

## Pole star

Michael Schumacher in the driving seat **page 11**


## Wimbledon

Henman and Rusedski win but Venus is out **pages 2-4**

## Ashes '97

England prepare for Old Trafford **page 5**

# Lions break Bok hearts



Victory salute: match-winner Jeremy Guscott leads the British Lions' celebrations at the end of his team's historic series-clinching win over South Africa, the world champions, in the second Test in Durban yesterday

Picture: Mike Egerton

ACCLAIM the most astonishing defensive performance, the most remarkable courage in adversity, in rugby history. Acclaim the counter-attacks of the last 10 minutes when the siege was raised and, with a short, stabbing, yet soaring drop goal by Jeremy Guscott, the Lions took the lead. Acclaim the 1997 British Lions, victors in the Test series in the home of the world champions. Now we have seen it all. The lot.

With respect to all those who could not be in King's Park, you had to be there to fully appreciate the high emotions at the end. Last week, I wrote that the visiting followers inside the stadium at Cape Town had made it feel almost like a home game. Yesterday Durban was claimed for the day by delirious Brits and Irish. After the whistle the whole Lions party, coaches and non-players too, took the field for a victory parade. It was the day of their lives and the tears and the hugs bore testimony to it.

And there was also more than a tinge of disbelief. The Lions had all but been swept out of the stadium. By all known tenets they should have lost by a hatful. We knew that the Springboks would come out

steaming, but the intensity, even the brutality, of their response to the media and public savaging they took last week still took the breath away.

They came in relentless, barreling waves of green and gold. With O du Randt at the head, they tried to drive through the heart of the Lions pack. They tried to stretch the

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inspiration. They might even have won if Gary Teichmann and others, clearly feeling the crush of the pressure, had not spent so much time griping and whining. And yet they still scored three tries to nil and held a territorial grip which never slackened.

But they failed to draw clear because of something else, something which the Lions drew from somewhere deep within; something which caused them to throw fury back in the Springbok faces.

It was something at the limit of their human endurance, because I have rarely seen a team under so much pressure. Scott Gibbs and Tim Rodber were titanic in defence, the front five were wonderfully comfortable in the scrum and Martin Johnson wonderfully strappy in the white-hot parts. The whole bunch played with a warrior-like refusal to submit. By naming individuals, I suppose, I have already denied the bonded team ethic which has given these men the series.

Lions at the back with rolling diagonals from Henry Honiball.

They led 15-9 at the hour and could easily have been out of sight had their goalkicking not been so abysmal. They missed six kicks. They might have won had their backs had an ounce of

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### Stephen Jones in Durban

#### South Africa 15 British Lions 18

**A Joubert; A Snyman, P Montgomery, D van Schalkwyk, P Rossouw; H Honiball, J A Tait (A Healey 75min); G Townsend, M van der Westhuizen; O du Randt, N Drotts, A Garvey, H Strydom, M Andrews, R Kruger (F van Heerden (capt), A Venter.**

**Scorers:** Jenkins (P 16min) 0-3; Jenkins (P 30min) 0-6; van der Westhuizen (T 34min) 5-6; Montgomery (T 41min) 10-6; Jenkins (P 47min) 10-9; Joubert (T 54min) 15-9; Jenkins (P 65min) 15-12; Jenkins (P 73min) 15-15; Guscott (DG 77min) 15-18.

**Weather:** good. **Ground:** excellent. **Referee:** D Mane (Fra).

The green tide never turned. The Lions turned over far too much ball, were beaten for possession at the restarts and never achieved continuity. But the isolated outposts of Lions pressure suddenly became more frequent. After 66 minutes, Neil Jenkins kicked a nerveless penalty. Jenkins had been pulled from pillar to post by the Springbok kicking. He never appeared flustered. He kicked his goals beautifully; true Pontypridd grit. There was more pressure to absorb but, seven minutes from the end of normal time, Teichmann was

penalised for handling in a ruck — this after Keith Wood appeared to knock-on. Jenkins came up and did his stuff. It was level.

Drama piled on drama. Wood came again, hacking the ball yards up the left-hand touchline, bald headed bobbing urgently. The position was set. Gregor Townsend, too frail for a hero by half, drove for the line but was hauled down just short of the line. The ball was recycled and Guscott dropped his goal under the noses of the onrushing Springboks.

There were to be around six

minutes of play remaining. And the Lions were so desperate not to concede a penalty that they stopped contesting the lineouts. Honiball and his back row and centres tried desperately to cut the Lions up. Loose balls bounced hair-raisingly. Gibbs and Rodber kept on tackling, Paul Wallace, Tom Smith and others probably surprised themselves with their tackling skills.

And then the whistle went, that sweet old trilling warble. It was only the fourth Lions series victory since the war, only the second in 23 years.

It was an irony that the Lions were leading 6-0 after half an hour. Everyone had predicted a Springbok storm and that the Lions had to hold on in the early stages if they were to have a hope. They did so and two penalties from the immaculate Jenkins may have given some people fond hopes that the Springbok storm had already blown itself out.

No such luck. Joost van der Westhuizen dummed his way over under a tackle from Wood,

after a series of almost terrifying South African attacks — helped by a nonsensical decision from a panicky referee when he awarded a scrum to South Africa after Rodber had downed du Randt and trapped the ball.

The Lions were still ahead at 6-5 at half-time but, disastrously so it then seemed, they

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conceded a second try. Neither Jenkins nor Matt Dawson could seize a high kick-ahead from Honiball and Alan Tait could not slip an underhand pass in the confusion, a pass gobbled up by Honiball. A high pass from Danie van Schalkwyk sent Percy Montgomery over.

Still the party was only green. André Joubert bounced out of an attempted tackle by John Bentley to score in the left-hand corner, which made it 15-9 to South Africa and, at that stage, with the momentum established, the Lions hardly seemed to have a price.

But back came our heroes, your heroes. It signalled a remarkable double for an elated Fran Cotton, the Lions manager, who was one of the heroes of the all-conquering Lions tour of 1974. "You cannot really compare the two. It is far better as a player than it is as a manager, but I am just delighted for the players, for Martin (Johnson) and the whole squad. The attitude and focus has been quite incredible. We hung in on the ropes and we took our chances," he said after joining the players for a victory parade on the pitch.

The Lions may not have been superior on the day as a rugby-playing force but, thank goodness, there is more to rugby at any level than simple tactics and techniques. There is heart and soul and indomitable courage. The British Lions had it. They won. They deserved to.

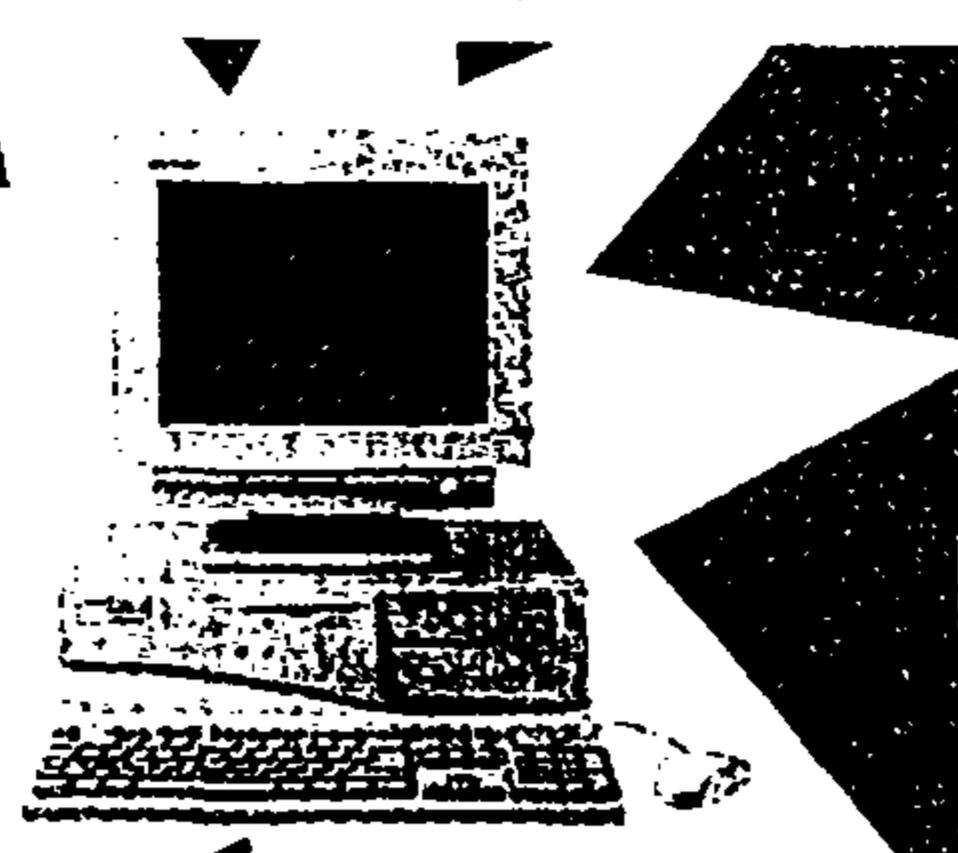
**More Lions coverage p8-9**

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