

# Olympic solidarity courses

## National basketball course in Zimbabwe

*Location:* Salisbury.

*Date:* from 15th-28th August 1981.

*Participants:* 25 men and women, for the most part school teachers.

*Staff:* Victor Harold Ambler (GBR), lecturer at the University of Exeter, author of three coaching books and a national trainer since 1970. Peter Van der Willige (HOL), international referee since 1972, referee at the Olympic Games in Moscow in 1980, member of the technical committee of the FIBA in charge of rule modifications.

*Objective:* To refresh and improve knowledge to the best coaches and most experienced referees. For a long time Zimbabwe has been isolated from the international world of basketball, and a serious up-dating is necessary.

*Programme:* At the first practical session, Mr. Ambler noted a basic lack of knowledge, a total absence of tactics, a practically non-existent system, and very little movement of the players. Thus, for the duration of the course, he attempted to rectify these deficiencies. He stressed the effectiveness of rigorously studied moves and the importance of style. He had the participants work on throwing, dribbling and passing the ball, and moving quickly. Because of the varied levels of experience, the participants were conscious of their weaknesses and very interested in attaining skills of an international level.

Mr. Willige was in charge of explaining the rules and their interpretations. With his friendly and disarming manner, he immediately encouraged an open and sympathetic environment in which those less experienced did not feel foolish by asking questions. The sessions were therefore very animated and the course on the whole was particularly successful. The staff was pleased with the progress of the participants, while offering the following advice: a) the relation between schools and the national basketball federations needs to be improved, with, if necessary, the support of the Ministry of Education, b) a national team should be organised, and c) priority should be given to the making of qualified national coaches.

In effect, there is a great deal of young talent and it would be a shame to neglect this. Slow development is a short-lived obstacle, and has already been partly overcome. Players for the future exist and that is the important point.