

CHAMPAGNE

THE FASCINATING RISE OF RUGBY IN FRANCE

(ORIGINAL THORN IN THE SPRINGBOK SIDE)



SYNOPSIS

CHAMPAGNE is a story exploring how the veritable English game of rugby, rose to become the unlikely national sport of her old adversary – France.

Brimming with memorable characters, the story invites you on a wild journey from the aristocracy of Paris, through the wealthy schools of Bordeaux and Toulouse, and into working-class families across the south-west.

Each stop providing insights into the flair and complexity (and brutality) within French rugby.

A unique concoction which ultimately saw France shunned by rugby's home unions, to

become rugby's original pariah.

That status, however, made for a curious alignment with the Springboks. For Danie Craven shared the French philosophy that rugby was a means of forging connections and resolving conflict, not for creating it.

So emerges a fascinating rivalry and partnership, whereby France's disregard for rugby convention saw them achieve unthinkable success against the tradition of the Springboks (the original thorn in our side).

CHAMPAGNE is all the context you didn't know you needed ahead of the RWC.

DETAILS

LENGTH:	65 minutes
PG:	14
INTERVAL:	NO
IMAGES:	YES
SOUND:	YES
Q&A:	OPTIONAL

CORE MESSAGE

Sport as a rare and powerful connector of people.

The power of remaining true to one's instinctive style or culture.

CONTENT OUTLINE

- Origin of the rooster (dating back to the Gauls).
- Origin of the French national anthem (Le Marseillaise) dating back to the Revolution.
- Origin of the French flag (Also linked to the Revolution, but with a curious link to the Dutch, and thereby South Africa).
- Origin of the French Championship trophy (Bouclier de Brennus).
- Link between France and South Africa through the Huguenot diaspora.
- Link between Britain, France and South Africa (therefore rugby) through the Napoleonic Wars.
- Link between rugby in France and the founder of the Olympics (including the origins of the Olympic logo).
- Story of the Michelin brothers; their tyres; their guide and their role in spreading rugby across France.
- How the veritable English game came to be the national sport of France. A game so loved in the south-west that it became known simply as l'Ovalie (Land of the oval ball).
- How rugby spread across the country: from Paris, through Bordeaux, onto Toulouse and then onto the rest of the country. Each having influence on the national style.
- France's expulsion from the Five Nations for foul play and professionalism (1931 – 1947).
- How Champagne rugby came to be defined (from the miracle of Lourdes in the 1950s).
- France as the first country (ever) to beat the Springboks in a test series in South Africa (and their role as our original nemesis)
- How our countries (both of whom experienced pariah status) came to share a belief that rugby was a great connector of human beings and cultures.
- Frank Mesnel and "le Showbizz" (Racing Club in the late 1980s) drinking Champagne at half time in the championship final while wearing pink bowties.
- How remaining true to our national styles has seen both countries achieve tremendous success.