

# Boks make Treu's dream come true

Paul Treu's Sevens Springboks made their coach's greatest rugby dream come true when they came from behind to beat New Zealand 12-7 in a tense but pulsating IRB Sevens World Series final at Outeniqua Park in George on Saturday.

It was the first time South Africa had won the IRB tournament at home and also the first time that they had put two successive wins together. The Springboks beat England in Dubai last weekend.

It was a victory against all the odds, with South Africa weakened by the Super 14 call-ups of a number of stalwarts like Schalk van der Merwe, Fabian Juries, Jonothan Mokuena and the non-availability of Stefan Basson and the injured Marius Schoeman and captain Neil Powell.

Built on a solid defence and an unbelievable camaraderie and team spirit, the relatively inexperienced Springboks, lighter than their opponents in virtually every match defied all the odds -- and are now clear leaders in the eight-tournament series.

Mzwandile Stick, who led the team in the absence of the injured Powell, was again outstanding in the final and scored the try that put the Boks ahead with less than two minutes remaining.

But hats off to every one of the players in this and the Dubai tournaments.

Robert Ebersohn received the Player of the Tournament award on Saturday, but it might just as well have gone to any of Frankie Horn, Mpho Mbyozo, Stick or Renfred Dazel.

New Zealand started off in a frenzy after kicking off and scored the first try through their captain DJ Forbes after three minutes following huge pressure on the Boks line (7-0).

The Kiwis, with their bigger players, initially played confrontational rugby in an effort to neutralise the Boks' speed and to draw them into the breakdowns. They often made contact with the Springboks forced uncharacteristically to kick to relieve pressure.

With two and a half minutes of the first half's 10 minutes remaining Gio Aplon broke the line with good stepping and Dazel won the 40 metres race against the pursuing New Zealanders to score far out (7-5).

It was a tactical battle with speed and aggression thrown into it, although it wasn't always the free-running stuff wanted by so many.

The tension before the biggest Sevens crowd in South African history was nevertheless unbearable and a near-try by the

Boks, preceded by a knock-on, gave the Kiwis some reprieve as the home side hammered their goal line.

But the Springboks who had climbed into the rucks got that elusive tighthead from the ensuing scrum, , and Stick went over from a good break, converted and put the Boks 12-7 up with less than two minutes to play. A drop from Robert Ebersohn was just wide, and with less than 50 seconds New Zealand had it all to do but couldn't.

\*\* England won the Plate final against a well-coached and gutsy Portugal, who showed great improvement from last year despite a rather average second day following their three wins to head their pool on Friday.

Turnover-mistakes by Portugal helped England to a deserved 24-7 win.

\*\* In the Bowl final an average France side, after a vastly better tournament than Dubai, outscored a poor semblance of an Australian national team 21-12. Australia have a young team and a new coach, but are not doing justice to their country's rugby or the IRB Sevens World Series with their below-par performances.

\*\* In the Shield final Zimbabwe annihilated a woeful and disinterested Scotland 26-0. This was Zimbabwe's third big win over Scotland in the two 2008/09 tournaments to date and left the Scots with only three wins from 11 matches so far.

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