

Ted Partridge, *A Life in Rugby*. Halfway House, Southern Book publishers, 1991. Illus. pp. 161.

Professor Dr Daniel H&man Craven died in his home in Stellenbosch on 4 January 1992 in the age of eighty-one years (he was born in the Orange Free State on 11 October 1910). From 1956 to his death he served South Africa in the capacity of President of the South African Rugby Board (now the SA Rugby Football Union). Three biographies of Danie Craven (or 'Doc Craven' as he was known to the rugby world) were published while he was still alive, proving that he was a living legend. A fourth biography is at present being written by the well-known ex-referee and rugby writer Paul Dobson.

The first biography came from Prof. Bun Booyens (a cultural historian at the University of Stellenbosch) and was titled, *Danie Craven*. It was published at the time of Craven's retirement from the Department of Physical Education at the University of Stellenbosch in 1975. This book covers his personal life intensively and gives detailed descriptions of the major games he play& The second biography, titled *Craven* (1982) was by Hennie Gerber (a former sports journalist).

Partridge's biography, *A Ljfe in Rugby*, lacks detail on Craven's early life - especially his student days (he was a Stellenbosch student for seven years). This is a serious void as the overseas reader has no access to the two above-mentioned Afrikaans biographies which cover this period intensively. On the positive side, there are parts which provide more detail - his experiences at the Reich's Akademie for Physical Education in Berlin for instance. As this book was written nearly ten years after the others, it obviously contains much more information on Craven's role in normalising South African rugby. It reveals that in the 1970s Dr Piet Koornhof (the then Minister for Sport) was not as enlightened as he now pretends to have been; it gives Craven's view on professionalism and amateurism in rugby, including his distinct differences with the Intemational Rugby Boar& it fully covers his nation-wide multi-racial coaching scheme for children as well as his

fields and facilities scheme; it explains his 'feeder team' experiment which Craven once called the 'cherry on top of my eightieth birth&y cake'; it deals also deals with his plans for a 'Gondwana Rugby Football Union' which was to include all the rugby-playing African countries; and, lastly, his talks with the African National Congress (ANC) in Harare (Zimbabwe) to have sporting sanctions lifted.

If the reader of *A Life in Rugby* searches for historical mistakes some will definitely be found. Partridge puts words in Craven's mouth - for instance Partridge believes the William Webb Ellis myth and he gives the impression that Craven also did, but I know for a fact Craven did not. Craven played soccer as a preschool farm kid and only started playing rugby when he went to the town school of Lindley. Partridge gives the impression that he started to play rugby on the farm because they had to play with a stone and they could not kick the stone around so they ran with it. All three authors admit that Craven's father was a keen soccer enthusiast. Booyens tells us that, as a result, James Craven gave his six sons a soccer ball to play with. Partridge says that Craven got into the Stellenbosch second team because the team's scrumhalf got injured. Booyens and Gerber claim that the second team's scrumhalf didn't turn up for practice and Craven took his place. With regard to Craven's initial selection for the Springboks, there also seems to be a discrepancy. According to Partridge, Craven was not surprised when he made the team (although he had never even played for his Province at that point in time) as he 'had played brilliantly during the earlier trial matches'. Both Booyens and Gerber tell the story of how Craven had not played rugby for two weeks before the trials due to the 'flu. He did not start off well during the early trials but played well in the third and final trial. Both Booyens and Gerber agree on Craven's itinerary when he went to Europe to study physical education. This itinerary gives Germany as his first stop and he stayed in Berlin for six months. Partridge says that Craven went to Germany 'towards the end of his tour (p. 40)'. He also has the rest of the itinerary wrong. When Craven started his Physical Training

Battalion back in South Africa, he appointed a Springbok high jumper by the name of Edwin Thacker, amongst others. Partridge refers to the latter by calling him Tacklan. The last, but very serious mistake, is on p. 63 where Partridge refers to Craven who went to Stellenbosch to 'help them establish their own Department of Physical Education'. The fact is, Ernst Jokl established the Department in 1936 and Craven was actually the fourth head of the Department.

The most frustrating shortcoming of this book is the general scarcity of dates. For the historian they are few and far between. Not even Craven's birth date is given. The author provides a long description of Craven's first match for the Springboks, but neglects to mention the score, besides the fact that they won.

Personally I regret the absence of any acknowledgment of Craven's king-pin secretary, Mrs Ria Duckitt, who made an enormous contribution to his success as a rugby administrator over three decades. On the academic level she also came to his rescue more than once. When he did his third doctoral dissertation (his first was in anthropology, his second in sports psychology and the third in sports history), I recall how she had to make phone calls to all parts of the world for he had neglected to note the full source references when he did his research in various countries.

No mention is made of Ernst Jokl's role in Craven's career either. Firstly, Jokl claims in his *South African Reminiscences* (1988) that 'he was instrumental in guiding him [Craven] into the study of physical education'. In 1936 (sic) he met Craven in Stellenbosch when the latter returned with the Springboks from their successful tour of Australia. He 'suggested to Craven that he spend time in Europe studying physical education'. Jokl, however, does not explain how it happened that the military eventually sent Craven to Europe to study. His date also proves to be wrong as the 'Boks toured Australia and New Zealand in 1937. Furthermore, during the war years of 1939-45 Jokl was attached to Craven's Physical Training Battalion as medical consultant.

It is a pity nobody has listed the many sayings of the 'old man'. One slogan of Craven I shall always remember from my student days is 'if God wanted man to play soccer, he would have given him round testicles'.

Knowing Craven from 1970 (first as a student and later as a colleague) I pity anyone who dares take up the mammoth task of compiling a biography on this phenomenal man. Partridge did well, but maybe he should have based his work on the previous two in order to come up with an absolutely detailed biography for the international market. Hopefully, Paul Dobson will rise to the challenge but we shall have to wait and see. However, the second part of the book, which covers more recent political sporting history and Craven's schemes for the development of rugby in South Africa, is invaluable. It certainly gives the reader a much better and more up to date picture of Craven the rugby administrator. In many ways this book concludes with a very important chapter in South Africa's sporting history.

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Bruce Schoefeld, *The Last Serious Thing: A Season at the Bullfights*. Simon and Schuster, New York, 1992. pp. 238.

I have to admit to knowing little about bullfighting but several things have always puzzled me. Why does it rate as one of Spain's favourite pastimes? What is it about bullfighting that interests not only Spaniards but Mexicans, South Americans, Portuguese and the French as well as a host of foreign tourists? Given the efforts to reduce violence in sport and the increasing pressure applied by animal rights' groups, how is bullfighting successfully defended? I picked up a copy of Bruce Schoefeld's *The Last Serious Thing: A Season at the Bullfights* to hopefully find the answers to these questions.