



Lions legend Willie John McBride liked to get his retaliation in first

Springbok. "There was method to the madness," said McBride. "You see, there were fights breaking out all over the place and some o' me lads were running 100 yards just to get a kick at a South African - retaliation, like. Now that was no use to me. If someone was fighting for 10 minutes that was 10 minutes he wasn't playing Rugby. The 99 call ensured everyone had a chance to settle their grievances and be ready to play 30 seconds later. Even a South African referee, so I reasoned, couldn't send off all 15 of us."

So what happened?

The Lions beat the Boks for the first time ever on home soil, then set about dismantling their hotel at the after-party. Told the police would be called, McBride replied, "These police of yours - will there be many of them?"

✓✓ 1995 Rugby World Cup final South Africa 15 New Zealand 12

Word to use: Emotional.

Eh? Why?

South Africa could play international Rugby again, they won the World Cup on home soil, Nelson Mandela out of the pokey...

Good match?

Not really. No tries, anyway. The outplayed All Blacks still claim... well, never mind what they claim. It was emotional, alright?

What else?

Oddly, the lasting image is not a tackle or try, but Nelson Mandela and Springbok captain Francois Pienaar trying to outgrin each other after the match. Probably because Nels got given a replica Bok top to take home with him. Not cheap, them.

The alphabet soup of the game they play in head

A All Blacks. A group of large gentlemen with funny vowels and terrifying tribal rituals. Most often found in sentences that end "... crushed by the All Blacks".

Advantage. A law accidentally left in the change room by the referee, along with his common sense and spectacles.

Analysis. Where ex-players describe professional fouls with great knowledge and barely restrained enthusiasm.

B Blood bin. Rebuilding area for injured players. Like the worst scenes of MASH with added swearing.

Burst. Darting run into a gap that gives backs wet dreams.

Bullocking. Effective, ugly run by a forward when his blood is up. Sheer momentum means it takes five tacklers to bring him down.

C Code. Secret plays patiently drummed into the big thickies involved in line outs, who ignore it anyway in favour of a fight.

Conversion. A place kick turned by the flyhalf into a three-act play plus curtain calls.

D Deathriding. Never officially acknowledged phenomenon, where second-stringers pray to God the team loses and that the guy in their position plays like Stevie Wonder before injuring himself.

Drugs. Of which Rugby, a game featuring giant angry men, is entirely clean. Yes.

E Engine room. Large blokes expected to carry the brunt of the team's fighting.

F The French. Described invariably as, "mercurial", "moody", or "bloody vicious". The team will play one match per tournament like gods, and the rest moping around in an opaque Gallic funk, gouging people, while the baffled coach smokes 50 Gauloises a minute. We'd try to figure them out, but we don't care.

G Garryowen. Sounds like a member of a boy band, but actually a very high kick. Members of boy bands should be kicked like this.

Gouging. Where a dirty great thumb is used to gently explore the eye socket of an opposing player. Causes agonising pain, possible blindness, and citing by the video referee.

H Hand-off. When a player attempting a tackle finds a large unwelcome paw pushing his face in.

Haka. Pre-match entertainment provided by the All Blacks. It carries an ancient message of welcome. Or is that wrong?

How's your father (a bit of). Term used to describe an ugly brawl and multiple stretcherings-off.

Hospital pass. One that instantly puts the recipient in mortal danger.

I Italy. Emerging Rugby nation. Described as "always likely to spring a surprise". In practice never actually springs a surprise.

J Japan. As a Rugby playing nation, proof that God does have a sense of humour.

K "Kick ahead, any head." Old battle-cry of the Springboks.

Knock. Manly way of describing an injury that would hospitalise a normal person.

L Late. As in, "That was a bit late." Commentator's description of a forward's assault on a player who has long since got rid of the ball and is peacefully minding his own business.

✓✓ THAT tackle

Tackle? What tackle?

The one Wallaby George Gregan made on All Black Jeff Wilson to save the Bledisloe Cup match in 1994.

Big bloke, is he? Bit of a monster?