

# Jean de Villiers to start from bench against World XV

Former Springbok captain, Jean de Villiers, will start from the bench for the Springboks when they take on the World XV at DHL Newlands in Cape Town tomorrow.



Victor Matfield will captain the Boks, with Warren Whiteley making his first start in the Green and Gold, while two uncapped players, Jesse Kriel and Vincent Koch, have been included in the match-23.

If De Villiers makes an appearance it will be his first rugby since suffering a dislocated knee and ligament damage in the final match of 2014, against Wales in Cardiff. De Villiers has gone through more than seven months of rigorous rehabilitation and is now completing a remarkable recovery.

"Jean is a massive asset to South African rugby and it's wonderful to know his return to play is progressing so well that we can give him some game time from the bench on Saturday," said Springbok coach Heyneke Meyer.

## Incredible work-ethic

"The mere fact that he is back in shape and ready to play is testament to his incredible work-ethic and his professional approach to the game. Jean has really put in hours and hours of extra work to get here and he is a great example for any player on how to put yourself in the best possible position to recover.

Meyer said the decision to hand the captaincy to Matfield for the time being was not a difficult one. Ruan Pienaar has been given the vice-captaincy. "The captaincy is a very important thing to me and it's something that I believe should not be treated lightly, especially at international level," said Meyer. "Victor is the most-experienced player in the history of Springbok rugby and has captained successfully at every level of the game."

Meyer said of the selection of Whiteley, Kriel and Koch: "All three of them were magnificent in Vodacom Super Rugby and they deserve this opportunity. I'm excited to see how they step up to this level. I've always rated Vincent and followed his

career for a long time. He has really improved a lot recently, which is testament to the hard work he and everyone who has worked with him, has put in."

## **Ball-stealing ability**

"Warren is a specialist No 8 and will have big shoes to fill with Duane Vermeulen out injured. Although he has played in only two Tests, he brings experience and leadership to the pack, having led the Emirates Lions with great style this season. The reason we've decided to go with Francois Louw and Marcell Coetzee is because we have lost some ball-stealing ability with Duane not available, but both our flanks can now fulfil that role.

"Jesse has played at outside centre before and starred for the Junior Springboks in that position in four of their five matches in 2014. He's also been training with us for a long time and I'm sure he will slot in easily with Damian de Allende in an exciting but a little inexperienced midfield combination," Meyer said.

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