



SPORT, POLITICS AND BLACK ATHLETICS IN SOUTH AFRICA DURING THE APARTHEID ERA: A POLITICAL-SOCIOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

Abstract

The article examines the relationship between sport and politics in South Africa from a political-sociological perspective, with a specific focus on the status of black athletics in apartheid South Africa. The narrower focus aims to outline how white civil society and the National Party government utilised athletics as a mechanism to enforce the policy of separateness/apartheid in the South African society. In the process, white dominated political structures and centralised political processes were used to dominate and regulate black athletics in South Africa (1894-1976). The structures and dynamics of black athletics were, for more than a century, manipulated and dictated for political and related reasons. The manipulation took place in three broad identifiable periods, namely: 1884-1960 – the period of “informal” segregation, when the national body, provinces and clubs used race as a mechanism to enforce cleavages in society. The second period stretches from 1960-1976, when the National Party adopted a more assertive direct role to enforce their sports policy. The last period, between 1976 and 1992, signified another direction change, when government stepped back and only set the broader framework for the regulation of athletics in South Africa. In each of the periods, the politics-sport power relationship will be explained in relation to the regulation of black athletics in the country.

Keywords: Sport; politics; black athletics; sports policy; segregation.

Slutelwoorde: Sport; politiek; swart atletiek; sportbeleid; skeiding.

1. INTRODUCTION

The development of black and coloured athletics have a chequered past in South Africa. For many decades in the period before democratisation in 1994, the potential and talent of black and coloured athletes in the country have been largely neglected and/or manipulated for political reasons. The aim of this article is to look at the phenomenon from a sports sociology perspective.

Within the broad encompassing fields of sports medicine and sports science, the related field of sports

sociology provides an additional dynamic sub-theme with strong contemporary relevance. The political-sociological perspective straddles the interesting cross section between politics and sociology within the ambit of the human sciences. This perspective also provides the opportunity to examine the highly interesting interrelationship between sport and politics. This article will examine the interrelationship, especially in relation to the development, or lack of development, of black athletes in South Africa.

The subfield of political-sociology can be broadly defined as the study of political behaviour from a sociological perspective and, as an academic discipline, analyses the relationship between political and social phenomenon in a society. Rush and Athloff define political sociology as, “the examination of the links between politics and society, between social structures and political structures and between social behaviour and political behaviour” (Pelser and Botes 1992:3).

In political sociology the interrelationship between politics and sport, with its focus on power relations and power structures in society, has been the focus of many studies during the past few decades (Allison 1986; Houlihan 1997; Coakley 2004; Jarvie 2006). In highly centralised states the existence of high level political interference and/or regulation of sport are of specific interest in the study of the relationship between sport and politics (Houlihan 1997:115). The investigation into the relationship between sport and politics has the nuanced challenge to construct theories to analyse, explain and predict sport-related behaviour, processes and structures in a highly regulated society, especially in terms of power relationships (Cantelon and Ingham 2002:67).

The broader focus of the article within this imbedded theoretical exposition is to analyse the historical relationship that existed between politics and athletics in South Africa during the apartheid era. The South African government followed a strong regulatory approach to sport during the post-1948 apartheid era, especially in regulating the interrelationship between the different racial affiliations in the country. This strong regulatory approach aligns strongly in theory with Weber's (1948:117) typology of an instrumental rational approach to sport. The instrumental rational approach involves a strong regulatory (policy) towards the attainment of a goal deliberately selected by an actor (apartheid regime) to achieve a specific outcome (separation on racial grounds). The instrumental rational approach forms a strong contrast to the features of a value rational approach where the emphasis is stronger on values, such as fairness and equality in relation to equal access to resources to enhance development in sport (Weber 1947:117; Cantelon and Ingham 2002:67).

During the apartheid era the South African apartheid government and white civil society adopted a strong regulatory approach to sport that was deeply imbedded in the instrumental rational approach. This highly regulated policy to sport negated the value based approach to distribute resources fairly in society and to develop sport equally across racial divides. The strongly regulated approach

suppressed the development of athletics in black communities, especially during the period between 1948 and 1976. The nature of the relationship between politics and black athletics in South Africa during the apartheid years was, therefore, predominantly one of an unequal power relationship, unequal power structures, lack of equal access to resources and unequal development (Cantelon and Ingham 2002:67). The instrumental rational approach to sport ultimately led to international condemnation and South Africa's banning from almost all major international sports organisations in the post-1960 period.

2. SOURCES ON BLACK AND COLOURED ATHLETICS IN SOUTH AFRICA

The strong regulatory instrumental rational approach to sport in South Africa resulted in a situation where the history and performances of black athletics remained largely obscured and unreported. It was not only in athletics that the role and status of black athletes were marginalised; it was equally true for all black and coloured participants in all sports codes, such as rugby, soccer and cricket.

During the post-apartheid era in South Africa, a limited number of studies have been undertaken to uncover the history of black sportsmen and women in an effort to address this imbalance in sport historiography. The studies that were undertaken displayed a strong historical focus, but also highlighted the political sociology of the power relations of the apartheid era in South Africa.

Black and Nauright (1998) published a comprehensive work on black and coloured rugby in South Africa entitled, *Rugby and the South Africa nation: Sport, cultures, politics and power in the old and new South Africas*. Nauright unveiled for the first time the rich history of black and coloured rugby in South Africa and this publication assisted in filling the gap in sport historiography in the country.

Murray and Vahed (2009) published a collection of essays on cricket in South Africa under the broad title, *Empire and cricket: The South African experience, 1884-1914*. The authors demonstrated how cricket in South Africa was used as an "instrument" during the foundational period to enforce racial cleavages in society. It is also evident from the publication how black and coloured communities had always existed and functioned in the shadow of white cricket.

However, in athletics, and specifically in relation to the history of black athletics in South Africa, a similar comprehensive study still needs to be undertaken. A number of studies have been done over the years to document the history of white athletics in the country. The first publication on the history of athletics was done in a doctoral study at Rhodes University. D Coghlan (1986) wrote a thesis entitled, *The development of athletics in South Africa 1814-1914*, in which he chronicled the history of athletics in the pre-1914 era. Unfortunately, Coghlan made only limited references to black and coloured athletics in South Africa during the period.

From the late 1950s, the South African Association of Track and Field Association (SAATFA) annually produced a journal, the *South African Athletics Annual*, to reflect the statistics and performances of athletics. Beinhardt compiled an extensive article on the history of athletics in two consecutive annuals – the 1961 and 1962 editions. However, Beinhardt made no reference to black athletes or their performances in his articles. The late Gert le Roux (1984:11-36), former Director of the South African Amateur Athletic Union (SAAAU), wrote a 25-page review of the first nine decades of South African athletics (1894-1984) in an edition on the centennial celebration of the union. Le Roux included a number of cryptic references to black athletes in his review, but the role of black athletes was again underplayed within the broader structure of the work.

In the 1962 edition of the *South African Athletics Annual* the results of the non-white championships were for the first time included in the publication and it provides a useful statistical insight into the status and standard of black athletics in South Africa. The non-white championships were in essence an inter-gold mine initiative, launched by athletic officials employed by the mining companies. From 1962 onwards, the black athletes' performances were included in the annual best performance lists, but with an asterisk, indicating that it was a performance by a black athlete.

Mayer (2009) in his work, *Three men named Matthews*, focuses on the careers of three extra-ordinary black middle and long distance athletes in the 1980s in South Africa. The three athletes, Matthews Motswarateu, Matthews Batswadi and Matthews Temane, produced exceptional performances on the road, cross country and on the track. However, the book provides only a window into their performances without dealing with the broader subfield of black athletics in South Africa. The lack of a comprehensive work on the history of black and coloured athletics therefore remains an elusive goal in South Africa.

The well-known athletic manager, Dewald Steyn (2015), did valuable research on the history of cross-country, middle and long-distance running and walking in a series of books. The first edition covered the period 1894-1966 and includes valuable references to the role of black athletics in South Africa.

The focus of this article is not to attempt to fill the gap which should be the scope of a more comprehensive work in book format. The focus of the article is rather to conduct an investigation into the broader developmental patterns of black athletics in the country. The history, development and status of black athletics in South Africa clearly developed as a power relationship between political and social phenomenon, within clearly defined chronological patterns. The relationship within these broader patterns aligns with the broader definition of political sociology as a study of the links between white dominated politics and the broader society, between social structures and political structures, and between social behaviour and political behaviour (Pelser and Botes 1992:3).

The focus of the article is, therefore, to examine the relationship between the white overbearing political structures and processes and their domination and regulation of black athletics in South Africa (1894-1992). The domination and regulation took place in three broad identifiable periods, which will also provide the structure for the article. The three broad periods that were identified to structure the investigation are:

- The period 1894-1960, which displayed the government's moderate instrumental rational approach to the regulation of sport in South Africa and resulted in informal unregulated segregation between the different racial groups. The year 1894 was selected as the entry point, because the controlling body (SAAAU) was formed on this date. The power relationship in the first period was between the regulators of athletic clubs, the national union and black clubs/athletes. It will be demonstrated how white civil society progressively used their organisational powers to regulate and enforce racial segregation in athletics, albeit in an "informal" manner. When the 1960 Olympic Games were staged in Rome, South Africa sent an all-white team to the multi-national event. This racially motivated strategy resulted in the country's last participation in this mega multi-national sport event and the demise of a normal relationship between South Africa and the international sporting community.
- The second era, 1960–1976, displayed a strong centralised approach by the apartheid government based on a highly regulated instrumental rational approach. This was also the period of the National Party's stubborn sport policy of multi-racialism and multi-racial meetings, which progressively alienated South African athletics from the international athletic fraternity. It culminated when South Africa's membership of the International Amateur Athletic Federation (IAAF) was terminated and ended any official contact with any of the member countries of the IAAF.
- The last era, 1977–1992, represents a period of gradual normalisation and of slow change to a value driven approach to the regulation of athletics. The strategy and policies of this period aligned stronger with the value rational approach based on values and the provision of more equal access to resources to aid development of black athletics in South Africa.

The three eras also reflect an interesting change in terms of the primary role players which regulated the power relationships in sport during the three phases. During the first period (1894-1960), civil society (national athletic body/provinces and clubs) controlled the regulation and power relationship within athletics. In the second period the role of government (1960-1976) was dominant and athletics was caught in the cross fire between government and civil society. The last period (1977 to 1992) represents a contrasting period of

normalisation, when the regulation of athletics reverted back into the hands of athletic administrators. The athletic officials managed during the last phase to normalise athletics within the broader impediments of grand apartheid and to place more emphasis on values and development. The structures and processes in athletics which discriminated against black athletes were dismantled, and athletics were normalised in a stronger value driven process which led to the development of black athletes, especially on the gold mines. This resulted in an explosion of their performances. Black athletes quickly became dominant in, especially, the longer and middle distances in the country. However, the positive changes did not translate to re-admittance into the IAAF and the International Olympic Committee (IOC). The admission back into the international fold was delayed until the African National Congress (ANC) was satisfied with the pace of the progress towards full integration between the opposing sport organisations in South Africa.

The focus of the article will be to trace the development path of black athletics in each of the three eras. The aim is to provide an insight into the manner in which the administration of black and coloured athletics was manipulated to achieve specific political goals. The regulation was done initially within the ideological framework of apartheid's model. However, in the subsequent eras the instrumental rational approach was replaced by a value driven approach partly driven by ulterior motives, but also by values. The value driven approach was partly done in an attempt to achieve international recognition and re-acceptance into the international sporting community. Through all three eras, the bigger scheme of the development of black and coloured athletics was therefore perpetually manipulated by the prevailing interest of politics, which highly politicised the development of black athletics in the country.

3. THE BACKGROUND TO SPORT DEVELOPMENT IN SOUTH AFRICA

In general, development in sport rests on a variety of power relationships which branch from policy decisions of central government and which cascade down to provinces, clubs and elected individuals. The regulatory approach of civil society (1894-1960) and government (1960-1976) was strongly underpinned by the values of the instrumental rational approach to achieve a specific outcome. The outcome was to complement the broader political policies to separate the various race groups in South Africa under the system of apartheid.

During the foundation period of the first phase (1894-1960), the central government was rather distant and aloof in formulating and to regulating sport. In the absence of a sports policy, government only indirectly dictated the power relations and policies that governed sport. The regulatory control was in the hands of the national governing body of athletics, the SAAU, provinces

and clubs acting within the apartheid context. The result was that the social relationship and control was in the hands of provinces and clubs (civil society) which amounted to a bottom up approach to sport. The enfolding relationship, power structures and power relationships between racial groups and the participation at meetings was dictated by the prevailing customs in society and not by central government as such.

In the Gramscian notion of hegemony, the ideological and cultural domination of one class over the other is achieved by engineering consensus through controlling cultural forms (Jarvie 2006:29) This power relationship is essentially a social relationship and its control was of paramount importance to establish the system of informal separateness in the foundation years (Sugden and Tomlinson 2002:9). As Hargreaves (1986:3) explains, the use of power is the relationship between the classes and the different agents and it is determined by the agent's access to relevant sources. The black community was excluded from the various levels of power and had limited access to resources, which put them on the back foot and they passively had to accept their alienation and lack of ownership of power resources for decades. Only much later in the second period (1960-1976), the pressure of the international community on the South African apartheid regime became an available resource that enabled them to apply pressure through resistance movements in reversing the power and social relationship in sport.

As Hall, Parry and Winch (see Marray and Vahed 2009:8-17) explain, in apartheid South Africa sport was always a part of the broader ideology. The regulation of sport also ensured the racial boundaries that aligned with the aim of separate development in the country. The authors demonstrated how cricket was used from early on in South Africa as part of the institutionalisation of segregation and eventually apartheid in the country. Sport was therefore an important additional instrument to enforce the unequal power relationship between white and black in the country.

4. THE PERIOD OF INFORMAL SEGREGATION, 1894-1960

The first identifiable period in the development of the administration of athletics in South Africa spanned the formation of the SAAAU (1894) until the 1960 Rome Olympic Games. The newly formed SAAAU consisted of the following affiliated clubs: Wanderers, Zoutpansberg, Kimberley, Bloemfontein and Pietermaritzburg. The minutes of the first meeting was not preserved, but the clubs that formed the SAAAU were all-white, which excluded non-whites (Le Roux 1984:7).

The first athletic clubs informally excluded or discourage black participation in the athletic events that were organised and ensured from the outset a divergence of paths between white and black. This initial strategy by civil society could be classified as a moderate form of instrumental rational approach to

regulate and administer athletics. *The Diamond Field Advertiser* reported the formation of the first athletic club north of the Orange River before the Anglo-Boer War (Coghlan 1986:217). The club was an all-white arrangement and provided an insight of how athletics developed during the early years in South Africa. The Kimberley based *Diamond News* advertised a sport event in 1870 that specifically excluded black athletes (Coghlan 1986:236). This action aligns with the notion of Hall, Parry and Winch (see Marray and Vahed 2009:8-17) that sport in South Africa was always part of a broader ideology to ensure that racial boundaries be constructed. This strategy determined the overall social and political structure of the country for the future. In line with this policy to separate races, the *Diamond Field Advertiser* reported that a meeting for blacks was organised at De Beers in 1892.

However, in spite of the fact that blacks were kept out of the official organisation of athletics, there exist reports of their participation in athletics. At a meeting on the parade in Cape Town in 1863, it is reported that a black athlete, Simeon, gained second place to W Day in the 880 yards. In Port Elizabeth events for black athletes were included at most meetings with Makwena, who won the mile in 4 minutes 53 seconds, one second faster than Jim Brown's time, in the first South African Mile Challenge in 1885. In East London there was also a Native Championship with the most notable performance that of Peter Dalaze who won the 880 yards in 2 minutes 14,2 seconds in 1894 (Steyn 2015:17).

The first South African Athletics Championship was held in Kimberley in 1894 and by all accounts was a very successful meeting (Minutes SAAU).¹ On the second day of the championship a three-mile cycle race for coloureds was included in the programme, but this was the only allowance that was made for non-white participation in the national championship.

From the outset, the objective was clearly to encourage black and coloured participants to form their own (separate) clubs. In Kimberley, the Colonial Athletic Club for Coloureds were formed in 1895. Blacks were allowed to join, but disagreements quickly surfaced between the various groups about representation on a national level. The Western Province Coloured Amateur Athletics and Cycling Union was also formed with its inaugural meeting at Green Point in 1902 (Steyn 2015:17). The national controlling body, the SAAAU, quickly squashed any participation by these clubs on a national level. The 1896 South African Athletics Championship led to a complaint against the participation of "Kaffirs" [sic] and the idea of including non-whites was dropped.²

The administration and organisation of black athletics in the Free State also developed separately from their white athletics counterparts and, from early on, non-white meetings were separately held from white meetings. The first reported meeting for blacks in the Free State was in 1886 when a native sport day with

1 The minutes of the South African Amateur Athletic Union appears in Le Roux (1984).

2 It is accepted that the word is derogatory manner, but it is functional within this context.

athletic items was held at the St Augustine mission station. However, the Free State Athletic Union organised a meeting on their Independence Day in 1885 and according to *The Friend* it included a “Kaffir” [sic] race (Coghlan 1986:235).

The control of social relationships in all other regions in South Africa followed a similar approach to that in Kimberley and in the Free State. In a similar manner, the participation of blacks at sports days and athletics in other areas of the country also became problematic and resulted in the termination of “mixed” meetings. The 1904 South African Championship held at the Wanderers track in Johannesburg had its share of controversy and the proposed inclusion of events for blacks were subsequently hotly debated and eventually withdrawn. In November the Free State Athletic Union (Orange River Colony A.A. and C.A.) enquired from the SAAAU about the possibility of the participation of blacks at athletic meetings. The national body discussed the matter under the item “Native Competition” and reported back that no rules exist about their participation, but that provinces should refrain from including such races in future programmes (Minutes SAAU). The Galloway Sport Union, based between Winburg and Brandfort, included an obstacle race in 1910 for “Kaffirs” [sic] in their programme (Gutter 1984:115). The fact that the race was an obstacle race raises the suspicion that it was included predominately for entertainment value, and not a serious attempt to develop black athletics in the Free State.

The “first” participation of black athletes at the Olympic Games took place in 1904 in St Louis and their participation was more a coincidence than planned or organised. General Cronje, the former Boer commander, was part of a travelling circus that gave exhibitions of skirmishes during the Anglo-Boer War (1899-1902) to the American public. Two of the servants in his entourage were black labourers, Len Tau and Yamasani (Jan Masami?), who decided on the spur of the moment to partake in the marathon race. The two men, sporting hats and knee length pants with race bibs displaying the numbers 30 and 35, became the first black athletes to compete in the Olympic Games. Len Tau finished in a credible ninth place, in spite of the fact that he lost valuable time when chased off the course by a vicious dog through a corn field (Wallechinsky 1984:35).

The controversial matter of racial integration in sport and the participation of blacks in meetings kept on creating problems in the early decades. In Johannesburg controversy arose on several occasions as a result of the attendance of coloureds at sport meetings. The advice that was forthcoming from the SAAAU to the provinces and the clubs was that the time was not ripe to allow blacks and coloureds to attend or to participate in meetings (Coghlan 1986:235).

The organisation and administration of black and coloured athletics in South Africa during the first phase, from 1894-1960, showed a clear pattern. The inclusion of races for blacks at sports days certainly varies from sheer amusement value (obstacle race) to a token accommodation and, at best, a low

level of informal accommodation. The adverse reaction of the various provincial unions to the participation of blacks and coloureds in meetings organised by white clubs during the initial phase yields only one inference. The practice to allow non-whites to compete against whites, or at white organised meetings, should be discouraged, because it transgressed the social rules of the era. The regulatory measures were basically done from a power relationship with the aim to establish a social relationship of strict separation within the South African society. This strategy relates strongly to the Gramscian notion of hegemony of the ideological and cultural domination of one class over another and is achieved by engineering consensus through the control of all cultural forms (Jarvie 2006:29). The foundation years of athletics in South Africa therefore constituted a power relationship to control the social relationships and to aid the system of informal separateness in society (Sugden and Tomlinson 2002:9).

While black and coloured athletes were alienated, or prevented from any international exposure, all-white teams were very successfully competing internationally. A whole host of white South African athletes competed at the various Olympic tournaments with great success and excelled at the Olympic Games tournaments. They won the following Olympic medals in London (1908) one gold, one silver, Stockholm (1912) one gold, one silver, Antwerp (1920) one gold, four silver, one bronze, Paris (1924) one silver, one bronze, Amsterdam (1928) one gold, Los Angeles (1932) one silver, one bronze, Helsinki (1952) one gold, one silver, and Rome (1960) one bronze (Le Roux, 1984:73-74).

However, the "indirect" nature of sport segregation through the actions of civil society (athletic bodies/clubs) and indirectly by proxy of petty and grand apartheid could not be maintained in the long run. In 1961, South Africa pulled out of the British Commonwealth to become a republic and this became a watershed period. The world had changed around South Africa, and the perception of the global community was influenced and changed by the decolonisation wave which brought new role players to the fore. The newly found decolonised states, especially from Africa, used sport very effectively to put pressure on South African to reform and, also, to normalise sport.

The South African apartheid government in the late 1950s had been highly regulated, but had never officially stated its national sports policy. However, it soon became clear that, to maintain membership of the IOC and the IAAF, the official government position on sport should be explained. The former Minister of the Interior, Senator Jan de Klerk, dispelled in 1956 any uncertainties about the *status quo*, "South African custom is that within the boundaries of the Republic, whites and non-whites exercise their sport separately and this must be adhered to" (Allison 1986:120).

The sports policy within the broader apartheid policy was the watershed moment which started the road down the slippery slope to isolation for South African sport. International political pressure was building up against the

continued participation of its teams in international events. The pressure was aimed at South Africa's apartheid policies and the exclusion of black and coloured athletes from its teams. At the 1960 Olympic Games the IOC and participating countries took note that the South Africa team was exclusively white and blacks were excluded. International criticism was initially muted, but soon more and more descending voices added their weight to the disapproval of South Africa's clearly discriminating policies (Killanan and Rhoda 1979:115). This was the turning point on the road of no return and the next period was the critical phase.

5. 1960–1976: THE MULTI-RACIAL EXPERIMENT AND THE ROAD TO ISOLATION AND EXPULSION

In South Africa's apartheid era the second period (1960-1976) was characterised by a shift from a moderate form of instrumental rational approach to a much stronger and assertive application and regulation of the sport policy. Government adopted a strong instrumental rational approach to sport with the specific aim of enforcing a policy of separation. It took firm control of the power relationship, using centralised control dictating to civil society (SAAAU, provinces and clubs) (Allison 1986:120).

Government's instrumental rational approach translated to an assertive application of the sports policy. However, this centralised assertiveness in reality just expedited the country's international isolation in all sports codes. It ignited the fuse of international boycotts and expedited the total isolation and global boycott of South African sport (athletics). The IOC in 1970 and the IAAF in 1976 terminated South Africa's membership from their esteemed organisations. The regulation of athletics within the apartheid and sports policy, the political and social domination of one racial group over the other, and the denial of black and coloured sportspeople the same access to resources, were the death knell for international contact. The South African government's insistence that the international world should accept the discrimination on the basis of race and the social engineering resulted in the country's expulsion from the international arena (Rademeyer 2013:71).

The National Party's strong regulatory approach to sport was extended throughout the layers of society to civil society and all the sports codes. In the face of the authoritative approach, the Amateur sports code was "defenceless" and forced to operate inside the centralised directives of multi-racialism to administer their sport. In practical terms it amounts to separate teams which represented the different race groups in the country and no mixed teams were allowed. The National Party was adamant and defiant in their stance against the international world and requests from the IOC and IAAF to normalise sport by picking teams on merit and to allow equal access to resources were brushed aside. Government's policy of multi-racialism was in tune with their balkanisation

of the country in homelands. The idea was that black athletes should represent their ethnic group on the sports field. This was a group approach with most opportunities and resources going to the privileged white group. The ethos of sport was severely tarnished due to the lack of equal access to sources for the development of black groups.

In essence, the National Party government regarded sport as just an extension of its policy of separate development. This balkanisation of the country and unequal treatment of its citizens resulted in the increase of international and local pressure and criticism aimed at South Africa's racial policies. The usage of sport to enforce cleavages based on race set the country towards a course of international expulsion and total isolation on the sports fields.

During the period 1960-1976 the policy resulted in the fact that society was clearly split into a white and a non-white section. The sports administrators acting within the political framework of the political regime insisted that each group should represent their racial affiliation at the 1964 Tokyo Olympic Games. This discriminatory stance was clearly not acceptable to the underpinning values of the IOC who insisted that one team should represent one country and that it should be selected on merit. The South African government backed down marginally and proposed a mixed team, basically white with a sprinkling of black boxers (BBC-website) in an attempt to satisfy the IOC. The defiance led to the IOC decision that South Africa was not allowed to participate at the 1964 Olympic Games (Killanan and Rhoda 1979:115). This started a period in the wilderness and South Africans were not allowed to compete at the Olympic Games for 28 years.

On a domestic level the administration and organisation of black athletics also fragmented into two opposing directions and into two separate controlling bodies. In 1951 the SA Bantu Athletics and Cycling Association (SABAC) was formed to organise and control sport on the gold mines. They moved closer to the white controlled SAAAU and applied to attend the 1961 Executive Meeting (Minutes SAAAU). The SABAC controlled sport on the mines and, from the early 1960s, successfully organised annual non-white South African championships for the workers on the mines. However, the South African Bantu Amateur Athletic and Cycling Federation (SABAC) was formed in 1949 and started to organise meetings. The first available results are from the 1961 meeting in the Orlando Stadium (Steyn 2015:187). Benoni Malaka won the 880 yards in 1 minute 56,3 seconds and again competed on 6 August at a meeting in Bulawayo and improved his time to a creditable 1 minute 55,1 seconds (Steyn 2015:191).

Unofficially (without registration/race numbers), black athletes were also "allowed" to take part in the annual Comrades Race. During the 1961 race John Mkwahyana finished in the 31st place out of a total of 98 athletes. He received rousing applause for his courage. The solitary runner's participation started a trickle of more unofficial black athlete's joining the race in the years that followed (Alexander 1985:205).

During 1962 a black South African athletic team from the gold mines was to compete against a black team from Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe). Several athletes from South Africa gained first places, such as Elliot Shale in the 100 yards and Didibeng Makoena in the 220 yards. Khosi and Malaka respectively won the 440 and 880 yards and Edward Sethsedi (later the first black council member of the SAAAU) finished first in the mile event (*South African Athletics Annual* 1962:42).

South Africa's racial duplicity was exposed when on 20 August 1962 an all-white cross country team from South Africa travelled northwards to Bulawayo to compete against an all-black team from Rhodesia. R Ndhlovu and A Gumbo, both from Rhodesia, took the first two places in the 12 kilometre cross country event. The black Rhodesian team managed to take the honours in the team competition with 38 penalty points against the South Africans' 40 penalty points (*South African Athletics Annual* 1970:102).

The next championship was held at Umtata on 5 and 6 May 1962 and was labelled the "South African Non-European Championship" (*South African Athletics Annual* 1962:79). The non-white championship became the primary outlet for the aspirations of African or black athletics and was under the guidance of sport and recreation departments at the gold mines. The South African gold mines employed hundreds of thousands of black migrant workers and athletics was one of the recommended pastimes for the workers, especially those of the Anglo-American Corporation (Mayer 2009:32).

During the 1962 non-white championships at Umtata black athletes, mostly from the gold mines, participated in sprints, hurdles, middle, as well as long distances up to the marathon. The black athletes also participated in field events, such as the high, long and triple jump, and in the throwing events. Humphrey Khosi, who was later destined for bigger things, won the 440 yards, but came second in the 880 yards behind Benoni Malaka. Johannes Metsing, who finished second in the three mile event, rose to national prominence in the first multi-racial meeting eight years later in Cape Town (*South African Athletics Annual* 1962:79). Henry Dunga won the marathon title for non-whites in 2 hours 37 minutes 27 seconds with John Nkwanyana second, and E Sibaya third (Steyn 2015:221).

The South African Non-Racial Olympic Committee (SACOS), formed outside the auspices of SABAC, was heavily opposed to the SAAAU. SACOS was predominately prominent among the coloured communities of the Witwatersrand and the Western Cape (Mayer 2009:32). The SACOS body was totally opposed to any contact with the South African government or any sports codes under white control. The organisation was headed by Dennis Brutus and Hassam Howe and the SACOS slogan, "No normal sport in an abnormal society", signified their hostility towards the apartheid regime's deeper socioeconomic foundation of unequal access to resources.

In 1962, SAATFA took a decision to include black and coloured athletes in their annual performance lists. The effect of this step within the broader context may be superficial, but for the first time some prominence was given to the performances of black athletes. In the 1962 edition the performances of 11 black athletes were included in the performance list. However, the names of the non-whites were indicated with an asterisk (*South African Athletics Annual* 1962).

A black team that toured overseas consisted of ten athletes, including Humphrey Khosi, Benoni Malaka and Timothy Koloti. The team participated in the 1963 British Championship and Khosi recorded an excellent time of 1 minute 50,3 seconds in the 880 yards (Steyn 2015:238). Khosi's phenomenal performance two years later, in 1964, propelled black athletics into national and international prominence. At a meeting in the Orlando Stadium, Khosi achieved the fastest time ever in South Africa over the 880 yards, when he clocked a fast time of 1 minute 48,9 seconds. He became the first South African athlete to complete the two lap distance in less than 1 minute 50 seconds. Khosi followed up on this performance with another excellent performance when he improved his time to 1 minute 48, 7 seconds in the next race. The positive spin-off was that the SAAAU decided not to keep separate records for white and black athletes. Khosi, therefore, became the first black man to officially hold a South African record (Le Roux 1984:31).

Khosi improved on his own South African record on 15 July 1967 when he set a time of 1 minute 48,6 seconds in an 800 metre race in London. The next day he set another first when he competed against his white counterpart, Vaughn Jacklin, in an 800 metre race in Dublin. The two athletes, one black and one white, both from South Africa, became the first South Africans to officially compete against each other in a race (Mayer 2009:33).

The South Africa government's instrumental rational approach and its insistence on separate teams for separate race groups were maintained, in spite of international condemnation. In 1964 the government still insisted that South Africa be presented by different teams at the Olympic Games. Separate trials were held in Pretoria in Mamelodi for black athletes and at the Air Force track at Valhalla for the whites. Humphrey Khosi and Benoni Malaka was selected for the former team, but predictably this social engineering was not accepted by the IOC (Steyn 2015:258).

In 1965 the illogical decision was made to stage separate marathon trials in Potchefstroom to select two athletes to compete abroad. The decision was to hold one race for white athletes and the second race for black athletes. The finishing time of the first and second place in the race for black athletes was faster than the white race (Le Roux 1984:94). Clifford Malope won the race for black athletes in 2 hours 30 minutes 34,8 seconds, while the race for white athletes was won by Sonny van Antwerp in 2 hours 30 minutes and 43,8 seconds. Metsing and the second place finisher, Clifford Malope, competed

in the Athens marathon; thereby becoming the first non-whites to represent South Africa in an athletic event (Steyn 2015: 285).

The 1969 South African Non-White Championships were held at the Marievale Bantu Stadium and black athletes from Rhodesia (Zimbabwe) were invited to compete in the meeting. In the 800 metres S Shekede from Rhodesia was in one of the heats, but in the final, Humphrey Khosi took the honours in a fast 1 minute 50,3 seconds (*South African Athletics Annual 1970:107*).

In 1968 there was some optimism that a South African team would be allowed to compete in the 1968 Mexico Olympic Games. The IOC dispatched a fact-finding committee to South Africa and they issued a favourable report on the normalisation of sport in the country. However, in spite of the favourable report, the international tide had firmly turned against South Africa and pressure was building up against South Africa's participation in Mexico. The Mexican Olympic Organising Committee subsequently issued a declaration that they could not guarantee the South African team's safety (Killanin and Rhoda 1979:115).

The continued isolation and international pressure resulted in gradual, but marginal, reforms in South African sport. The first few years from 1970 to 1974 brought a number of changes, but the progress was impeded by the overarching national segregation policies (Rademeyer 2013:71) and the continued emphasis on multi-racial sport. The regulation was that the different ethnic groups in the country should compete within their ethnic distinctions as Tswanas, Vendas, Zulus or Sothos against whites at the so-called multi-racial international meetings.

The continued isolation led to the organisation of the first "veelvolkige" or multi-racial international meeting in Cape Town (Green Point Stadium). It was predominately local athletes who participated and a sprinkling of international athletes to provide an international flavour. White and black athletes from South Africa were allowed for the first time to compete against each other, but with their racial affiliation conspicuously displayed on their running vests. The country held its breath that this bold step would not create an incident, but everything went smoothly. This ill-conceived strategy did set South Africa on its way towards multi-racial sport as a possible solution to the increasing isolation, but, in essence, it was one step forward and two steps back.

The organisers, acting on the instruction of the South African government, were obliged to ensure that each racial group displayed its racial affiliation on their running singlets. Andries Krogmann competed against his countryman, Johannes Metsing, in an epic battle over 10 000 metres. Metsing had to display his racial classification as Tswana on his red singlet. Khosi competed in the 800 metres, but had to display his "homeland", QwaQwa, on his vest. He finished second behind the British athlete, Andy Carter (*South African Athletics Annual 1972:10*).

The 1973 South African Games was staged along the same racial lines as the first multi-racial meeting at Green Point Stadium. The South African

Games was intended to soften the impact that its sportsmen and women were again banned from the 1972 Olympic Games in Munich. The organisers took a further step when a separate South African Games for non-whites was staged in the Orlando Stadium (Oosthuizen and Swanepoel 1973:9). The international community was not in the least impressed by the hijacking of the Olympic Games concept. In fact, this opportunistic use of the hijacking of the Olympic Games concept forced a wider gap between South African athletics and the international sports community.

The 1973 South African Games was organised in step with government policy that whites, blacks and coloureds could compete against each other, but within the framework of multi-racialism. The racial affiliation was again enforced, but in a more disguised manner. Josiah Leserwane, who finished third in the 400 metres, had to run under his club banner of Wes-Wits, and Titus Mamabula for Highveld, while the white athletes were running for South Africa (Oosthuizen and Swanepoel 1973:130-131).

Although South Africa was banned from international meetings, individual athletes were still allowed to compete in international meetings, because the SAAAU was still a member of the IAAF. In the aftermath of the 1973 South African Games, small groups of South African athletes were touring in Europe. To lessen the criticism on their presence, the underpinning strategy was to include white and black athletes in the groups. Danie Malan, Dicky Broberg and Motsapi Moroosi took part in a meeting in Cologne in Germany, which was attended by 30 000 spectators. Malan used the opportunity to set a new world record in the 1 000 metres in 2 minutes 16 seconds (*South African Athletics Annual* 1974).

The organisers of the 1974 Comrades Marathon officially allowed black runners to compete in the annual race. However, in line with government's policy of multi-racialism, each racial group had to display a tag with its race affiliation. When the Zulu tags were depleted, they handed out Tshwana tags to the Zulu athletes in a remarkable act of insensitivity (Alexander 1985:205).

However, the multi-racialism policy simply served to accelerate the expulsion of South African sport from international bodies and, eventually, led to total isolation from all the sports codes. The South African athletics administrators made a vain attempt to implement changes, but their progress to normalise athletics was restricted within the strong regulatory instrumental approach from government. In 1974, the SAAAU took the bold step to implement changes and made a major constitutional reshuffle. They changed the membership from a provincial to a racial affiliation (on the basis of racial lines). The structure of the SAAAU consisted of three independent bodies under an umbrella coordinating body: one for whites, one for coloureds and one for blacks (Le Roux 1984:36).

In an effort to normalise athletics, the SAAAU then organised two championship events, one for whites and one for non-whites. The two separate championship events were followed by an open athletic championship for all

athletes, black and white. The first black athlete who rose to the top was the enigmatic Titus Mamabolo, who won an epic battle against Ewald Bonzet in the 5 000 metres. He repeated the feat a year later in 1975 at the open South African Championship in Pretoria to become the first black South African champion in athletics (*South African Athletics Annual 1974; 1975*).

The experiment of two separated championships for whites and blacks, followed by an open South African Championship, only lasted until 1977 when it was scrapped in favour of one championship for all race groups in South Africa. A further development was that the controlling bodies of the three racial groups accepted the Springbok colours as the national colours for all athletes. The first black athlete to be awarded his Springbok blazer was Matthews Batswadi, who excelled in middle and long distances.

The racial division that still underpinned the structural organisation of athletics in South Africa seemed to be tedious and the predominant reason why the international community remained sceptical. However, it should be acknowledged that the transformation of sport had to set its pace against the broader policy decisions of the government. As a result, their constitutional and policy changes were always too little, too late to satisfy the demands of the international community.

However, in spite of the “advances” in South Africa to normalise athletics, the international sporting community had clearly lost patience with its racial policies. In 1976 the killer blow for athletics was struck when South Africa lost its IAAF membership at the annual congress in Montreal. Russia, Senegal and Sudan tabled a notion to terminate South Africa’s membership of the controlling body. The notion was accepted with the support of 227 votes against 142 (*Rand Daily Mail 1976*).

The termination of South Africa’s membership of the IAAF marked the end of South African athletes’ participation as individuals at international meetings in Europe. Small groups of athletes from South Africa, made up of black and white athletes, were regularly touring in Europe at that stage. This decision brought an end to this arrangement and a mixed team of black and white athletes that was scheduled to tour Europe had to be cancelled (*Rand Daily Mail 1976*).

The international athletics controlling body and the international sports community had lost patience with South Africa’s solution of dividing the controlling body into sub-systems of white, black and coloured controlling bodies under the auspices of a multi-racial SAAAU. The effect of the expulsion from the IAAF on South African athletics and on the position of black athletes was profound and forced them into the athletic wilderness. Although the expulsion triggered changes to national policies, the adjustments were always a matter of too little, too late. The expulsion started a sad period in South African athletics that lasted 18 years and promising careers of white and black athletes were drained into the pool of international isolation.

6. THE PERIOD 1977-1992: TOO LITTLE, TOO LATE

The termination of South Africa's IAAF membership was hard hitting the country's athletes, but had a positive effect on national policies. The National Party started to move away from a strong regulatory instrumental rational approach to sport and, gradually, allowed more leeway for athletics administrators to adopt a rational approach to sport. The National Party's sports policy in the late 1970s and the 1980s contained less central governmental control and allowed more autonomy for sport bodies (Weber 1947:25; Rademeyer 2013:71-72). The initial strong regulatory approach was softened, which allowed greater access to resources and equal opportunities for all athletes in the country. The enlightened sports policy and the greater leeway for sport ensured that values started to play a stronger role in the administration and regulation of athletics. On the gold mines this led to an explosion of performances by black middle distance athletes.

The National Party government also made major changes to their sports policy during the 1980s (See Rademeyer 2013:71-72). The new sports policy basically removed all discrimination based on race and reflected a strong rational approach to sport. It also indicated that, "the Department of Sport will assist the local authorities to provide sport facilities for all population groups according to their needs" (Rademeyer 2013:72). The newly appointed Minister of Sport, FW de Klerk, declared, "It is not in the interest of sport in South Africa to enforce the stated guidelines by law. The autonomy of sport bodies in respect of sport is recognised provided that the general laws of the country are upheld" (Rademeyer 2013:72).

During 1977 the all-white SAAAU was disbanded which symbolically brought an end to racial separation within the different controlling bodies. The SAAAU adopted a new constitution that brought substantial changes to the regulation of athletics, which was in many aspects more liberal than the official government policies. The new constitutional changes made provision for only one governing body, one national championship at junior and senior level and ensured the autonomy of provincial bodies and clubs. These constitutional changes brought an end to the three governing bodies for the three racial groups in South Africa. The constitution also endorsed the decision taken in 1976 about Springbok Colours as the only colours for national teams and individuals (Le Roux 1984:39).

However, the IAAF and the international sports community continued to view any South Africa initiative or strategy with suspicion and were therefore not prepared to acknowledge, or to legitimise, the changes which were short of full integration. The South African athletic fraternity was unable to change national policies and they were left stranded in the sports wilderness.

However, in spite of lack of international recognition, the SAAAU's direction change benefited black athletes tremendously. With the domestic doors now open to black athletics, the athletes stepped forward so assertively that they

soon dominated their white counterparts in many disciplines, especially the middle distances.

The progress and development of black athletes and their rise to the top in, especially, the middle and long distances were meteoric. In the 1978 annual performance rankings their overall position on the list was modest and sporadic. However, only one year after the opening of opportunities, black athletes started to rise to the top of the performance list. Sydney Maree headed the list in the 1 500 metres, with William Mogoregi who moved up into the seventh spot. In the 5 000 metres Matthews Motshwarateu headed the list, while his namesake, Matthews Batstwadi, was the fastest in the 10 000 metres. In the South African Cross Country Championship five black athletes finished among the top ten in the men's race. In the 1979 10 000 metres rankings, the names of four black athletes appeared on the list (*South African Athletics Annual 1979; 1980*).

In spite of the progress in South Africa to normalise athletics, very little recognition or encouragement was forthcoming from the international community. In 1978 the SAAAU extended an invitation to the IAAF to send a fact-finding committee to South Africa to see the advances that were made to normalise athletics in the country. However, the IAAF was not even prepared to discuss the invitation at their biennial Congress in Porto Rico (Le Roux 1984:41).

In an effort to fully realise their talents, top athletes of all races then decided to look at other alternatives to allow them to compete internationally. The absence of real possibilities in South Africa impacted negatively on the black athletes and they were looking for any way to bypass the boycott. In essence, the black and coloured athletes were caught in the crossfire between South Africa's apartheid policies and international condemnation of the policies which discriminated against them (Mayer 2009:65).

Sydney Maree decided to leave South Africa and took an athletic scholarship at the Villanova University in the United States where he was coached by the legendary coach, Jumbo Elliot. This allowed Maree to compete abroad, including against the legendary Steve Ovett (Elliot 1983:115). Maree's career reached a wonderful pinnacle when he broke Ovett's three-year-old world record in Cologne in August 1983, running 3 minutes 31,24 seconds (Mayer 2014:119). Another black star athlete of the 1980s was Matthews Motshwarateu, who set a new South African record of 27 minutes 48,2 seconds in the 10 000 metres. He also left for an American University with a scholarship.

The period 1980-1992 signified South Africa's total isolation from the athletic fraternity, ostracised by their peers and left stranded within the proverbial athletic wilderness. The Russian authorities were not even prepared to issue visas to South African citizens to attend the 1980 Olympic Games in Moscow as spectators. All that was left, was to award Springbok colours to top athletes and to send them as spectators to attend top meetings in Europe, such as the IAAF World Championships. Top athletes, with the possibility of competing under

a flag of convenience, such as Zola Budd, left the country to compete for an adopted country in the Olympic Games and at other top meetings (Vine 1984).

The SAAAU, in a desperate attempt to get back at the IAAF, started a court case against the world governing body. However, the attorneys of the IAAF requested the constitution of every club in South Africa, which considerably delayed the process. The iron clad curtain had certainly come down on South African athletics and a generation of top athletes, including Matthews Temane, had to watch their careers dwindling and fading away, while South African athletics remained in the cold and totally isolated.

However, ironically within the iron clad isolation, black athletes, especially those employed by the gold mines, thrived and their performances were exceptional. In the decade before the normalisation and democratisation of South Africa, black athletes dominated the longer distances. In the 1990 performance list in the 5 000 metres, seven of the top ten athletes on the list were black athletes and in the 10 000 metres only one performance was not from a black athlete. In the 1990 South African cross country meeting only one white athlete was among the top ten placing and he was in the tenth position. In the 15km championship the first ten athletes were all black athletes (*South African Athletics Annual* 1991). The pattern was repeated on the 1991 performance list in the year before South Africa re-entered the international fray, with nine black athletes in the top ten in the 10 000 metres, and seven black athletes in the top ten in the cross country championship. In the South African half marathon championship black athletes filled nine of the first ten places (*South African Athletics Annual* 1992).

7. CONCLUSION

In a remarkable manner the normalisation and unification of sport in South Africa actually pre-empted the process of democratisation in the country. President FW de Klerk's speech in parliament in 1990 started the process to normalise the political environment when he unbanned all black opposition parties. However, the democratisation took place four years later in 1994 – two years after South African sport was readmitted to the international fold. The role of sport in relation to nation building cannot be quantified, but it certainly made a major contribution to the broader political changes that have been made in South Africa.

The IOC and the IAAF directive for re-admission into the international fold were inequitable and clear. All opposing sports bodies in the different codes must be united within one non-racial sports body. The unification process in athletics was completed in time for the 1991 Tokyo World Championships, but the internal battle between the IOC and the IAAF delayed South Africa's participation until the 1992 Barcelona Olympics (Simson and Jennings 1992: 348-349). The first participation of a united South African athletics team was therefore postponed

until the African championship in Dakar. South Africa's participation at the 1992 Olympic Games signified the country's arrival back on the international scene.

The relationship between sport and politics in South Africa from a political-sociological perspective, and specifically the status and position of black athletes, can be divided in three broad patterns. During the first period (1894-1960) the prevailing strategy was the Weberian instrumental rational approach applied and regulated by white civil society. The underpinning strategy was to separate racial groups in society and white and black and coloured athletics developed independently from each other. In the second period (1960-1976) the apartheid government assertively applied the instrumental rational approach to enforce apartheid cleavages on South African society. However, during the last period (1976-1992), the instrumental rational approach was replaced by the value rational approach which enabled black athletes to have greater access to development and this boosted their performances. The normalisation of athletics took place in 1990, which removed all previous barriers and allowed South Africa to send unified teams to compete all over the globe.

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