

The Challenge Cup Chronicle

Saturday August 8 2026



Day one is done, now the real action begins

THEO GARRUN

The 2026 St David's Marist Inanda Challenge Cup kicked off in balmy weather in Sandton on Friday, and the players took advantage of the conditions to produce some excellent soccer and there were several close results.

The 860 boys from 50 teams who were in action will have slept well on Friday night, having played two full length matches, with the prospect of two more on Saturday and another one on Sunday.

That player tally is the biggest the weekend has seen in its 22-year history, with 16 U19 tournament, eight under 19 festival teams teams, 16 U15 festival teams and six Grade 6 primary schools teams in action this year.

That makes this one of the biggest schools soccer gatherings in the land. It has created something of a logistical nightmare, but St David's has a track record of organising jumbo events and the 1st day went off without a hitch.

The under-15 section, in line with an agreement that boys this young don't need the pressure, is festival, with no pecking order determined at the end of it, as are the additional U19 festival and the Grade 6 festival.

The under-19 section is, however, a



proper tournament, with pool games and quarter finals, semis and a final, followed by classification games to determine positions 1 to 16. And, on the first day's evidence, it's highly competitive, with the top schools determined to win it.

With one more game to go, the winners of all four pools have not yet been decided and the results of Saturday's games are going to settle the final positions.

In Pool A, the hosts, who are the defending champions, and St Alban's are even at the top of the table, and they are going to play each other on

Saturday.

St John's and St Stithians are likewise tied in Pool B, and they meet Saturday.

Grey College head pool C, with Hilton and KES meeting to see who the other side that goes through will be. In Pool D Jeppe have to beat St Benedict's to qualify in The top 8.

There won't be quarterfinals in the U15 section, but match points are awarded to help with allocating strength vs strength encounters of days two and three. KES, Jeppe and St Alban's all won both their games on day 1.



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Day 1 Results

U19 - Pool A - St David's 6 Marist
Linnmeyer 0, St Alban's 1 Norkem Park 0,
St David's 2 Norkem Park 0, St Alban's 3
Marist Linnmeyer 1

Pool B - St Stithians 2 At Andrew's 1,
St John's 1 St Peter's 1, St John's 3 St
Andrew's 2, St Stithians 0 St Peter's 0

Pool C - KES 6 St Andrew's School 0,
Grey 1 Hilton 0, Grey 1 KES 0, Hilton 7 St
Andrew's School 0

Pool D - Jeppe 6 Springs 0, St
Benedict's 1 Michaelhouse 0,
Michaelhouse 1 Jeppe 0,

St Benedict's 2 Springs 1

U15 – St Benedict's 2 Michaelhouse 2,
Springs 2 Marist Linnmeyer 0, St Stithians
1 Norkem Park 1, CBC Boksburg 1 St
Andrew's 0, Hilton 2 St David's 0, KES
2 Sacred Heart 0, St Alban's 3 Grey 2,
Jeppe 3 St Peter's 2, St Stithians 1 St
Andrew's, Springs 0 Norkem Park 0, CBC
4 Michaelhouse 4, Marist Linnmeyer 2 St
Benedict's 0, St Alban's 3 St Peter's 0, St
David's 5 Sacred Heart 0, Jeppe 3 Hilton1,
KES 1 Grey 0

U19 Festival teams – St David's II 5
Heronbridge 2, CBC Boksburg 3 Beaulieu
1, Trinityhouse Glenvista 2 Midstream 1,
Sacred Heart 1 Thandulwazi 1

Grade 6 teams – St David's A 6
Rivonia 0, Bryandale 2 Pridwin 0, The
Ridge 1 Montrose 0, St David's B 4
Craighall 1, Trinity House Glenvista 1
Fairways 1, Rivonia 2 Pridwin 2, The
Ridge 2 Bryandale 0, Montrose1 St
David's B 1, Trinityhouse Glenvista 2
Craighall 1, St David's A 7 Fairways 0.

Spreading the net

A Challenge Festival for under-19 teams, and for Grade 6 sides has been included for the second year

The St David's Marist Inanda Challenge Cup tournament has been a ground-breaker in schools football in many ways.

This is the 22nd staging of the event and it has come of age.

It's hard to imagine that when it was introduced back in 2003 football was very much a minor, poorly resourced sporting activity at the traditional, rugby-playing schools that have been the core participants here from the earliest days.

Shane Gaffney, head of sport at St David's at the time, was the driver of the concept. He was instrumental in getting soccer accepted at the local high schools in the first place - 10 years earlier.

From the beginning there was a spirit of inclusivity about the event. Naturally, the boys-only and independent schools that St David's had long-standing ties with and against whom they had competed in various spheres over the years, would always be involved.

But other institutions who took the game seriously were also invited.



There was a demand, at one stage, from some of the football youth academies to be included, but that didn't work out and the experiment was stopped in favour of involving only bona fide school teams.

One school that has been here from those earliest days is Norkem Park. Theirs is a community-based sports development success story. They won the Challenge Cup tournament

in 2011 and have been quarter and semi-finalists on a number of occasions and they have made many friends down the years with their energetic, joyous presence around the place, and with the style of football that they play.

In that spirit of inclusivity, extra festival matches involving Grade 6 teams and eight more U19 teams were introduced in 2025.



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