



CHRIS SCHOEMAN

THE NUMBER

10s

**SOUTH
AFRICA'S
FINEST
FLYHALVES**
1891–2010

FOREWORD BY MORNÉ DU PLESSIS

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In memory of my father, who sparked my love of the game

AUTHOR'S NOTE

How does one go about compiling a book on South Africa's finest flyhalves of all time? You have to accept that selections in publications of this nature will never please everybody, and that it is futile to even attempt as much. Personal choices will vary from one rugby fan or 'expert' to another, but, as they say, in the end it remains only one man's opinion. The best that one can do is to get as many knowledgeable and objective opinions as possible, verbal and written, to point the way.

No one in this world has watched every Springbok flyhalf in South African rugby history play, and of course no one among the living can claim to have seen the likes of Paddy Carolin (1906) or Freddie Luyt (1912) in action. However, for the assessment of the older generations of flyhalves from before 1900 all the way up to Hansie Brewis in 1949, one could, to a large extent, rely on the recorded opinions of the legendary A.F. Markötter – and who better? The famous Oubaas Mark himself had played first-league rugby

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during the 1890s already, and had been involved as coach and national selector for many years.

Then there was ‘Mr Rugby’, Dr Danie Craven, who literally saw hundreds of Springboks play for their country from the time of his own international debut in 1931 to his death in 1993. He had arguably the greatest knowledge of the game of everyone before or since his time, and his views on most Springbok players were widely published. With regard to the 1920s and 1930s, I was also fortunate to have spoken several times to the late Reverend George Daneel, the only Springbok to have lived to a 100 years of age, and a man who played in the era of ‘halfbacks’, before flyhalf and scrumhalf had become specialist positions. He made his debut for the Springboks even earlier than Dr Craven, in 1928, and was a Springbok and Western Province teammate of the great Bennie Osler, as well as Craven, in 1931/32.

I also canvassed opinion on the players in this book among former Springboks or provincial teammates, a few foreign internationals and coaches, and, for what it’s worth, I have also seen many of these players in action locally and on foreign fields. This helped a great deal to paint a more complete picture.

Hopefully this book will help to bring some famous names of the past to the attention of the younger generation. I recall how taken aback a former Springbok coach once was when he discovered that some of his players were quite ignorant of a certain Springbok flyhalf, famous a mere 30 years before. And, who knows, 30 years from now, there may be young Springboks who will be clueless when the name Morné Steyn comes up – however strange that may sound right now.

CHRIS SCHOEMAN

SEPTEMBER 2010

FOREWORD

As long as the game has been played, we have always talked about the man in the team who wears the No. 10 shirt. We talk about him around the dinner table, the braai, in the pub, at school and at work. Wherever the game of rugby is discussed, we speak about the flyhalf, the halfback, the No. 10 – mostly in reverence, because without him at his best, our team will not be what we want it to be.

My earliest recollection of talking about the great flyhalves was from my late dad. He would speak glowingly of the great dictator, the tactical genius, the Bobby Jones of rugby – the great Bennie Osler. My dad would also speak about the incredible all-round sporting ability of Tony Harris, who played cricket and rugby at the highest level, this versatile sporting talent not uncommon to many of the great flyhalves.

In 1949, Hansie Brewis cut through the All Black defence, and over 70 000 people at Ellis Park witnessed what is still regarded as one of the great tries of international rugby. The flyhalf they nicknamed

‘Kiewiet’ would become a legend, and my dad, who played with Hansie Brewis in that Test, would fondly recall that moment of magic.

The first flyhalf who captivated my own young imagination and left a lasting impression was Keith Oxlee. I can still clearly see from my earliest recollections the cool, calm, collected Oxlee going about his business on the field, finishing the Test match the way he had started it – unfussed, unfazed and, like all great flyhalves, in charge. Then there was my personal all-time flyhalf hero, the mercurial Jannie Barnard: creative, explosive and with a sidestep to both sides as big as a garden gate.

My own experience of playing with the ‘generals’ of my time followed – Piet Visagie, Gerald Bosch, Dawie Snyman – who I went to school with – and, of course, the brilliant Naas Botha. Each of these men had their own special qualities and unique talents that are still vivid in my memory, and I now share these personal experiences with my own sons.

And so I can go on: the groundbreaking Errol Tobias; the uncomplaining, unassuming but hugely effective Henry Honiball; the World Cup legend Joel Stransky and the most talked-about drop goal in the history of the game; and, finally, those who now wear the No. 10 green-and-gold shirt as I write this foreword – boys like Butch James and Morné Steyn (who will, it seems, rewrite all the record books).

I have singled out but a few of these flyhalves, the men around which much of the structure of the game of rugby revolves, and perhaps that is why we refer to them as the ‘pivot’. You will read about all of these players in this entertaining book, which will add to the enjoyable debate and conversation that is sure to continue as long as we play this game.

MORNÉ DU PLESSIS

The fly-half must be the tactician, the fulcrum of the side, with the confidence to call the shots and to select the percentage options. He must have the ability to change strategy as the game goes along; he must punt accurately with either foot; and he requires soft hands so that in an instant he can provide weight and direction of pass that would prove beneficial to those on either side of him. He needs to have sharp acceleration because his opportunities to break will be few and far between, so they must not be wasted. It is a bonus if he revels in explosive tackling, and an additional bonus if he can slot a drop goal off either foot. The garryowen [up-and-under], the grubber kick, the diagonal punt, and the neat chip ahead also have to be part of his repertoire. He has to have the confidence and judgment to direct operations and to select the most fruitful ploys, and he must also take a full part in the forward and cover defence systems in operations.

– *BBC rugby commentator Bill McLaren (the 'voice of rugby')*

INTRODUCTION

Over the years, many books have been written on Springbok rugby sides, on the best rugby players South Africa has produced and on individual rugby players, but this is the first book on the No. 10s of Springbok rugby. Throughout the history of rugby football, it has been the flyhalves who have most captured the hearts and minds of supporters. They play in arguably the most crucial position on the rugby field and are usually the ones who win (or lose!) games for their sides.

During its illustrious history, South African rugby has produced some of the best flyhalves in the world – among them Bennie Osler (in whose era South Africa never lost a series), Hansie Brewis and Naas Botha. From Alf Richards in 1891 up to Morné Steyn in 2010, more than 60 players have played at halfback (more about this later) or flyhalf for the Springboks.

Some of these players have been responsible for the most memorable moments in the history of the game, such as Bennie

Osler's great all-round performance versus the All Blacks in the first Test of 1928 (including two drop goals and two penalties); Hansie Brewis's brilliant try and drop goal versus the All Blacks in the second Test in 1949; Naas Botha's 20 points versus the All Blacks in the second Test, in Wellington, in 1981; Joel Stransky's World Cup-winning drop goal at Ellis Park in 1995; and Jannie de Beer's record-setting five drop goals at the 1999 World Cup.

Not all that much has been recorded about some players, especially those from the 1890s and early 1900s; some played only a few Tests, and match reports from those days were skimpy. On the other hand, there is an abundance of information on the more recent players – just think of Naas Botha or Joel Stransky or Ruan Pienaar. In a book devoted to the great flyhalves of Springbok rugby, one cannot say everything about a player like Naas Botha, as that would constitute a book or two on its own!

Through a series of profiles on the great No. 10s of Springbok rugby, I aim to convey what type of player a specific flyhalf was or is, his achievements in terms of scoring points, or his ability as a match-winner, and so on. The legendary Danie Craven, for instance, played only two Tests as a flyhalf from a total of 16 Tests, yet he was a magnificent footballer and he – and some other players with only a few Tests at flyhalf – are included here on the basis of their qualities as genuine footballers. The final chapter describes some of the most memorable plays by the great flyhalves of Springbok rugby.

It should be noted that during the period before 1912/13, a halfback was basically a halfback: there was as yet no specialisation in terms of playing flyhalf or scrumhalf, so players were selected as halfbacks and not as flyhalves or scrumhalves as in the later period. The halves would simply alter their position according to who was closest to the scrum at a breakdown. I recall the late George Daneel – the first, and so far the only, Springbok to have lived to

100 years of age – telling of his days as a halfback while at school in Robertson, and afterwards as an under-19 player for the University of Cape Town (he later went to Stellenbosch, where he was moved to No. 8, and became a Springbok in 1928 against New Zealand):

In those days all I wanted was to play amongst the backs. I didn't want to have anything to do with the forwards. I played both scrumhalf and flyhalf; in those days we were known as 'halfbacks'. In our time you had to be able to play in both positions. When play was at the left-hand side of the field, I would for instance take up position as scrumhalf nearest to the left-hand-side touchline. When play went across the field to the right-hand side, the flyhalf would take over as scrumhalf because he was closest to the play and I would take his position at flyhalf. If play moved to the left again, I would play scrumhalf again and my partner flyhalf again. So we swapped places to and fro.¹

In fact, during the 1890s, rugby teams fielded three halfbacks. Barry Heatlie, former South African captain and member of the Western Province Currie Cup team, wrote in the *History of South African Rugby Football*: 'In those days we played eight forwards, three halfbacks, three three-quarters and a fullback. The third half-back held a roving commission and there was very little concerted play between him and his three-quarters. In fact, combination was lacking and individualists shone.'² He also mentions that the Currie Cup tournament of 1892 was 'the last tournament in which three three-quarters were played'.³

In the second-last match of the 1906/07 Springbok tour of Britain and France – the Springboks versus Cardiff RFC in Cardiff – the Welsh still used the three-halfbacks formation. Percy Bush

(their captain) and R. David were listed on the Cardiff team sheet as ‘half-backs’, and R.A. Gibbs as ‘five-eighth’, with only seven forwards completing the list.

The halfbacks of those days were definitely interchangeable. A photo from 1906 clearly shows Springbok halfback Mary Jackson passing the ball from a set scrum to Uncle Dobbin, yet somehow in some people’s minds Dobbin was a scrumhalf and Jackson a flyhalf. The bottom line is that they were brilliant footballers in either position, and they are treated as such in this book.

An interesting article in this regard by Paddy Carolin, Springbok halfback and vice-captain of the 1906/07 Springboks in Britain, appeared in the *Cape Times* of 17 September 1926 under the heading ‘H W Carolin on Modern Halfback Play’. In the article, he stressed the necessity of a flyhalf and a scrumhalf being able to interchange positions. He wrote that ‘between the 1906 and 1912 tours it gradually became the practice, when selecting the halfbacks, to select them either as “scrum” or “fly” halves ... up to 1912 no halfback was selected as a scrumhalf. The one halfback took the scrums on his side of the field and played “away” when the scrum was on the other side of the ground.’ He also wrote:

I consider the present system [of flyhalves and scrumhalves playing in one position only] not an improvement on the old one. From their very position the halfbacks must be the strategists of the team. It is they who act as the connecting link between the backs and the forwards and it is upon their brains that the team must rely for success. Under the old system either of the halfbacks could view the game from two different viewpoints during a game; two brains were put to work as against one in the present system, and as we all say two brains are better than one.⁴

At some stage during Jake White's tenure as Springbok coach, the Bok scrumhalf Joost van der Westhuizen was played on the wing and would take over as scrumhalf when he was nearest to the action on his side of the field. At the time this move was regarded as revolutionary, but in fact it was as old as the hills.

Some halfbacks were the size of forwards in those days. Willie Wotherspoon of Scotland, for instance, who toured with the British Isles in 1891, was 1.8 metres tall and weighed more than 90 kilograms. The strong Dietlof Maré was chosen as halfback for Paul Roos's 1906/07 Springbok touring team to Britain and France, but he was equally at home at forward, and ended up going through most of the tour as a forward.

It could be argued that some of these halfbacks would have been either a better flyhalf or a better scrumhalf had they played in those specific positions, as in years to come. Would Alf Richards, for instance, have been a better flyhalf than a scrumhalf, and Uncle Dobbin and Jackie Powell better scrumhalves than flyhalves? Who knows – they were great footballers in any case, and therefore some of the halfbacks of the 1891–1913 era are included in this book.

The outbreak of World War I in 1914 brought a temporary end to international rugby, which resumed for South Africa only in 1921. By that stage, halfbacks were chosen specifically as flyhalves or scrumhalves, playing in that position throughout, starting with Mannetjies Michau, Charlie Meyer and Sas de Kock – even though Michau was regarded as more of a scrumhalf and, in fact, played two Tests in the scrumhalf position. But they seem to have been so versatile and such complete footballers in those times that it didn't much matter whether they were slotting in at flyhalf or scrumhalf – yesteryear versions of a modern-day Ruan Pienaar, or even Brent Russell.

Broadly speaking, there have been six dominant flyhalf eras since then – that of Bennie Osler (1924–1933), Hansie Brewis

(1949–1953), Keith Oxlee (1960–1965), Piet Visagie (1967–1971), Naas Botha (1980–1992) and Henry Honiball (1993–1999). The two decades between 1921 and 1938 (between the latter date and 1949 there was no international rugby for South Africa because of World War II) were largely dominated by the great Bennie Osler, who started playing for the Springboks in 1924 against the British Isles and played his last Test in 1933 against Australia. For the 1937 series in Australia and New Zealand, the legendary Danie Craven took over for two Tests and Vandie van de Vyver for one; thereafter the outstanding Tony Harris took over for the last two Tests as well as for the 1938 series against the British Lions.

After World War II, the great Hansie Brewis dominated the fly-half scene. Playing in all four Tests against the visiting All Blacks in 1949, he was the master on the 1951/52 tour to Britain and France, and finished his career in the first Test against Australia in 1953. From 1955 to 1958, six flyhalves were used in Tests, with Clive Ulyate playing in seven of them.

Then followed the era of the genial Keith Oxlee, who only bowed out on the New Zealand tour of 1965, to be followed by Piet Visagie, who, between 1967 and 1971, was the first-choice flyhalf for the Springboks and played in 25 Tests – a lot of Tests for that era. Until the emergence of the legendary Naas Botha in 1980, flyhalves came and went, but Naas would make the position his own for more than the next decade (except for a brief spell in 1984, when he temporarily defected to American gridiron).

In the post-Botha era, South African Tests became more prolific, and so did flyhalf appearances. Between 1993 and 2010, 20 flyhalves were used: Henry Honiball played flyhalf in 27 Tests, Jaco van der Westhuysen in 24, André Pretorius in 29 and Joel Stransky in 21. But of course this does not mean that those who had played in fewer Tests were lesser footballers; Percy Montgomery, for instance,

played in only five Tests at No. 10, but in 102 Tests in total, and his ability and remarkable contributions to the Springbok side are well known.

Rugby Union Scoring: 1891–Present

The point values for the various scoring methods in rugby have changed over the years. The table below shows the differing point values during the applicable seasons from 1891, when South Africa played international rugby for the first time.

<i>Season</i>	<i>Try</i>	<i>Conversion</i>	<i>Penalty goal</i>	<i>Drop goal</i>	<i>Goal from a mark*</i>
1891	1	2	2	3	3
1892–93	2	3	3	4	4
1894–1905	3	2	3	4	4
1906–47	3	2	3	4	3
1948–71	3	2	3	3	3
1972–77	4	2	3	3	3
1978–91	4	2	3	3	–
1992–present	5	2	3	3	–

* The goal from a mark ceased to exist when the free-kick clause was introduced in 1978.

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THE ERA OF THE HALFBACKS: 1891–1913

ALF RICHARDS

Given names: Alfred Renfrew

Date of birth: 14 December 1867

Place of birth: Grahamstown

Education: Leys School (Cambridge)

Province: Western Province

Club: Villager RFC

Debut: British Isles, 1891

Test caps: 3 (captain in 1 Test)

Points: Nil in Tests



Alf Richards was South Africa's third rugby captain, and equalled H.H. Castens's feat of captaining South Africa at cricket as well. In 1894 he scored a century for Western Province against Natal, and in 1895/96 he led South Africa against Lord Hawke's team. He was one of only four South Africans who played in all three rugby

Tests against the touring British Isles side in 1891 – the others were Chubb Vigne, Ben Duff and Marthinus Versfeld – and he captained South Africa in the third Test.

Alf's father, Joseph, was a shoemaker from England who immigrated to South Africa with his wife, Sally, in 1820. Alf was born in Grahamstown in the Eastern Cape. He was educated at Leys in Cambridge and learnt his rugby in England, and his knowledge of the game would be to the benefit of rugby in South Africa in later years. In 1890 he returned to Cape Town, where he joined Villager RFC (Villagers), and was known to have introduced loose knickers to the players. Until then they had been playing in three-quarter-length tights.

He also played an important role in developing the standard of rugby in the Western Province. William Bisset, who played for South Africa in 1891, described this role in the *History of South African Rugby Football*:

Any record of the rise of Western Province Rugby Football is wholly incomplete which fails to do justice to the immense improvement in the game which was effected by the advent about 1890 of H.H. Castens and Alf Richards. They at once started a system of coaching which first developed the club for which they were played – Villagers – and subsequently was responsible for the development of the Diocesan College and of such men as Heatlie, Bidy Anderson, P.S.T. Jones and other contemporaries of these men. The solid foundation of our Rugby football was laid by these two men, and the great development of the game was largely due to their efforts. Their teaching gradually permeated the whole of the Rugby game in the Western Province and subsequently the whole of South Africa.¹

Alf and his brother Joe were instrumental in initiating the very first international rugby tour to South Africa, the British Isles side of W.E. Maclagan in 1891, and Joe is said to have closed the deal with England's Rugby Football Union (RFU) in September the year before. The tourists were unbeaten, winning 19 games from 19 and scoring 224 points with only one against. In those infant days of South African rugby, Alf was considered to be the only South African player who could rank with the visitors' players. In fact, one of the early greats of South African rugby, the strong forward Barry Heatlie, described him 33 years later as the best halfback he had seen in his time.² Players he had seen by then included fine halfbacks such as Paddy Carolin, Freddie Luyt and Bennie Osler. But of course, few, if any, would have agreed that Alf was even better than the great Bennie.

As a player, Alf Richards had good pace and all-round skills, as well as good hands and a good boot, and he was calm and composed. A courageous player, he often literally put his body on the line by throwing himself on the ball in the face of a brutal stampede of British forwards as they tried to dribble the ball downfield as far as they could. He was also a good defender, meaning that he could collar opponents, which was then perfectly legal (as it was for decades afterwards). After the 1891 series, he was regarded as the best of all the halfbacks on either side.

During the British tour of South Africa, Alf played against the tourists no fewer than six times, in all three of the Tests, as well as for the Cape Town Clubs, Western Province and the Cape Colony. Paul R. Claus of Oxford University and Scotland, one of the three-quarters for the British Isles, wrote of their first match against the Cape Colony: 'The colonials, and especially A[lf]. Richards, gave us a lot of trouble; their defence was very good and we only crossed the line once, though two dropped goals added further points to our score.'³

The first Test, played in Port Elizabeth in front of 6000 spectators, was won 4-0 by the British. Interestingly, the South Africans played in white Eastern Province jerseys (their colours in those days); for the second Test, they would switch to dark-blue jerseys, and for the third, to Villagers jerseys (Richards's club). Richards almost scored for South Africa when he broke through, but he slipped before he could get to the line.

The British also took the second Test, in Kimberley, by 3-0, where they played on a hard gravel field, and the final Test, at Newlands in Cape Town (4-0). It must be remembered that in these early Tests, the South Africans were sides thrown together with no preparation. Alf Richards was the South African captain for the third Test. The local match report noted that he had a 'really fine' game, but lamented the fact that his three-quarters saw too little ball.⁴ In the first and last Tests, he was partnered at halfback by Western Province teammate Frank Guthrie, and in the second by Jackie Powell of Griquas.

Barrie Heatlie regarded Alf's second Test performance, in Kimberley on a hard gravel surface, as his best ever. 'I saw the imperturbable Alf play many a great game, but I shall never forget his magnificent display in the second Test at Kimberley,' he observed. 'It was only his second on a hard ground, so he was just as much handicapped as our opponents. Nevertheless he was the dominating figure on the field.' He described Alf as 'essentially a flyhalf, but he was also no mean scrum-half'.⁵

Interestingly, the referee for the third Test was H.H. Castens, the Western Province forward who had captained South Africa in the first Test in Port Elizabeth.

Richards missed the 1892 Currie Cup tournament because of a knee injury, but he captained Western Province to the title in 1895. Writing about that tournament almost 40 years later, Heatlie commented: 'We [Western Province] won and deserved to ... That truly magnificent half, Alf Richards – the finest half I have ever seen

– captained us. The Griquas halves, Jackie Powell and Dan Smith, were a formidable pair to circumvent, but Alf and Theo. Bell did it.’⁶

Alf Richards retired from playing the same year, and in 1896 refereed the fourth Test between South Africa and the British Isles at Newlands, South Africa’s first-ever international victory. It was the only Test the tourists lost (0-5), and as could be expected, they were unhappy with Alf. Apart from refereeing, Richards also served as a member of the South African Rugby Board.

Richards’s older brothers, Dicky and Joseph, also played cricket for Western Province, and Dicky appeared in one Test match in 1888/89.

Cricket was another sport at which Alf excelled. A good batsman who often opened the innings, and a fairly good wicketkeeper, he captained Western Province to the Currie Cup title in 1894. In 1895, he captained South Africa against Lord Hawke’s XI at Newlands in the only Test he played in, but it was a disaster for the local side: South Africa lost by an innings and 32 runs.

Richards left Cape Town for Rhodesia, then a new land of opportunity, and he had little involvement in rugby from then on. Sadly, only 35 years old and still a bachelor, he died of typhoid fever in the hospital in Salisbury on 9 January 1904.

JACKIE POWELL

Given names: John Mercer

Date of birth: 12 December 1871

Place of birth: Cape Town

Education: St Andrew’s College; Kimberley Boys’ High School

Province: Griqualand West

Club: Kimberley RFC

Debut: British Isles, 1891

Test caps: 4 (captain in 1 Test)

Points: Nil in Tests



Jackie Powell made his debut for South Africa in his hometown of Kimberley in the second Test against the 1891 British Isles side, taking over from Frank Guthrie as halfback. His Griquas teammate, Bob Snedden, captained the side, and Jackie would become the second Griquas player to captain his country when he skippered South Africa in the second Test against the British Isles in 1903. His brother, Bertie (Albert William), also played for South Africa, in the third Test against the British in 1896.

Powell was a product of Kimberley Boys' High School, which also produced South African halfbacks/flyhalves William Cotty (1896), John McCulloch (1912/13), Uncle Dobbin (1903–1913, see later profile) and Ian Kirkpatrick (1953–61). Powell played for the Kimberley RFC and Griqualand West, where he laid the foundation for all the fine halfbacks produced by the province in years to come. He first played against the tourists for Kimberley on 18 July 1891 on the hard Northern Cape surface, and the locals gave the visitors a run for their money in going down 0-7. Two days later, Powell met them again, and this time the British had to sweat even harder, winning only 3-0.

Powell's debut Test against the visitors on 29 August was his only Test of the series (there were nine Griquas players in the South African side), and the home side lost 0-3. With him in that side were Marthinus Versfeld (Western Province), whose brother Charles played in the third Test, as well as Charlie van Renen, whose brother Willie gained national selection in 1903. Thus, by 1903, three sets of brothers – the Powells, the Versfelds and the Van Renens – had played for South Africa. For the third Test, Jackie Powell had to make way again for Frank Guthrie, Alf Richards's Western Province halfback partner.

When the British Isles visited South Africa again in 1896, Powell played in the third of four Tests, partnering his Griquas teammate William Cotty at halfback. Trailing 0-3 at half-time, the South

Africans went down 3-9. For the last Test, in Cape Town, Powell was ousted by Transvaal's Alf Larard, who also played in the second Test, in Johannesburg. The latter was regarded by the legendary Stellenbosch coach A.F. Markötter, affectionately known as 'Oubaas Mark', as equal to the famous Danie Craven as a player.

In 1903, 12 years after his international debut, Powell again opposed the British Isles, this time under M.C. Morrison, in the first and second of three Tests, with his Griquas teammate 'Uncle' Dobbin as his halfback partner. In the second (and his last) Test, Powell captained South Africa. Both Tests were drawn, 10-10 and 0-0 respectively, and Powell lost his place to Transvaal's Hugh Ferris, a former Irish international.

The series also marked the debut of the legendary Japie Krige, the mercurial Stellenbosch centre who is still hailed as one of South Africa's best players ever. Krige declined the invitation to play in the second Test, in Kimberley, privately telling those close to him that he 'would never see the ball' with Powell and Dobbin on his inside.⁷ Nevertheless Barry Heatlie recalled that 'Dobbin and Powell [were] again a tower of strength at half-back'.⁸

When the British touring side of 1903 came up against the Griquas in Kimberley, the home side of Jackie Powell beat them 8-6. Alfred Tedford of Ireland recalled of this game: 'At Kimberley we were, of course, up against the same standard of play as at Cape Town, and three great players I still remember, "Klondyke" Raaff, "Uncle" Dobbin and "Jackie" Powell.'⁹

Powell played for the Griquas from 1891 to 1911, a full 20 years. In 1899, just before the outbreak of the Anglo-Boer War, he captained the Griquas side to the Currie Cup title in Kimberley. According to Ivor Difford's *History of South African Rugby Football*, Powell also played for St Andrew's College in the Eastern Province, where he was team captain in 1890.

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During the 1930s, Danie Craven paid a special visit to Jackie Powell in Kimberley. He found him to be a real gentleman. 'He was quiet, reserved, and always waited for the other man to take the lead in conversation,' Craven wrote. 'He was nevertheless a good conversationalist in his own right. Jackie Powell left us with an enduring example of how to play the game, on and off the field.'¹⁰

Jackie's brother, Bertie, had a much shorter international career than Jackie, having played at centre in only one international, against the British Isles in 1896. At least he had the privilege of playing with his brother in the same backline for South Africa. Bertie was still a member of the Griquas side that won the Currie Cup tournament in Kimberley in 1899, seven weeks before the siege of the city during the Anglo-Boer War (1899–1902).

After his playing days, Jackie Powell became involved as an administrator, and was a member of the three-man committee appointed in 1920 to investigate the formation of a South African Referees Society. By 1923, however, a report was still lacking, and a Rules Committee was formed instead. Bertie Powell was also a member of this five-man committee, as was the famous A.F. Markötter.

ALF LARARD

Given name: Arthur

Date of birth: 30 December 1870

Place of birth: Kingston-upon-Hull (England)

Education: Not known

Province: Transvaal

Club: Pirates RFC; Diggers RFC

Debut: British Isles, 1896

Test caps: 2

Points: 3 in Tests (1 try)

