

What a final!

I have said this a couple of times, but I am going to say it again. A week in rugby is a long time! I did predict a week ago that the All Blacks would be crowned world champions, but that is just about the only thing I predicted correctly. I really felt that it would be a one-sided final and that the All Blacks would win comfortably by no less than 14 points.

 By [Corné Krige](#) 24 Oct 2011



I also mentioned that you never know which French team would arrive on the day. Would it be the team that arrived against Tonga or would it be the one that arrived against England? Well, to be honest, it wasn't either of the two. This was a French performance like I have never seen before. They were up against a nation, never mind an All Black team, and they responded beautifully and made it a final to remember and the lowest-scoring final in history.

All Black pack under massive pressure

The French pack took time to settle in but, ultimately, managed to put the All Black pack under massive pressure. Their set pieces were fantastic and they never gave the All Blacks any space in attack. The French defended bravely and frustrated the All Blacks into uncharacteristic mistakes. An injury to Aaron Cruden, the New Zealand fly-half, really threw the cat amongst the pigeons, but somehow they managed to hold on to a one-point victory.

The French were led by an inspirational Thierry Dusautour, who was probably my man of the match. His work rate in attack and defence was just amazing and I have no doubt that that inspired his team to play the rugby that they did. In the end, the All Blacks deserve a lot of credit for not panicking and managing to hold on under enormous pressure from the French.

Proud of Craig Joubert

I thought that Craig Joubert had a fantastic game and we South Africans can truly be proud of him. In the final minutes of the game the French were on the attack and he held his nerve well and didn't give an unnecessary penalty to the French. The kicking on both sides was dismal and if Piri Weepu had converted all his kicks it could have been a slightly easier win for the men in black.

Twenty-four years is a long time and I am sure that the players and management are very relieved that that monkey is off their back. I am really happy for Richie McCaw as a captain, player and person. He really is one of the greats of world rugby and he deserves to hold up the Webb Ellis Trophy. I am also glad for the New Zealand people as they really have had a tough year with the earthquakes in Christchurch. The parties would have gone well into the night in Auckland and deservedly so. New Zealand hosted a fantastic tournament and maybe, just maybe, it was a fitting end. Just as it was in 1995 in South Africa. Have a great week and we will chat after the Currie Cup final next week. I think it will be great for SA Rugby if the Lions manage to pull off a win against a Springbok-laden Sharks team.

ABOUT CORNÉ KRIGE

Corné Krige, former captain of the Springboks has had a successful rugby career, playing 39 tests for South Africa 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, CK Outdoor which specializes in Outdoor Advertising and is sports contributor to Bizcommunity's BizLifestyle section.
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