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**Name**

Mike Catt MBE

**Topics and Title**

Former England Rugby International

**Background History**

Mike Catt MBE has made a striking contribution as a play-maker for his club and country, including a crucial role in winning the 2003 Rugby World Cup.

Thirteen years after his debut as a replacement for Rob Andrew – now the RFU's Director of Elite Rugby – Catt is going strong after gaining a new lease of life at London Irish, whom he has in turn reinvigorated alongside Brian Smith.

South African-born, he went to Grey Junior and High School and represented Eastern Province, but has played his senior rugby in England. He holds a British passport as his mother Anne was born in the Home Counties.

He joined Bath in 1992 as understudy to Stuart Barnes and stayed at the Recreation Ground for 12 years. He had a testimonial year with Bath in 2004 and joined London Irish for the 04/05 season after considering offers to play in Japan, being named Guinness Premiership Player of the Season for 2005/6.

Mike has had a roller-coaster ride around the England backline, playing at full back, fly half and centre.

Playing mainly at full back, he was part of England's 1995 Grand Slam winning side, and played in the 1995 Rugby World Cup.

While touring Argentina with England Mike was called up as an injury replacement for the 1997 British Lions tour to South Africa and played in the final test.

In 2000, with the retirement of Will Carling and Jeremy Guscott after the 1999 RWC, his career was revived when he stepped into midfield. Acting as an inside centre, with Jonny Wilkinson at No 10, his kicking and distribution contributed to England's high try count.

In the 2003 RWC quarter final against Wales he took second half command of the game to see England through after coming on as a replacement and stayed at centre in place of the injured Mike Tindall for the semi final against France.

Mike led the side against France and Wales in this year's RBS 6 Nations after Head Coach Brian Ashton turned to a player he coached at club level to replace the concussed Phil Vickery.

After suffering a hamstring injury at the Millennium Stadium he did not play again for the rest of the season but joined the RWC training squad for their camp in Portugal and was selected as captain against France at Twickenham in August.

In the recent 2007 Rugby World Cup, incredibly Mike's FOURTH World Cup, he played in 5 of the 7 matches including the Quarter-final, semi-final and Final. Along with Wilkinson he was credited with turning around England's fortunes and helping them get to the Final.