

EDITOR'S NOTES

FEB 21, 2006.

A couple of weeks ago we ran two articles on the Lions in New Zealand and invited readers to offer their views on the subject. The winner of Lynn Kidman's latest book, 'Athlete Centred Coaching' (ISBN 0-476-01445-X), is Stephen Johnson, who is a regular contributor to the Technical Journal from his base in Japan.

His was probably the most balanced view and perhaps we should draw a line under the series now that the lessons have been learned.

"The British Lions tour to New Zealand in 2005 was undoubtedly one of British rugby's low moments, from both the playing record and the ineptitude of the people handling the public relations side of things. However, rather than simply cooking this unpalatable bunch of cabbages twice, let's move on. By all means learn from the errors, but let's get over this constant Woodward-bashing.

He did it his way twice; once he achieved the greatest prize (and what a hero he was then - how soon we forget) and the second time he fell flat on his face. He did not change as a person - his team simply could not cope with the best in the world at that time. The success of the autumn All Blacks - at the end of an energy-sapping year - is an indication of where they were in 2005 - way ahead of the northern hemisphere. The Lions' players were simply washed out when they played and how many of us in coaching can put our hands on our hearts and say that from time to time after hurtful losses, we have never been just a tad bitchy? Give Sir CW a break, and move on."

There was a technical hitch last week when the new article was late and it managed to hide among the previous week's pieces. It was all put right in the end but some readers may have been a bit confused. Because of that, we are keeping last week's article (Mark Goodwin: Developing Rugby Athletes) on for another week alongside this week's new article, Chris Jones' observations on international match dates and kick-off times.

The number of responses from readers does ebb and flow – and the Editor is always looking for more flow than ebb. Please do send in any thoughts that you have after reading an article. If you think it was dreadful, say so. If the material would, in your opinion, never work at your level, let us know with your reasons. It will all add to the vast coaching resource that the RFU produces and the Technical Journal is very much for coaches who want to widen their range of knowledge, but it is also read by many who will never coach a team. Giving your viewpoint on any subject will surely help another coach, referee, player or spectator somewhere.

I have just had a plea from Chris Coverdale, who coaches at Torquay Athletic. He runs the U7s/U8s and they will become the club's U9s next season. They will be facing

contact for the first time and he is looking around for tips on how to introduce contact with an element of fun so that the players do not become bored – or put off the game. If you have any practical ideas and/or advice, please e-mail it/them to me and I will pass it on. There might just be a Technical Journal article at the end to help other coaches in the same situation. Any correspondence should be sent to Keithrichardson@therfu.com