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Kgomotso dreams big

Pre-reading question

Look at the pictures. What sport is the story about?

New words

Kit – Sports kit is the clothing you wear to play sport.

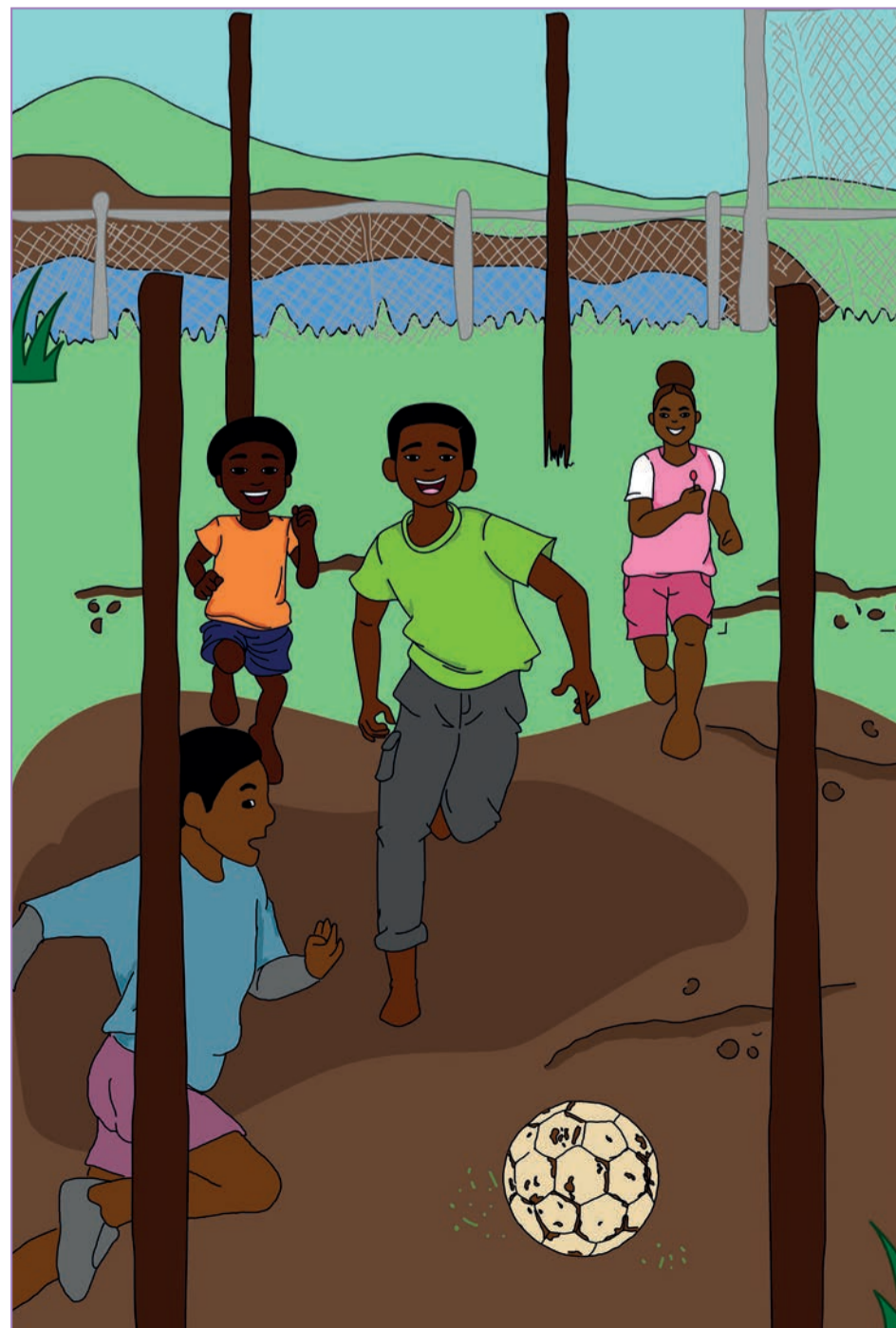
Bumpy – The field was bumpy and full of holes.

Tough – The soccer game was tough.

Improved – Kgomotso's rugby improved because he practised.

Scholarship – Kgomotso won a scholarship to pay for his school fees.

Kgomotso lived with his family in a small village in the North West province of South Africa. Most of the people he knew played and watched soccer. However, Kgomotso loved rugby. Every afternoon, Kgomotso and his friends played rugby on the



bumpy, dusty soccer field in their village. They used branches to build two rugby goal posts so they could practise kicking. Kgomotso had big dreams and he started working hard on making them come true.



One day two men stopped their bakkie on the side of the field.

“We see you guys playing good rugby,” said the one man. “But you really need to play with a rugby ball, not a round ball.

It bounces differently and is easier to carry.” He reached into the car and threw a rugby ball to Kgomotso.

“Try this,” he said. “We’ll be back sometime to see how you are doing.”

The friends were excited to play with a real rugby ball. It took time to get used to the shape, but soon they were kicking and catching with ease.

One Saturday, Kgomotso asked his family to watch the South African team play rugby. They were playing in the World Cup.



Kgomotso wanted to watch Siya Kolisi, the Springbok captain.

Kgomotso had heard of Siya Kolisi before. He paid close attention.

Before the game started, the TV host told Kolisi's story.

“Siya grew up in a poor township and didn't have much,” he said. “He loved rugby, but it was difficult for him. He did not have the right boots or kit. But Siya worked hard and kept playing, even when it was tough.”

Kgomotso kept listening. He felt that he and Siya had a lot in common.



Kgomotso heard that Siya Kolisi had started out with little, yet became so successful. “If Siya can do it, maybe I can too,” he thought.

When the Springboks won the World Cup, Kgomotso was overjoyed. If he trained hard, he was sure he could be successful too.



Every day he practised running and passing. After his friends went home, Kgomotso stayed on the field, kicking the ball over the goal posts.

Kgomotso needed rugby boots, but his family didn't have the money to buy them. So Kgomotso started washing cars, feeding chickens, carrying heavy bags and helping people in his village. He saved every cent he earned and finally had enough money to buy his first rugby boots. When Kgomotso put on his new boots, he felt stronger and more confident. His game improved, and soon people started noticing him.



One day, the two men who gave Kgomotso the rugby ball arrived. “You are playing very well,” one man said. “We work with schools to scout for future Springboks. Perhaps we can help you.” They explained that Kgomotso could try to win a scholarship. This would pay his fees at a school where rugby was important. Kgomotso trained hard every day. At the try outs, he played his very best.

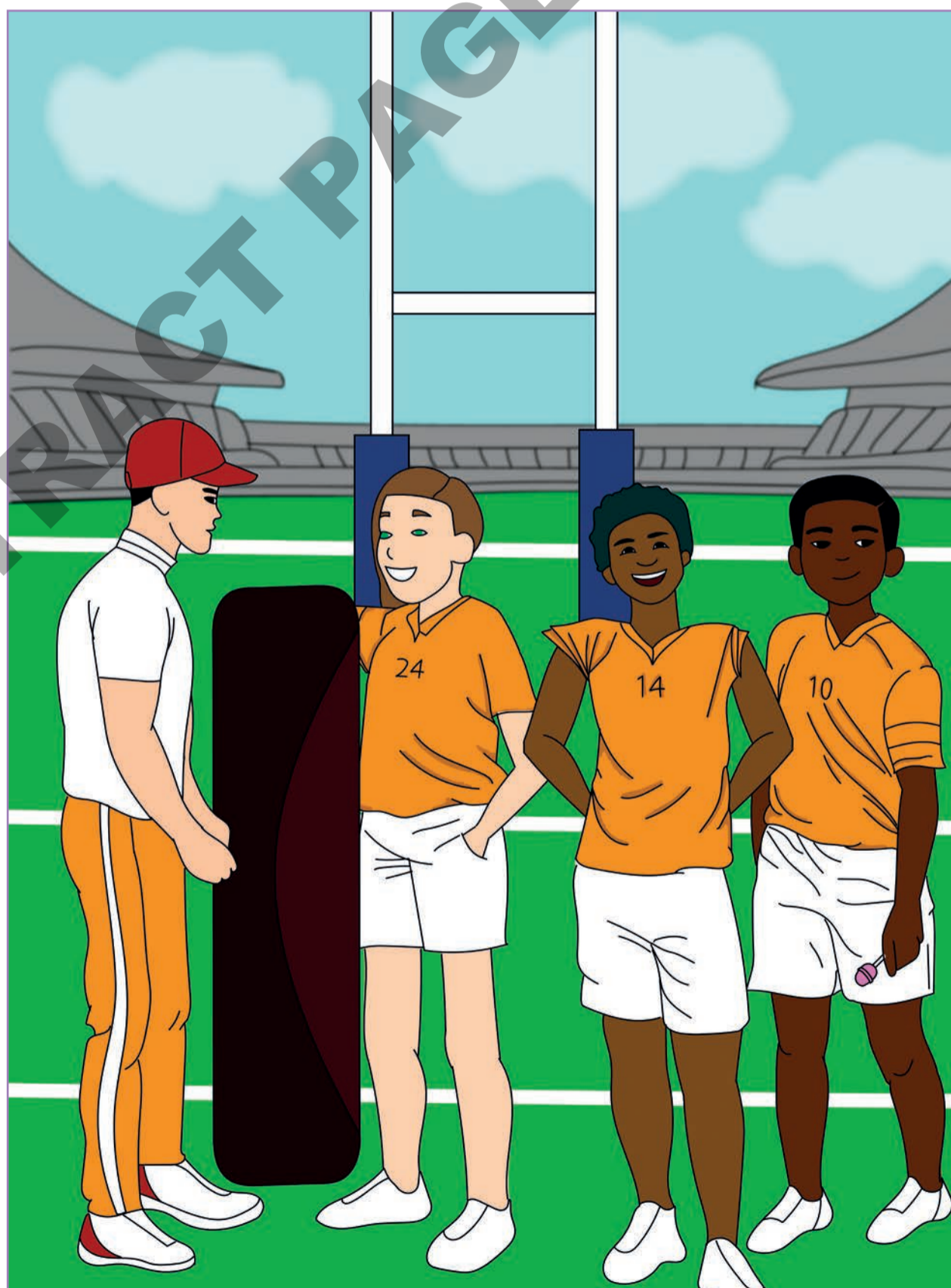


A few weeks later, Kgomotso received a phone call. He had won the scholarship! His dream was starting to come true. The whole village came to say goodbye to Kgomotso as he left for his new school. His friends cheered loudly and his father hugged him, saying, “You have worked hard, Kgomotso. We are all proud of you. Keep doing your best. Never give up!”



At his new school, Kgomotso practised and played more than ever before. His hard work paid off, and he became one of the best players in the team.

Every time he played, he remembered Siya Kolisi. He thought about how far he had come. Kgomotso believed that, like Siya, he could reach his dreams with hard work and faith in himself.



Now, Kgomotso plays rugby with confidence. He is captain of his team and has been chosen to play schools' rugby for his province. He is certain of one thing. If he keeps working hard like his hero, Siya Kolisi, he too might play for the Springboks one day.



Post-reading questions

1. What game did Kgomotso and his friends play?
2. Kgomotso and his friends got help. Who helped them and what did they do?
3. "Siya Kolisi was a role model for Kgomotso." Do you think this is true or false? Explain your answer.