

Springboks accept full responsibility for Japan defeat

Springbok coach Heyneke Meyer and captain Jean de Villiers accepted their performance was not good enough as South Africa opened their Rugby World Cup campaign with a defeat against Japan.



Japan won 34-32 in Brighton, following a try after the hooter by replacement wing Karne Hesketh. It was his team's third try, after captain Michael Leitch and fullback Ayumu Goromaru also scored. Goromaru added two conversions and five penalty goals for a personal total of 24 points.

The Springboks' four tries were scored by Francois Louw, Bismarck du Plessis, Lood de Jager and Adriaan Strauss. Pat Lambie kicked two conversions and a penalty goal, while Handré Pollard added a conversion and penalty goal.

"It was very disappointing - we have let our country down but we can't keep on saying that. It was a below par performance and unacceptable," said Meyer.

"All credit to the Japanese, they played right to the end. Our performance was just not good enough. We knew they were going to be tough, but we gave away too many penalties, our discipline was just not good enough.

"Their defence was brilliant. We didn't get quick ball and if you don't get quick ball you won't win.

"But it's easy to look back afterwards on the decisions made, for instance the last penalty we probably should have gone for

a try. I'm not going to blame the players though, I picked the guys and have confidence in them. I take full responsibility and I still believe in these players."

De Villiers said: "We were beaten by a better team and as players we need to take responsibility. It was way below par and it is difficult to say exactly where it went wrong.

"It was a massive victory for Japan and I am embarrassed. All credit to Japan and the way they executed their win. We could never get comfortable and they always hung on. It feels like a massive shock to us and it's difficult to take it all in.

"We were beaten by a better team on the day. As players, we need to take responsibility and ownership. This was way below par and the standards we set for ourselves. It's difficult to say where it went wrong. It wasn't good enough, by a long shot."

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