



The Bulls have announced that Southern Kings coach Deon Davids, Blue Bulls Currie Cup coach Pote Human and former Bulls captain Victor Matfield are on the short list to replace John Mitchell. **Simnikwe Xabanisa** considers their credentials

# SWOT ANALYSIS OF BULLS' COACHING CANDIDATES

**Deon Davids (50)**  
**Why he's in with a shout**  
 Springbok coach Rassie Erasmus, one of the panelists on the advisory committee to choose the coach and easily the most influential man in SA Rugby at the moment, is a huge fan of Davids, having recommended him for the Southern Kings job.



**MAGIC TOUCH Deon Davids has earned his chance** PHOTO: DANIEL JAYO / LATINCONTENT / GETTY IMAGES

**What he brings to the job**

The ability to build a team from ruins. The Kings team that finished 11th in last year's Super Rugby, above the Bulls and the Cheetahs, was made up of rejects, journeymen, formerly retired players and kids nobody had heard of, but Davids got them to fly in formation, playing the kind of rugby that made friends and influenced people.

**What could trip him up?**

His current record in the Pro 14 and his strength. As understandable as their situation is, the Kings have still won just two out of 29 games since joining the Pro 14 last year. And sometimes coaches who are patron saints of lost causes can struggle when suddenly confronted with a team loaded with as much talent as the Bulls.

**Did you know?**

Davids discovered Lions wing Anthonie Volmink by trolling the main field on Christmas Day at their naive Bredasdorp in the Western Cape, having been told there was a talented youngster in the neighbourhood while on holiday. Volmink was kicking that day, and that's how he got to play for the Lions. Davids also gave Lionel

Cronjé's career a second wind by convincing him out of retirement - that's his touch with players.

**Is he the right man for the job?**

It is tempting to rationalise his capabilities by saying he's driven enough ambulances and now it's time to get behind the wheel of a limo. But the truth is, Davids has earned his shot the hard way, uncomplainingly chipping away at unglamorous posts and doing a fine job of it.

**Pote Human (59)**

**Why he's in with a shout**

In all the time he has worked as a coach at the Bulls, Human has never let them down, be it at Varsity Cup level with Tuks or in the Currie Cup level, where he shared a trophy with a Rassie Erasmus-coached Cheetahs in 2006.

**What he brings to the job**

After a Bulls player had botched an offload years ago, Human is alleged to have been overheard saying: "Sê vir daai d\*\*s, ons is nie 'n pop-pass span nie." Subsequent to his coaching experiences in Japan, the former hard-running Free State No 8 is said to be much more flexible in his approach, and a player's dream as a result.

**What could trip him up?**

Human's best work has largely been done while deputising for someone else, or at a level just below the very top. His reputation as a career forwards coach, which makes him come across as a contented assistant coach, may count against him.

**Did you know?**

He also has a connection with Erasmus, with both



**UNDERSTATED Pote Human is said to be a player's dream** PHOTO: STEVE HAAG / GALLO IMAGES

coaches' parents having been next-door neighbours in Despatch. And, oh, his real name is Gerhard.

**Is he the right man for the job?**

After former All Blacks coach John Mitchell, one gets the impression that the Bulls want a bit of a name for a head coach. One wonders if someone as understated and lacking in obvious ego as Human is their man.

**Victor Matfield (41)**

**Why he's in with a shout**

He's Victor Matfield, arguably the Springboks' greatest lock forward and most capped player - and a Bulls legend, thanks to three Currie Cups, three Super Rugby titles, two Tri-Nations trophies, a British and Irish Lions scalp and a World Cup.

**What he brings to the job**

As a player, Matfield had a reputation for being studious to the point of obsessive, and almost always had input into how the teams he played for played. The studious bit is obviously a quality that comes in handy with coaching, and his legend as a player takes care of that instant credibility that



**BLUE BLOOD Victor Matfield has undeniably strong ties with the Bulls** PHOTO: DEAN VIVIER

modern sports teams seem to crave these days.

**What could trip him up?**

Matfield was a genius as a player, but will that translate into his being a genius as a coach? Also, while incredibly experienced as a player and, one supposes, a pundit, Matfield's actual time in the coaching saddle is limited when one looks at his two assistant coach gigs at the Bulls and the Lions.

**Did you know?**

Matfield's obsession with contesting opposition line-outs was such that he would call up SuperSport to give him the footage of all the line-outs of the teams he was up against so he could crack their codes.

**Is he the right man for the job?**

On the strength of his coaching experience, no. He could benefit from being an assistant coach, but tell that to an ambitious former Bok used to winning everything.

