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Boks stutter to Wallabies draw in Bloemfontein

A thrilling Rugby Championship clash in Bloemfontein on Saturday night saw the Springboks and Wallabies play out to a 27-27 draw.

This follows the 23-23 draw between the sides in Perth earlier this month and it is a result that does not do anything for under-fire Bok coach Allister Coetzee. Bok supporters were left drained as they watched their side take the lead, and then lose it, numerous times. Referee Ben O'Keeffe was also a central figure in the contest, with his handling of an incident in the first half between Eben Etzebeth, Israel Folau and Dillyn Leyds not sitting well with the large majority of the Bloemfontein crowd. Springbok flyhalf Elton Jantjies had a chance to win the game in the 79th minute with a penalty from out left, but he missed to the right.

It was clear from the kick-off that the Boks were in a running mood. Instead, the Wallabies struck first when fullback Folau finished off a clinically executed backline move from a scrum that showed just how dangerous the Australian backs could be. Foley added the extras, and with the Boks 7-0 down, the Bloemfontein crowd went silent.

The Boks hit back well. Skipper Etzebeth turned down a chance to get on the board with three points, opting instead for the lineout. The resulting rolling maul was well defended as the Boks went nowhere, but a few phases later Ruan Dreyer went crashing

over to level matters as Jantjies added the extra two. Uzair Cassiem, meanwhile, was replaced by Jean-Luc du Preez with what looked to be a rib injury. The helter skelter nature of the opening quarter died down somewhat as Foley and Jantjies exchanged penalties to make it 10-10, but the Boks were beginning to show a weakness at scrum time and a second penalty in quick succession in that department allowed Foley to knock a goal over from right in front as the visitors took a 13-10 lead.

Things got heated on 35 minutes when, with the Boks on the attack, Leyds was pulled down in bizarre fashion. Folau was the 'tackler', and Etzebeth was having none of it as he charged over to the Aussie fullback and wrestled him to the ground. As referee O'Keeffe examined the replays of the incident, the crowd roared in anger when Folau could clearly be seen pulling Leyds' hair on the big screen. But the Kiwi match official opted against dishing out any cards in what was the final big moment in the half as the Walla-

bies took a 13-10 lead into half time. Siya Kolisi has been massive for this side in 2017 and he sparked what was a crucial score for the Boks. With just a couple of minutes gone in the second period, Kolisi went charging down the right touchline and crashed over Kurtley Beale. Kolisi offloaded inside to Leyds, who managed to scramble a pass away to Jan Serfontein. The Bulls centre finished off the move, Jantjies converted, and the Boks were 17-13 up. It was short-lived. Having just created a try, Kolisi then cost his side one when he slipped a routine tackle on Foley.

The Wallaby flyhalf broke through and offloaded to wing Marika Koroibete, who cantered in for a try to take the lead back. The response, once more, was on point from a Springbok side that was throwing everything at it. A good period of enterprising attack got the reward when Courtnall Skosan spotted a gap to finish off, but again the Boks could not hold onto their lead. 24-20 up, the hosts found themselves defending on their line again.



With men sucked in, the hosts were left short out wide and the Wallabies swung it left where Koroibete dived in for his second of the night. As the final quarter approached, the Springboks were 27-24 down and needed a big effort from their bench to get over the line.

National and international soccer news, scores and fixtures

- * Manchester City playmaker, Kevin de Bruyne, believes the 1-0 win over Chelsea is worth six points in the race to the Premier League title.
- * Arsene Wenger believes Arsenal are ready to silence the critics who wrote them off in the aftermath of their humiliating loss against Liverpool.
- * Jurgen Klopp assessed Liverpool's latest failure to win a Premier League game after a 1-1 draw at Newcastle United by saying: "Football is not fair."
- * Everton manager, Ronald Koeman, was set for an uncomfortable international break after Jeff Hendrick's goal gave visitors Burnley victory at Goodison Park.
- * Mauricio Pochettino admitted he is running out of ways to describe Harry Kane after the Tottenham striker inspired a rout of Huddersfield.
- * Bournemouth were left frustrated as the Premier League strugglers failed to turn their dominance into goals in a draw against Leicester.
- * Brazilian youngster, Richarlison scored in time added on to give Watford a share of the points in a draw with West Brom in an EPL

- fixture.
- * A brace from Marouane Fellaini and goals from Juan Mata and Romelu Lukaku saw Manchester United run rampant against Crystal Palace at Old Trafford.
- * West Ham United moved clear of the relegation zone with a last gasp Premier League win over Swansea City at the London Stadium.
- * Stoke City picked up a valuable three points with a hard-fought victory over Southampton in their English Premier League clash.
- * Kaizer Chiefs coach, Steve Komphela says he will maintain his dignity despite fans expressing their disapproval with the club's 2-1 defeat to Baroka.
- * Mamelodi Sundowns have secured victory over Platinum Stars in their Absa Premiership match at the Royal Bafokeng Stadium.
- * A solitary goal by Roggert Nyundu for Bloemfontein Celtic ensured they beat Bidvest Wits in their Absa Premiership clash at the Dr. Molemela Stadium.
- * A late goal from Thabo Mnyamane secured a draw for SuperSport United against Club Africain in the first leg of their CAF Confederations Cup semi-final.

Weekend results

(Saturday):

* Manchester City	1 - 0	Chelsea	
* Bournemouth	0 - 0		Leicester City
* Stoke City	2 - 1		Southampton
* ManUnited	4 - 0		Crystal Palace
* W/H/united	1 - 0		Swansea City
* W/b/Albion	2 - 2		Watford
Tott/Hotspur	4 - 0		Huddersfield Town

Sunday:

* N/castle United	1 - 1		Liverpool
* Burnley	1 - 0		Everton
* Arsenal	2 - 0		Brighton & Hove Albion

Log:

Pos	Team	P	W	L	D	Pts
1	Man/City	7	6	0	1	19
2	Man/United	7	6	0	1	19
3	Tott/Hotspur	7	4	1	2	14
4	Chelsea	7	4	2	1	13
5	Arsenal	7	4	2	1	13
6	Burnley	7	3	1	3	12
7	Liverpool	7	3	1	3	12
8	Watford	7	3	1	3	12

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