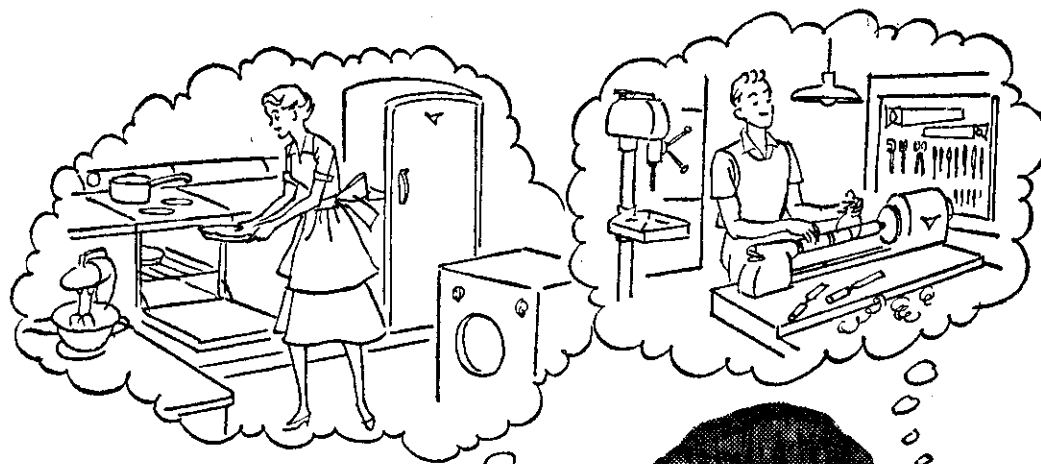


a true Springbok pack as we knew Springboks packs to be. Their backs were brilliant, and scored some of the loveliest tries you could wish to see. But how often after some feat of extraordinary brilliance would we see the expected try not materialise through either the brilliant player hanging on too long or tossing out a pass that you would frown at a schoolboy for. And it didn't happen once—it happened dozens of times.

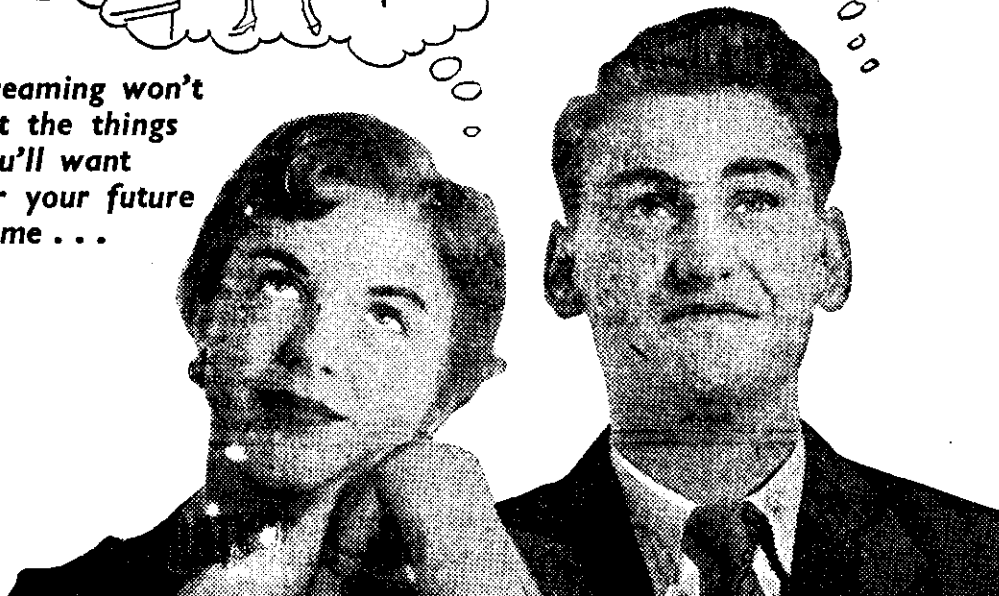
And so it was, or so it seems to me, that the astute Danie, sensing the strength of New Zealand forward play, coupled with the strange reluctance of most of our players to run with the ball, trumpeted out the clarion call for more open play. If he could get our players to attempt the same type of Rugby they played the advantage would all be theirs. They were used to it—we weren't. But the New Zealand selectors knew the answer, and our Test teams played to their instructions: Don't give the brilliant South Africans a chance to play their own game. Were they wrong? What would we do if we were the strategists? Play to our opponent's strength or his weakness? There is only one answer if you want to win, and I'm sure the selectors wanted to win—and they did. What would we have said had they instructed the All Blacks to toss the ball around willy-nilly and we had lost? . . .

But one lesson among others the Springboks did teach us: When you get the ball run with it and run hard. Pin your ears back and use your speed. It is something we just do not do here in New Zealand. I know a lot of that depends on the speed of getting the ball away from the base of the scrums and rucks, and I would advise all budding halfbacks to make that their Number 1 objective. Practice through the summer to get the ball away in one sweeping movement *off the ground*, and the farther you can get it the better. I know the cry is that the ball doesn't come out quickly enough. It comes out of our scrums just as fast as it does from the Springbok scrums, and they manage to get it away all right.

And so we won the Tests. The most discussed tour of all time is over with the All Blacks triumphant—a complete reverse to 1949. There we had brilliant backs, but the Springboks evolved a plan to make them innocuous. This year they had brilliant backs and our selectors just reversed the compliment. They were praised in 1949 for out-thinking us. This year, with just the same tactics, we are accused of playing stodgy football. There doesn't seem to be any justice. The cry is now for open Rugby. Let us have it by all means, but don't let us make the same mistake as the Springboks and in our excessive zeal for what is termed open Rugby disregard the Number 1 in all Rugby: Get control in the forwards first. Open Rugby by all means—but not at the expense of sound Rugby.



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