

Sunday, October 4, 2015



SPRINGBOKS BEAT THE SCOTS

Newcastle

Handre Pollard kept South Africa's World Cup revival on track landing 19 points with the boot in a 34-16 victory over Scotland yesterday.

The win took South Africa a point ahead of the Scots in Pool B as they took a new step back from the brink after their devastating loss to Japan in their first match.

Schalk Burger, JP Pietersen and Bryan Habana scored tries to bring the match alive in front of more than 50,000 people at Newcastle. But Pollard's deadly accuracy secured the key points.

Scotland staged an heroic comeback in the second half after trailing 20-3 at the break and twice hauled themselves to within seven points against the Springboks.

But each time Pollard denied them the chance for what could have been a crucial losing bonus point, landing a drop goal the first time and a



South Africa's fly half Handre Pollard (centre) runs while he is being tackled by the Scots

50-metre penalty the second time.

It was the first defeat in the tournament for the Scots and for South Africa it made

their pathway from Pool B to the play-offs more clear even though they did not get a bonus point.

They just need a win over the

United States to go through. "Hats off to South Africa," said Scotland's sporting coach Vern Cotter after the defeat. "They played very well."

Scotland must beat Samoa next week to go into the quarter finals and Cotter was happy to get seven days to prepare.

"There are a few things to sort out," he said.

But South Africa's opening loss to Japan has been put behind them as they improved to two wins from three games, the same as Scotland. Japan beat Samoa 26-5 earlier to stay in the Pool B qualifying race.

Scrum-half Fourie du Preez, stepping up to captain South Africa after the inspirational Jean de Villiers suffered a career ending broken jaw against Samoa, directed play with surety.

Scots muscled out

He used South Africa's pack led by man-of-the-match Lodewyk de Jager to out-muscle the Scots, dominating scrums and mauls, while raking kicks from fly-half Pollard were used to turn Scotland wings Tommy Seymour and Tim Visser.

Wearing their white away strip, the Springboks announced their forward dominance from the start as they set up camp deep in Scotland territory.

Even after being driven back to their own 22 by a couple of quick penalties, a tighthead allowed them to ram their way back up field with a try awarded to Schalk Burger after a mass drive over the line.

The signs were ominous for Scotland that they were well out muscled up front.

A forward drive that marched the Scots back nearly 15 metres eventually produced a penalty which Pollard duly slotted from in front of the posts.

Facing an early 10-0 deficit, Scotland tried to up the pace of the game to upset the Springboks rhythm but for every metre they gained by running the ball they lost many more as South targeted the Scots wings with deep kicks.

Goromaru's boots fire Japan over Samoa



Japan's full-back Ayumu Goromaru (left) is tackled

Milton Keynes

Ayumu Goromaru scored 16 points to keep Japan in the race for a historic appearance in the Rugby World Cup quarter-finals as they beat Samoa 26-5 yesterday.

The 29-year-old, who starred in the epic win over South Africa two weeks ago, became the leading tournament points scorer with 45.

The Japanese also scored two tries, a penalty try and one from wing Akihito Yamada. Samoa paid for their lack of discipline losing three players

to the sin bin in the game.

The win at Milton Keynes takes the Japanese -- who before this World Cup had won just one match and that back in 1991 -- onto eight points ahead of their final game with United States next weekend.

Table-toppers Scotland -- who have 10 points from two matches -- face the Springboks, who have seven points, later on Saturday.

Goromaru looked to have given Japan a dream start as he went over in the left hand corner but linesman Wayne

Barnes signalled for a forward pass leaving coach Eddie Jones fuming.

South Africa referee Craig Joubert, who had been playing an advantage anyway, awarded the Japanese a penalty instead and Goromaru shrugged off the disappointment to slot over the penalty.

Samoa were reduced to 14 men for 10 minutes when No8 Failfili Levave was sin-binned for making no attempt to tackle hooker Shota Horie simply bending his shoulder into the Japanese player and sending him flying.

Joubert read the riot act to Samoan captain Ofisa Treviranus about conceding penalties and the South African wielded another yellow card when prop Sakaria Taulafo took out a Japanese player in the air -- leaving the Samoans with just 13 men on the pitch.

The Pacific islanders defended stoically as the Japanese pounded away at them. The Asian champions eventually came away with a penalty try which Goromaru converted for 10-0 after 24 minutes.

Battered All Blacks in QFinals



New Zealand's wing Julian Savea (left) runs with the ball

Cardiff

Julian Savea scored a hat-trick of tries but New Zealand's rugby superstars took a battering before they overcame Georgia to become the first nation into the World Cup quarter-finals.

The 43-10 result did not reflect the struggle by the All Blacks in the Millennium Stadium where the biggest cheer went to Georgia's tough tackling hero Mamuka Gorgodze as he was named man-of-the-match.

Captain Richie McCaw

and coach Steve Hansen both admitted that it was not a great night for the team seeking to become the first to win back-to-back World Cups. But both said there was no reason to panic.

"I was a little disappointed with some of the errors we made, but that's an easy thing to fix," McCaw said.

"We're under no illusions it wasn't perfect out there but I thought the intensity around some of those contact areas was a definite step up."

"There's a lot of things we

could have done better for sure. Our execution at times was not great," said Hansen. Georgia physically matched the world champions, forcing them into elementary errors.

Not all black

Lost lineouts and scrums, passes fired into empty spaces and penalties not finding touch -- Dan Carter missed three conversions out of seven -- showed the All Blacks were well out of tune with only one game against Tonga left before the knockout stages.

Starting their top available side against a Georgia team resting many of their best players, the All Blacks were expected to win comfortably. But they were only 22-10 up at half-time before adding three tries in the second half.

They were rattled by a Georgia team that used bone-jarring tackles and their powerful forward pack to shake the All Blacks.

With his first touch of the ball in his comeback game after a leg fracture in his maiden Test three months ago, Waisake Naholo sped 55 metres through the Georgian defence to touch down after just 80 seconds.