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Former Wallabies great David Campese has slammed the number of Southern Hemisphere players in the British and Irish Lions squad, describing them as the British and Irish and Pacific Island Lions. Eight of the Lions' 38-man squad were born in the Southern Hemisphere, including Australian-natives Mack Hansen, Sione Tuipulotu and Finlay Bealham, and this has already become a heavy talking point in the build-up to the series. Scotland international Pierre Schoeman, who was born in South Africa but qualified on residency grounds, has previously hit back at the claims over the number of foreign players in the squad, saying: 'If you're good enough to play for your country and then you're good enough to play for the Lions and you're selected, obviously you're going to do that,' said Schoeman, who has 42 Scotland caps after qualifying through residency. Scotland is home for us, my wife and myself and other players as well. You embrace that, you fully take that on. It's like Outlander. You move to a different country and now that's your house. You live there. You buy into the culture and now to represent the British and Irish Lions, you fully buy into that, you fully submerge into that. Nothing else matters, not your past, not the future, it's about the now. David Campese slams Southern Hemisphere Lions Speaking on TalkSport, Campese described the team as the British and Irish and Pacific Island Lions. It is hard when you've got four nations in one team, he said. The British and Irish Lions, sorry, the British and Irish and Pacific Island Lions, I'm going to call them, because you've got so many Australian Islanders in there. It is going to be a very interesting game. British and Irish Lions team: Winners and losers as Andy Farrell copies Warren Gatland's template as forwards stocks soar Will Genia reveals where the Wallabies are a little bit better than the British & Irish Lions. It wasn't just the Lions that were on Campese's hit list, as he also gave a scathing view on the state of rugby union in Australia. In Australian rugby, we haven't got any culture. No one cares, no one knows who we are, he said. If you haven't got culture or history, you haven't got anything. Unfortunately, that's where we are. He added: 'We've got Joe Schmidt as our coach, who still doesn't know about our culture and history. He's now got Les Kiss involved, who's a rugby league guy and who went out and played and coached in Ireland. We've got to try and play a style of rugby that people want to watch, but at the moment it's a very up-and-down defensive game.' READ MORE: British and Irish Lions: Andy Farrell backs hungry Henry Pollock to be real poins of difference Rugby legend David Campese has slammed the British and Irish Lions squad over the number of 'Australian Islanders' on their books - and then dubbed Andy Farrell's team 'the British and Irish and Pacific Island Lions'. Never afraid to voice his opinion, Wallabies great Campese unloaded ahead of the Lions' clash against... read full story The British and Irish Lions celebrate their series win over Australia at Stadium Australia in 2013 (Image: Steve Christo/Corbis via Getty Images) Australia might be known as the lucky country but don't tell that to David Campese. The Wallabies great might have won the 1991 World Cup - where he was named Player of the Tournament - earned more than 100 caps in a 14-year international career and have gone down as one of the finest athletes (let alone rugby players) that Australia has ever produced. Yet to Lions fans, he'll always be remembered for a mistake, one that arguably handed the tourists victory in a rollercoaster 1989 series. It set the platform for what has become a rivalry pock-marked with soaring highs, plundering lows and a fair bit of bad blood in between. With 20 minutes left in the decisive third Test in Sydney, Australia led 12-9 when a Rob Andrew drop goal slipped wide of the posts, where a waiting Campese collected in his own in-goal area. The winger went back to run the ball out from behind his own try-line but then flicked a pass to his supporting full-back Greg Martin. However, as if in slow motion, the pass went behind Martin, hit the floor and the covering Ieuan Evans gleefully dived on the loose ball for the try and a lead the Lions would turn into a series-winning 19-18 victory. It was a one-in-100 moment, Campese said when reflecting on the aftermath. 'I walked in the dressing room, none of the Australian players or [coach] Bob Dwyer came near me for about 15 minutes and I was pretty down.' READ MORE: 2025 British and Irish Lions tour fixtures, morning kick-off times and TV channel confirmed READ MORE: British Lions sent five-word Marcus Smith message after early Andy Farrell decision LIONS READY TO ROAR! Get your special preview of this summer's tour - on sale now! To rub salt into Campese's wound, he was pulled over by the police while driving home and handed a speeding ticket. Talk about bad luck, he said, and later, in a bizarre turn of events, as he walked through the front door, just desperate to get to bed, he had phone call from the St Helens rugby league team offering him a huge sum of money to sign. 'I don't know what game they were watching, he added. It was a strange night, that's for sure. The ironic thing is, I did the exact same pass the next week and it worked. It was bad luck. Australia's David Campese after the Lions claimed victory on the back of his error (Image: Bob Thomas Sports Photography via Getty Images) Campese is not the only iconic Lions moment to have come Down Under. Think Brian O'Driscoll's breath-taking try, Kurtley Beales jaw-dropping slip, and George North's hilarious fireman's lift on Israel Folau. Historically, the Lions' most storied rivalries may be with South Africa and New Zealand, both scenes of legendary 1970s successes. But they have played those two nations 91 times combined and have won just 25. Take out the 71 tour to New Zealand, where the Lions recorded their only series win against the All Blacks, and the 74 trip to South Africa, where they emerged unbeaten and with a famous 3-0 win against the Springboks, and their overall record against those two southern hemisphere giants is to be blunt, bleak. Against Australia, it's anything but. George North of the Lions lifts Israel Folau of Wallabies while carrying the ball (Image: Getty Images) Of the 23 Test matches, from 1899 to 2013, the Lions have won 17. Indeed, of the nine Test series staged between them, they have won seven. Though the Lions have a long history of touring Australia - the very ever Lions tour included two months there in 1888, sandwiching two stints in New Zealand, their rivalry simmered rather than boiled for more than a century. And then came 1989, and the rivalry burst into life and not just because of Campese's infamous error. The background to the series was fascinating in itself. The 89 Lions were the first to visit Australia since 1971, the first to play more than two games in the country since 1966 and only the second ever Lions side to use Australia as their sole destination. Only the Reverend Matthew Mullineux's tourists 90 years earlier had toured Australia without venturing to New Zealand. With this in mind, it was hardly surprising that there were plenty of doubters ahead of the adventure. Australian rugby had struggled during the 1970s but the Grand Slam tourists of 1984, the Wallabies beat all four home unions on an autumn tour - had shown that they could hang with the best. The Lions may have won all eight of their non-Test fixtures but they were convincingly beaten in the first international in Sydney, a 30-12 hammering. But that defeat only spurred the Lions on to create history of their own. The Battle of Ballymore, as it was aptly christened by the Australian press, is widely regarded as one of the most bruising encounters in the history of the game. Victory over the soon-to-be world champions kept the tourists' series hopes alive but it was perhaps the manner of the triumph that paved the way for a series win with the first scrum setting the tone. Australia's scrum-half Nick Farr-Jones prepared to feed the ball in but opposite number Robert Jones sneakily stood on his rival's foot and Farr-Jones snapped. As the two smallest men on the field came to blows, the Lions forwards piled in and battle commenced. Nick Farr-Jones of Australia is tackled by Robert Jones of the British Lions (Image: Billy Stickland /Allsport) Similarly robust confrontations occurred at regular intervals throughout the match, with Dai Young later accused of stamping on the head of Australian lock Stephen Cutler in one of the most-controversial moments of the entire series. 'I would describe it as the most violent game of rugby that has ever been played,' said flanker Mike Teague after a 19-12 win. Robert Jones said: 'It was a spur-of-the-moment decision to stand on his foot at the first scrum and push down. He came back at me, and within seconds there was a pretty lively punch up going on. The Australian public were engaged and enraged. And then, a week later, came Campese. Now, with the Lions in a fixed cycle of touring Australia, New Zealand and South Africa on rotation, they have only been back Down Under twice since that series. 2001 was very different to 1989 and what went on tour certainly did not stay on tour. Graham Henry was named as the first overseas coach in Lions history, having earned an impressive reputation with Wales, but the decision was met with criticism from sections of the press, arguing that an Irishman or a Brit should always be handed the reins ahead of a foreigner. Rumours of discontent in the camp were rife before newspaper columns and player diaries threatened to ruin the tour. Austin Healy never has shaken off the fall-out from his Observer column, where he labelled Wallabies lock Justin Harrison a plank and an ape. He later used those pages to predict a fine would be coming his way. He was right. It was 3,000. Jonny Sexton celebrates with Daniel Craig after the Lions' defeat of the Australian Wallabies in the third Test (Image: 2013 AFP) The Lions somehow still produced one of their best-ever performances in the opening Test - inspired by a coming-of-age try from Irish centre O'Driscoll, where he danced through a sea of Aussie defenders and sprinted clear to score - before the Wallabies fought back to triumph in the second and third matches. 2013 was hardly spice-free either. Kurtley Beales missed penalty in the last minute cost the Wallabies a first Test win and, while they battled back to level the series, the Lions produced an all-time display to win 41-16 in the third with James Bond actor Daniel Craig partying with them in the changing rooms. Australia is a special place, said Jamie Roberts at the end of that tour. Anything can happen. Indeed it does. Just ask David Campese. The British and Irish Lions' 28-24 defeat to Argentina in Dublin on Friday night has sent shockwaves through the rugby world, marking their first opening tour loss since 1971. RUCKS: Lions content is powered by ISUZU. Make no mistake, this wasn't just any warm-up clash. The Pumas came to play, and they delivered a brutal wake-up call to Andy Farrell's side just one week out from their first hit-out on Australian soil. While Farrell was quick to give credit to the South Americans, Wallabies legend David Campese didn't hold back. In a brutally honest assessment, Campese ripped into FOUR Lions players, slamming their performances as woeful, dismal, and simply not good enough for Lions level. Here's who felt the full force of Campese's wrath in his column for Planet Rugby. Campese was particularly scathing about van der Merwe's failure to compete in the air, despite his physical stature: 'I simply can't understand how Duhan van der Merwe, a man of 65, fails under the high ball in the way he does. He pointed out van der Merwe's aerial struggles as a key weakness that Argentina exploited: 'He's bloody massive yet managed only one from five in the air in a dismal display under the ball.' CONTINUES ON PAGE TWO By ANDREW PRENTICE FOR DAILY MAIL AUSTRALIA Published: 08:32 BST, 27 June 2025 | Updated: 08:32 BST, 27 June 2025 Rugby legend David Campese has slammed the British and Irish Lions squad over the number of 'Australian Islanders' on their books - and then dubbed Andy Farrell's team 'the British and Irish and Pacific Island Lions'. Never afraid to voice his opinion, Wallabies great Campese unloaded ahead of the Lions' clash against the Western Force in Perth on Saturday night. Captain Maro Itoje was also on Campese's hit-list, alongside Farrell, the dire state of rugby in Australia and Wallabies coach Joe Schmidt. Speaking with UK radio station TalkSport, Campese didn't mince his words. 'It is hard when you've got four nations in one team,' he quipped when pointing to the amount of players with Southern Hemisphere ties. 'The Irish Lions, sorry, the British and Irish and Pacific Island Lions, I'm going to call them, because you've got so many Australian Islanders in there. It is going to be a very interesting game.' Never afraid to speak his mind, rugby legend David Campese has slammed the British and Irish Lions squad over the number of 'Australian Islanders' on their books. Lions captain Maro Itoje was also on Campese's hit-list, alongside coach Andy Farrell (pictured), the dire state of rugby in Australia and Wallabies coach Joe Schmidt. Campese feels Wallabies coach Joe Schmidt (pictured, left) 'doesn't know' about Australia's rugby culture and history. Campese then declared star lock Itoje fails to 'lead by example' and could prove to be a liability on Australian shores. The man affectionately known as 'Campo' next questioned a number of Farrell's selections following the recent defeat against Argentina before turning his attention to what the code must do in his eyes to stay relevant in Australia. He finished by outlining why he doesn't rate Schmidt. 'In Australian rugby we haven't got any culture, no one cares, no one knows who we are,' he said. 'If you haven't got culture and history, you haven't got anything. Unfortunately, that's where we are in Australia.' We've got Joe Schmidt as our (Wallabies') coach, who still doesn't know about our culture and history. 'Now he's got Les Kiss involved, who's a rugby league guy who went out and played and coached in Ireland. We've got to try and play a style of rugby that people want to watch.' At the moment, it's a very, very up and down defensive game. The first Test featuring the British and Irish Lions against the Wallabies is on July 19 at Suncorp Stadium in Brisbane. Campese chalked up 101 appearances for the Wallabies, with his career highlight winning the 1991 World Cup. British and Irish Lions' Tadgh Beirne and Ellis Genge (Image: PA Wire) Outspoken Wallabies legend David Campese has launched a scathing attack on the British and Irish Lions, mocking the make-up of their squad and questioning head coach Andy Farrell's selections ahead of Saturdays clash with Western Force in Perth. Speaking to talkSPORT, the outspoken former Australia winger criticised the number of players in the Lions squad with Southern Hemisphere heritage, dubbing the side the British and Irish and Pacific Island Lions. It's hard when you've got four nations in one team, Campese said. The Irish Lions, sorry, the British and Irish and Pacific Island Lions, I'm going to call them because you've got so many Australian Islanders in there. It's going to be a very interesting game. Campese didn't stop there. He singled out Lions captain Maro Itoje, claiming the England lock fails to lead by example and could prove a liability during the tour. Sign up to Inside Welsh rugby on Substack to get exclusive news stories and insight from behind the scenes in Welsh rugby. The 1991 World Cup winner also cast doubt over Farrell's squad selections following their recent loss to Argentina and took aim at the state of the game in his homeland. In Australian rugby, we haven't got any culture, no one cares, no one knows who we are, he said. If you haven't got culture and history, you haven't got anything. Unfortunately, that's where we are in Australia. Campese also criticised current Wallabies boss Joe Schmidt, questioning his connection to the Australian game. We've got Joe Schmidt as our coach, who still doesn't know about our culture and history. Now he's got Les Kiss involved, who's a rugby league guy who went out and played and coached in Ireland, he said. We've got to try and play a style of rugby that people want to watch. At the moment, it's a very, very up and down defensive game. It's not the first time Campese has had the Lions in his crosshairs over the last few days. After Farrell's side's opening defeat by Argentina in Dublin last week, the 62-year-old tore individual Lions apart in a withering assessment. In a no-holds-barred column, Campese questioned the physicality, tactical nous and positional selections of Farrell's side, saying bluntly in his Planet Rugby column: 'If they perform like they did in Dublin during the Test series, they'll be toast. Down Under.' 'I'd go so far as to say they'll lose 30 unless they can fix a few things and fix them quickly.' He also issued a stark warning that unless the Lions rediscover that fire, they will be blown away in Australia: 'Wearing the Lions shirt carries with it a weight of expectation. Those challenges were not met on Friday night. The Lions begin their 2025 tour of Australia on Saturday against Western Force, with the first Test against the Wallabies taking place on July 19 at Suncorp Stadium in Brisbane.

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