

A WORD FROM THE LEGENDS

“To lift the Webb Ellis Cup after winning the Rugby World Cup is the greatest honour you can achieve as a player for your country, but to be the first person to have the honour is extra special. Captaining the All Blacks to success in the inaugural Rugby World Cup in 1987 was the pinnacle of my rugby career and thank you John for bringing so many wonderful memories back to me in your magnificent book.”

David Kirk, 1987 Rugby World Cup winner with New Zealand

“This is a truly wonderfully crafted book which is quite simply a treasure trove of all things Rugby World Cup. From the first page to the last, John will amaze you with so many wonderful entries and facts you may not have previously known. All-in-all a superb read.”

**Nick Farr-Jones, 1991 Rugby World Cup winning captain
with Australia**

“I will never forget winning the 1995 Rugby World Cup on home soil in front of our Rainbow Nation, experiencing how the tournament brought our nation together, indescribable. We were one team playing for one country. John’s book brings back so many memories of that wonderful time.”

**Francois Pienaar, 1995 Rugby World Cup winning captain with
South Africa**

“To win the Rugby World Cup is the dream of every rugby player, and I was no different. To achieve this, on home soil in 1995, in the presence of the great man himself, Nelson Mandela, is something that will live with me forever. And thanks to John I can relive that very special moment time and time again in his wonderful book.”

Joel Stransky, 1995 Rugby World Cup winner with South Africa

“I will never forget my nation’s path to Rugby World Cup glory in 1995. The entire Rainbow Nation was United as One behind us and spurred us on to victory. John’s book tells our story and the story of every Rugby World Cup tournament.”

**Chester Williams, 1995 Rugby World Cup winner with
South Africa**

“This is a book which will teach you everything you need to know about the history of the sport’s greatest competition, the Rugby World Cup. Well done John on producing such an excellent insight into the history of this event.”

George Gregan, 1999 Rugby World Cup winner with Australia

“Winning the Rugby World Cup is the pinnacle of any player’s or coach’s career. When I held the Webb Ellis Cup in my hands as coach of the winning England side in 2003, I was so proud of my team’s achievement. John’s book rekindled that memory along with many other outstanding moments from previous Rugby World Cups. John has produced a very comprehensive book which all rugby fans, regardless of what country they support, will thoroughly enjoy reading.”

**Sir Clive Woodward OBE, 2003 England Rugby World Cup
winning coach**

“Winning the Rugby World Cup with England down under in 2003 was the best moment of my 18-year rugby career. I actually forgot so many things that happened during that tournament but John has brought them so vividly back to me in his superb book.”

**Lawrence Dallaglio OBE, 2003 Rugby World Cup winner
with England**

“I was 17 when the Rainbow Nation won the Rugby World Cup in 1995 and after watching President Mandela present the famous Webb Ellis Cup to Francois Pienaar I dreamt that one day I would follow in my countryman’s footsteps as a Rugby World Cup winning captain. So you can imagine my joy when 12 years later I captained my country to Rugby World Cup glory. John’s book is superb and reveals so many Rugby World Cup moments I never knew about until now.”

**John Smit, captain of South Africa’s 2007 Rugby World Cup
winning side**

“John’s Rugby World Cup Miscellany is one of those books which when you start reading it you will find difficult to set down. It is jam-packed with Rugby World Cup facts, figures and trivia.”

**Sir Graham Henry, 2011 New Zealand Rugby World Cup
winning coach**

JOHN WHITE



**A MISCELLANY OF
RUGBY'S WORLD CUP**

FOREWORD BY JASON LEONARD OBE



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THE RUGBY WORLD CUP MISCELLANY

THE WEBB ELLIS CUP

The winners of the Rugby World Cup are presented with the Webb Ellis Cup. According to a popular legend it was William Webb Ellis who invented the game of rugby when he was a schoolboy at Rugby School. It is said that during a game of football he picked up the ball and started to run with it.

The Webb Ellis Cup is 38 centimetres high and weighs 4.5kg. It was crafted from solid sterling silver and 24 carat gold plate and has two cast scroll handles. On one handle there is the head of a satyr and on the other the head of a nymph. The words 'International Rugby Football Board' and 'The Webb Ellis Cup' are engraved on the face of the trophy.

There are two official Webb Ellis Cups, which are used interchangeably. The original cup was made in 1906 by Carrington & Co. London. It was a Victorian design of a cup from the 1740s made by Paul de Lamerie. The second is a replica which was made in 1986.

Did You Know That?

The Webb Ellis Cup is often referred to as 'Bill', a nickname coined by the 1991 winners, Australia.

A HISTORY LESSON

At least two centuries of rugby's history are written in the stones and other monuments to tradition at Rugby School that stand around the School Close, where in 1823, local lad William Webb Ellis, 'with a fine disregard for the rules of football', took the ball in his arms and ran with it, originating the game of rugby football. The players then were more numerous: in 1839, when Queen Adelaide visited the school, it was School House (75) versus the Rest (225). Today, innumerable tourists visit the 'Home of the Game' and rugby teams from all over the world can be seen training against the distinctive backdrop of Butterfield's Chapel. At the top of the Close stands the King's Oak, planted by Edward VII in 1909, beneath which the heads of school watch the pupils file into chapel every morning. Behind it rises the battlemented skyline of School House where the headmaster has his study – he still sits at Bishop Percival's desk – which pupils can enter by a spiral staircase at the foot of a tower. Rugby's greatest headmaster Dr

Thomas Arnold (1828–42) instigated this practice so that boys could see him privately and the tradition continues today.

Arnold is famed for ridding the school of its ‘Flashmans’ and emphasising subjects that were a good ‘preparation for power’. He treated his senior boys as gentlemen, increasing their power and duties so that they shared responsibility for moral tone and discipline with him. As Arnold put it: ‘First religious and moral principle, second gentlemanly conduct, third academic ability.’ Masters were expected to supervise as well as teach; the dames’ houses were abolished and pastoral care was born.

If Arnold’s educational initiatives had not assured Rugby’s fame, his political intervention certainly would have done. His 1829 pamphlet on the issue of Catholic Emancipation attracted widespread criticism, and though the storm of publicity had subsided by the late 1830s, Rugby School and its remarkable headmaster were now national news and the school was growing rapidly. Not only did the 260 boys Arnold inherited become 360 by the time he died, but his disciples spread his ideas throughout the United Kingdom and Empire. No fewer than 23 of his assistant masters became headmasters of other public schools between 1842 and 1899. This trend has continued ever since.

Arnold’s ideas – or at least Thomas Hughes’s version of them, as written in *Tom Brown’s School Days* – found fertile ground in France and in the mind of one French boy in particular. Pierre de Coubertin was 12 years old when he first encountered Thomas Arnold in the pages of Hughes’s book. By the time the novel was translated into French in 1875, Arnold had become something of a legend. Inspired by what he had read, de Coubertin visited Rugby several times during the 1880s and concluded that organised sport could be used to raise the aspirations and improve the behaviour of young people. This idea fuelled his vision for universal amateur athletics which culminated, in 1896, in the first modern Olympic Games in Athens. As one world expert on Olympic history says, ‘Thomas Arnold was the single most important influence on the life and thought of Pierre de Coubertin.’ Arnold’s influential role in the Olympic Games is commemorated in a plaque on the school’s Doctor’s Wall, unveiled by Lord Sebastian Coe in 2009. In July 2012, the Olympic torch came to Rugby School on its route towards the Olympic Stadium and paused at the plaque to acknowledge the importance of Thomas Arnold, who would certainly have enjoyed the school’s re-enactment of a 19th-century game of rugby with the boys wearing kit of the time.

Arnold was succeeded by a number of formidable figures, notably Frederick Temple (1858–69), under whom the tercentenary buildings of the New Quad were begun; John Percival (1877–95), who had made his

name as the founder of Clifton College; and Herbert Armitage James (1895–1910), whose nickname ‘The Bodger’ has since become part of Rugbeian argot. Numbers further increased in the 20th century from 580 under James to 620 under W. W. Vaughan (1921–31), passed 700 under Sir Arthur fforde (1948–57) and topped 800 under Brian Rees in the early 1980s. Having resounded to Arnold’s passionate sermons, the chapel is now his resting place, beneath the chancel steps. The walls boast tablets in memory of renowned Rugbeian writers such as Lewis Carroll, Rupert Brooke and the Victorian poets – Matthew Arnold, Arthur Hugh Clough and Walter Savage Landor. The Boomer, a 3¼-ton bell raised in July 1914 and rung at noon every day in the First World War, still calls the school to chapel. In 2001, a new award-winning organ was inaugurated in the chapel. The smaller Memorial Chapel, where the BBC has recorded *Songs of Praise* more than once, was dedicated in 1922. Old Quad was built before even the first chapel. A drainpipe proclaims the date 1809 of this oldest part of the school, designed by Henry Hakewill, who was also responsible for School House and the first chapel (1820). Here is the trough where Tom Brown was ‘ducked’ and, inside, the fire where he was ‘roasted’. Looking up one sees Upper Bench where Arnold taught Thucydides and looked down severely upon moral turpitude. On the town side, a splendid oriel window, with stained glass portraits of successive headmasters, looks out over the main school gate and down the High Street to where the school began, 200 yards away.

In 2006, William Webb Ellis and Rugby School became the first two inductees of the newly established World Rugby Hall of Fame.

Did You Know That?

On 1 November 1923, Rugby School celebrated the centenary of William Webb Ellis’s ‘fine disregard for the rules of rugby’ with a match between an England/Wales XV and an Ireland/Scotland XV. The Rugby Football Union, the sport’s governing body, wanted the match to be played at Twickenham Stadium, London where a larger crowd could see it, but the school remained steadfast and hosted the match at the Close. A crowd of 2,000 spectators, which included players from the first ever international match (Scotland beat England 1-0 on 27 March 1871 at Raeburn Place, Edinburgh, Scotland), watched the England/Wales XV triumph 21-16. The schoolboys sat on tarpaulins whilst one of the many former Rugbeians at the game was Adrian Stoop, the English international after whom the Harlequins’ ground is named. The post-match dinner took place at The Great Central Hotel in London.

INAUGURAL RUGBY WORLD CUP UNDER THREAT

In mid-1986 a nervous International Rugby Union Football Board (IRFB), concerned at slow progress the co-host nations, Australia and New Zealand, were making with planning the inaugural Rugby World Cup finals in 1987, considered taking over the tournament (sponsors were not secured until shortly before the tournament kicked off). Indeed, a proposal to do so was lost only on the chairman's casting vote. The IRFB spent a year arguing over the distribution of profits, which were yet to be made. Knowing they had the old guard (IRFB) over a barrel, the host unions held out for the best terms they could get. The deal reached in March 1986 gave Australia and New Zealand all their net gate takings. They would also share 48% of the income generated by the tournament representatives (the commercial company that would manage the event). The other 14 unions taking part would share most of the rest. The same March 1986 meeting appointed the British sports marketing company, West Nally, as the tournament representatives. West Nally had suggested a Rugby World Cup several years earlier. They trumped rival bidders by offering US\$5 million upfront for the rights. The Australians' insistence on payment in advance was to prove wise in view of the stock market crash on 19 October 1987, known as 'Black Monday'. Potential sponsors demanded stadiums that were 'clean' (free of all other advertising). Because of this, and Australian rugby politics, the traditional New South Wales Test venue, the Sydney Cricket Ground, was unavailable. Auckland's Eden Park would host the final, and both semi-finals would be played in Australia. Brisbane's Ballymore Oval could readily stage one (New Zealand beat Wales 49-6). The Sydney semi-final was allocated to the small Concord Oval, which the New South Wales Rugby Union was developing as its base (Australia lost 30-24 to France). With rugby weak outside these two cities, only one pool would be contested in Australia (Pool 1 comprising Australia, England, Japan and USA – won by Australia). Eight venues in New Zealand would host the other three pools, namely Athletic Park, Wellington; Carisbrook, Dunedin; Lancaster Park, Christchurch; McLean Park, Napier; Rotorua International Stadium, Rotorua; Rugby Park, Hamilton; Rugby Park Stadium, Invercargill; and Showgrounds Oval, Palmerston North.

Rugby World Cup Proprietary Ltd, the company set up in Australia to handle the financial side of organising the tournament, appointed a New Zealand judge, Sir Desmond Sullivan, as its chief executive officer. When he was appointed to the Waitangi Tribunal, he was replaced by management consultant Jim Campbell (the father of TV3 broadcaster John Campbell). Both men found it tough going. The host unions had

only a handful of employees between them, and much of the work was done by committees headed by the respected rugby identities Sir Nicholas Shehadie (in Australia) and Dick Littlejohn (in New Zealand). Sponsors were not secured until shortly before the tournament kicked off. When they were announced, the wisdom of including Japan and the USA in the tournament was justified. KDD, a Japanese telecommunications company, was the main sponsor. The others were Mazda, Rank Xerox and New Zealand Breweries. Commercialism was suddenly everywhere. The name of a New Zealand beer, Steinlager, was even painted on the small buckets in which sand was carried out to place-kickers. Despite a stern circular from the New Zealand Rugby Football Union (NZRFU), this ruse was repeated in the final. In rugby's brave new world, even official sponsors were not above a little guerrilla marketing. The host television rights were shared by public broadcasters, the Australian Broadcasting Corporation and Television New Zealand. At the last minute, the British Broadcasting Corporation decided to pay £1 million to cover the tournament meaning it would be shown live in 17 countries. This fee looked excessive, but by the 1991 World Cup it would seem the bargain of the century.

There were other problems too. The New Zealand Cavalier tour of South Africa, an unofficial venture in which key rugby figures in both countries were heavily involved, had just ended. All but two (David Kirk and John Kirwan) of the 30 players selected for the cancelled 1985 All Black tour of South Africa had taken part. The IRFB expressed its disapproval. The Cavalier tour disrupted the All Blacks' preparation for the 1987 Rugby World Cup finals. The rebels were let off very lightly, being banned for just two Tests. They were then blended uneasily with their temporary replacements, the 'Baby Blacks' and more than half the team that played in the 1987 World Cup Final were former Cavaliers. A week before the All Blacks' first game against Italy, Prime Minister David Lange announced a boycott of his team's matches, prompted by the presence in the squad of many of the Cavaliers. Many people in New Zealand were extremely angry that their star sportsmen had broken ranks on the stance against apartheid and made large sums of money from doing so.

Lange had been elected to office in 1984 at the age of 41 (New Zealand's youngest prime minister), and had inherited a country in the midst of an economic and political crisis. In September 1986, Lange was at loggerheads with France over nuclear testing and the sinking of *Rainbow Warrior* on 10 July 1985. The sinking of the *Rainbow Warrior*, codenamed '*Opération Satanique*', was organised by the 'Action Branch' of the French foreign intelligence services, the

Direction Générale de la Sécurité Extérieure (DGSE). The boat was the flagship of the Greenpeace fleet and was bombed at the Port of Auckland, New Zealand, on its way to a protest against a planned French nuclear test in Moruroa, French Polynesia in the southern Pacific Ocean.

The New Zealand government refused to invite overseas dignitaries to attend the 1987 Rugby World Cup finals or to host functions for the visiting players and administrators. Just two days before the opening match, the captain of the All Blacks, Andy Dalton, pulled a hamstring, which ruled him out of the tournament. However, when Prime Minister Lange boycotted matches, some of his ministers were more than delighted to take his place in the VIP section at Eden Park, Auckland. Despite the political tensions, the fraught build-up and the loss of their inspirational captain, the All Blacks rallied and roused themselves, resulting in David Kirk lifting the Webb Ellis Cup following the All Blacks' 29-9 win over, of all nations, France, in the final played at Eden Park on 20 June 1987.

Did You Know That?

The total attendance at the 1987 Rugby World Cup finals was 600,000.

The Ball

An original rugby ball was round and changed shape over a period of time to the oval it is today. They varied in size depending on the pig's bladder they were made from. Gilberts, a local boot maker near Rugby School, took up ball-making to supply the school. Others, notably London, also supplied balls and it was this maker that invented the inflatable inner and the pump.

Uniform, Teams and Rules

Rugby School played in white and, because the committee of the Rugby Football Union (RFU) in 1871 was composed largely of Old Rugbeians (ORs), England played in white too. School House at Rugby School was the first team to play in a uniform kit (long flannels, shirts and caps), because it was the only house to play as a single group until 1850. Before this, the boys at Rugby School played in their ordinary school clothes in teams made up from various houses. In 1867, the first 'foreign' match was played against ORs and a team from the town of Rugby. The teams were now down to 20 players, and then 15 by 1876. Internal teams stayed at 20 until 1888. The first inter-school match was against Cheltenham in 1896 and half the players in the first England international team were ORs. The RFU was formed (largely of ORs)

in 1871 and the first national code was introduced. The boys at Rugby School kept their own rules, and even modified them, until the late 1880s. There were no referees in the early days and boys would wear sharpened boots with nails in them for extra hacking. Boys considered good enough to play for the main teams were given 'following up' caps, which later developed into the international cap awarded to the country's top players.

Rugby School and the Calcutta Cup

The Calcutta Rugby Football Club was established by former students of Rugby School in January 1873. However, with the departure of a local British army regiment (and perhaps more crucially the cancellation of the free bar at the club!), interest in rugby diminished in the area and sports such as tennis and polo began to thrive as they were better suited to the Indian climate. Whilst the Calcutta (Rugby) Football Club was disbanded in 1878, members decided to keep the memory of the club alive by having the remaining 270 silver rupees in their bank account melted down to be made into a trophy. The trophy was then presented to the (RFU) to use as 'the best means of doing some lasting good for the cause of Rugby Football'. The Calcutta Cup continues today as the trophy that is presented to the winner of the England versus Scotland rugby union match which takes place during the annual Six Nations Championship.

Rules of the Game

In 1845, the first codified rules of the game were drawn up by the levee [Rugby School prefects] and included the following: No. 5 'Try at goal' (a touchdown doesn't count unless it is converted; so it's a try or attempt at goal). No. 18 'A player having touched the ball straight for a tree, and touched the tree with it, may drop from either side if he can, but the opposite side may oblige him to go to his own side of the tree.' No. 20 'All matches are drawn after five days, but after three if no goal has been kicked.' No. 25 'No stranger, in any match, may have a place kick at goal.' No. 33 'The Island is all in goal.'

Rugby Football Union

The first five Rugby Football Union presidents were Old Rugbeians, as well as the first England captain. An OR introduced the game to Cambridge University. When first played some passers-by ran on to the pitch thinking they were breaking up a brawl!

Origins of Half-Time

Half-time originated at Rugby School. After some 40 minutes the school captain stopped the game and announced it was hardly fair

as his team was playing with a strong following wind. He offered the opposition the chance of playing the rest of the match with the breeze. They changed ends and half-time was born. Forty minutes each way was first mentioned in the 1926 Rules.

International Caps

The international cap originates from Rugby School, as well as the distinctive posts that go up well above the cross bar. It became near impossible to kick the ball between the posts due to the number of young men who packed the goal mouth. Hence the kickers began to kick over the crossbar.

Kit

England's original white shirt and shorts with black socks is from Rugby School and Oxbridge's 'blue' also comes from the school's XV.

Terminology

The terminology in the original rules can still be found in the laws today: knock-on, onside/offside, fair catch, try, goal, place kick, 25-yard (22m) line, touch judge, charge, scrummage and in-goal.

THE SOMME CUP

The closest thing to a Rugby World Cup before the inaugural tournament in 1987 was an event organised at the end of the First World War (1914–18). In late 1916 and early 1917, a team made up of New Zealand soldiers played seven matches in Britain against teams made up from local military regiments. The New Zealand Division, organised by Colonel Arthur Plugge, scored a total of 292 points across the seven games and conceded only nine. In another game, they beat a Welsh Division XV 3-0 in Belgium, a game played with the sound of German shells exploding in the distance. In 1917, the Paris newspaper, *Le Journal*, donated a trophy, the Somme Cup, which was contested by teams from the English, French, Irish, New Zealand and Welsh military who were serving on the Western Front. The final saw the home side, the French Service, play the New Zealand Division at Vincennes on 8 April 1917 before a crowd estimated at 25,000. The military All Blacks demolished their allies 40-0, scoring nine tries, five conversions and a penalty goal on a bright Easter Sunday afternoon in Paris. Two of the French players were airmen who had taken part in bombing raids the day before whilst three members of their team left the trenches to play. A rival newspaper, *L'Image*, wrote the following about the game: 'Our men ... had to bow to world champions ... The result of 40-0 was nevertheless honourable and was proclaimed in a storm of cheers and a burst of fraternal esteem.' Three months after the match, All Black

Reg Taylor was killed in action in Messines, West Flanders, Belgium on 20 June 1917; Maori All Black Tom French was severely wounded on 4 October 1917 resulting in his left arm being amputated; and George Scott lost the sight in both eyes at Passchendaele, West Flanders. The French captain, Maurice Jean-Paul Boyau, an outstanding pilot, was shot down and killed on 16 September 1918. He earned the *Médaille militaire* and *Légion d'honneur* for his aerial exploits in 1917 and 1918.

Did You Know That?

The Somme Cup is not a cup. It is a statue created by the French sculptor Georges Chauvel, and it was presented to the New Zealand captain, George Murray. The statue depicts a French soldier in the act of throwing a hand grenade and was originally called *Le Lanceur de Grenades*. However, the French and New Zealand soldiers dubbed it the '*Coupe de la Somme*'.

RUGBY'S MOST FAMOUS WHISTLE

From the inaugural Rugby World Cup in Australia and New Zealand in 1987 to the 2011 edition hosted by New Zealand, the opening game of every tournament was started by the same whistle. Welsh referee Gil Evans used the sterling silver whistle when the original All Blacks played England at Crystal Palace, London on 2 December 1905, a match the All Blacks won 15-0. Evans then passed it on to another Welsh referee, Albert E. Freethy, who is believed to have used it in the rugby union final at the 1924 Summer Olympics in Paris, when the United States of America beat the hosts 17-13 at the Colombes Stadium, the last occasion the 15-a-side version of the sport featured in the Games. On 3 January 1925, Freethy famously blew the whistle to dismiss the All Blacks' Cyril Brownlie in the Test between New Zealand and England at Twickenham Stadium, London, making him the first player to be sent off in an international match. The tourists won the game 17-11. Freethy then presented it to Stan Dean, the manager of the 1924/25 All Black Invincibles, who then presented it to John Sinclair, one of the founders of the New Zealand Rugby Museum, on 16 April 1969 for the museum's opening ceremony. Dean also served as the chairman of the New Zealand Rugby Football Union for many years.

For the 2015 Rugby World Cup hosted by England, the sport's governing body, World Rugby, took the decision not to continue the trend and so the famous whistle remained in its display case in the museum located in Palmerston. The whistle bears an inscription saying it was used by Gil Evans in the famous 1905 Test match. Bob Fordham (Australia) was the first to blow it at a Rugby World Cup when he kicked off the 1987 tournament, a 70-6 rout of Italy by New

Zealand at Eden Park, Auckland. Since then the whistle has been used by Jim Fleming (Scotland, 1991), Derek Bevan (Wales, 1995), Paddy O'Brien (New Zealand, 1999), Paul Honiss (New Zealand, 2003), Tony Spreadbury (England, 2007) and George Clancy (Ireland, 2011). In 1996, the whistle was also used to start the first professional rugby match between the Hurricanes and the Blues at the Palmerston North Showgrounds, a five-minute walk from the museum.

The referee of the 1924 Test between England and the All Blacks did not have a coin on him to toss prior to kick-off and so Hector Gray, a New Zealand fan who was sitting on the touchline and following his country's 1924/25 tour, offered him a florin. Mr Gray was given the coin back and he later had a rose embossed on one side and a silver fern on the other and presented it to the museum in 1973. The coin was tossed prior to the Hurricanes and the Blues match.

Did You Know That?

In season 1885/86, referees were allowed to use a whistle to stop the game for the first time in the sport's history, while umpires (now known as assistant referees) were given sticks.

RUGBY WORLD CUP QUOTES

'I have had some of the most intimate moments of my life with Madiba (Nelson Mandela). There is a sincerity and openness about him that affected millions. Our relationship was incredible. It grew enormously after 1995. That was the start of the journey, not the end. He was a special, special person. I wish I had the words now to give a fitting tribute but I can't find them, I just can't.'

Francois Pienaar, 1995 Rugby World Cup winning captain of South Africa

TOP OF THE POPS 1987

When New Zealand won the inaugural Rugby World Cup Final on 20 June 1987, the No.1 song in the UK pop charts was *Star Trekkin* by The Firm. This was a novelty song parodying the characters of *Star Trek*, the long-running TV series. It spent two weeks in the top slot before being ousted by The Pet Shop Boys with *It's A Sin*.

LA BAJADA

Dr Francisco Ocampo pioneered this unorthodox scrum technique back in the 1960s in Argentina. His twin loves of physics and scrummaging combined to devastating effect to create the '*Bajada*', Argentina's classic set-piece counter-drive. The locks bind round the props' hips with their outside arms, rather than through the legs as

standard. Pinning the props inwards towards the hooker, all the power shoots through the centre of the front row.

A BLESSING IN DISGUISE

Argentina coach Pablo Bouza said the Pumas would not have made the semi-finals of the 2015 Rugby World Cup had they joined the Six Nations, as originally planned, instead of the Rugby Championship. The Pumas, who petitioned the tournament organisers for inclusion in the Six Nations competition following their Rugby World Cup semi-final appearance in 2007, had their application to compete in the European competition with games in San Sebastian, Spain, dismissed out of hand.

Instead Argentina joined New Zealand, Australia, and South Africa's annual Tri-Nations tournament in 2012, their inclusion the catalyst for the competition's rebranding into the Rugby Championship in 2012. When he was asked, in October 2015, if Argentina would be as strong had they joined the Six Nations in 2012 and not the Rugby Championship, Bouza said: 'I cannot be sure, but I don't think so, they are quite different styles. Last year when we finished playing the championships, we struggled, we came back here and we lost against Scotland. But they are such different styles, when you play here in autumn, November, the pitches are slow, the breakdown is tough, it's tough to have quick ball to play. When you have quick ball, for us it's very positive. I think playing in the Rugby Championship for us has been great.' Argentina lost their semi-final 29-15 to Australia followed by a 24-13 defeat to South Africa in the bronze final match.

Did You Know That?

For the first time in Rugby World Cup history no teams from the northern hemisphere reached the semi-final stage following Argentina's 43-20 win over Ireland in the quarter-finals of the 2015 tournament.

FROM RUSSIA WITH LOVE

Vasily Artemyev (78 caps, 2009–present) was born in Moscow, Russia on 24 July 1987 and is his country's record try scorer with 28. He went to school at Blackrock College in County Dublin, Ireland and won schools' Junior Cup and Senior Cup medals. He also attended University College Dublin where he studied law and played for their successful rugby team in 2007, winning the League and Metro Cup, and was also part of the Intervarsity Team which won the Conroy Cup in 2006 and 2007. He played for Russia in the 2011 World Cup finals and has won 17 international caps and scored five tries.