

Feathers fly as 1.2.70 tour ends

by Staff Reporters

THE Springboks rugby tour came to a bizarre end yesterday at Twickenham when a cushion fight broke out between rugby supporters and anti-apartheid demonstrators. Police took nearly half an hour to clear the ground after the final whistle of the match against the Barbarians.

As players left the field spectators in the stands seized their seat cushions and hurled them down at demonstrators standing on the terraces below. Several hundred protesters responded in kind and the feathers flew as battle was joined.

Shortly after half-time tintacks were hurled over the police line out of a section of the crowd in the South East corner of the ground. Play was momentarily halted and then continued while stewards with electro-magnets cleared the pitch.

It was when the police went into the crowd in search of the culprit that fighting started with angry demonstrators pitching in to rescue their comrades. Police abandoned their previously successful tactic of containment in favour of mixing it with the demonstrators.

Immediately things got out of control. Punches were swopped, arms twisted, hair pulled and tugs-of-war fought over demonstrators who had fallen into the hands of the police.

Twenty-six people including one girl were arrested. Forty-six others were thrown out of the ground, some far from gently, and 30 people, including 15 policemen, were treated for injuries.

The Springboks fly home tomorrow. About 50 protesters gave the Nazi salute when the Springboks arrived at the Savoy Hotel, London, last night for a farewell dinner.