

VODACOM CUP

Griquas and Leopards break the mould as Lions' Vodacom reign is ended



THE LIONS claimed their third title in succession - all of them at the expense of the Blue Bulls - and their fourth in the seven-year history of the competition as the two sides from either side of the Jukskei again demonstrated the depth of their young talent. The pair won nine of their 10 matches against the other sides in the 'A' section with only the Vodacom Cheetahs' stunning 60-23 victory over the Bulls in Bloemfontein interrupting the pair's seemingly inevitable march to the final.

When the two met in the round robin stage of the competition, the Lions won by a point (41-40) after Blue Bulls flyhalf Louis Strydom missed a last minute penalty that would have given his side victory and home field advantage in the final. As it was the Lions swept through to the final without defeat, claiming a bonus point for scoring four tries in all but one of their matches - a hard-fought 22-18 victory over the Falcons.

The Lions disposed of the same opponent in the semi-final (47-17) with little trouble while the Blue Bulls had rather more trouble subduing the Cheetahs on their return to Bloemfontein. The Cheetahs' victory over the Bulls had allowed them to squeeze the Bulls into third place on the log but they were unable to ram that advantage home in the semi-finals. It appeared that they might be about to repeat their earlier thrashing of the Pretorians as they sprang into a 17-0 lead midway through the first half. A spectacular try by wing John Mametsa started the revival with fullback Morné Steyn intercepting on the halfway line to close the gap to two points at halftime (17-15). Two Strydom penalties and a late Steyn drop goal completed the victory (24-20).

The first half of the final was similarly even. The Lions led 9-6 at halftime but scored four tries to one in the second to romp to a 35-16 victory. Centre Doppies la Grange was the Lions' outstanding player, scoring two of the tries with his midfield partner Bryan Habana and prop Pietman van Niekerk claiming the others. The Bulls' score came from a rolling maul, completed by Carel Hoffman. Although the Bulls were competitive for much of the game the Lions' greater finishing power was a key difference. That was demonstrated by the fact that the Lions' wing John Daniels and Habana were the leading scorers in the competition with ten and six tries respectively.

Daniels took his career total of tries in the Vodacom Cup to 44 - ten more than the second-placed Jaco Booysen, also of the Lions, who scored four in 2004. Daniels scored two hat-tricks in the season - against the Impala Leopards and the Border Bulldogs. Lions flyhalf Quinton van Tonder was the leading points scorer.

Vodacom Cup Logs and Play-Offs

Section X	P	W	D	L	PF	PA	Diff	TF	TA	B4	B7	Bonus	Pts
Vodacom Blue Bulls	7	5	0	2	255	184	71	34	20	6	2	8	28
Boland Cavaliers	7	5	0	2	258	165	93	34	19	6	0	6	26
SWD Eagles	7	4	0	3	206	253	-47	22	31	3	0	3	19
AMD Valke	7	3	1	3	208	188	20	25	23	3	1	4	18
Lions	7	2	0	5	180	224	-44	18	30	3	2	5	13
KwaZulu-Natal	7	2	0	5	174	213	-39	23	28	3	1	4	12
Mighty Elephants	7	2	0	5	174	236	-62	18	29	2	0	2	10

Section Y	P	W	D	L	PF	PA	Diff	TF	TA	B4	B7	Bonus	Pts
Wildecklauer Griquas	7	5	1	1	236	132	104	30	14	3	0	3	25
Impala Leopards	7	5	0	2	234	177	57	28	20	4	1	5	25
Investec WP	7	4	0	3	214	179	35	27	21	6	1	7	23
Vodacom Cheetahs	7	4	0	3	248	197	51	33	24	4	1	5	21
Pumas	7	4	0	3	230	256	-26	26	29	4	0	4	20
Border Bulldogs	7	2	0	5	130	241	-111	13	31	1	1	2	10
Griffons	7	1	0	6	171	273	-102	23	35	3	1	4	8

Semi-finals**Vodacom Blue Bulls 11, Impala Leopards 17 (halftime 11-9)****Pretoria, May 6. Referee: D Van Blommestein**

Bulls - Try: Vermeulen. Pens: Potgieter, Basson.

Leopards - Try: Swanepoel. Pens: Olivier (4).

Wildecklauer Griquas 16, Boland Cavaliers 13 (halftime 5-13)**Kimberley, May 7. Referee: W Roos**

Griquas - Tries: Bock, Mentz. Pens: Prinsloo (2).

Boland - Try: Nokwe. Con: Goosen. Pens: Coetzee. Goosen (2).

Final**Wildecklauer Griquas xx, Impala Leopards xx (halftime 5-13)****Kimberley, May 13. Referee: W Roos****Griquas** - Tries:**Bulls** - Try:

Vodacom Shield Log and Play-Offs

	P	W	D	L	PF	PA	Diff	TF	TA	B41	B72	Bonus	Pts
Boland Cavaliers	6	4	0	2	156	100	56	21	12	3	1	4	20
SWD Eagles	6	4	0	2	164	151	13	23	16	4	0	4	20
@lantic Pumas	6	3	0	3	183	133	50	27	19	3	2	5	17
Investec WP	6	3	0	3	169	185	-16	22	24	3	2	5	17
Wildeklawer Griquas	6	3	0	3	152	130	22	21	16	2	2	4	16
Mighty Elephants	6	2	0	4	165	203	-38	19	31	3	1	4	12
Griffons	6	2	0	4	153	240	-87	20	35	3	1	4	12

Semi-finals**Boland Cavaliers 26, Investec Western Province 5 (halftime 16-0)****Boland Stadium, Wellington, May 8**

Cavaliers - Tries: H Du Plessis, Meintjies. Cons: Petersen (2). P: Petersen (4). Investec WP: Try: Van den Heever.

SWD Eagles 31, @lantic Pumas 21 (halftime 6-15)**Outeniqua Park, George, May 8**

Eagles - Tries: Plaatjies, Saayman, Van Schalkwyk. C: De Bruyn (2). P: De Bruyn (4).

Pumas - Tries: Holland, Schutte. Con: Schutte. Pens: Schutte (3).

Final**Boland Cavaliers 19, SWD Eagles 12 (halftime 11-5)****Boland Stadium, Wellington, May 14. Referee: A Turner.****Cavaliers** - Tries: H Du Plessis, Smit. Pens: Petersen (3).

AG Verhoeven; A Bock, W Van Zyl, J Badenhorst, M Du Plessis (W Petersen, 67); PB Petersen (K Meintjies, 72), N Papier; H Du Plessis, C Potgieter, A Brinkhuis (D Frans, 79), NM Smit, V Wium (M Noemdoe, 79), T Dixon, JC Burke (c) (G Rademeyer, 66), F Brandt (PA Terblanche, 66).

SWD Eagles - Tries: Rheeders, Plaatjies. Con: De Bruyn

BA Fortuin; JJ Plaatjies, J Saayman, R Van Jaarsveld (c), R Pietersen (D Femboes, 17, HJ Adams, 80); D Raw (D Philander, 75), M De Bruyn; SPE Jacobsz, M November, J Van Vuuren (G Eggeling, 36), H Rheeders, N Beukes (A Hulme, 45), D Thiar, M Van Schalkwyk (M Kruger, 47), C Botha (B Smit, 49).

Boland eighthman Henley du Plessis on his way to the try-line in the Vodacom Shield final with Eagles fullback Bevan Fortuin in pursuit.

Boland won 19-12.

PIC: Touchline Photo

VODACOM CUP LEADING SCORERS**40 POINTS**

		M	T	C	P	DG	Pts
G Goosen	Boland Cavaliers	8	3	14	20	-	103
D De Beer	SWD Eagles	7	1	17	18	2	99
IP Olivier	Impala Leopards	6	2	16	17	-	93
J Peach	Mighty Elephants	7	2	11	19	0	89
L Strydom	AMD Valke	7	1	15	15	2	86
CP Steyn	Pumas	6	1	22	11	0	82
J-L Potgieter	Vodacom Blue Bulls	8	2	16	10	0	72
C Durand	Lions	7	1	7	16	0	67
E Prinsloo	Wildeklawer Griquas	9	-	13	13	-	65
R Gerber	Border Bulldogs	6	0	8	14	1	61
JH Claassens	Vodacom Cheetahs	5	2	15	4	-	52
MJ Swartbooi	Investec Western Province	4	1	10	8	-	49
B Hennessey	KwaZulu-Natal	7	4	7	3	0	43

FOUR TRIES

7	AG Bock	Wildeklawer Griquas
7	R Dazel	Boland Cavaliers
6	RJ Cooke	Impala Leopards
6	SC Smith	Vodacom Cheetahs
5	JH Cloete	Pumas
5	R Pietersen	Vodacom Eagles
4	B Hennessey	KwaZulu-Natal
4	GE Krause	Wildeklawer Griquas
4	GWF Kuin	Vodacom Blue Bulls
4	CR Lloyd	Impala Leopards
4	GW Ramazan	Lions
4	JIA Saayman	SWD Eagles
4	WP Van Zyl	Boland Cavaliers