

ACCOMMODATING RACE TO PLAY THE GAME: SOUTH AFRICA'S READMISSION TO INTERNATIONAL SPORT

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In June 1991 the South African government repealed a block of apartheid statutes including the Group Areas Act and the Population Registration Act. The following month the International Olympic Committee (IOC) restored the Republic's membership of the Olympic movement and subsequently invited South Africa to participate at Barcelona. It will be the country's first Olympic Games since Rome in 1960. The International Cricket Council (ICC) also welcomed the Republic back into the world cricket fraternity; four months later South Africa toured India playing its first official international cricket match since 1970.

The liberation movement, while initially uncertain and critical of what it deemed premature readmission, broadly agreed with the assumption that sport should assist national reconciliation. Former supporters of the boycott began to speak a radically conciliatory language: the 'new' South Africa would be founded on sport.

This article evaluates the sports boycott and its lifting. The boycott achieved its logical objective by forcing black and white sportspersons to negotiate, but negotiations have not achieved anticipated results: South African sport remains racially segregated. The multi-racial movement¹ out-manoeuvred the non-racial movement which was let down by the African National Congress (ANC), manipulated and threatened by international administrators, and ignored or dismissed by foreign governments, including Australia.

Apartheid Sports Policy: From Segregation to 'Autonomy'

Specific legislation never enforced segregation in South African sport. Segregation was the result of racial ideology and general legislation which reinforced that ideology. In practice, this was known simply as 'the South African way of life'. Mixed club sport was technically legal and in one case even practiced: mixed sport could be played at private facilities providing no amenities were shared, no spectators attended, and players did not socialise after the game!²

Officially, eugenicist principles supplied the theoretical justification for segregation. De Wet Nel, the Minister for Bantu Administration and Development, declared:

I am against mixed sport meetings in principle . . . there is sufficient evidence to prove that such a policy would lead to the most distasteful racial tensions. It is senseless injudiciousness to encourage such a thing.³

Other ministers echoed this sentiment: racial mixing promoted conflict.⁴ In the post World War II climate of national-racial struggles including decolonisation, and the discrediting of 'scientific' racism, the dominant ideology of race contracted. Simultaneously, the ideology of sport strengthened. Around the world, blacks and whites began breaking the old taboo by playing together. Sport appeared to negate racism that persisted in other areas. The exception was South Africa: apartheid prohibited all forms of racial mixing. International sports federations responded in the 1960s by boycotting the Republic. Their sole objective was to *integrate sport*.

Isolation and ostracism concerned the apartheid state. The secret Afrikaner society, the Broederbond, said that international sporting ties ... have serious implications at this critical stage for our country, regarding international trade, military relationships and armaments and strategic industrial development'.⁵ The Minister for Sport, Piet

Koornhof, said that 'play and sport are strong enough to cause political and economic relations to flourish or collapse'.⁶

A profound ideological turning point occurred in South Africa in the mid-1970s. Rather than portraying mixed sport as synonymous with racial conflict, the state claimed that it would ease racial conflict. After the Soweto riots in 1976, the Broederbond said that:

The recent drastic changes in the internal security situation makes the promotion of internal peace and good relations between whites and non-whites essential. The policy change is seen as an important step to prevent or decrease tension and promote goodwill among large sections of the population.⁷

The dominant paradigm of sport - the ideology and discourse that sport is cohesive, integrative and educative, and separate from the harsh stresses and strains of life - was seeping into South Africa.

The government's 'autonomous sports policy', adopted in 1979, marked this ideological turning point. 'Autonomous sport' referred to the right of sports organisations to administer their affairs independent of the government.⁸ Precisely as the government accepted the dominant ideology of sport, the focus of the boycott shifted from apartheid sport to apartheid per se. The liberation movement reanalysed sport and showed the incongruity of autonomous sport under apartheid. White South Africans screamed foul and claimed that the 'goalposts had been shifted'. But while apartheid remained, so too did the boycott. (Of course, autonomous sport did not alter the 'South African way of life'; it did not deracialise, liberalise or democratise sport - sportspersons were as wedded to apartheid as everyone else. Autonomy actually imposed a rigid racial structure on club sport⁹ that is only being dismantled now.)

The Non-Racial Sports Movement: Building Post-Apartheid South Africa

During the 1980s State President P W Botha partially deracialised both the state and society. His objective was to modify apartheid rather

than dismantle it, and his policies met increased resistance. In sport, the non-racial movement followed a strict policy of non-collaboration while the multi-racial movement turned to rebel sport to supply international competition. Tensions within the non-racial movement in the late 1980s led to the formation of the National Sports Congress (NSC). The NSC abandoned non-collaboration and in 1990 it forced the multi-racial movement to cease rebel sport and enter negotiations to unify and integrate sport according to non-racial principles.

Non-collaboration was the foundation of apartheid resistance for most of the 1980s. The logic of non-collaboration is to exploit the morality of authority and shame a ruling class or group into granting concessions. For example, the objective of the sports boycott in the 1960s was to embarrass whites who professed to be civilized and Christian but who refused to play sport with blacks. Old Testament scriptures, 'commonsense' and 'science' (including eugenics) justified racial segregation, but even they could not sustain the naked and gross inequalities of apartheid. For all its post hoc rationalisation and victim blaming, apartheid still contradicted white perceptions of themselves as civilized Christians and made them susceptible to non-collaboration. Indeed the government's policy of 'autonomous' sport suggested that non-collaboration did indeed work.

Non-collaboration posed two major problems. First, it became a principle rather than a strategy and limited the resistance movements' flexibility. Second, strategy reflects values. The cosmology of apartheid traps people in a predicament that defines their values as the opposite of their existential anguish - a negation of the conditions they hold responsible for their plight. 'Democracy and 'non-racialism' are the opposites of racial oppression; 'socialism' is a panacea for exploitation and poverty. Non-collaboration negated the state and provided a psychological escape from helplessness - but it neither transformed the state nor empowered the victims.

The South African Council on Sport (SACOS - the sports wing of the liberation movement until displaced by the NSC) rigorously enforced non-collaboration. Initially, SACOS was 'a pressure group' that lobbied for non-racialism and merit selection.¹⁰ Cricket, darts, rugby and table tennis affiliates even began 'unity talks' with white administrators to normalise sport. Non-collaboration quickly supplanted negotiation. Genuine unity and non-racialism were an anathema to the government and whites. In 1976 the (non-racial) Cricket Board of Control (SACBOC) agreed to merge with the (African) Cricket Board and the (white) Cricket Association and form the (multi-racial) Cricket Union (SACU). The latter promised equal opportunities and merit selection but shied from integration at club level - partly because of its own racial ideology and partly under pressure from the government. Some former SACBOC clubs defected from SACU and reaffiliated to SACOS as the Cricket Board (SACB). 'Unity talks' also collapsed in darts, rugby, table tennis and weightlifting and bodybuilding. It was a bitter lesson for SACOS.

SACOS then passed the Double Standards Resolution to rid the organisation of 'corrupt and self-seeking persons'. It forced members to sever all ties with government recognised *sporting bodies*.¹¹ SACOS also reanalysed South African sport and concluded that relations in sport are inextricably tied to the totality of political and economic relations; sport would not be free of discrimination until the symptoms of the apartheid disease had been eradicated. Blacks would suffer inequities in sport while they suffered mass unemployment and poor living conditions, inadequate health services and transport, housing shortages, inferior education, subsistence wages and oppression. The slogan 'no normal sport in an abnormal society' encapsulated this analysis.

SACOS quickly extended non-collaboration into other terrains. In 1979 it applied the Double Standards Resolution to people working in government institutions administering black affairs because those bodies reinforced racism. SACOS demanded that its members boycott

the permit system (sportspeople could apply to the Department of Sport for a permit to compete in the 'group areas' of other races), private schools, international status hotels and sports facilities at mixed universities. People who played sport under the permit system facilitated their own humiliation.¹²

Non-collaboration restricted SACOS's constituency to a minority black middle-class and prevented its growth in the townships. Its leadership comprised mainly propertied and salaried groups of the black, non-African, middle-class - doctors, engineers, teachers, insurance brokers, lawyers and shopkeepers. SACOS's members come mainly from skilled factions of the non-African working class. Most Africans either play no sport or multi-racial sport. The boycott of the permit system, for example, did not consider the absence of infrastructure in the townships. Most Africans simply do not have the mobility to play sport outside the townships. SACOS thus became increasingly sectarian; a principled organisation without a mass base.

Nor did non-collaboration empower SACOS. It can only achieve incremental and conservative change or negotiation. It cannot alter the balance of power by forcing the ruling classes or groups to surrender or capitulate.

By the last quarter of 1986 the state had regained control of those townships from which it had been evicted during the 1984-85 insurrection. (The Security Forces called them 'oilspots'.) Over the following two years the state immobilised black resistance. Critics within the movement argued that non-collaboration had become an inviolable principle. They advocated qualified participation in state institutions as a strategy to transform them into instruments of people's power. The same debate raged in SACOS.

Some affiliates criticised SACOS's policies. Its refusal to affiliate or even identify with township organisations, its uncompromising ideological grip on sport, its policy of non-collaboration, and its 'infantile malady of ultra-left rhetoric' isolated SACOS. Many non-racial

sportspersons¹³ chided the Double Standards Resolution as it related to multi-racial private schools. They wanted to send their children to desegregated private schools to escape the perpetual crisis in black education. SACOS rejected them as collaborators.¹⁴ It was a petulant label.

In the last quarter of 1989 major SACOS affiliates including cricket, rugby, soccer and table tennis defected to the NSC (officially launched in June 1990 as the National and Olympic Sports Congress - NOSC). SACOS declared the NSC a rival organisation and relations between the two deteriorated.

NOSC regards unity in sport and the break up of apartheid as inseparable and self-reinforcing processes. According to the NSC's Chairman Krish Naidoo, 'the normalisation of sport can only take place at the same time as the destruction of apartheid'.¹⁵ Social transformation will be achieved by mass mobilisation and organisation and the transformation of institutions that produce and reproduce racism. Every deracialised democratic institution is a victory for non-racialism and every victory, no matter how small, contributes to the cumulative building of post-apartheid society.¹⁶

Multi-racial sport ignored the NSC's overtures. In July 1989 the NSC announced a programme of action against the forthcoming English rebel cricket tour to force multi-racial sport to the negotiating table. SACU had organised six successful rebel tours under SACOS's threats of mass protests. Ali Bacher, the Managing Director of SACU, expressed confidence that State President F W de Klerk's reforms would 'divert the attention of protesters away from the tour' and that 'commonsense' would prevail.¹⁷ It is a reminder of his reality and his ignorance of the changes in the non-racial sports movement. While SACOS lacked the relations with township organisations to ensure mass action, the NSC used its links to co-ordinate mass demonstrations and protests.

The English tour ended after just three weeks. The adverse publicity it generated brought intense pressure to bear on SACU. The

recently unbanned ANC mediated a compromise between SACU and the NSC: SACU agreed to cancel the second 'Test' and three one day games; the NSC sanctioned four one day matches. Geoff Dakin, the President of SACU, conceded that 'in the present political climate, tours are counter productive to the medium and long term aims of cricket and to the wider interests of South Africa as a whole'.¹⁸ The government welcomed the cancellation despite praising the tour just three months earlier. By February 1990 conditions had changed. The government wanted a stable political climate before releasing Nelson Mandela. Moreover, the demonstrations and violence that followed the tour received more international publicity than de Klerk's reforms.

NOSC embarked on its next strategy - to unite each code under one controlling body. This meant negotiations, or 'unity talks', between multi-racial and non-racial associations.

The Moratorium and the Politics of Hope and Optimism

The NSC imposed a precondition on negotiations - a moratorium on all tours. Multi-racial sport accepted without demur. While it had little option after the collapse of rebel sport, it was not totally demoralised. Political liberalisation, deracialisation, official talks between the government and the ANC, and the latter's suspension of its armed struggle, generated immense optimism that the country would be welcomed back, *without qualification*, into international sport. This optimism proved well founded.

The prospect of an unqualified return to international sport paradoxically helped the moratorium: it served as a light at the end of the tunnel and rendered the moratorium palatable. As former Springbok rugby player Morne du Plessis said, it is 'a small price to pay considering the medium to long term benefits. It will be seen as an act of good faith ... [and] could speed up the return of Springbok rugby from the international wilderness'.¹⁹ Advocates of a selective boycott had been

arguing this for some time: the targets of boycotts will only abide by them if they are rewarded.

The IOC and the Association of National Olympic Committees of Africa (ANOCA) also promoted optimism. IOC President Juan Antonio Samaranch discussed the Republic's position with Johan du Plessis, President of the multi-racial South African National Olympic Committee (SANOC). Sam Ramsamy (the Executive Director of the exiled South African Non-Racial Olympic Committee [SAN-ROC], an IOC adviser, and the nemesis of multi-racial sport), ended 18 years of exile and returned home at ANOCA's behest in August 1990. His mission was to discuss the unification process with multi-racial and non-racial administrators.

SACU agreed to the moratorium in June 1990. With Steve Tshwete (the ANC's spokesperson on sport) mediating, SACB and SACU amalgamated as the United Cricket Board of South Africa (UCBSA) in June 1991 - the first sport to achieve 'unity'. Most other codes followed suit over the following twelve months. (If negotiations between SACU and SACB were satisfactory, in most cases they were a sham - especially at regional level.)²⁰ The moratorium and negotiations were victories for non-racialism. But the international community's unilateral actions destroyed all prospects for genuine unity.

International Readmission: 'Sport's Triumph'

International federations claimed that the boycott had worked: sport had triumphed over racism. Their blind desperation to readmit the Republic, despite developments within the country, regardless of the status of negotiations, and after more than two decades of isolation, was startling. With foreign governments they foisted their solutions on NOSC. NOSC broke the non-collaborationist deadlock and forced multi-racial sport to enter negotiations, but it proved powerless in even slowing premature readmission. Ironically, NOSC's own strategies compounded its ineffectiveness.

Sharp differences of opinion between international sports federations and NOSC emerged over the timing of South Africa's readmission. This developed into a struggle between the IOC, ANOCA and NOSC. ANOCA President Jean-Claude Ganga summed up the general view of the international community in November 1990: the boycott would only be lifted after all sports had united and after the abolition of all forms of apartheid. The conference communique rejected a selective boycott: it is not possible to have 'a fully integrated sporting haven of friendship in an apartheid state'.²¹

NOSC rejected this position. It wanted to reconcile and negotiate with multi-racial sport to build a post-apartheid society. In August 1990 Krish Naidoo rebuffed the logic of boycotting unified codes: individual sports would not have 'to wait for every nut, bolt and screw of apartheid to be removed' before they competed abroad. The prerequisites for international participation, he said, were evidence of the irreversibility of political change, unity and development programmes to correct racial inequities.²² Mluleki George, the President of NOSC, claimed:

We never demanded the eradication of apartheid as a precondition although that is what we obviously all strive for. When we perceive change towards a non-racial society in this country to be irreversible, we will gladly ... reintroduce international contact.

He appealed to multi-racial sport to distinguish between Africa's uncompromising position and NOSC's message of reconciliation.²³

At a conference of the International Campaign Against Apartheid Sport in September 1990, Samaranch unilaterally announced that the IOC would invite South Africa to Barcelona if there was a political solution to apartheid.²⁴ The conference communique did not refer to Samaranch's statement²⁵ (which most observers dismissed as ill-considered) and ANOCA ignored it. The IOC, however, pre-empted ANOCA's initiatives.

In November, ANOCA appointed a Committee of Eight (later 10), comprising representatives from SAN-ROC, NOSC, SACOS, SANOC and the Confederation of South African Sport (COSAS), to co-ordinate the integration of sport and to establish a single national Olympic committee. The Committee was instructed to present ANOCA with a progress report in April 1991. ANOCA would then advise the IOC of the merits of sending a delegation to the Republic. (Although ANOCA foisted the Committee of 10 on South African sport without debate or consultation and stunned everyone,²⁶ it was not inconsistent with negotiations.) But the IOC pre-empted ANOCA in December 1990 with its announcement that a delegation would visit South Africa the following March, in recognition of the gathering pace of unification. (Only soccer and cricket had then progressed beyond exploratory unity talks.)

The Committee of 10 subsequently reported to ANOCA in Gaborone, Botswana, early in March 1991 - one month before the original schedule. In Gaborone ANOCA again foisted its agenda on the Republic by reconstituting the Committee of 10 as the Interim National Olympic Committee of South Africa (INOCSA). Ganga also announced that the moratorium would be lifted with the repeal of the Population Registration Act.

Once the legislation goes there is no need for a moratorium. We cannot remove apartheid from the minds of men, but what we have objected to is its presence in the laws of the country.²⁷

Ganga reversed tack. He now implied that havens of sporting friendship in racist societies are indeed feasible. This had been multi-racial sport's position for over a decade.

What caused Ganga to change his political tune? Three sets of conditions explain the shift: the commercialisation of sport, economic crisis in Africa, and naked ambition. English entrepreneur Don Bailey summed up the general perception of the Republic's financial worth to international sport when he said cricket 'needs' South Africa: 'A lot of

people would make an effort to see them - I wouldn't get out of bed to watch India, Pakistan or Sri Lanka play against a county - but the Springboks would fill grounds everywhere'.²⁸ The International Amateur Athletics Federation (IAAF) calculated that South Africa's presence at the 1991 World Athletics championships in Tokyo would have generated an extra US\$10 million.²⁹ India invited UCBSA to play in November 1991 for purely commercial reasons after Pakistan cancelled its proposed visit because of threats by anti-Muslim Hindus.

Economic crisis weakened Africa's resolve to maintain the boycott. African states perceive South Africa as the continent's saviour amid decreasing per capita incomes and savings, and increasing illiteracy, mortality, malnutrition and debt. African sports administrators regard the Republic as a proverbial treasure chest of money, resources and expertise. They believe that its expertise in coaching, marketing and promoting sport can somehow benefit the whole continent. An official of the African Amateur Athletics Confederation (AAAC) believed that South African television would introduce African athletes to the entire world. The same official said that 'political freedom is just a term'.³⁰

The two leading players involved in the race to readmit the Republic, Juan Antonio Samaranch and IAAF President Primo Nebiolo, were motivated by personal ambition. A former fascist parliamentarian, Minister for Sport and member of the Barcelona City Council in General Franco's totalitarian police state, Samaranch worked desperately to ensure South Africa's presence at Barcelona. It seems that he wants the first 'complete' Olympic Games in his home city to ensure his nomination for the Nobel Peace Prize. This would be awarded for bringing the world together in a festival of goodwill and friendly competition.³¹ Coincidentally, it also would 'prove' the cohesive and integrative power of sport. Samaranch's efforts have not gone unnoticed. King Juan Carlos of Spain recently made him a Marquis for his 'dedication to ... friendship between peoples'.

No individual better epitomises naked ambition in sport than Nebiolo. Athletics is the Olympic movement's premier sport but to Nebiolo's chagrin he was not a member of the IOC. Nebiolo thus sought to upstage Samaranch by including South Africa in international competition before Barcelona. He imposed himself on, and meddled in, the unity process in athletics by insisting that the SACOS-affiliated Athletics Board and the NOSC-affiliated Athletics Congress amalgamated with the multi-racial Athletics Union in an interim structure - the Athletics Association (SAAAA). He foisted amendments on SAAAA's draft constitution; he instructed it to apply to the IAAF for affiliation under threat of reviewing the multi-racial Union's suspension; and he invited SAAAA to compete in the World Championships in Tokyo before it had been officially constituted and before the IAAF Congress had discussed the issue. When SAAAA voted against competing in Tokyo, Nebiolo tried to bribe it with 'development aid' worth R2 million and then threatening to isolate the Republic 'for a very long time'. Without debate or consultation Nebiolo granted SAAAA provisional membership of the IAAF and the AAAC, and permission to compete anywhere in Africa including the All-Africa Games in Cairo.³² Nebiolo had no authority to invite South Africa to Cairo. The Supreme Council of Sport for Africa (the sporting arm of the Organisation of African Unity - OAU) hosts the All- Africa Games; South Africa is not a member of the OAU. When SAAAA did not participate at Tokyo and when it became evident that it would not be invited to Cairo, IAAF and AAAC announced that they would host the African Unity Games in Dakar (Senegal) and Germiston (South Africa) over two successive weekends in October 1991. NOSC, the ANC and most African states rejected the Games which were cancelled.

The Union and Congress officially amalgamated (for the third time!) as Athletics South Africa (ASA) in February 1992. Unlike the earlier 'births', Nebiolo demanded complete unity with the Athletics Board before IAAF recognised ASA. However, in March 1992

Samaranch welcomed Nebiolo into the IOC. Just hours later, Nebiolo announced that IAAF would recognise ASA and that South African athletes could compete at Barcelona.³³

These conditions transformed NOSC's relations with the international community from a struggle over the blanket boycott to one over premature readmission. Ironically, NOSC's own strategies of reconciliation and negotiation had initially fuelled the shift in international perceptions. NOSC steadfastly maintained that it would decide when the Republic returned to international sport.³⁴ This was in vain. Ganga threatened the entire non-racial movement that it would 'miss the train' if it obstructed the process.³⁵ Democracy, he said, 'has limits': international sport would not wait three or four years while people consulted.³⁶

An IOC delegation visited South Africa in March 1991. It granted INOCSA conditional recognition and said that South Africa would be invited to Barcelona upon the *repeal of apartheid*.³⁷ Keba Mbaye, who led the delegation, said that the IOC would formulate its own position as to *when* this had occurred but he stressed that the issue of political rights was not, and never was, on the IOC's agenda: democracy is desirable but it is not our role to insist on a universal franchise.³⁸ In his official report Mbaye wrote:

We think the difference between South Africa and other countries which are not democratic is that there is racist legislation in South Africa ... If we remove all this legislation now, what is left? There is perhaps a country where not everyone has what they want, where democracy is not total. But there are a lot of countries like this in the world.³⁹

It is a classic example of deflection theory that attempts to trivialise apartheid - but it fits neatly in the apologetic, authoritarian, undemocratic, parochial, and apolitical world of sport.

The IOC restored South Africa's membership on 9 July 1991. INOCSA travelled to Lausanne to give Samaranch a progress report only

to be told that it was now a full member. The IOC privately warned stunned NOSC officials that if they rejected the offer, membership could be conferred on SANOC.⁴⁰ (SACOS refused to accompany the INOCSA delegation.) Readmission violated the IOC's charter. NOCSA ('Interim' was deleted) did not fulfil the criterion that a National Olympic Committee represent five national controlling bodies in Olympic codes. Moreover, the Republic of South Africa Constitution Act of 1983 and gross inequalities in state expenditure mean that black sportspersons still suffer overt discrimination. When reminded of these Samaranch replied, 'maybe the conditions have not been fully complied with today, at this time. But I'm sure they will be in time for the Barcelona Olympics'.⁴¹ It was another shameful moment in the IOC's tarnished history.

The discourse of the dominant paradigm of sport littered the discourse of readmission. When SACOS complained to an IAAF delegation about the lack of facilities in the townships, Lamine Diack, an IAAF Vice-President, retorted 'you need to put athletics first and work together'. Hassan Agabani from Sudan echoed Diack: there are no facilities in Sudan but we have produced two World Cup Champions!⁴² The boycott had met its objective: the government no longer interfered in sport and sport had triumphed over racism. Immediately de Klerk promised to repeal apartheid legislation, international sport rejected all 'political' arguments.

Most international federations paid scant attention to the details of the unity process. The International Tennis Federation (ITF) approved Tennis South Africa's membership before the SACOS-affiliated Tennis Association had even voted on whether to amalgamate with the multi-racial Tennis Union and the NOSC-affiliated Tennis Federation. According to ITF President Brian Tobin, *two out of three is good enough*.⁴³

NOSC failed to take a decisive stand. Instead it diluted its objectives. After the IOC unilaterally readmitted South Africa, NOSC introduced a select moratorium and imposed 'stringent preconditions'

on international participation including unity and a township development programme in each code.⁴⁴ It was adamant that no applications to compete internationally would be considered until 1992. Yet, in October 1991 it accepted the IOC's invitation to Barcelona and introduced an 'event-by-event' moratorium in several codes, including tennis that had not amalgamated and had not even appointed a co-ordinator for its township programme.⁴⁵ The following month it sanctioned two Association of Tennis Professionals' tournaments in Johannesburg.

NOSC lost the will to enforce the moratorium. The multi-racial Gymnastics Union (SAAGU) flagrantly violated the moratorium and competed in the World Championships in the US in September 1991. SAAGU had not even approached the South African Senior Schools Sports Association (which co-ordinates non-racial gymnastics) let alone begun negotiations. SAAGU claims to have had a programme in place since 1983 to encourage and assist black gymnasts. In those eight years it has not produced a single black national champion. A deafening silence from NOSC greeted the all-white gymnastic team as it marched in the opening ceremony under the apartheid flag. NOSC has tried to hide behind semantics and the threat of mass action: in accepting membership of the IOC, it drew a distinction between *membership and participation*; and it continues to threaten mass action, falsely assuming that boycotts can be turned on and off like taps.

NOSC sought leadership and guidance from both the ANC and Sam Ramsamy.⁴⁶ The ANC has not even debated, let alone adopted, a sports policy.⁴⁷ Ironically, the ANC sought NOSC's guidance! Mandela and Tshwete lobbied the ICC to invite UCBSA to participate in the 1992 World Cup. Mandela wrote to the ICC claiming that South Africa's presence 'will enhance the process of unity in sport as well as the spirit of national reconciliation'.⁴⁸ The argument that an all-white cricket team can reconcile South Africa is absurd. It was even more preposterous

given that he wrote to the ICC before a single ball had been bowled in UCBSA's domestic competition.

Ramsamy is a sports teacher, administrator and diplomat. The skills he learned in exile while co-ordinating the boycott did not equip him to lead the politically robust internal non-racial movement. Ramsamy was *appointed* to Chair the Committee of 10 (and ultimately NOCSA) by his friend and the President of the Southern African Olympic Confederation and Executive Member of ANOCA, Tommy Sithole.⁴⁹ By the end of 1991 he had built only a pitifully weak constituency - a partially amalgamated swimming organisation that even the International Swimming Federation initially refused to recognise.⁵⁰ His reaction to SAAGU's violation of the moratorium - 'there is a certain amount of sympathy for their position ... this is their only chance to qualify for the Olympics'⁵¹ - suggests he has no control over events.

NOSC broke the non-collaborationist deadlock but it lost the initiative to a blatantly opportunist and grossly insensitive international community.

Accommodating Race to Play the Game

The moratorium has been lifted on most codes; international federations are readmitting and admitting South African affiliates; and South African sport has been totally depoliticised. However, evaluation of sport in the Republic does not end with these facts: are white South Africans genuinely committed to non-racial sport or are they simply accommodating a select group of blacks to create the impression that they have 'normalised' race relations?

Nineteenth and twentieth century South Africa was built on the idea of white racial superiority. That idea persists. Pierre Bourdieu argues that the absorption of new ideologies requires them to be 'placed beyond the grasp of consciousness' where they 'cannot be touched by voluntary deliberate transformation, cannot even be made explicit'.⁵² Racial awareness pervades South African society and is simply too strong

for the absorption of non-racialism. Individual whites do accept that racism is immoral: individuals can grow, reflect and attain wisdom, and they can adopt alternate lifestyles and new philosophies. This is not true of whole societies. The ruling National Party has not adopted a new ideology; it is not searching for solutions to resolve artificial racial differences. It is looking for political, economic and social *formulas* that will *preserve and accommodate differences: neither racial assimilation nor integration are on the agenda*.⁵³ De Klerk is teaching whites that preservation of their doctrines, power and status requires a policy that will accommodate just enough blacks to satisfy the international community's racial conscience.

Accommodationists are masters at presenting themselves as pictures of reasonableness and at appearing to have shed their prejudices. Many even express sympathy with black frustration, alienation and deprivation. Accommodationists insist that they are open to change, that they want change, that they reject overt racism, and that they support black aspirations. They even propose solutions, such as repealing discriminatory laws and improving education opportunities. Sadly, it is a massive sham - partly because they cannot perceive it as such.

No single event illustrates this more graphically than the outrage at NOCSA's decision to compete in Barcelona under a 'neutral' flag, anthem and emblem. Louis Pienaar, the Minister for National Education (and responsible for sports administration), described the decision as 'a slap in the face of all South Africans'. He threatened to withhold funds from NOCSA.⁵⁴ De Klerk was equally vehement and said that the Springbok was 'worn with pride' by all South Africans and 'had nothing to do with apartheid'.⁵⁵ Many letters in the mainstream press endorsed de Klerk's wisdom that 'the Springbok was used for many years before apartheid'!⁵⁶ The Citizen blustered 'capitulation': 'This country is South Africa - and its official symbols must be honoured. ... our sports administrators have cravenly capitulated to the ANC and must now dance to its tune. Shame on them'.⁵⁷ The leader of the ultra-right

Herstigste Nasionale Party, Jaap Marais, accused Ramsamy of treating the national flag with contempt in contravention of the constitution and instructed police to investigate criminal charges. Students from the University of Stellenbosch held a protest march and called for the retention of the Springbok.⁵⁸ In a poll conducted by the *Sunday Times*, 7,542 readers said that they would rather South Africa did not go to Barcelona if it had to compete under NOCSA's flag and anthem. Only 1,553 readers supported the new symbols.⁵⁹

No symbol captures better the racial hatred of apartheid than the Springbok. As Prime Minister Vorster said in 1971:

The Springbok rugby team is not representative of the whole of South Africa. It has never been that. It has never claimed to be representative of the whole of South Africa. It is representative of the whites of South Africa. ... invitations sent here in the past were not addressed to the rugby players of South Africa. They were addressed to the White South African Rugby Board, which consists of Whites only, and to which the Coloured people and the Bantu have never belonged.⁶⁰

While accommodationists now accept blacks as representatives of the nation (approximately 100 have achieved national honours since the late 1970s), the Springbok emblem remains a symbol of white power and authority. The hysterical white reaction over a sporting symbol bodes an ill wind for future negotiations over more substantial issues - such as the official language and the redistribution of land.

At best, accommodationists' solutions focus on equal access rather than equal results. Tawney captures the distinction perfectly when he describes an equal opportunity solution as 'the impertinent courtesy of an invitation offered to unwelcome guests in the certainty that circumstances will prevent them from accepting'.⁶¹ Equal opportunity solutions neither address the historical legacy of discrimination nor redistribute power, wealth or prestige.

Merit selection in sport is a classic example of an equal access solution. The mainstream media and the multi-racial fraternity dismissed outright the selection of blacks in the team that played in the 1992 World Cricket Cup. They claimed that there were no black cricketers of standard and insisted on merit selection. They argued that the inclusion of blacks would symbolise tokenism and paternalism - relationships inappropriate in the 'new South Africa. National sides, they said, must be competitive and have the potential to win.⁶² (The inclusion of the 40 year old Coloured and former multi-racial cricketer Omar Henry in the 14 member World Cup squad was gross tokenism. Of course, the token black has been a characteristic of the Republic's teams since the late 1970s).

However, there were over a dozen former non-racial players worthy of selection.⁶³ Some have played provincial or English/Scottish county cricket. No one asked UCBSA to select token or inept players. The country is in transition and its priorities are membership of the international community, nation building and team building: winning is not a priority. South African teams should reflect these conditions. After all, selectors *always* choose teams to reflect specific circumstances. Merit selection is a particularly strange insistence given that racial exclusion was the cause of their banishment. It is little more than a euphemism for 'status quo': white South Africans are not interested in welcoming blacks into the national teams. They want to participate in international sport - but only on their own terms.

Under pressure, UCBSA reluctantly added two former non-racial champions, Yaseen Begg and Faiek Davids, to its 14 member World Cup squad. The Board said that the two would be given many opportunities to 'play their way' into the final squad during pre-Cup matches. Whites greeted the gesture with scorn and contempt⁶⁴ and UCBSA immediately retreated. It stressed that players selected in pre-tournament matches would not be eligible for national honours. UCBSA's insensitivity and incompetence immediately attracted similar

charges of tokenism from SACOS and left it totally isolated.⁶⁵ Neither Begg nor Davids played in the 'warm-up' games.

White sportspersons counter charges of accommodation by pointing to township development programmes which they cite as evidence of their commitment to integration. The programmes show no such thing. Their objective is to create the illusion of harmony while co-opting a carefully selected small group of elite black players and administrators who pose no threat to long term white control of sport.

Cricket provides the best example. SACU/UCBSA has *introduced* over 50,000 black school children to the game since 1987, providing bats, balls, wickets and coaches. It has not, however, provided any permanent infrastructure - there is not a single turf wicket in any of the more than 700 townships. (It is no coincidence that SACU first introduced cricket into 'oilspots' such as Alexandra, Mamelodi and Duncan Village. After the Security Forces 'recaptured' these townships they tried to 'win the hearts and minds' of residents. One element of this strategy was to provide access to recreation and sport. However, sport is a low priority among blacks who need housing, water and electricity, health, educational and transport services, and jobs.) Thus the overwhelming majority of black children introduced to cricket are callously discarded because there are no facilities or structures to enable them to pursue their interests. Only a handful of youths, such as Walter Masemola (who recently trained at the Australian Cricket Academy in Adelaide) have achieved any success beyond the townships. Less than 50 black school teams play against whites in interschool competitions nationwide - just in the Pretoria-Witwatersrand-Vereeniging area there are 764 African schools. The lack of facilities means that these teams must be bused to white areas. In Australia for the 1992 World Cricket Cup, Bacher candidly admitted that South Africa 'cannot pretend to have merit selection until there are equal opportunities to progress in the game. [Township children] ... still feel like orphans because they cannot

reciprocate on a home-and-away basis, which is something that lies at the very heart of cricket'.⁶⁶

Targeting black school children also overlooks other problems such the bias against sport in black schools, the high drop-out rate among black pupils, and the club foundations of South African sport. Sport in African schools is, at best, token and unsystematic. Sport is understandably a low priority amid chronic shortages of text books and stationery, in the absence of libraries, and where computers and other technology are non-existent. In the twelve years since 1980, the matriculation pass rate among Africans has averaged less than 50 per cent per annum. Older staff tend to regard sport as a 'waste of time' and dedicated teachers allocate spare time to extra lessons rather than sport.⁶⁷ A recent report concluded that the lack of educational opportunities meant that 'black youth seek compensatory education rather than recreational outlets in their spare time'.⁶⁸

Nearly two-thirds of Africans leave school after primary education. There are no clubs for those whose interest in cricket may have been kindled. The private club is the foundation of South African sport. It is through membership of private clubs that sportspersons are selected to play for their province and ultimately their country. Private sports clubs worldwide are notorious bastions of white exclusiveness. In Zimbabwe, for example, clubs remain almost exclusively in white hands and have shown no desire to recruit any of the thousands of black school players.

These stark realities led Dr Willie Basson, President of COSAS and a former Executive Member of SACU, to predict the failure of township development programmes.⁶⁹ Of course, Basson fails to recognise that whites do not want thousands of blacks to infuse into sport. At best they seek to co-opt a group that poses no threat to long term white interests and that will engender a positive image of racial interaction.

Early evidence supports this conclusion. Hussein Manack, a former non-racial cricketer, was twice selected as a bowler to represent the amalgamated Transvaal Cricket Board; he was dropped from a losing side without bowling a ball. One correspondent to the press recently reported 'shock' at the 'cavalier way a black opening batsman of undoubted talent ... was treated by two teachers from a white school'. Drafted into a Johannesburg (white) suburbs area team for a cricket week, 'he got one turn to bat - at number nine!'⁷⁰

Depoliticisation stifles critical evaluation. Evidence of the degree of depoliticisation in South Africa comes from the remarkable comment made by Tshwete to Joe French, President of the Australian Rugby Union. French had expressed concern that an adverse result in the March 17 whites-only referendum would disrupt a scheduled Australian rugby tour of the Republic. Tshwete replied, '*the Barcelona Olympics are just around the corner - we can't afford any political nonsense at this stage of the game*'!⁷¹ Depoliticisation reduces social issues, including national team selection, to the attributes of individuals and ignores structural conditions such as race and access to facilities.

There has been a murmuring of discontent. Hussein Manack wrote that 'halfway through our first season as part of UCBSA, it is ... evident that those benefiting from the cricket unity are not ... the black but the white cricketers, the same white cricketers who have always benefited under apartheid'.⁷² However, most non-racial sportspersons are loath to question publicly the headlong rush to international sport or to challenge all-white national teams out of respect to Mandela. Imran Khan, captain of the Pakistan cricket team, made this quite clear when he said that 'people like me' could not question Nelson Mandela's insistence that the international community readmit the Republic.⁷³ Whites are cleverly exploiting black silence to argue that it is 'proof' that all are working together in the 'new' South Africa.

Realists in NOSC such as Krish Mackerdhuji (a Vice- President of both NOSC and UCBSA) say that their strategy is long term.

Mackerdhuj admits that 'there has been and will continue to be opportunism and selfishness'. He draws an accurate comparison with the US in acknowledging that real change will take many generations and that sport will not be an exception. He knows that 'most whites do not accept me as a brother'. He was a victim of white racism as recently as September. The Natal Cricket Union (NCU), an UCBSA-affiliate, held a pre-season function to introduce its new sponsor. It is custom for the most senior elected official to address such gatherings - in this case Mackerdhuj. The NCU, however, invited UCBSA's appointed Manager, Ali Bacher, to speak. At the same event, the NCU presented the official guest, West Indian cricketer Clive Lloyd, with a tie of the 'defunct' whites-only Natal Cricket Association!⁷⁴ Despite such humiliation, Mackerdhuj says that NOSC's strategy of 'encouraging white administrators to take the first tentative steps towards a new society will produce results. One is left wondering whether Mackerdhuj and his colleagues really believe this or if it is an unconscious deflection.

Sport offers an ideal window on the 'new' South Africa and the general process of accommodation. It is a particularly important window because of the characteristics that separate sport from other social practices. Sport is a metaphoric or a symbolic statement of liberation, of how things could be if all people had equal rights and opportunities.⁷⁵ Dale Old Horn, an Indian-American, dramatically illustrates the limitations of this symbolism:

For us a victory in a ... basketball game is a victory over everyday misery, poverty and racism. But it is not a real victory. It doesn't decrease bigotry. It doesn't lessen alcoholism. It doesn't remove one Indian from the welfare rolls or return a single acre of our land. It hasn't led us on to greater things. It gives us pseudo pride.⁷⁶ It is ironic that in South Africa the right-wing should be the first to recognise this. The leader of the Conservative Party in Natal, Carl Werth, dismissed the ICC's inclusion of South Africa in the 1992 World Cup: 'cricket is after all, only a form of recreation which in the general scheme of things is no more important than tiddlywinks or scrabble'.⁷⁷ White South Africans

are belatedly learning what their brethren in other parts of the world discovered over a quarter of a century ago: integrated sport poses no real threat to the racial order.

NOTES

All newspapers cited are published in South Africa unless indicated otherwise.

1. The term multi-racial is a derivative of multi-national. It means any activity in which different racial groups partake together. The emphasis is on *different* and thus it carries negative connotations implying that South Africa is a confederation of different racial groups or nations. In current lexicon, 'establishment sport' has superseded 'multi-racial sport'. However, this glosses over the racial assumptions that still pervade South Africa.
2. The mixed race Aurora Cricket Club complied with these conditions and played in the 'whites-only' Maritzburg Cricket Union between 1973 and 1978 (after which it affiliated to the non-racial Maritzburg District Cricket Union). Christopher Merrett, 'Problems of Black Sport in an Apartheid City' in, J Laband and R Haswell (eds.), *Pietermaritzburg, 1838-1988: A New Portrait of an African City*, (Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press, 1988), p. 248.
3. Cited in, Richard Lapchick, *The Politics of Race and International Sport*, (Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1975), p. 46.
4. See for example the comments by the Minister for the Interior and the Prime Minister, John Vorster. Republic of South Africa (RSA), *House of Assembly Debates*, col. 932 and col. 3961, 1967.
5. Ivor Wilkins and Hans Strydom, *The Super-Afrikaners*, (Johannesburg: Jonathan Ball, 1978), p. 247.
6. RSA, *House of Assembly Debates*, col. 7974, 1977.
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8. For details see, Douglas Booth, 'South Africa's "Autonomous Sport" Strategy: Desegregation Apartheid Style', *Sporting Traditions: Journal of the Australian Society for Sports History*, 6.2, 1990, pp. 156-157.
9. *ibid.*, pp. 174-175.
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11. *ibid.*, pp. 27-28.
12. *ibid.*, pp. 29-30.
13. Natal Council on Sport Executive, 'The Sports Situation', 7 September 1989. Reproduced in, Cheryl Roberts (ed.), *Sport and Transformation*, (Cape Town: Township Publishing Co-operative, 1989), pp. 32-37.
14. Krish Pillay (President National and Olympic Sports Congress Central Natal; and former President Pietermaritzburg Council on sport), interview, 9 September 1991.
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17. Quoted in, Peter Bazalgette, *Innocents Abroad*, BBC television documentary, 1990.

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20. Douglas Booth, "UnityTalks" in South African Sport: Is it Time to End the Boycott?', *The Australian Quarterly*, 62.4, 1990, pp. 386-389.
21. 'It's all or nil for SA sport', *The Sunday Star*, 4 November 1990; and, 'Sports boycott goes on until apartheid ends', *The Citizen*, 5 November 1990.
22. 'Sport doesn't have to wait for politics', *The Daily Mail*, 27 August 1990.
23. Emphasis added in quote. 'NSC the true voice: George', *Sunday Times*, 11 November 1990.
24. 'SA gets invitation to 1992 Olympics', *Business Day*, 5 September 1990.
25. Stockholm Statement Against Apartheid Sport, 6 September 1990. Reproduced in, SACOS, 1991. *Secretarial Presented to the Nineth Biennial General Meeting*, 16-17 March 1991, pp. 78-83.
26. Willie Basson (President COSAS), interview, 6 September 1991; and, Reggie Feldman (Publicity Secretary SACOS), interview, 5 September 1991.
27. 'Full international soccer within months - Bhamjee', *Business Day*, 11 March 1991.
28. 'Sport and South Africa', *Sunday Tribute*, 2 September 1990.
29. 'A soft spot for apartheid sport', *Mayibuye*, November 1991, p. 25.
30. "'SA's future lies in AAAA [sic] hands'", *Eastern Province Herald*, 6 June 1991.
31. Bruce Kidd, 'Sports Boycott Crosses Finish Line', *Southern Africa Report*, 7.1, 1991, pp. 30-31; and, personal correspondence, 14 July 1991. Samaranch was allegedly disappointed at not receiving the Nobel Peace Prize for his organisation of the Seoul Olympics - the largest sports event in history at which competitors from 160 countries participated. Only Albania, Cuba, Ethiopia, Nicaragua, North Korea, Seychelles, and South Africa did not attend.
32. Harry Hendricks (President SAAAB), interview, 18 September 1991. Press reports including 'SA athletics split on Tokyo Games', *City Press*, 26 May 1991; "SA's future lies in AAAA hands'", *Eastern Province Herald*, 6 June 1991; 'SA athletics united by Friday', *The Citizen*, 3 July 1991; 'SAAAB refuses to sign IAAF application', *The Citizen*, 11 July 1991; 'Tokyo ultimatum adds to SA athletics confusion', *Cape Times*, 30 July 1991; and, 'The road to Barcelona passes through Africa', *The Citizen*, 21 August 1991.
33. The Unity Games were held in April 1992.
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35. 'SA sport comes in from the cold', *The Sunday Star*, 10 March 1991.
36. Report of Meeting between the Committee of 10 and ANOCA, Gaborone, 9 March 1991 in, SACOS, *Nineth Biennial General Meeting*, p. 52.
37. Letter, Commission for Apartheid and Olympism to INOCSA, 27 March 1991.
38. 'Barcelona beckons', *City Press*, 31 March 1991.
39. 'Path to Barcelona Olympic Games opens up', *Business Day*, 16 April 1991.
40. Report of the Meeting of NOSC, East London, 13-14 July 1991, p. 2.
41. "'Sure" SA at Barcelona', *The Citizen*, 1 August 1991.
42. 'Fast tracks, fast talkers', *Sunday Times*, 12 May 1991.
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52. Pierre Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of practice*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), p. 94.
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