Sport and Nationalism in Post-Liberation South Africa in the 1990s: Transcendental Euphoria or Nation Building?

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The belief that sport plays a nation building and unifying role in the new South Africa is widespread and largely uncontested. Indeed, contrary views tend to be dismissed as either misguided or even unpatriotic. The orthodox view holds that Nelson Mandela and sport have been the two strongest factors holding South Africa together since 1994. The eminent exiled writer and journalist Donald Woods is typical: “One of the earliest and most dramatic signs of a new feeling of national unity came through sport, especially the three major sports of cricket, rugby and football... sport was proving to be a healing agency in our national life.” Identical sentiments have been voiced in the National Assembly: sport can achieve “a united people working for a common goal,” operating as an “instrument that can unite the nation.” In the case of Australia, it has been possible to argue that “as they are consolidated in commemorative events and national celebrations, sport and sports history become part of an overall process of producing an image of national unity.” This paper examines evidence to interrogate this assumption in the case of South Africa, mainly in the context of its involvement with the Olympic Movement during the 1990s: that is, with the Games held at Barcelona (1992) and Atlanta (1996), with passing reference to the failed 1997 bid by Cape Town for the 2004 gathering. Illustrations are also drawn from other sporting codes where relevant.

The Olympic Games have played a significant role in the political history of South Africa. First, international sport was an early point of weakness for the apartheid regime and the Games, in particular, provided an opportunity for relatively powerless Black African states to pressurize South

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Africa. Espy’s case that “sport had nothing substantively to do with the African position against political conditions in South Africa, but the Olympic Games and sport as a worldwide forum determined Africa’s mode of opposition” is somewhat overstated but makes a valuable point nonetheless. The sports boycott also provided a convenient means for those governments wishing to demonstrate a symbolic opposition to apartheid while maintaining economic relations with Pretoria.

The modus operandi of the South African Olympic and National Games Association (SAONGA) provided a classic example of collusion between the customary attitudes of White national controlling bodies grounded in colonial, segregationist practices and the apartheid policy of the National Party government. The standard response of national bodies was that there were no Black athletes of sufficient ability to compete for South Africa, but that as soon as this situation was rectified they would be included. There were a number of examples to disprove this, most notably in the field of weightlifting where Ron Eland competed for Britain in the late 1940s and Precious McKenzie for Britain and New Zealand in the 1960s and 1970s at Olympic level. Both had held de facto South African records but there was no question of their participation in trials nor, of course, selection for the national team.

Resistance to racism in South African sport and to government policy and apartheid law gave rise to an influential element within the anti-apartheid movement as a whole. The South African Non-Racial Olympic Committee (SANROC) was a powerful icon of the struggle, all the more so from its exile location and in the person of the poet and anti-apartheid sports administrator, Dennis Brutus. The experiences of Brutus contained great symbolism. He was captured by the Portuguese security branch in Mozambique, transferred to the custody of the South African Police and shot in the back in a Johannesburg street when attempting to escape, after trying to leave the country to attend the 1963 International Olympic Committee (IOC) meeting at Baden-Baden. He was subsequently given fifteen months in jail for leaving the country illegally and for an earlier offence involving an interview by a foreign journalist at SAONGA’s offices that broke his banning order. Brutus subsequently spent time in prison on Robben Island and eventually left the country on an exit permit (government-sanctioned exile). SANROC workers and later South African Council on Sport (SACOS) supporters suffered detention without trial, banning, house arrest and exile.

Under the premiership of John Vorster, who assumed office in 1966, a realignment of South African government policy towards the Olympic Games provided the first chink in the granite face of apartheid, presaging the reform movement of the 1970s. It allowed a single, mixed-race team, chosen by an integrated selection committee, wearing the same colours and travelling and competing together under the same flag to compete in the Olympics and Davis, Federation and Canada Cups. It was, however,
made clear that mixed trials were not acceptable and that Black athletes would have to belong to organisations affiliated to White national controlling bodies. Vorster justified his change of mind on the grounds that participation in the Olympics was a matter of foreign policy as much as involvement in sport: “His purpose was to separate the question of international sporting relations from sporting relations within South Africa.” For South Africa in the mid 1960s these were major concessions, but all they achieved was a delay in eventual international isolation.

In spite of the inherent conservatism of the IOC, the Rome Olympics of 1960 were South Africa’s last until 1992. SAONGA named a number of Black athletes in its preliminary squad for the Tokyo Games of 1964 but was excluded because it would not publicly repudiate segregation in the organisation of South African sport, thus infringing the IOC Charter, in particular rules 1 and 24 which outlaw discrimination of any sort and demand resistance to political pressure. A fact-finding team (Killanin, Ademola and Alexander) visited South Africa in September 1967 and its report, in spite of the fact that the IOC required a single, multi-racial national Olympic committee, led to readmission at Grenoble in February 1968 (on the basis of a postal vote, 38 to 27) as long as a mixed team was chosen for the 1968 Games and further steps were employed to eliminate discrimination. Mexico City failed to issue South Africa with an invitation because of the threat of a boycott led by African nations. The IOC backed this up by a vote of 47–14 with two abstentions. South Africa was finally expelled from the IOC in 1970.

The potential of sport to act as a unifying force in post-apartheid South Africa would inevitably depend initially on the way in which the international boycott was lifted. In the opinion of many activists it was removed in an erratic and authoritarian manner that had little consonance with the realities on the ground in South Africa. Dennis Brutus’s appeal of 12 April 1991, “We cannot . . . through indecently hasty desire or an unseemly jockeying for power, abandon our principles now that victory is possible,” predictably proved naively quixotic. What had been at the height of apartheid, from the early 1960s to the Soweto Uprising of 1976, one of the few means (with the help of the exile movement and foreign sympathisers) of opposing the regime from within was appropriated by international diplomatic, economic and sporting interests in collusion with the African National Congress (ANC). Put simply, the boycott was terminated for reasons of commercial interest and political expediency. Lifting it was more about the commercial interests of foreign organisations than the internal non-racial sports movement and the process was shamelessly railroaded by “a blatantly opportunist and grossly insensitive international community.” Foreign interests included those who would use “images of South Africa as an exotic sports-tourism destination.” As Coetzee explains, this was a matter of perceptions of South Africa manipulated by outsiders, not the complex political and social reality of national (re)construction.
Within South Africa, the boycott had been strongly influenced by the ideology of non-collaboration derived from the Non-European Unity Movement (NEUM), which coined the expression, “No normal sport in an abnormal society,” and promoted policies such as the double standards resolution (which required a principled commitment to non-racialism beyond sport), the very bedrock of SACOS. The latter’s influence began to wane in the late 1980s with the rise of the National Sports Congress (NSC), which put a higher premium on practical politics than principled objections. The NSC was in effect an offshoot of the United Democratic Front (UDF, a broad umbrella body for anti-apartheid organisations, which was widely and accurately seen as the internal wing of the ANC), interested in the process of wresting control of the commanding heights of South African sport. Its conditions for the lifting of the boycott were basically four in number: unified national controlling bodies with non-discriminatory constitutions; the removal of apartheid legislation; installation of development programmes; and the replacement of old symbols. The NSC was particularly antagonistic towards the Springbok. But, significantly, the requirements of international federations were less onerous and boiled down to the first two conditions. By the end of 1990, the ANC’s demand was reduced simply to “a single, integrated and non-racial body for each sport” and the declared desire was to convert the blanket boycott into a selective exercise. Nonetheless, in September 1989, the IOC had placed a ban on any athlete competing in South Africa.

This situation was of considerable strategic interest to the ANC. It had shown virtually no concern about sport during its years of proscription and exile and certainly had no policy nor principles in this regard, but now had a useful subordinate ally in the NSC. In October 1989, an article by the pseudonymous Alan Player appeared in the ANC’s official organ, Sechaba, expounding on the need for sports organisations to become more involved in community politics, providing a channel for political activism, well over a decade after SACOS had done exactly that. In October 1988, just two months after four Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK) soldiers had detonated a bomb killing two and injuring thirty just outside Ellis Park rugby stadium in Johannesburg, an ANC delegation (including future President Thabo Mbeki and future Cabinet Ministers Steve Tshwete and Alfred Nzo) met officials of the White South African Rugby Board (SARB) in Harare and made plans for unification with its non-racial equivalent. The same plans were made for soccer, the prize being ANC support for international readmission.

The ANC made its first major move at the time of Mike Gatting’s mercenary cricket tour of South Africa, raising the issue in England at one of a number of meetings with various prominent South Africans. The ANC promised pressure to end the boycott and re-admit South Africa to international competition as long as the second leg of Gatting’s tour was abandoned. This was just a few months after the ANC had expressed outrage
at the suggestion by Dennis Brutus that it was about to sanction a change in the boycott policy. Kidd describes these agreements as a “tremendous victory for the ANC.” At the point of its unbanning and the beginning of negotiations it was looking for means to placate White fears of change and encourage the idea that there could be compensation for the loss of political and economic power. The issue of international sports links could hardly have been better chosen, as it went to the very heart of the White South African psyche. Politically, ANC involvement was a master stroke, underlined by the supreme irony of appropriation of the hated Springbok symbol, using it to pacify the majority of the White population at the same time as the extreme right wing Afrikaner Weerstands beweging (AWB) railed against the national rugby team, and both its old and new symbols, as alien. This was remarkable in itself, but it should not distract from the fact that it was a party political ploy with national repercussions, not a nation-building exercise, especially since its purpose was to distract Whites from the change happening around them.

The most obvious use of sport as a political vehicle occurred during the 1992 Whites-only referendum on continued negotiations, an outcome of the 1989 General Election whose proceedings had failed to give the National Party a mandate to negotiate with the liberation movement. The question asked, “Do you support continuation of the reform process which the State President began on February 2, 1990 and which is aimed at a new constitution through negotiation?” It was widely assumed that a No vote would usher in a more right wing Conservative Party (CP) government, the CP having become the official opposition in 1989 with 39 seats plus three subsequent by-election victories, the last at Potchefstroom (a 11.2% swing away from the National Party) as late as February 1992. Leaders of sport and business had good reason to fear renewed isolation and threw their considerable weight behind the Yes vote. “The media used rugby, cricket, tennis, boxing, and athletics to make emotional appeals to voters. Indeed, sport and economic issues were the main propaganda-erected pillars on which the ‘Yes’ vote rested, and the C.P. could find no antipode in these fields.” One advertisement supporting the Yes campaign asked a series of ten questions, two of which related to sport: “(2) Are you glad South African teams are participating in international events like World Cup cricket again?” and “(3) Are you looking forward to sporting tours to South Africa like the Wallabies?” Indeed, the referendum was intertwined with matches leading up to the semi-finals of the Cricket World Cup in a remarkably intimate way. Seldom can a sporting occasion have played such a large role in a political process. Yet another advert used a picture of two sets of broken stumps and the caption, “Without reform, South Africa hasn’t got a sporting chance . . . Vote Yes to keep South Africa batting, Vote Yes to keep South Africa in the game.” A No vote, it was suggested, meant a “final innings for South Africa.” An advert on the eve of the referendum on 17 March 1992 showed Jonty Rhodes, the charismatic international cricketer,
and posed the question “imagine how far he would go with a Yes vote.” Another advertisement, aimed at women, argued “You want to see your husband and sons in action on the cricket field, not killed in action on the battlefield.”31 There can be little doubt that the turnout of 86% and a Yes vote of 68.7% overall with only one electoral division voting No (Pietersburg, 56.8%) was due in part to the fact that Whites were led to believe that something that was culturally “theirs” would remain so, as a reward for good behaviour: “The reason why Whites voted yes in the referendum . . . had more to do with support for the cricket team than the abstract notions of power-sharing.”32

The first consequence of the instrumental use of sport was encouragement of the idea of business as usual, the resumption of normality after an unfortunate interlude in which the mistakes of a few politicians had intruded into the supposedly neutral activity of domestic and international sport. South Africa experienced a “celebration of white culture and joy at the return to the international fold.”33 One ANC observer perceptively but idealistically noted that South Africa had not returned to international sport, but was admitted anew under totally different conditions.34 Nevertheless, some Whites were apparently able to persuade themselves that the boycott had been more about envy than political problems.35 In such a context, the unification of sports bodies became in many cases a matter of absorption and the subordination of non-racial bodies to traditional White structures: as Douglas Booth perceptively reads it, multi-racialism won the final battle over non-racialism, a concept that was poorly understood outside South Africa itself. The simple deracialization of sport, which had in fact been entirely possible since the early 1980s under a “reformed” apartheid regime, was now suddenly acceptable.36 Certainly, the intellectually critical voice of SACOS, together with its tough activists, was stilled and marginalised.37 By 1994, the residual influence of SACOS, in Booth’s view a prisoner of history, had disappeared, in particular that peculiar strand of principled, rejectionist and often rigid politics belonging to the Western Cape.38 The process left a legacy of discontent, and sometimes bitterness, that articulated itself in allegations of bad faith that have lingered for years. The ANC MP and athletics official Jannie Momberg said in 1992, “I cringe when I see the way some whites are behaving as though apartheid had never happened,” arguing that the main beneficiaries of the resumption of international ties were the very people who had benefited from apartheid in the first place.39 United Cricket Board of South Africa (UCBSA) members walked out of a Lord’s Taverners dinner in London after a speech by Ali Bacher and there was anger at the Lord’s Test programme of 1994, which made no reference to SACOS cricket.40 The most famously insensitive demonstrations of Momberg’s point include Louis Luyt’s post-victory speech at the Rugby World Cup in 1995 and the banner displayed at Sydney Cricket Ground at the 1992 Cricket World Cup, reading “South Africa: World champions, 1970–1992 (unbeaten).” The principled objection of SACOS to simple
amalgamation proved farsighted: some sports bodies showed little change other than the appointment of titular Black heads.41

The events of the early 1990s abetted the high degree of resilience of deeply embedded, long-term White sporting memory. This was shown in particular by the perpetuation of certain symbols and the tenacity of an ethos that had been at the very root of the definition, through the medium of recreational activity, of White South African identity. By the time apartheid was overthrown, this intertwining of sporting tradition and White nationalism, older than the nation itself and whose very purpose was distinctiveness and apartness, was ninety years old. Its resilience was illustrated at the much documented and discussed Ellis Park rugby match against New Zealand in 1992.42 Ultimately the flag and the anthem were dropped but the Springbok emblem proved more resilient.43

In some codes the administration proved to be not only discordant but also corrupt, authoritarian, and lacking in service ethos what it indubitably displayed in material self-interest.44 Summing up South African athletics at the end of 1996, Julian Drew wrote that its administration “flagrantly flouted the ethics of sport,” was “the laughing stock of world athletics,” and was run by “a group of politicians who hand out positions and overseas trips to those who pledge fealty to their unholy and incompetent cause.”45 Many officials in the new South Africa operate comfortably within the parameters of the traditional corrupt and authoritarian mould in the fashion evoked by Kedourie.46 The British coach Wilf Paish resigned before the 1996 Olympic Games in protest at the administration of Athletics South Africa (ASA) and observers put this maladministration down to the dominance of political motives and a lack of integrity. ASA had, for instance, tried to get Hezekiel Sepeng to sign a contract agreeing not to attempt the South African record except at meetings sponsored by Engen.47 By 1997, racial tensions had developed to such an extent, particularly in the Western Cape, as to worry supporters of South Africa’s Olympic bid.48

Guelke sums up the context with considerable perception: an uneasy transition from pariah to paragon state with the international community looking on with self-congratulatory indulgence.49 This involved gross historical distortion, including denial of the past; the unwelcome endurance of certain symbolism; and a large measure of political and material opportunism. All are manifest in the country’s interaction with Olympism. The question thus arises whether, given such circumstances, a true contribution to nation building could be made by international sport. The Constitution of a democratic South Africa and its Bill of Rights may be seen as a metaphorical bridge between the old and the new South Africa50; a pathway between the enforced divisiveness and attendant suffering of the past and a nation based on principles of human rights and the fact of common citizenship. A cohesive nation requires symbols that transcend differences and stimulate distinctive identity through solidarity and shared sentiment. The very fact that the issue of the Springbok was left unresolved as too
sensitive an issue long after the adoption of a new national flag (a matter that had caused major political crises in the past, most notably in the 1920s) and the compromise over the national anthem in 1994 is indicative of enduring divisiveness within sport and the problems it faces in acting as a potential unifier. Unifying symbols require general respect derivative of an evolutionary process of nationalization within a climate of tolerant pluralism.51

In April 1991 an IOC delegation visited South Africa and conferred conditional recognition upon the Interim National Olympic Committee (INOCSA).52 As early as July 1991, there were reports that Juan Samaranch had invited South Africa to the 1992 Barcelona Games but the Tokyo World Cup the following month was missed because of a lack of administrative unity.53 In July 1992, the ANC gave qualified approval to South African participation in the Barcelona Games subject to progress with peace and democracy. It required support by athletes for a democratically based constituent assembly and condemnation of violence, particularly the recent Boipatong massacre in which hostel dwellers had died in large numbers at the hands of vigilantes allied to state security forces.54 South Africa’s involvement at Barcelona was a cause of conflict and a conspicuous lack of national identity. There was considerable acrimony about the original team selection (the eventual composition was 80% White), mainly around the credentials of Tom Petranoff, a former American javelin thrower who had broken the boycott. ASA was split along racial lines over Petranoff, who was supported by Whites, prompting its President, Deon van Zyl, to say that he was “sick of working with [the National Olympic Committee of South Africa] NOCSA” and threaten to deal directly with the IOC.55 An ANC assessment of various sporting codes in mid 1992 showed that “Athletics is the worst culprit.” A specific allegation levelled at the newly-formed ASA was that it had made little provision for pre-Olympic training for Black middle distance runners: “the sports establishment should not be surprised when people in the townships do not cheer.”56 The efforts of the 97 competitors (Petranoff did not take part in the end) were rewarded by two silver medals, in athletics and tennis.57 Supporters of South Africa waved the old tricolour flag during Elana Meyer’s 10,000 metre qualifier in defiance of attempts to stop them and in spite of a confrontation with Mluleki George, Deputy President of NOCSA. Meyer herself had the last word as silver medalist when she ran a lap of honour with the winner, Derartu Tulu of Ethiopia.58 Both Meyer and Sam Ramsamy, President of NOCSA, responsibly stressed that participation in the name of the new South Africa was the key factor; Meyer bravely noting the fickleness of the South African public where sport is concerned.59 President-in-waiting Nelson Mandela sat in the Royal Box and paid a visit to the South African team, which he credited with rebuilding unity.60 But when the team was met by supporters at Johannesburg airport, Springbok flags were waved and old insignia displayed.61 Archbishop Desmond Tutu speaking at the synod of the Church
of the Province of South Africa (Anglican) reminded the country that, like the ANC for a brief period, he had called for South Africa’s exclusion from the Games in view of the Boipatong massacre, but “Our media were far more concerned about sport than about the lives of God’s children and perhaps were reflecting the mood in the White community.”\textsuperscript{62} Steve Tshwete (later Minister of Sport) noted that South Africans were bad losers in international competition; while Aziz Pahad (later Deputy Foreign Minister) commented on player bashing resulting from totally unrealistic hopes.\textsuperscript{63} Other press comment reflected on the need for a democratically founded NOCSA, not one based on struggle credentials and networking, and over-concerned with “personal political image.”\textsuperscript{64} NOCSA was heavily criticized for administrative failures including some embarrassingly inept arrangements.

The most obvious and well-known example of international sport as a positive factor in post-apartheid South Africa is of course the 1995 Rugby World Cup, described by Waldmeir as an “orgy of national reconciliation.”\textsuperscript{65} A massive attempt was made to portray the team as representative of South Africa as a whole and unifying themes were emphasised in the opening ceremony. This event has been described by Grundlingh as sanitized and choreographed as well as ahistoric. South Africa, he goes on to argue, in the immediate aftermath of the first democratically based election was simply in the mood for a party and any suitable event could have provided the catalyst. Grundlingh goes so far as to say that the celebratory exuberance exhibited at the 1995 Rugby World Cup final cannot be translated into any sort of identification,\textsuperscript{66} a view backed up by Crawford who writes about a “fragment of transcendent time.”\textsuperscript{67} In the opinion of the journalist and political commentator Max du Preez, the event and South Africa’s victory produced a “warm feeling of goodwill and patriotism,” but by early 1997, in the wake of the Maakgraaff affair (in which the South African rugby coach was recorded making free use of obscene language coupled with racist epithets in telephone calls), he was describing rugby as a “racist sport run by a Boere mafia.”\textsuperscript{68} So great was the disaffection that there were rumours of a breakaway by Black and Coloured players: there was, indeed, a general perception that even in its historical areas of strength in the Eastern Cape Black rugby was collapsing.\textsuperscript{69} At the time of the Rugby World Cup there had, however, been a few dissenters. One was the once-banned cleric, Cosmos Desmond, who argued that “The victory enabled white people to feel good, their white chauvinism having been legitimized by the GNU [Government of National Unity].” As he pointed out, the rugby brought no end to the severe violence taking place in the Port Shepstone and Bhambayi areas of southern Natal.\textsuperscript{70} The views of Grundlingh, du Preez, Desmond and others led to the conclusion that sports symbolism is malleable and that hopes of using rugby as a focus of national unity were over-optimistic.
The build up to the 1996 Atlanta Games was characterized by modesty regarding sports prospects coupled with over-confident political forecasts. President of NOCSA, Sam Ramsamy, said that he had no high hopes of medals (naming Elana Meyer, women’s marathon, and Ockert Brits, pole vault, neither of whom in the end made much impact, as the strongest contenders), but he made wild claims about the political context. South Africa’s was “An Olympic team that can’t lose.” The Minister of Sport, Steve Tshwete, had two years earlier made it clear that winning was the major objective, a policy that did not sit comfortably with the development programme for formerly disadvantaged athletes and produced considerable tension. Even though most of the athletes were White, they epitomized unity and democracy in the South African polity representing “a winning nation which shed its past in a bloodless revolution. . . . They are seen to embody the true spirit of the Games.” South Africa’s presence at Atlanta was accompanied by much appropriate new symbolism. Ramsamy promoted the slogan “Simunye” (We are one), and the Rhodesian miner’s song “Shosholoza” (described by the poet and political journalist Antjie Krog as “our national anthem of fake unity left over from the Rugby World Cup”) was predictably adopted as the team anthem. The South African Airways (SAA) plane that flew the team to and from Atlanta was painted in the colours of the national flag and named “Ndizane” (To soar to new heights). The team was called the “Rainbow warriors” and it left for the Games in a tearful atmosphere of anticipatory nationalism. Furthermore, Ramsamy attempted to draw historical parallels between Georgia and South Africa in terms of transformation, reconciliation and progress after a racist past. Prior to the Atlanta Games, at the time of the African Cup of Nations (soccer) tournament, Nelson Mandela put the view that sportspersons were uniting the country and used them to suggest that success could likewise be achieved by way of job creation, security for all and an improved quality of life.

South Africa’s 1996 Olympic Games may be divided into two distinct and revealing phases. Within the first few days Penny Heyns had won two gold medals and set a world record in the 100m and 200m breaststroke, Marianne Kriel had unexpectedly taken the bronze in the 100m backstroke, and the women’s 4x100m medley relay team (Heyns, Kriel, Mandy Loots and Helene Muller) had come fourth. After this period of success by White female swimmers there was a considerable lull until Hezekiel Sepeng took silver in the 800m and Josiah Thugwane won the marathon on the last day of the Games. The second spell of success thus belonged to Black male runners and South Africa came home with five medals, three gold, one silver and one bronze, all won in athletics or swimming, compared with Barcelona’s two silvers.

The swimmers’ successes unleashed a flood of nationalistic rhetoric: “The feats of Heyns and company have certainly sparked a surge of national pride in South Africa and underlined once again the powerful role
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sport can play in helping to forge a new sense of unity in our fledgling democracy,” was a representative sample. No evidence was presented to support such a sweeping statement. This particular editorial, however, added another dimension to the equation—nostalgia for apartheid era sport: “spare a thought,” it continued, “for this nation’s greatest swimmer of all time—multiple world record holder Karen Muir—who was never allowed to showcase her talents at the greatest games of all.”79 Muir represented South Africa at the apogee of apartheid sport and there is no evidence that she objected to it in any way. The Afrikaans press delved further back in time evoking winners from the 1952 Helsinki Olympics, Joan Harrison (100m breaststroke) and Esther Brand (high jump). Heyns apparently had no idea of the identity of Harrison. According to Die Burger, the thwarting of Muir and another backstroke record holder, Ann Fairly, was a further reason why “Heyns’ gold is applauded with pride but yet with a touch of pain.”80 The historical connections were reinforced by a correspondent to Die Burger who argued that Heyns had “completed a bridgehead which stretches from Stockholm in 1912 to Atlanta in 1996.”81

Michael Owen-Smith wrote about the opening of a new chapter in the history of South African sport. He mentioned complaints about the organisation of the Atlanta Games but placed South Africa on the moral high ground by smugly arguing that the country “has been happy to concentrate on being a shining star in an enormous galaxy.”82 The Black press was also enthusiastic. The swimming medals represented “the first time that we have appeared as a new democracy with a new image, with athletes representing all South Africans.”83 Nelson Mandela’s message to Heyns was: “You have done your land and people a great honour. You’re our golden girl.”84 Another editorial highlighted “The wonderful string of successes that have punctuated South Africa’s march to democracy. Like the victory of the Springboks in the World Cup last year, her performance has lifted the pride of a new nation emerging from years of oppression.”85 Significantly, this opinion in a conservative English-medium newspaper failed to mention the successes of soccer in the African Cup of Nations.

Both swimmers referred to God and country as reasons for their success. Of her 200m victory, Heyns said, “I felt I must just grit my teeth and leave everything in the hands of the Lord” and “I dedicated the race to God.”86 But Heyns also invoked the old nationalism by wearing a Springbok tattoo on her left shoulder. This may have been one of the reasons why she did not carry the flag at the opening ceremony (it was carried by the boxer Masibulele “Hawk” Makepula instead), although according to her version this did not worry Nelson Mandela. “He told me my support of the Springbok was ‘cool’,”87 a sentiment which it seemed might more easily have sprung from the pen of an American journalist than the mouth of a septuagenarian South African politician. She also claimed that Steve Tshwete had told her to display the tattoo and be proud. She admitted to a lifelong ambition to be a Springbok, her colours having been awarded in
their last year, 1991. The sports editor of the *Sowetan*, Victor Tsuai, criticized Heyns for her use of apartheid symbolism, but the Afrikaans press was uncompromising on this point. Detractors, said *Die Burger*, would “just have to accept that the Springbok symbol has long ago been etched into the genes of the sports stars and nobody . . . will be able to remove it.” Heyns extolled Mandela as the inspiration for South Africa’s success in the pool and dedicated her medals to him: “His support . . . gave me inspiration to train as much as I did to bring a gold medal to South Africa. Tonight I’m so proud of being a new South African.” In order to counter questions about her national loyalty (she had been studying and training in the USA) she pointed out that it was not possible to study and excel at sport in South African universities and added, “But I am still a South African.” The National Party predictably joined the fray after the first Heyns medal, which it claimed “would sustain the pride of all South Africans.” Penny Heyns was promptly named “Newsmaker of the Year” (in mid-August) by the Johannesburg Press Club. Media coverage of the Olympics was consistently humourless and nationally solemn but one correspondent wrote: “When I was young the pound was green and the shilling was silver. Now the rand [South Africa’s currency] is invisible and our Penny is gold. Is this called Rainbow Nation inflation?” At the time the Rand had plumbed new depths on the foreign exchange market.

The Black winners elicited another round of rhetoric: for instance, “our proud nation has plenty to cheer about.” But overall the response was more thoughtful than the raw nationalism unleashed by the success of the White swimmers. Sepeng’s silver medal prompted this from Nelson Mandela: “You are an example of conquest over years of deprivation and alienation.” The *Sowetan* wrote promisingly of Sepeng: “coming from an impoverished background that was deliberately designed by the architects of apartheid to inhibit young Black South Africans from using their talent.” But this soon degenerated into the standard rhetoric: “The team’s overall performance has not only put South Africa back on the map of international sport but has done much to speed up the process of nation building desperately needed in our fledgling democracy. With such athletes, South Africa, once the polecat of the world, stands tall amongst the best in a family of nations.” The Minister of Sport, Steve Tshwete, was “beaming with pride” after Sepeng’s medal and said, “You have aligned South Africa with other prominent countries in the history of the Olympics and I must say the image of our country as a competitive nation has been uplifted.”

Following Thugwane’s marathon gold medal (South Africa’s first since Kenneth McArthu won in 1912), Tshwete made the important point that it showed how the disadvantages of growing up under apartheid could be overcome. This was emphasised by the fact that when Thugwane signed his first contract with an agent in 1992 he had to make a cross. Tshwete subsequently lapsed into the standard rhetoric about “a fresh surge of
national pride.” This took on lyrical form in some quarters: “When the little Mpumalanga runner Josaya (sic.) Thugwane rushed into the Olympic stadium first yesterday, one could hear the Drakensberg echoing,” a far-fetched sentiment as the Berg is generally associated not with Mpumalanga, but KwaZulu-Natal. Mandela described Thugwane’s dedication of his gold medal to the President as “selfless” and said he was “our golden boy” who has “reinforced our pride and confidence as a nation.” Mathews Phosa, premier of Thugwane’s home province of Mpumalanga, said “He did it for all of us and we will always be proud of him.” Thugwane seemed to agree: “I ran this race for my country and my President.” He was also quoted as saying, “What this medal means to me is that our problems are over in our country. We are free to run and be members of the international community.” The National Party simply said that the marathon gold was a triumph for the new South Africa. When he received the freedom of Mpumalanga a martial air was introduced by his description as “hero and rainbow warrior,” while Mzwakhe Mbuli, the people’s poet, wrote a poem to Thugwane called “Marathon warrior.”

Most papers made much of the fact that Thugwane was fortunate to be in Atlanta, having undergone an all too typical South African experience. In March he had almost been the victim of car highjackers. A bullet had grazed his chin and he injured his back jumping from a moving vehicle. The press seemed unable to make up its collective mind about Thugwane’s job and he was variously described as a miner, a cleaner, a security guard and a welfare worker at Koornfontein mine, near Evander. They all agreed, however, that he was a product of the mines athletics system and lived in a hostel augmenting the R2000 per month earned for his extended family of 15 by running for prizes of about R1000. It was also pointed out that after his brush with death the mine gave him excellent medical care. The Afrikaans press was keen to note that he was an Ndebele. The Azanian People’s Organisation (AZAPO) made the most telling point. Thugwane, it argued, was the one “true South African” to win at the Games: of the four medallists only he had not benefited from training outside the country.

Tokyo Sexwale, premier of Gauteng, brought a rare degree of humour and historical perspective to the celebrations when he said, “Thugwane would not have made it had he not been intimidated by a man disguised in an old South African police uniform who shouted ‘Pass.’”

The welcome home for the team at Johannesburg airport was ecstatic with screaming, weeping and ululating people shouting “Madibaland.” “All types of people from different religions, creeds and colours were brought together by a common factor—glorification of the Olympians,” recorded the Sowetan. The implication is that a crowd at an airport represents the nation, although the same newspaper printed the view that the “South African public, black and white, was united in a series of heady celebrations.” Those teachers who gave children time off from school were
called “patriotic.” The four medal winners had tea with Mandela on their return and rededicated their medals to him and the new South Africa. Penny Heyns, who seems to have been especially schooled in diplomacy after earlier dismissive references to the past, was quoted as being proud of the “united flag and united anthem.”

The essential question is whether or not the new symbols and images had a meaning beyond the transitory moment. Did, for instance, Josiah Thugwane’s Atlanta marathon victory unite and define the South African nation in any significant way in the medium to long term, or were the television pictures and commentary of passing importance only? There can be no doubt that South Africans savoured the personal triumph of a disadvantaged countryman but this could only have lasting significance if it has a long-term place in mass collective memory and the national psyche. As John Arlott put it, describing a very different era, sport’s “true greatness is the stature of its public image.” Indeed, can South Africa, given its history, be sustained by elite athletic performances when development programmes at grassroots level have failed to be delivered as promised? Can new symbols in the context of transitory sounds and images help to create a new nation and, if so, how quickly?

In spite of the best efforts of the image-makers, a number of negative factors detracted from South Africa’s participation in the Atlanta Games. There was strong protest from both Right and Left about freeloading politicians “supporting” the national team on free SAA tickets, which were also provided for their families. Four such tickets, two solicited, belonged to Minister of Transport Mac Maharaj who aggressively asked who had elected the journalists writing critically of him. Seventeen government ministers and deputy ministers found a need to be in Atlanta to study various aspects of the Games or support the team. The gravy train (a dismissive South African term for undeserved spoils of office), it was suggested in some circles, was now being supplied with caviar. The Natal Mercury carried a cartoon of a “gravy plane,” and one of its correspondents called the flights “inexcusable as well as insensitive.” In its criticism of die soustrein [gravy train], Die Burger wrote about lack of fiscal discipline, megalomania and the “unseemly enthusiasm of politicians who with 140 officials—almost double the number of the national team—got on board the gravy train to Atlanta under the cover of ‘official business.’” Free-loading politicians argued that they were in Atlanta to promote Cape Town’s 2004 bid. Predictably, those who advanced a more critical view of the Games, the unity and nation building issue, or the Cape Town bid were dismissively described as “SACOS diehards.”

There is evidence to show that Olympic success did not fire the imagination of so many South Africans and was not received with as much universal joy as the media had suggested. For instance, when Josiah Thugwane won the marathon on the final day of the Games, apart from that of his immediate family there was no particular interest in his home, Mhlusi, a
township of Middelburg. The comments of Banele Sindani, general secretary of ASA, after Sepeng won his silver medal are also somewhat ambiguous: “Among the black population in South Africa they don’t know how significant the Olympics is. He must set an example and stand out now, so that people can say they want to be like him. They must say how amazing it is and what a medal has done for him.” Letter writers to the *Sowetan* pointed to the difficulty of identifying with White athletes; and asked why, with all their advantages, no White males had won medals.

South Africa’s participation at Atlanta highlighted the great gulf between members of the national team and this may be examined through the figures of Penny Heyns and Josiah Thugwane. Much about the Atlanta Games suggests that South Africa was still operating as two nations. For instance, Durban City Council spent R14 million upgrading and heating its Olympic pool for winter training for the national squad, which included Heyns. Josiah Thugwane received nothing until he was given a kitbag at Johannesburg airport. Given his entirely unexpected marathon victory and personal circumstances, Thugwane was in fact the ideal person to provide a unifying sporting icon in the new South Africa. Abandoned at birth, he grew up illiterate and lived in a shack working as a janitor on a mine. After his Olympic triumph he bought a house in a middle class suburb of Middelburg but his former neighbours threatened to rob him because he was now perceived as rich. In January 1997 he was assaulted by another driver and moved to Johannesburg.

While the media was celebrating the successes of Penny Heyns, a protest by 5,000 people against rising levels of crime took place in Durban, occasioned by the highjacking and murder on 18 July of a schoolteacher, Roderick Lamont. His case was highly symbolic in the context of the Games as he had just dropped off a group of touring England Schools rugby players. His brother, in a letter to the press, argued, “It is a scandal that government ministers are presenting themselves all over the world using scarce taxpayers’ resources, travelling on first class tickets with their families. I refer in this instance [sic] the cabinet ministers who are, at this moment, enjoying the warmth of the Atlanta sunshine.” South Africa’s ambitions for the 2004 Olympics were, he said, unrealistic. On the same Sunday that Thugwane won his marathon in Atlanta, a Cape Flats gang leader, Rashaad Staggie was murdered by a PAGAD (People Against Gangsterism and Drugs) mob on a street in Woodstock, Cape Town while the police stood by and watched.

There is much evidence to prompt a sceptical approach to the role of sport. Perhaps the most obvious reason for this is that few sporting codes in South Africa are yet genuinely non-racial and part of the reason for this may be found in the flawed processes of unification and lifting of the boycott in the early 1990s described above. Assumptions about the power of sport to unite the nation have their source in media hyperbole and superficial populism. Their antithesis may be found in the political divisiveness
engendered by the failed Cape Town bid for the 2004 Games, which came to an end in 1997. The ANC had indicated its support for a South African bid as early as March 1993, arguing that it would provide employment for 7,000, generate income and encourage sports development. There was a great deal of opposition to it on the grounds that none of the bidding cities (Cape Town, Durban and Johannesburg) had the requisite infrastructure, although the mainline press downplayed this. There are claims that the job creation forecast was exaggerated by as much as ten times (to 70,000) and that the cost per seat was grossly under-represented (R4 420 for a proposed Cape Town stadium when Sydney was already banking on R16 400). The opposition argued that the Olympic bid was not only an expensive risk for a developing economy but also a distraction from real issues. Indeed, it was portrayed as a panacea for all ills attracting uncritical and at times hysterical support, which saw opposition as a threat to the nation and an example of lack of patriotism. Certain newspaper groups, such as Independent Newspapers, carried virtually no objective opinion about the Games bid.

Nevertheless, the Cape Town Olympic bid campaign attracted a great deal of bitter comment in the context of crime, poverty and infrastructural need. The outlay on feasibility studies and public relations generated much anger. In early 1994 the left-of-centre Weekly Mail & Guardian was opposing the bid of any South African city to hold the 2004 Games, arguing for Beijing as the best venue. South Africa, it editorialised, had reconstruction needs such as electrification and education and problems, at that time, of political uncertainty. The idea of hosting the Games was “driven by egos in search of glory and political advantage.” This was certainly a perception in Johannesburg where there was strong public apathy and a feeling that a small group of ambitious individuals was pursuing a private agenda in an undemocratic way with lip service being paid to community involvement. The effort of Durban was lukewarm, with the only benefit seen as a new airport. The orthodox view was that a successful bid and its infrastructural spin off would “liberate” the poor of Cape Town from welfare dependence and a poverty trap. For this reason, it was reckoned, 80% of Capetonians supported the bid.

The level of emotional tension involved in the aftermath of the Atlanta Games is indicated by the fact that the retailer Raymond Ackerman, who had experienced a chequered career with the Cape Town bid committee, attacked Sam Ramsamy, the ex-head of SANROC and now chair of NOCSA, for having a negative attitude towards the city’s aspirations. The Cape Times highlighted the transport chaos at the Atlanta Games and asked how Cape Town’s system, well known as inefficient, dangerous and inadequate, could cope. It also raised the issues of the taxi war (violence between different groups of operators) and the squatter problem on Cape Town’s outskirts. The director of the bid committee, Ronnie Kingwill, responded that the chaos at Atlanta was good for the Cape Town bid. A
local resident disagreed: “We need houses, jobs and good living conditions for all. . . why do we have to be so certain about the 2004 Olympics?” The excruciatingly poor electronic media coverage from 87 South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) staff also stimulated letters questioning South Africa’s ability to host the 2004 Games.

A cartoon in the *Sowetan* summed up widespread feeling in a parody of the gymnastics and diving contests: returning commentators are welcomed by a panel of judges whose placards read “Athletes 10, Commentators 0.” Another criticism said that the SABC deserved medals “made of stone.” Grogan, the well-known *Cape Times* cartoonist, provided a hard-hitting caption: “Oh dear, there have been some unfortunate incidents in this Cape Town Olympic marathon: four runners have been mugged, five caught in the crossfire between vigilantes and gangsters, three knocked over by errant minibus taxis and one has fallen over a trashcan left by a striking dustman.” More soberly, his paper printed the view that winning medals at the Olympic Games was all very well, but mass-based sport was required in South Africa.

Critical comment comparing Olympic glory with South Africa’s social and political circumstances was to be found in both the right and left wing press. Of Penny Heyns, the right-wing editor Johnny Johnson wrote, “The girl swims and wins gold and you’d think that we have landed her on the moon.” In pointing out that South Africa’s was a sports mad society, he asked how this was going to solve the crises surrounding crime and housing. Johnson argued that Cape Town could not handle the 2004 Games because of lack of infrastructure. His paper’s editorial column subsequently aired the view that “security forces here cannot protect the country’s citizens from vicious criminals armed with guns.” And its letters page echoed similar feelings, pointing out that “South Africa can ill afford the expense required” in view of the delay in housing provision and the existence of squatters close to Cape Town airport. Another letter listed car hijacking, strikes, corruption, cable theft, taxi wars and postal delays as factors militating against the Cape Town bid and put forward the sarcastic view that South Africa would win gold, silver and bronze at the toyi-toyi.

On 15 August 1996 the formal Cape Town bid documents were submitted at Geneva in the midst of a vigilante war, taxi violence and municipal strikes back home. When asked about these, Robbie Stewart, director of the bid company, responded, “We don’t want to get involved in the specific issues.”

The exact relationship between sport and nationalism as builder or divider remains highly debatable. Bale and Sang put the view that a nation derives psychic income from sport which is particularly significant in a heterogenous country. On the other hand, R.W. Johnson argues that “A coherent South African identity may be a mirage, visible in post-match celebrations of the Rugby World Cup and other moments of transcendental euphoria, but not really a part of the fabric of everyday life.” Indeed,
there are reasons to argue in terms of continuity as much as change, accepting that sport epitomises a fragmented, sectional South Africa. The country’s participation in recent Olympic Games has been accompanied by much high-flown and intellectually dubious rhetoric, enduring symbolism from the past and numerous contestable statements about the influence of international sporting triumph, some of which had about them a martial air. At the end of the Atlanta Games, Sam Ramsamy made the widely-reported statement that “The black/white divide” is now finished, a statement of extraordinary recklessness especially as he had admitted at the start of the Games that the team contained an embarrassingly high proportion of Whites. Only in the context of sport, it seems, could such a sweeping utterance be made without challenge. Indeed, as late as February 1998 the ANC condemned sport as a last bastion of apartheid.

Competitive sport may assist in the development of individual, group or national identity but because of its essentially competitive nature it inevitably operates by constructing “otherness.” The problem with sport in South Africa is that this otherness exists within the national polity and divides one group of South Africans from another. Griffiths relates how a rugby match between Transvaal and Northern Transvaal and a soccer match between Kaizer Chiefs and Orlando Pirates took place at Ellis Park in Johannesburg on successive days in the late 1980s. Only one hundred people, mainly stadium staff, attended both and the White and Black press virtually ignored each other’s news focus, rugby and soccer respectively. The primary sport—soccer—remains overwhelmingly African working class in its support base with a very strong emphasis on club rather than country. Rugby and cricket are still essentially White sports. In the case of rugby there are pockets of interest and involvement from the Coloured and African communities in the Cape. Cricket has Coloured adherents in the Cape and Indian participation in Natal. At a rugby match at King’s Park, Durban, for instance, White “tribal unity is sealed.” Swimming is overwhelmingly White and athletics is in an intriguing historical position, appealing to working class Africans and Afrikaans speaking Whites. Forced to accept integration and equality in every area of life, there are still Whites who harbour antediluvian sentiments about proving their superiority on the sports field: the whitewash of the West Indies cricket team on the 1998–1999 tour is a case in point. Standing in the way of a national identity for South Africa, with no obvious single contender for dominance, are strong ethnic cores. While the attendant centrifugal tendencies are minimal—South Africa will not fragment as a country—the nature and history of sport in South Africa do not offer scope for common identity.

Given South Africa’s history of apartheid, ethnicity and linguistic differences cannot be wished away. In his brilliant study of the life and mind of the assassin of Hendrik Verwoerd, Dimitri Tsafendas, Henk van Woerden looks back at the state of South Africa in the 1960s: “It is impossible to describe how deep was the sense of mutual estrangement.
Differences of language, faith or race were never more than the most obvious indicators of a chronic, irremediable lack of civil cohesion." The creation of national unity suffers also from the fact that there was no departing colonial power or settler community whose influence started to decline dramatically as the old flag was lowered against an appropriate setting sun. Mazrui believes that African nationalism is essentially a search for a Utopia without tribes but that it has all too often been used as a diversion from broader problems. In fact, overt nationalism may be better suited to the liberation phase of a country’s history than that of nation building. Exactly ten years after the release of Nelson Mandela and the start of the democratization process, there were signs that sport was in fact fracturing along racial lines and much was made of the purported comment by Percy Sonn of the UCBSA that he was glad South Africa had not won the 1999 Cricket World Cup as this would have set back transformation. This extreme view must be put into the historical context of sport as one of the main planks of White South African identity in relation to both Blacks and foreigners.

The recent history of South Africa is that of a struggle between two nationalisms, White and African. It was they who negotiated the 1994 settlement and ensured a peaceful transition to democracy using, amongst other techniques, their basic predilections for authoritarianism. As Christie puts it, South Africa is easily identifiable, but who are the South Africans? National identity requires a collective, shared memory and under present conditions perhaps the best that can be hoped for is a bi-national society in a democratic context, especially given the fact that both nationalisms have much in common. In spite of a more complete documentation of South Africa’s history after the publication of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) report, agreement on the essential nature of the nation has moved no further forward: “The question of what truth is in the new South Africa is also the question of what constitutes a nation and what the meaning of that nation is.” Deputy Chairperson of the TRC, Alex Boraine, asks whether South Africa can be described as a healed nation and comes to the conclusion that “The answer remains ambiguous.” As Hargreaves explains, a nation entails territory populated by people with common identity brought together by myth, history, culture, shared emotion, rights, duties and opportunities that envelope the individual in a collectivity, “a form of civil religion” to which sport may contribute in a major way. In the case of South Africa these factors are so nebulous that the very idea of nation building must remain an article of faith. Bell’s “community of memory” is constituted by a sharing of the past over several generations at least, within a given geographic space, and evolves into a “community of hope” looking to the future. Total strangers share a history, a “moral tradition that helps to provide the narrative unity of our lives... linking our destiny to that of our ancestors, contemporaries and descendants” and creating “meaning in the morass of history from which we can draw moral lessons.”
concludes, “patriotic allegiance is more than identification with national sports teams.”

The Olympic Games with its propensity for the flaunting of national symbols is a particularly conducive occasion for the instrumental use of sport. But the fatal flaw is the unavoidable fact that “Winning and individual success is everything; defeat is disaster.” Writing about Northern Ireland, Guelke and Sugden argue, “mutuality experienced on the playing field will necessarily be ephemeral.” The popular idea that sport and Nelson Mandela can unite South Africa and provide a foundation for the nation is now far less compelling than it was in the mid 1990s. South Africans have shown divisiveness even in victory and in particular in defeat; and Nelson Mandela’s successor as President, Thabo Mbeki, is a man whose legislative programme and attitudes have encouraged a revived awareness of race. It is highly ironic that South Africans should look to a factor as fragile as competitive, professional sport as a basis for nation building; all the more so since the country has far more significant institutions to which to relate. One is of course the Constitution and in particular its admirable Bill of Rights. Another is the TRC from which much catharsis, awareness, mutual understanding and indeed truth has arisen. There is also a significant corpus of legislation on the statute book with the potential to bring people together. Whether this will happen in the face of revived racism, corruption, rampant crime and violence, and officially sanctioned inefficiency and incompetence is open to debate. Once a solid nationalism is constructed upon a foundation of responsible citizenship, balanced economic growth and social justice, international sport may come to play a more embracing role.

Endnotes

3L.M. Xingwana and Z.A. Kota, speaking on the Appropriation Bill’s vote 31 on sport and recreation in Debates of the National Assembly, 13 June 1995, cols. 2737 and 2769.
7The apartheid philosophy of the National Party was applied in South Africa from 1948 to 1994 although its methods varied with time. Essentially it involved the division of South Africans into so-called racial groups based largely on
appearance and community acceptability; and the enforcement of residential and social segregation. However, in the long term, economic segregation proved impossible.


18D. Booth, “Accommodating Race to Play the Game,” p.198.


24D. Booth, “Blight on Rugby in Hall of Fame” *Sunday Star Times* 11 June 1995, p.B13; P. Pigou, “Questions of the Ellis Park bomb,” *Mail & Guardian* 13 August 1999, p.11. Terror directed at a civilian target was contrary to official ANC policy, but there are suggestions that this was not simply the act of a wayward group of cadres.


34“Sport: Putting the Cart Before the Horse,” Mayibuye August 1991, p.17.
52“Running to Make the ’92 Olympics,” Mayibuye May 1991, p. 41.
68M. du Preez, “Q & A,” aired on SATV1, 25 February 1997. Boer (plural boere) is the Afrikaans for farmer and a word frequently used as a derogatory term for conservative Afrikaners.
71This section on the 1996 Olympics is based on editorial comment, feature articles and letters in a cross-section of the South African press published from 15 July to 15 August 1996. The titles scanned were Cape Times, Argus and Natal Mercury (Independent, formerly Argus Newspapers); Citizen (Perskor), Sowetan (New Afrika/NAIL), Die Burger (Naspers) and Mail and Guardian (independent). This covers the political spectrum (Left to Right), geographical distribution (Cape Town, Durban, and Johannesburg) and language (English and Afrikaans).
72Natal Mercury 1 July 1996.
76Natal Mercury 1 July 1996.
78Natal Witness 10 February 1996.
82Cape Times 26 July 1996.
84Die Burger 23 July 1996.
87Citizen 22 and 23 July 1996.
88Natal Mercury 13 July 1996.
90Citizen 23 July 1996.
92Citizen 23 July 1996.
93Letter from F.R. Spangenberg Cape Times 5 August 1996.
95Citizen 2 August 1996.
98Die Burger 5 August 1996.
99Cape Times 6 August 1996.
100Sowetan 5 August 1996; Cape Times 7 August 1996.
101Citizen 5 August 1996.
102Sowetan 6 August 1996.
103Sowetan 19 August 1996.
105Sowetan 6 August 1996.
106Die Burger 5 August 1996.
107Ibid.
108Sowetan 5 August 1996.
109Sowetan 7 August 1996.
111Sowetan 8 August 1996.
118Y. Vanderhaeghen, “Snouts in the Trough.”
120Cape Times 5 August 1996.
121Natal Mercury 2 August 1996.
122Letters from Morwe Letshwenyo and Samu Zulu, Kafue, Zambia Sowetan 8 August 1996.
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\(^{127}\) Noseweek 18, 1997, pp.3-7.

\(^{128}\) South 6 March 1993.


\(^{133}\) Cape Times 25 July 1996.

\(^{134}\) Letter from Paki Zandile Cape Times 31 July 1996.

\(^{135}\) See, for instance, Cape Times 6 August 1996.

\(^{136}\) Sowetan 7 August 1996.

\(^{137}\) Natal Mercury 1 August 1996.

\(^{138}\) Cape Times 7 August 1996.


\(^{140}\) J. Johnson, “Height St. Diary” Citizen 25 July 1996.


\(^{142}\) Letter from Concerned Taxpayer of Kempton Park Citizen 2 August 1996.

\(^{143}\) Letter from Incredulous, Selcourt Citizen 8 August 1996. The toyi toyi is a form of protest, half dance and half demonstration usually accompanied by aggressive chanting.

\(^{144}\) Citizen 15 August 1996.


\(^{147}\) Citizen 17 July and 6 August 1996; Cape Times 6 August 1996.


\(^{150}\) E. Griffiths, Bidding for glory, pp.13-15.


\(^{156}\) P. Alter, Nationalism (London: Arnold, 1989), pp. 144-147, 149.


165 M.E. George speaking on the Appropriation Bill’s vote 31 on sport and recreation in *Debates of the National Assembly*, 13 June 1995, col.2749.

### Appendix

**Glossary of Organisations**

**African National Congress (ANC):** the predominant internal opposition to White rule in South Africa, founded in 1912 and banned in 1960. It flourished in exile, was unbanned in 1990 and won the first democratic election in 1994.

**Afrikaner Weerstandsbeweging (AWB):** extreme right wing White supremacist party with a penchant for amateur militarism.

**Athletics South Africa (ASA):** post-liberation national organising body for athletics.

**Azanian People’s Organisation (AZAPO):** left wing party with socialist tendencies and a Black Consciousness heritage.

**Conservative Party (CP):** right wing party that was the official opposition to the National Party in the last years of the apartheid regime.

**National Olympic Committee of South Africa (NOCSA, for a while the Interim National Olympic Committee of South Africa, INOCSA):** post-liberation national Olympic body.

**National Sports Congress (NSC):** UDF-aligned sports umbrella body in the last years of apartheid.

**Non-European Unity Movement (NEUM):** an alliance that developed out of Coloured resistance to segregation policies and laws, notable for its non-collaboration stance, intellectualism and Trotskyite heritage.

**People Against Gangsterism and Drugs (PAGAD):** Islamic vigilante group with terrorist tendencies.

**South African Council on Sport (SACOS):** internal umbrella body for anti-apartheid, non-racial sports codes.

**South African Non-Racial Olympic Committee (SANROC):** exiled opponent of the official South African Olympic Committee.

South African Rugby Board (SARB): official national rugby body to which were affiliated racially defined Coloured and African unions.

Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC): post-liberation investigative body empowered to grant amnesty for political crimes in exchange for full disclosure; and to recommend reparations.


United Cricket Board of South Africa (UCBSA): post-liberation national cricket body.

United Democratic Front (UDF): umbrella body for hundreds of anti-apartheid organisations from 1983 to 1994, often seen (not entirely accurately) as the internal wing of the ANC-in-exile.