# Ireland's Mike Catt Plays Down Provocative Comments Ahead of South Africa Series



Ireland's assistant coach, Mike Catt, has downplayed the importance of provocative comments from South African rugby players ahead of their anticipated two-match series next month. Since last year's Rugby World Cup, South African players such as Eben Etzebeth, Damian de Allende, and Cheslin Kolbe have made remarks intensifying the rivalry between the world's top two rugby teams.

Ireland will head to Johannesburg on Tuesday to face the Springboks on July 6 in Pretoria, followed by another match on July 13 in Durban. Catt, a South Africa-born attack coach, stated, "People can say what they want. It means nothing to us. It’s something we don’t particularly worry about," emphasizing Ireland's focus on performance.

The rivalry intensified following a 38-3 defeat for the Springboks in Dublin in 2017 and heated comments from Etzebeth and De Allende after Ireland’s 13-8 World Cup pool-stage victory in Paris last year. South Africa went on to win the World Cup, whereas Ireland exited in the quarter-finals, losing to New Zealand.

Ireland’s squad, which currently has no fresh injuries following Jamison Gibson-Park’s hamstring injury, will face the Springboks who recently defeated Wales 41-13 at Twickenham. Catt, set to leave his role after this tour, expressed confidence, calling the upcoming series an exciting challenge against the world champions.