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SA RUGBY MEDIA RELEASES

Saturday 26 November 2016

SA Rugby plans Springbok review and governance overhaul

- **Springbok turnaround strategy top priority**
- **Planned revamp of governance structures**
- **Review of selection of overseas-based players**

The president of SA Rugby outlined plans on Saturday night for an overhaul of SA Rugby administration as well as for a Springbok review process following what he admitted had been a “profoundly disappointing” season for South African rugby.

Mr Mark Alexander said plans to bring governance structures more in line with the demands of professional sport were already well advanced while the immediate question of what to do about Springbok results was the organisation’s No 1 priority.

“It has been a profoundly disappointing season in terms of results and we are acutely aware that we have failed to live up to the Springboks’ proud heritage,” said Mr Alexander.

“We have collectively let down our supporters, our commercial partners and our broadcast partner, SuperSport. I would like to apologise to all our stakeholders for the disappointments we have all suffered this season.

“We are all feeling very raw and let down and it would be easy to make knee-jerk decisions. But we must resist that.

“For instance, our playing fortunes have been declining since the Castle Lager Outgoing Tour of 2014 – despite a fine fightback to win a bronze medal at the Rugby World Cup – and we must coolly and coldly analyse what have been the main factors contributing to those results before determining what remedies are at our disposal to solve them.

“We will start by speaking to the coach and other team role players for their assessment and to provide our feedback. We will take feedback from forthcoming indabas and we must critically review our selection policy relating to overseas-based players.

“We’ve seen an unusually high number of injuries to key players this year, and we’ve lost many experienced Test players to overseas clubs, both of which have had major repercussions for the Springboks. We have to find ways to manage these challenges.

“But I can assure our supporters and stakeholders that if tough decisions have to be made we will not shy away from making them.”

Mr Alexander confirmed that the planned on-field interventions would continue as scheduled. A conditioning indaba (workshop) for the national teams and Vodacom Super Rugby biokineticists would take place on 7 December.

The coaching Indaba between the Springbok coaches and franchise coaches takes place on 12 December.



Meanwhile, a General Council meeting on 9 December could also have a significant bearing on the future of rugby in South Africa, Mr Alexander said.

“A number of constitutional changes are being placed before the unions for their consideration,” he said.

“The Executive Council regards them as major and important steps to make structures more efficient and better purposed to meet the needs of professional rugby.

“Obviously their impacts will only be felt over coming months and years – rather than over days – but we believe that they will have a positive impact on the way rugby is managed.”

Mr Alexander said the key changes planned are:

- New franchise and non-franchise rugby committees to improve communication between unions and Executive Council; to make recommendations on competitions and playing affairs; and to speed up decision making.
- Allowing third parties to take a majority shareholding in Unions’ commercial arms and have a voice in running rugby through the new franchise rugby committee.
- Doubling independent representation on the Executive Council to four members plus the representative of the players
- Terminating the role of the vice-president (at the end of the current term in 2018) to bring the elected representation to six

The Executive Council is also planning the creation of an Advisory Board of eminent individuals from business and civic society to act as a sounding board for rugby. That body would not have a constitutional role however.

“We have previewed these planned changes with our member unions and they are on the agenda for the December meeting,” said Mr Alexander.

“We trust that they will find favour to provide a structure better placed for rugby to navigate our current challenges.

“But our No 1 priority is a turnaround strategy for the Springbok team and that will be looked at immediately and decisively.”

Mr Alexander said that he would provide a further update on progress for supporters and stakeholders once key meetings in December were concluded.

Issued by SA Rugby Communications



Saturday, 19 November 2016

Statement from SA Rugby president, Mr Mark Alexander

“The whole of South African rugby is extremely disappointed with this year’s Springbok results and deeply worrying aspects of the performances. It has not been good enough and no one is pretending otherwise.

“We have a minimum target of winning three out of four test matches each season – which is better than the historical record – but we have not come close this season.

“It would be easy to lay the blame for that at one door or another and look for scapegoats but it would also be an oversimplification.

“All of us within South African rugby need to look at ourselves and ask what we could have done differently in aid of the Springbok cause.

“Those questions will be asked at the end of the season when we will undertake a full review of the year and what new interventions may be needed to turn things around.

“We began that work recently with the coaching indaba. It set out to align national and Super Rugby coaches on the technical, tactical and conditioning requirements to succeed in 2017 and beyond.

“We also have to review such things as how we manage the fact that so many of our leading players are now based outside South Africa and more are being lured there.

“No group of individuals is more concerned or disappointed right now than the Springbok team and management. We know they are better than this.

“After that it is our job to take steps to do as much as we possibly can to make sure we are not in a similar position in 12 months’ time. Our focus is on solutions and finding answers to our current problems.

“We have a test against Wales on Saturday and then we will review the season and spend time determining a path for the future.”

Issued by SA Rugby Communications