

# SA Rugby looking strong



By [Corné Krige](#)

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A couple of weeks ago I was very worried about the Springboks chances in this year's World Cup. The reason for my concern was that the senior players in most of the franchises were struggling with their form. This was escalated by the fact that Bulls were struggling for form and that many of the Springboks going to the World Cup would come from their ranks.

This weekend gave me a lot more hope that the Springboks could become the first team in history to defend their title as World Champions. The experienced players, such as Bakkies Botha, John Smit, Bismarck du Plessis, Victor Matfield and Morne Steyn are starting to lift their game and play the rugby that we all know they are capable of. Let's hope that P Divvy can surround himself with the right people so they pick the best team.

## Record-breaking Stormers



The Stormers broke the records in Canberra this weekend by beating the Brumbies on home soil for the first time. It was also a record fifth loss in a row at home for the embattled Brumbies. It wasn't a pretty win, but one that the Stormers will take with a smile. It is extremely difficult to beat the Brumbies at home because they always seem to lift their game against the Stormers. They probably played their best game of the season, but on the day the Stormers defence was just too good. At one stage the Brumbies held the ball through 32 phases and they didn't even manage to gain a penalty for their efforts. If the Stormers are to play in a home semi-final then it will be their defence that has gained

them that advantage.

## Attitude, discipline and teamwork

Defence is all about attitude, discipline and teamwork, and it is often a sign of how closely knit a team is. The guys care for each other and look after one another. Strong defence requires that you work hard for your teammate and that you trust him 100 percent. At the moment the Stormers look like they understand each other and work hard for each other in defence. Here I must mention Schalk Burger, as a guy who leads by example. He puts his body on the line in every game, and his work rate in defence is at times superhuman. I would love to see the statistics of the Stormers defence and how many tackles he makes in a game.

## Buns and Bunnies



The Lions pulled another bunny out of the hat with an unlikely win in Dunedin. The Highlanders had their best start to a season by winning their first five games, but since then the wheels have well and truly come off. Credit must go to the Lions for not giving up and continuously asking questions of the opposition. I have a lot of respect for John Mitchell, I think he is a fantastic coach and the kind of guy that the Lions camp needs. He is very hard on his players, but he knows his rugby. I think Lions supporters will in the next two years have lots to cheer about if stays in the coaching position.

So we are entering the exciting stage of the competition at last. The Stormers play the Rebels this weekend and this is a game that they should win. On their return they face a Bulls side that is starting to look like the team that won the Super 14 last year. Luckily, that game is at Newlands. They also have to play the Cheetahs in Bloemfontein, which is not going to be an easy game. Let's accept that the Stormers will end top of the South African Conference, then there will be a bun fight for second place between the Sharks and the Bulls. If either the Sharks or the Bulls have to travel to New Zealand or Australia

for a play-off, then the odds of a win are stacked against them. Let's hope two South African teams can make a home semi-final, because that would boost our chances of keeping the silverware in South Africa.

## ABOUT CORNÉ KRIGE

Corné Krige; former captain of the Springboks has had a successful rugby career, playing 39 tests for South African in total of 18 of which were as Captain as well as leading the Springboks in the World Cup in 2003. Corné now lives in Melkbosstrand with his wife Justine and three children. He owns his own company, OK Outdoor which specializes in Outdoor Advertising and is sports contributor to Bizcommunity's BizLifestyle section.

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