explanation. The energy between all the players from different regions was extraordinary. It was really nice to interact with the other players.

**What is your best memory from your time involved in tug of war?**

Till now the best one was when I got the captainship of first Pakistan's women Tug of War team, I am so blessed to have this position and honour. That will always be the best memory for me.

**What do you think are the most important attributes for a puller to have?** The tricep and the thigh muscles of the puller are most important attributes for this sport.

**What is your funniest tug of war memory?** There are too many but there's one this recent one. I went to another city for the Championship and the opponent team was just 5 kg less from mine and when the game started we gave them a 2 min hold and the opponent team was totally losing their strength and that was kinda funny to us watch while being on a hold position.

**What do you like most about tug of war?** The strength. The way this game utilizes the player's strength is so amazing. Boys and girls both can play together in the mixed category, this game has nothing to do with men and women's equality rights.

**What would you say to anyone thinking about perhaps giving tug of war a go?** I'll say of course - go for it, show your strength, and it will definitely improve your confidence too.

**What is your tug of war 'top tip'?** I'll say just don't lose your confidence, just keep your hopes high and don't let any negativity come in your way of success.

**What are your hopes and dreams for tug of war in the future?** I am aiming to represent my country in the Olympics one day.



Javaria Ahmed

AGE: 21

CLUB: Sindh Tug of War  
Association

COUNTRY: Pakistan

USUAL POSITION ON THE ROPE: 2nd







**Lin Yu Hsienmen**

AGE: 21

CLUB: National Taiwan Sport  
University

COUNTRY: Chinese Taipei

USUAL POSITION ON THE ROPE: 6

**How did you first get involved in tug of war?** School community.

**What was your first competition experience like?** In Junior high school, I participated in a national competition. At that time, the weight class I participated in was 540 kg, while our team only had 480 kg. Due to the big difference in strength and weight, our team only finished seventh place in the eight team.

**What was your first international competition experience like?**

2016 TWIF Outdoor Championships in Sweden. I was competing in the U23 men and it was a big challenge for me to lose weight from 72 kg to 63 kg for the first time. The strength of my opponent was unknown to me, so I just concentrated and tried my best on the field, and concentrated on the instructions and reminders from my coach and teammates. In the end, I was very lucky to get the third place.

**What is your best memory from your time involved in tug of war?** Before 2016, my country hadn't won the third place in the outdoor tug of war U23 men, so it was a special honour when I stood on the World Championships podium for my country for the first time.

**What do you think are the most important attributes for a puller to have?** Perseverance, intelligence, figure, weight, strength, endurance, skill, and self-discipline are all important. But tug of war is not an individual sport, so I think a good tug of war puller or a good team must have good communication and mutual understanding in order to perform to the maximum.

**What is your funniest tug of war memory?** I was most impressed by the outdoor tug of war practice on a rainy day, where we had to train in the mud, and our whole bodies were sprayed with mud, and sometimes we even ate the mud and got very dirty. The atmosphere of training was great fun for everyone.

**What do you like most about tug of war?** I like tug of war, because unlike other sports, we can help each other. I give help when others are in pain, and my teammates support me when I am in pain, it's harder to feel this in other sports because there is no other sport like tug of war, where eight pullers are on the same rope.

**What would you say to anyone thinking about perhaps giving tug of war a go?** I would encourage them to try it first and tell them that tug of war is not just about strength, it's also about skill. And tug of war has developed to a very mature stage, it's worth a shot.

**What is your tug of war 'top tip'?** For outdoor tug of war, it takes a lot of strength to return to the original movement after the lateral movement is broken, and I think this is quite like the weightlifting movement "clean", so adding "clean" to weight training gives good feedback on the strength performance in outdoor tug of war.

**What are your hopes and dreams for tug of war in the future?** Win the World Indoor 560 kg & Outdoor U23 Championships.

## CHINESE TAIPEI

**How did you first get involved in tug of war?** When I was in elementary school, I once went to see my brother's tug of war competition, and after watching it, I fell in love with the excitement of playing on the court, enjoyed the feeling of the audience shouting for you, and then told my father that I also wanted to learn and practice tug of war.

**What was your first competition experience like?** I had my first competition when I was just ten and a new puller, so it was a total mess. After that, I was thought of giving up tug of war.

**What was your first international competition experience like?** My first international competition was the European Championships 2017 in England. I was very nervous at the time. In the past, my opponents were only Taiwanese pullers. After I went abroad, I found that every puller was high, and I didn't know how strong they were. It was also a problem to adapt to the foreign climate.

**What is your best memory from your time involved in tug of war?** I think the most important thing is the process of the competition. During the process you will get a lot of experience. Everyone works hard for the same goal and all fight together!

**What do you think are the most important attributes for a puller to have?** Strong team - work and hard work spirit.

**What is your funniest tug of war memory?** I remember when I was in elementary school, when I competed for first time I, my movements and posture were very ugly, but I was still pulling very seriously.

**What do you like most about tug of war?** I like the feeling of working hard with everyone for the same goal, even if the result is not good, at least the process is very important, that's why I like tug of war.



**Ting-Yu Lai**

AGE: 21

CLUB: National Taiwan Normal University

COUNTRY: Chinese Taipei

USUAL POSITION ON THE ROPE: 3 or 4



**What would you say to anyone thinking about perhaps giving tug of war a go?** Tug of war is a team sport, not an individual one. One needs to cooperate with the whole team to bear the good or bad together.

**What is your tug of war 'top tip'?** I think it is "persistence". As long as you work hard and persist in every competition, you will have a chance of winning.

**What are your hopes and dreams for tug of war in the future?** I hope to win the World Championships and World Games.



# ADOPT-A-SCHOOL PROJECT

## South Africa

*During 2006, South African Tug of War reached its lowest point in terms of the number of athletes that participated in the sport.*

**T**he juniors that participated represented about 20 schools/junior clubs - they were basically on an 'island'

- separate from the senior body and running their own competitions with their own judges. Almost no junior athletes progressed to the senior level of the sport. As a result, senior clubs had no feeding system and were basically dying out and closing down. By 2006, there were only about 6 senior clubs left - surviving barely.

At the Annual General Meeting of 2006, a new EXCO was elected under the leadership of Johann Möller. This new management was enthusiastic and immediately set about to implement plans to start growing the sport. A hand of friendship was extended to the schools and the SA Schools President were included on the EXCO of SA Tug of War with full voting rights.

In January 2007, SA Tug of War officially initiated the "Adopt-a-School" project. In terms of this project, each of the senior clubs had to "adopt" the schools in its town or region or go and establish the sport in the schools, if tug-of-war were not practised at the existing schools. The 'ideal' scenario that was envisioned, was a pyramid structure with a senior club taking responsibility for development at the top of the pyramid structure. Under the senior club, there should be two senior/high schools that could feed into the senior club. Under *each* of the two high school clubs, there would likewise be two primary

### ANTON BOTHA

*President of SA Tug of War*

or junior schools feeding into the high schools. So, the ideal 'pyramid' structure would consist of 1 x senior club at the

top level of the pyramid, with 2 x high/senior schools on the middle level and 4 x primary/junior schools on the bottom level.

In terms of this structure, the senior club would provide knowledge, expertise and mentorship to the schools as well as assist with referees, ropes and training. The sport is introduced to the primary school children (which pull barefoot in South Africa). From there, they can continue their sport when they enter high school in Grade 8/Year 8. (In South Africa, the juniors only start pulling with boots in high school. What has been established since the project started, is that you require at least ONE passionate person (a teacher or parent) at each school to DRIVE the process. In the South African context, most of those parents are senior pullers who become involved in the schools where their children attend classes. Currently less than 10% of the people 'driving' the sport in the schools are teachers, the rest are parents.

A further advantage in South Africa, is that the junior season are normally 'split' from the seniors - the juniors have a development season with some 'development' competitions from October to December annually, whilst the official competition season for the juniors runs from January to March annually. This provides the



opportunity for the senior athletes to assist in the junior season. The senior competition season runs from April to September annually. During the senior season, we allow the high school students (14 years plus) to participate primarily in the U/23 division - where a junior athlete has exceptional skills, we allow the athlete to start participating with the seniors already. In some of our provinces where there are less schools participating in the sport, they have tug-of-war competitions where both schools and seniors participate at the same event.

Although the pyramid structure with 2 x high schools and 4 x primary schools are the 'ideal' scenario, we have several senior clubs that only have 1 x high school as 'feeding school', and it works!

14 years since the implementation of the Adopt-a-School

project, there are now almost 60 junior/school clubs and 30 senior clubs and the sport is growing healthily. The annual SA Tug of War Junior Championships is currently South Africa's third largest school sport event with up to 1,600 juniors participating in 280 teams in 12 junior weight categories. They are enthusiastically supported by about 3,000 to 4,000 spectators at the annual event, which stretches over two days.

We have found that the juniors love to participate in competitions - be it in league competitions, regional or national competitions. We, as seniors and management, must just provide them the opportunities to participate and the sport grows by itself.

This is the single most important goal for SA Tug of War's executive - to create such opportunities.



**How did you first get involved in tug of war?** I started doing Tug of War in primary school after being introduced to the sport by a friend.

**What was your first competition experience like?**

I didn't know what to expect and was very nervous. After the first pull I wasn't so nervous anymore and had a lot of fun.

**What was your first international competition experience like?** It's an experience I will never forget.

Of course at first there were nerves but I learned a lot, saw a lot and experienced a lot. This was a great opportunity to learn how to pull at an international standard.

**What is your best memory from your time involved in tug of war?** Definitely winning the silver medal in U23 in South Africa.

**What do you think are the most important attributes for a puller to have?** Team work is very important

as well as pushing yourself to be the best. You need to have stamina and you have to push through

barriers mentally and physically. **What is your funniest tug of war memory?** Pulling in the rain and slipping.

**What do you like most about tug of war?** I like it's people. Tug of War is just one big family.

**What would you say to anyone thinking about perhaps giving tug of war a go?** Try it! Tug of war teaches you so much and can give you the confidence you need in everyday life.

**What is your tug of war 'top tip'?** Run! Running is really good for you when it comes to tug of war. It helps you with your breathing, your stamina and it keeps you fit.

**What are your hopes and dreams for tug of war in the future?** I would love to get the opportunity to pull at the world games.

## SOUTH AFRICA

**How did you first get involved in tug of war?** My parents ask me if I wanted to do it for a school sport and from day one I loved it.

**What was your first competition experience like?** Fun, exciting - but also difficult.

**What was your first international competition experience like?** It was the best feeling ever knowing all the hard work we did put in paid off, and travelling across the world, meeting great people and seeing how good the other countrys are. Just left a feeling of more hard work to be as good as they are.

**What is your best memory from your time involved in tug of war?** The first time winning western province colour.

**What do you think are the most important attributes for a puller to have?** Passion and mindset for the sport I'll say are the best attributes.

**What is your funniest tug of war memory?** It was in a final pull. When my pants ripped from the top straight down for all to see my underwear!

**What do you like most about tug of war?** My friends I have made that have become family.

**What would you say to anyone thinking about perhaps giving tug of war a go?** Don't think just do it. And don't give up it is very hard in the beginning.

**What is your tug of war 'top tip'?** Work hard, practice as much as you can.

**What are your hopes and dreams for tug of war in the future?** To became a Springbok and win world's.



**Gavin Brand**

AGE: 21

CLUB: Helderburg

COUNTRY: South Africa

USUAL POSITION ON THE ROPE: Anchor



*Above: 560 kg Juniors from Strand High School participating at the SA Junior Championships held in March 2020 just before the first Covid lockdown.*

*Left: Junior ladies from the Disa Ladies Club representing the Western Cape at the SA Championships held in November 2020 after the first Covid wave's lockdown.*

## BASQUE COUNTRY



**How did you first get involved in tug of war?** In my town, Amaiur, the tug of war (Sokatira) team has been for many years and I have always been involved, because my father and brother were pulling there. When I was a child the group of girls disappeared, and a couple of months before the age of 16 some girls in the village wanted to do tug of war again and they asked me if I would encourage them. I certainly told them yes. Unfortunately, after a year, the team quit. Then I started in the Txantrea Sokatira team and I'm still there today.

**What was your first competition experience like?** I will not forget the first day I participated, it was a 4x4 Navarra championship and I was very nervous. There was no lack of encouragement of those around me neither the previous days nor the same day. Although the first day we lost all the pulls, I was very happy and returned home wanting to learn more.

**What was your first international competition experience like?**

My first international experience was last year in Ireland, in the World Indoor Championships, four intense days full of emotions. Being the first experience for most team members, we lived those days in a very special way. Repeatable.

**What is your best memory from your time involved in tug of war?**

I cannot choose a single memory, the seven years I have been active in tug of war are full of beautiful memories. It is true that bad or not so good moments have passed on the rope, but I have forgotten them and I always try to stay with good memories, because all the moments and competitions have something special. Anyway, if I would stay with the World Indoor Championships, personally it give me a great feeling to participate in it, both in the Clubs and Nations championships.

**What do you think are the most important attributes for a puller to have?** I think a puller has to be mentally strong and not give in, if I have learned something during all these years is that we are able to do more than we always think.

**What is your funniest tug of war memory?** The experience of my tug of war is full of fun moments, we have an unbeatable atmosphere in the team and in addition to sports, we try to enjoy to the maximum of it day to day.

**What do you like most about tug of war?** Among the things I like most about tug of war, I would highlight, on the one hand, that it is a sport that allows to know its limits, until I started sokatira I did not know my ability to suffer. And on the other hand, of course, the atmosphere that exists in the group and with other groups, when it comes to pulling are rivals, but after, we have a good atmosphere between the groups. That makes this sport special.

**What would you say to anyone thinking about perhaps giving tug of war a go?** I would certainly encourage all those who are curious about tug of war to try it, but forget the first training day! After a few training days you will start to like it and then you will not leave it easily.

**What is your tug of war 'top tip'?** Be constant. If you are constant in tug of war as in everything as well as training, you can reach beautiful things. On many occasions there are bad days or bad seasons, but you have to continue, because better times will always come.

**What are your hopes and dreams for tug of war in the future?** The hope for the future is for tug of war to stay alive and to encourage more people and groups, and always welcome new teams! And of course, continue to enjoy the tug of war as before and participate in multiple competitions.