

The Times CLASSIFIED

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Requirements: The applicants must have a minimum of 4 years experience in the retail industry No saqa required but applicants with degrees and diplomas will be considered. All applicants will be considered. South African citizens will receive preference. Experience in Retail is required
Fax applications to 021 423 7035
Closing date 16/08/2013

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BEFORE CLOSING DATE: 19-08-2013.

Top care Plumbers, Ithemba Designs and Nenta Trading (Same Owned group of Companies) 6 Positions (Cape Town)

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SALARY NEGOTIABLE
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Injuries threaten to sideline game

THE main part of the Springboks' international season is about to begin, with seven weeks of international rugby against Argentina, New Zealand and Australia.

After that, the final stages of the Currie Cup, a tour to Europe and a short break, before the cycle starts once again in 2014.

Over the course of such a long season, a player's muscle mass and speed decline progressively, indicative of the futility of keeping players in a well-trained, optimal state. Instead, inevitable breakdown occurs, niggles become injuries and, unless the stress (contact and fatigue) is removed, the slide continues until a lengthy injury lay-off is unavoidable.

The over-playing argument is not new, although it seems to gain momentum every year, as the frequency, severity and impact of injuries appear to increase.

Aside from the impact of "rugby-saturation" on match attendances, rugby's custodians would do well to pay attention to the status of its most important assets, its players.

In the same way that a car rental company uses assets (cars) to generate value (money), sports teams use their players to produce victories and league points, and thus ensure revenue.

If a car rental company found that half its fleet was out of commission due to damage and overuse, its shareholders would react with

DOCTOR KNOW

ROSS TUCKER



alarm and demand an investigation and solution to disappearing profits.

In rugby, the alarm has sounded, but the solution remains elusive. By the end of this Championship, all three Super rugby nations will most likely have at least five players per match unavailable for selection due to injury. The same will happen in the Currie Cup, where the consequences of injury are amplified by a lack of depth.

In this environment, coaching jobs hang precariously on the fate of knees, muscles, shoulders and necks, and while no coach or player will ever offer injury as an excuse (nor will fans accept it), the reality is that it is often a decisive factor in the outcome of a season.

Recent analysis from English football has shown that the single most powerful factor associated with overall performance is injury impact — teams that lose many players also lose many matches — it is that simple.

Winners have healthy players to call upon, whether by luck or design. An excuse? No, but injury is

a valid explanation that has far-reaching implications.

Prevention is always better than cure, and so systems to avoid injury will always outperform those that treat them. In this regard, New Zealand, by virtue of the central contracting of its players, have the advantage of being able to dictate rest periods, as they have for Richie McCaw and Dan Carter.

In South Africa, a key problem is that the "assets" are owned by professional teams and the incentive pull this creates has players stretched in two directions.

In terms of injury prevention and management, it is no coincidence that one of the big "growth areas" in sports science is the tracking and monitoring of training and playing loads, in search of better player management.

Advanced data management systems enable load and performance to be tracked, so that performance and player health can be optimised without guesswork.

However, even these advanced tools will be ineffective without the collective buy-in from rugby's "owners".

Until that happens, southern hemisphere teams, in particular, may continue to face a player exodus to Europe and Japan (it's not only the money that is attractive), and fans will face frustrating under-performances as embattled coaches make the best of an increasingly bad situation.



OVER-EXPOSED: The rugby season is too long, with intense competitions that lead to injury and player fatigue. It is a yearly complaint, but owners of rugby clubs don't seem to be listening
Picture: DUIF DU TOIT/GALLO IMAGES

Lions' coach bet on Jantjies and lost

LIAM DEL CARME

HIS tactical blunder, Lions' coach Johan Ackermann admitted, helped cost the team victory in their Currie Cup opener against the Cheetahs at Ellis Park on Saturday.

Just as the side launched a stirring rearguard action, Ackermann replaced flyhalf Marnitz Boshoff with Elton Jantjies, and the latter missed two conversions before the Lions ran out of time in a 30-29 defeat.

"Marnitz made one or two errors in defence and we felt Elton is strong

in that position and had fresh legs," Ackermann explained. "We didn't know one kick would decide the game."

He conceded that he could have rearranged the deck chairs better. "The mistake we made was not moving him to fullback. A mistake from my side but at the end of the day we had enough opportunities to win the game," reminded the coach.

With his side up against it for most of the match, Ackermann was emboldened by the great fighting qualities his charges displayed in the

final quarter.

"There was a lot of character out there. Some of them just got better and better as the game wore on."

The events of the last 20 minutes, however, left Cheetahs coach Naka Drotske exasperated.

"In this competition you have to play for 80 minutes. Last year we lost three or four games like this, and we had to play to avoid relegation.

"I'd say the score wasn't a fair reflection of the game, but we could also have lost the game in the last 10 minutes."