The Peoples' Club
A social and institutional history of Orlando Pirates Football Club, 1937 - 1973.

By

Richard Maguire

University of the Witwatersrand

Dissertation submitted to the Faculty of Arts in partial fulfillment for the degree BA Hons

November 1991

Acknowledgements

ıis work could not have been completed without the numerous and varied ontributions of many people. Here I would simply like to thank a few hose contibution was significant.

irstly, I am deeply grateful to Nyana Molete, for the initial enthusiasm nd for making possible the important first few interviews. I would also ike to thank Professor Delius for his tolerance of my failure to respect he time schedules that academic norms demand. Thanks are also due to roffessor Bonner for the encouragement in the final weeks, and to my onours classmates for providing a stimulating and friendly environment. am grateful too, to the staff at the Johannesburg Library for their ssistance and for putting up with my intrusions for so long. Peter aguire deserves a special mention: his technical expertise saved this dissertation from potential oblivion at the printing stage.

Special thanks to my parents for their constant support throughout my studies; to Dave Husy for his critical interest and for doing without his personal computer for what he said felt like ages - it was!. Deepest thanks to Sue Wixley for her love and understanding, without which, this task would have been so much more difficult.

Finally, thank you to Sidwell Mokgosinyana for accompanying me on numerous trips through Soweto and to all the old Pirates who welcomed into their homes.

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

Orlando Pirates is the "Peoples' Club". Although it is no longer as successful as it was for most of its long history - it is the oldest surviving club in top class football - Pirates can still call on a larger suppport than the current glamour club of South African soccer, Kaizer Chiefs - ironically born out of a split from the "Buccaneers" just over two decades ago.

One of the prime motivations for undertaking this study was to try and capture just why Pirates is - or was - regarded as the "Peoples' Club". Why a friend talking football on a ferry on the Zambezi was inundated by questions about Pirates from people who had never seen the club play, nor for that matter, heard of Chiefs or Moroka Swallows, the only club that approaches Pirates in terms of tradition and support.

Pirates support: in Orlando, nationwide and stretching beyond South African borders, is on the face of it a dormant support. The "Peoples' Club" hardly attracts more than five thousand fans to its matches nowadays. Where are the thousands that thronged to Natalspruit's Indian Sports grounds in the early sixties or to Orlando Stadium a decade later; what has happened to the families who wouldn't dream of allowing their sons to play for any other club in the 1950's?

If one enters any home in Orlando - and many other parts of Soweto including the hostels - one is likely to find people who will announce they are lifelong Pirates supporters. If one is aware, every day one will notice people, young and old, wearing some form of Pirates insignia, or displaying the club slogan on their cars.

"Once a Pirate always a Pirate" they will say between clenched teeth, as fervently as if they were in prayer. These supporters, most of whom stay away form the grounds today, repeat this litany as if by some chance, it will one day restore the club to its former glories and return it to the hands of its rightful owners.

For many supporters, "no one man can own Pirates" because "it belongs to the people." While it is patently not in the peoples hands today - a small clique of men having wrested control some eight years ago - precipitating a final split so that there are two Orlando Pirates operating today, there is still debate as to whom Pirates belongs.

For former players, including three surviving founders, the club was "for the people, but not to be ruled by them". While many supporters would share these sentiments, others recall the second half of the 1960's and much of the seventies as the period when the club was truly the "peoples" - a time when supporters had a much greater say in the running of the club although there voice was drowned beneath the clamour of warring factions of attached to influential supporters.

These factions might have been a small percentage of the actual support, but they were perhaps more representative of various opinions within the club than some of today's leadership are. With unity (seemingly) on the way to being achieved between the National Soccer League and the league from which it broke, the National Professional Soccer League, it is anyone's guesss what will happen when the two Orlando Pirates - one in each league - are forced to unite. Some are hopeful that the question of

the control of the club will be put to a meeting of all bona fide members, reversing the largely unpopular decision, taken in 1983, to convert the club into a private company, thus precipitating the acrimonious split.

This split - not the first in the club's 54 year history - was a culmination of the period regarded as "the time of the guns", characterised by mafia style rub-outs of rivals amongst power brokers in the club. This study wisely stops just short of this period.

In undertaking a study of Orlando Pirates between its inception (as Orlando Boys Club FC) in 1937 until 1973 (the year it achieved a clean sweep of all five trophies on offer), I have attempted to achieve two things:

Firstly, I have tried to document the progress of the club, charting its high points and low points, significant moments and successes and failures. This is in part the history of an institution.

Secondly, by focusing on this particular institution, I have tried to throw some light onto a vastly under-researched aspect of African urban history, namely sports clubs and associations interaction with, and impact on, the day-to-day lives of countless South Africans.

The nature of this work - based largely on oral accounts and dealing with an under-researched area of study - menas that it throws up more questions than it answers. Hopefully these questions might be the spur to more broad-ranging or in depth studies.

This history hopefully manages to provide insights into the role of organised sport, in general, and football clubs, in particular, in the context of poverty and opression. Orlando Pirates is an expression of urban African culture: as a football club it has generated passionate support; as a proudly revered institution it has been a unifying force as well as the source of bitter division; and as a symbol, it has come to be "the second family name" of countless residents of Soweto.

Chapter One examines the origins of the club, and some of the early influences operating on the original members. It also provides an impresssion of some of Pirates early rivals.

Chapter Two charts the club's rise, in the years of amateur football, to become the country's greatest club, the first to attract a national following. This chapter makes brief reference to the two football associations operating at the time. It is impossible, however to do any justice to the rich histories of the JBFA, founded in 1929 at the behest of the Johannesburg City Council, and Jafa which followed soon after, attempting to steer a more independant course. This chapter also looks at a number of themes of relevance to organised football in the 1940's and 1950's, such as the struggle over facilities and the rise in unrest at matches towards the end of this period.

Both of these themes continue into the 1960's, which I have dubbed the era of semi-professionalism. Chapter Three examines Pirates in the context of the early attempts at small time professionalism. It also assesses the role of patrons - the so-called "big men" who wielded power in the associations and clubs throughout the period under review but really had "their day" in this decade.

This chapter also makes reference to the independant South African Soccer League and its rival, the fledgeling NPSL. The struggles waged between these two bodies were in many ways a continuation of those which were waged between the JBFA and Jafa; with the local branch of the state - now backed by "white" football bodies - continuing to try and influence developments.

Phenomena such as patronage and "Big Men" should be understood in the context of South Africa's particularly skewed social relations which give rise to such struggles as existed between the "Bantu" and "African" factions in football administration.

Chapter Four, to some extent, maintains this theme in its examination of the nature of Pirates' organisation. In this chapter I argue that the club displayed properties of a friendly society and even a burial society, providing as it did, a source of stability and an outlet for ambitions in an urban working class context. This chapter picks up a theme raised ine chapter one, that of the interaction between sport and morality.

The norms which influential patrons of the young Pirates players attempted to inculcate, are one of the reasons why the club achieved such deep empathy with its sorrounding community. The final chapter focusses on the relationship between the club and its immediate community. Mindful that the term "community" is a complex one, and one which is too readily used - and therefore easily abused - in studies in an urban African setting, I would suggest that people of Orlando, in their relationship of common interest around the club, Pirates, did form a community of interests. Nonetheless, I use the term guardedly.

This chapter charts the involvement of supporters in the affairs of Pirates, trying to assess exactly what meaning the football club had in their lives. It culminates with an examination of the process, during a period of about ten years, whereby power was transferred from the original club officials and players - as well as their successors - and came to rest, not with the mass of supporters, as it seemed, but with a small group of educated middle class men.

This was a process which has generated much bitterness amongst the early generations of "Pirates". As my primary source of information was interviews with former players and their long-time supporters, it has been difficult to mediate between their own interpretations of how they lost the club and what took place historically.

The lack of much serious work on South African sport, and football in particular, directed my research towards a reliance on oral testimony and the records of contemporary print media. Both primary sources have their weaknesses. The major problem with both is that neither are particularly "objective". Consequently, this history is reliant to a large extent on the perceptions of interviewees and commentators in the media.

Furthermore, I encountered great difficulty in making the initial break-through with my oral sources, who, because of the club's recent history, appear to have subjected me to a vetting process. I was sadly unable to persuade the club's founder, Andries Mkwanazi, to speak to me, and have lost an invaluable source of information and insight.

It also proved difficult to find supporters who were suited to my

purposes: people who were genuinely "there" at the time and were not passing on second-hand information and received wisdoms. I have consequently, I feel, not accessed a sufficient number of supporters.

A final point on oral sources: people, when remebering distant events and proccesses, are not the sticklers for precision that students of history try to be. Frequently in this study I am forced to refer to the "early seventies" or the "late forties" where I have been unable to confirm the exact timing of events.

I encountered difficulties with my other primary sources as well: contemporary print media, notably the Bantu World (later the World) and the Golden City Post. Besides the fact that coverage of football was extremely "ad hoc" and inconsistant (one newspaper was still publishing "Results at Random" in the early sixties), it is very difficult to base a social histoty on accounts which inevitably place emphasis on score lines and sensation.

I was extremely fortunate to stumble upon club minutes, albeit far from complete, covering the period 1945 to 1961. Unfortunately this discovery was made well into the writing phase of my work and they could not be utilised to the fullest.

It remains for me to tell a tale which, try as I might, I could not fit into the body of the text.

For many years, the Bucaneers played in an all black strip - they still do on occasion - something which is quite possibly unique in world football. In one typically super-charged match, during a particulary frenetic spell of play, a Pirates player gained possesion of the ball. He looked up and there were opponents everywhere, desperately trying to cut off the supply routes to his forwards. Suddenly he spotted an opening and slotted the perfect through-ball to the only figure clad in black who was unmarked.

The referee was momentarily non-plussed, but he quickly regained his composure, trapped the ball and sent it gliding to another Pirate, breaking free. The crowd roared in appreciation, and the players clapped their hands in acknowledgement of a deft piece of football.

An incident such as this could only happen in the story of Orlando Pirates.

CHAPTER ONE

"FOR THE CHILDREN OF ORLANDO"
THE BIRTH OF PIRATES

Orlando East is one of the oldest townships in what is now the sprawling ghetto of Soweto. It was built in the early 1930s to house - as City Council tenants - the growing numbers who were reluctantly recognised by officialdom as permanent urban dwellers. The first tenants who streamed into Orlando in the twenties and thirties were men and women who had chosen to take the opportunity of having their "own" house in which to settle themselves and their families. They were first or second generation urban dwellers who had decided to make the Witwatersrand their home. This desire and its implications were apparently acknowledged by the state who made it a condition that only married men could secure tenancy of the squat little houses that had been erected.

Most of these families had moved out of the slums of Johannesburg - Prospect, Vrededorp, Doornfontein - where they or their parents had settled in the first great wave of migration to Johannesburg from the farms of the Transvaal and Orange Free State highveld or from the Natal midlands over the past four decades. Accordingly they were predominantly South Sotho or Zulu speakers.(1)

Sam Shabangu is, in many ways, an embodiment of these early citizens of Orlando. He is Zulu by birth but speaks fluent Sotho: "even my wife was Masotho" he says with some pride. Shabangu's family moved to Orlando in 1932, leaving behind life as sub-tenants in the teeming Prospect Township. He was born in Amersfort - "on the way to Swaziland" - but when he was a very young boy his parents decided to move to Johannesburg:

> "My father did not like it on the farms - when we had to go and look for green pastures for sheep and goats I was to go with but I was very young. This is what brought our family to Johannesburg where I started school and my father got work at a glaziers firm. We didn't have our own home in Eastern Native Township. When they built up Orlando we heard there were ample houses, so we rented our own."(2)

Sam Shabangu is also known as "Babboon Shepherd" and to this day, Orlando children whisper "Babboon" in awe and respect when they see him; for although his name was conferred by an exasperated school teacher, Shabangu is a founder member of Orlando Pirates and it was by this name that he became known as a dashing goalgetter for almost two decades.

Like most of the young schoolboys who came together, as members of Orlando Boys Club, to form the football team late in 1937, Shabangu learnt his football at school, chasing a ball around during lunch break with a horde of other eager youngsters. On arriving in Orlando, his first days at his new school - the Methodist Primary - were spent, like any new boy, shyly in the shadows. It wasn't long, however, before he succumbed to the temptation to join the enthusiastic throng playing football at break.

He soon caught the eye of the older boys, who informed the headmaster of Shabangu's prowess. He was duly summonsed to the headmaster's office where he was told he had been selected for the school. His "big break"

with the school side is probably typical: there were no trials on which schoolmasters or older boys could base there team selection and those who were really skilled stood out in the dusty throng that spent hours kicking a ball about. "We used to play at break - any amount of boys" Shabangu recalls. Furthermore, "There was no training, just a bit of lecturing on how to play".(3)

School soccer was played enthusiastically and the schools in Orlando competed with each other on an inter-school basis at both junior and senior school level. The school players competed on a few uneven, hard, sandy pitches - not unlike the pitches today's youths perform on. They played barefoot and probably wore their school uniforms on the field of play.

The inter-schools competition received a boost in numbers in 1937 when about seven new schools were opened. This dramatic increase of schools coincided with the forced influx of the remaining residents of Prospect. In their number were a number of Shabangu's fellow Pirates founder members, who joined the Orlando Boys Club that year. Most of the teenage boys who formed the nucleus of the original Pirates side belonged to the Orlando Boys Club, although they already knew each other as school mates or as members of opposition teams in the inter- school competitions.(4)

Shabangu, who was fifteen years old at the time, recalls the formation of the team:

> "At the Boys Club we had everything - table tennis, physical culture, weight lifting, boxing ... - except football. We decided, why don't we have a football team of our own... we called ourselves the Orlando Boys Club Football Club."(5)

The first two decades of Pirate's existance are dominated by the presence of their first patron, Bethuel Mokgosinyana, remembered as a "self styled social worker", whose philanthropy and wise words were to influence and benefit, not only the club, but the people of Orlando as a whole. It is ironic then, that the formation of Pirates, in 1939, should have been brought about by the actions of another social worker. Ironic, because Phillip Mashego, who ran the Orlando Boys Club to which the founder members of Pirates belonged, is remembered, not for his philanthropy, but because he represents the first case of an influential figure in the community who - to borrow a phrase from former players and supporters - "ate the club's money". Mashego's inability to account for the collection of money - intended to pay for a set of playing shirts - which had been entrusted to him, precipitated the walk out of his young soccer playing charges.

The team had already completed the 1938 season in a minor division of the Johannesburg Bantu Fooball Association (JBFA).(6) The youngsters used to travel four on a bicycle, or sometimes even cut accross on foot, to Sophiatown where they played at the Waterval grounds. They turned out barefooted, and without a proper playing strip, wearing a variety of shirts. The young team was only to get proper "colours" after Mokgosinyana took an interest in them in 1940. By this time the youths had already decided to go it alone and had named themselves Pirates in 1939.

Mokgosinyana's intervention had been crucial and in recognition of this

the club made him their patron; but the man recognised as the moving influence behind the actual formation of the team is Andries "Pele Pele" Mkwanazi. He appears to have commanded great respect from the other boys who were three or four years his junior and it was at his house (number 3939), two blocks away from the Boys' Club, that the team reconvened to give birth to Pirates.(7) When the younger boys met him on joining the Boys Club, Mkwanazi was already an accomplished boxer - hence the nickname which loosely translated means "hot like peppers" - and he was in charge of the gym at the Club.(8)

The Boys Club's main purpose seems to have been to keep its members physically fit while serving as an alternative to youth street culture. One source describes Mashego as "an organiser at the Diepkloof reformatory" and according to Shabangu, he used to ask for "repentant young chappies to be sent ot the Boys Club". At least one future Pirates star, Steve "Didiza" Mpshe, was gleaned from the ranks of the Reformatory side whom the Boys Club FC took on in friendly matches.(9) The club appears to have accommodated a few unemployed, non-school going youth, as well.(10) Rankus Maphisa, a contemporary of the inaugural Pirates squad and a lifelong supporter of the club, recalls the impact the Boys' Club had on himself and his schoolmates:

> "Mkwanazi is the man who made us to be what we are. He taught us boxing, he built us up. Some became powerful gentlemen because of [the Club]. Phillip Mashego was a very educated man and a social worker. He wanted us to become united. He had the words of love and he could influence you into goodness. He was concerned about young boys - you couldn't get wild when he was around, you couldn't be a tsotsi when he was there. He wasn't [physically] powerful but he could make you to understand. "We Pirates were not very wild. Well I <u>was</u> wild - but not very wild. Not that wildness ... we were never arrested. This was because of Mashego and [later] Mokgosinyana."(11)

Maphisa's testimony seems to suggest that there certainly was a "wild" element about amongst the youth of Orlando during this period but that by and large the youths at the Boys Club were sheltered from, or dissuaded from joining in, the activities of "tsotsis". Various studies in urban youth sub-culture show that this is precisely the period when the word "tsotsi" achieved wide usage and when some of the more violent gangs began operating. The roots of youth delinquency seem to have lain, inter alia, in the overwhelming tendency for youths to leave school early (either because of disatisfaction with their schooling but more often due to economic pressures on the family), an inability to find stable employment (partly because employers stigmatised all youth as "tsotsi"), the breakdown of the family and general urban working class conditions.(12)

My own interviewees, however, attest to a relatively stable family life in which parents still wielded strict control. They remember Orlando then as a close knit community, which was "not as dangerous as today".(13) Of course, "not as dangerous as today" does not add up to an idyllic world; and there is a danger in the proccess of capturing history orally that the subject reflects passed against current experiences and values, to project an image of the past that is exageratedly rosy.

It does appear that the young Pirates came from the more "privileged" sectors of the working class. Most experienced a relatively stable home life: by and large both parents lived at home, most fathers seem to have

been in stable employment and the families had already been settled in the community for a few years (the recent arrivals from Prospect excluded). Msomi's father was a shop owner and became a club official in the fifties.(14) Almost all these families - including the former Prospect dwellers - shared a common cultural and historical experience, having hailed from the regions described at the beginning of the chapter. It is of some significance that the first generation of Pirates included three sets of brothers and at least two pairs of cousins.*

On the other hand, the late thirties and early forties appear to have been fairly turbulent years for Orlando, when viewed as a whole, with a steady influx of new tenants, arriving from different quarters of the Transvaal, and settling uneasily in backyards as sub-tenants of the established residents because there were no more council houses. Thus we see the beginnings of a situation which gave rise to social upheaval in most other townships in and around the city of Johannesburg - the worst was yet to come for Orlando. (The conditions which gave rise to the township's famous squatter movement of a few years hence doubtless had their roots in this later influx.) (15)

Of course, a township situation that is more tolerable than most still falls far short of ideal conditions to grow up in; the Boys Club clearly had a role to play. What is of interest here is to what extent the Boys Club did help mould the soon-to-be Pirates into the "powerful gentlemen" Maphisa speaks of and what influences if any operated on Mashego's club. These questions, in turn, point us to Mokgosinyana, and his philosophy which - apparently rare amongst the game's patron managers - viewed the football club as a possible vehicle for social upliftment.(16)

During the thirties a number of Boys Clubs were set up in the Reef towns and townships, apparently as a continuation of the earlier efforts of prominent liberals (such as Prof Reinhallt-Jones who founded the Joint Councils Movement) and missionaries (like Rev Ray Phillips the co-founder of the JBFA who sought to solve -in his own words - the "whole great problem of moralising the leisure time of Natives ...").(17) These clubs were financed by bodies such as the Department of Social Welfare, the National Advisory Council for Physical Education, the Bantu Welfare Trust and mining companies and municipal councils. By the end of the war 76 volunteer leaders of 32 boys and 22 girls clubs were receiving training at the Wemmer Barracks, the Bantu Mens' Social Centre (BMSC) or at the JH Hofmeyr School for Social Work (housed at the BMSC).(18)

The Bantu Mens Social Centre (BMSC) - which was the stamping ground of many of football's early administrators - was an initiative of of the Joint Councils. So was the Bantu Sports Club (BSC) which became the headquarters and playing field of Johannesburg's other main footballing body, the Johannesburg African Football Association (JAFA), during the thirties. According to Archer and Bouillon, the intention of the Joint Council Movement's "European leaders was to raise the level of African cultural life and thereby attach the mass of African workers, via the elite, to the values of European civilization". The movement's concern

---

* Elliot and Lucas Buthelezi and Steve and Bennett Mpshe; besides the Ramela brothers and cousinss who played for various divisions of Pirates, Alex Tschabalala and Willard Msomi were cousins.

for the provision of sporting and recreational facilities for urban African youth as part of its programme is evinced by the resolutions of the 1929 European-Bantu Conference which it convened. It called for, among other things, the provision of equipped and supervised sports fields and playing grounds, halls for indoor sports and paid directors of recreational facilities.(19) While this movement may have facilitated the development of organised African sport as part of its mission for social and moral upliftment of the African proletariat, it is difficult to assess its impact on a specific boys club in Orlando and the fledgling Pirates.

Involving children in organised sport was widely regarded as one means of countering the youth problem. It was a solution advocated by many sports administrators, including the first president of the JBFA, "Snowy" Senoane who laboured tirelessly to help establish a variety of sporting codes in the Johannesburg area. Senoane was very popular with the administrators of the City Council whose initial support for the JBFA was prompted by a vision of using it to curb drinking amongst miners on the weekends. He also enthusiastically promoted various cultural activities such as traditional dancing, while his wife helped organise "girls' clubs. Senoane was not a simple stooge of Ballenden's City Council or Phillips' missionary endeavours, however, and his prime aim was to secure African control over their playing fields. This he did, under the JBFA, but the price was collusion with the Council at the expense of Jafa.(20)

It is possible that Mashego was one of the volunteer leaders that received training either at Wemmer Barracks or at the BMSC, although the Club is remebered by the founder members of Pirates as his private initiative. He was, however, a young man and by all accounts, not at all wealthy. He charged his members a small subscription fee - although the Boys' Clubs refered to by Archer and Bouillon apparently did not charge until after the war. On the balance, it is probable that Mashego, as a social worker, was influenced to an extent by the morality of the liberal social reformers at the time. While it is mechanistic and "top down" to assume Mashego, as an individual, had any great impact on the boys because he was a social worker - he is after all remembered as a thief - we can, I think, surmise that his club, and the environment it provided, played an important role in the youth's formative years. Whereas some of their peers might have turned to other forms of youth culture - such as the street gang - they settled for the Boys Clubs's healthy combination of muscles and manners.*

> "The Boys Club taught us to be united. We taught ourselves boxing; we became good good boxers and we became united. The unity between us came like that: [Some of us asked] "what are we going to do now? Our parents haven't got money; we can't go to school?" People like Mashego came along and looked after us and [later] people like Mokgosinyana came and looked after us"(21)

---

* More than a decade later, Mike Tseka, a future player, team manager and club chairman, was paying two shillings a year to attend another Boys' Club in Orlando East. There were no "lectures on morality" at the Donaldson Boys' Club and Tseka was spent most of the time boxing and honing his self defence skills. "If the gangs knew you were training at the gym, they stayed away from you", he says. (Interview with Tseka, August 1991)

There are elements discerneable in former players' reflections which suggest the impact of a value system not that far removed from the "muscular Christianity" which gave as much emphasis to healthy bodies as to clean souls and is reputed to have had some influence on the development of organised sports in Victorian England. Sport came to be advocated, towards the end of the last century, as an important part of the new "rational" approach to education and recreation. Such philosophies were easily transported into the colonial situation, perhaps with a social Darwinist variant - for instance the ethic espoused by Baden-Powell - incorporated. Ironically, at the point empire builders were most enthusiastic about the "playing fields of Eton" and missionary teachers were becoming inclined to see the potential of school sport in building "civilised natives", so England on the home front, beset by doubts after the Boer war and in the face of Germany's growing pre-eminence, was starting to believe that too much emphasis was being paid to grit and brawn rather than versatility and brain. (22)

The case for Mokgosinyana's impact on the teenagers - who in many ways were virtually given up to his charge - is overwhelming. Again, however, it is doubtful that his own philosophy was directly influenced by the enthusiastic reformers of the Joint Councils Movement. His background suggests he was unlikely to have been the target of their zealous attempts at building socially responsible leaders. He grew up in a farming community near Brits, where his family might have been slightly more affluent than the majority of their neighbours - his brother became "a rich cattle owner in Botswana".(23) Nevertheless, Mokgisanyane was not a wealthy man, nor was he considered "educated". He arrived in Johannesburg as a young man seeking work and enthusiastically participated in football.(24)

Mokgosinyana remained, however, a man with one foot in another world. Past players refer to time honoured, never to be repeated, "secrets" he passed on to them and pre-match rituals involving burning coals, fat and impenetrable smoke which "would vanish at a word". On the other hand he was an avid reader of the bible and "he used to keep the company of priests" - once quipping that if it wasn't for Pirates he would have been a priest himself.

At the time of Pirates' formation Mokgosinyana worked as an "induna" in a factory in Booysens but towards the end of the forties he had been able to acquire a butchery with the assistance of his wealthy brother. He was able to travel - at one stage he visited Rhodesia - and former players recall he was "ambitious to learn about the world." His economic standing, like that of many of his players' parents, was probably improved by virtue of his having been one of the earlier settlers in Orlando, thus having control over a stand which might provide extra income from backyard lodgers. Yet he does not appear to have moved in the social circles of the educated elite and he apparently never darkened the doors of the club for "high hats" - as the BMSC was known.(25)

Above all, his religion was football and he wished everyone to follow it:

> "He used to say to people - "football is <u>the</u> sport ... if you let your child play, you will save him from trouble. He encouraged good habits. The old man held us very tight - not using force - he could make us understand. [We] who played under his supervision know what is right or wrong. All players of my generation have families ... good families."(26)

This evokes images of the stable, family environment liberal reformers would have admired. The philosophies espoused at the Boys Club, and later by Mokgosinyana, were tailored to fit the context of a nascent urban African working class setting, but they also drew - perhaps unconsciously - on the formula of muscles and manners which built many a succesful team or conquering army around the British Empire.

The young players themselves were of course equally responsible for building their world. They grew up together, kicking tennis balls around the neighbourhood and leather balls on bumpy school pitches. Most left school by the completion of Std 6 - usually becuase their parents couldn't afford to keep them in school or because their father had died. The players tended to share the little they had, and those who had found employment were expected to help the others get work. They would spend their free time at Mokgosinyana's house playing cards or kicking a ball. His house was, in effect, the clubhouse, where formal team talks were held on Wednesday evenings and where the players and their closest companions slept over on the night before a match. Mokgosinyana was a skilled carpenter and he built an extension to his house for this purpose and the players used to bed down on the floor.*

"Camping" as it became called, followed by pre-match rituals in the morning, further strengthened the unity and and group loyalty in the team. "We enjoyed being together" Buthelezi says simply, "we used to play cards and go to bioscope together...". The players also used to "gym" in Mokgosinyana's back yard under the guidance of Mkwanazi so that they were able to stand up to Sophiatown teams who considered them fair game.

> "They called us "kalkoens" or "takkies" because we were from the township and spoke Zulu a lot. They spoke a lot of Afikaans. We weren't all Zulu but we grew up together and chose to speak Zulu. We were mostly Sothos and Zulus."(27)

Buthelezi's comment above attests, on one hand to the close bond between the Pirates players, based on shared experiences to some extent but also on a common cultural and linguistic heritage that was typical of the earlier Orlando residents. On the other hand, it suggests that the team were seen as apart - even protected - from the burgeoning "tsotsi" youth culture. The Sophiatown players - whose "Afrikaans" was quite possibly "tsotsi-taal" - were often closely linked to gangs and they looked down on the township boys, whom they regarded, as "cissies". This lead to many a tough battle with one particular Sophiatown side, African Morning Stars, whom we shall hear more of in the following chapter.

This "brotherhood" amongst the players, besides enhancing their effectivity as a team, was to provide a source of intergration and fellowship that acted as a buffer against the worst ills of township life and, as they grew up, a mainstay against economic uncertainty. Most of their fellows, when forced out of school, would have been more likely to turn to street gangs to find similar sources of fellowship and self worth.

---

* This extension was apparently the first built onto an Orlando house. The Pirates president developed a reputation for "good neighbourliness" because he frquently applied his skills to improving the houses of fellow residents at cost price.

A final crucial factor in building this bond was the policy - written in the constitution of the club - that only boys from Orlando, or the children of Orlando residents, could play for Pirates. It added to the unity in the team and deepened the players sense of self worth by inculcating a pride in the knowledge that they were Orlando's "pick". This policy grew in part from their own experiences in forming the team and partly from Mokgosinyana's desire to build something "for the children of Orlando; and for the parents of Orlando".

Jimmy "Hitler" Sobi was a member of the first ever Pirates second side, formed by Mkwanazi in 1940:

> "We were all from school in Orlando - I was from Dutch Reformed. Mkwanazi was working night shift but on his way to work in the afternoon he would watch the schools play and choose [players] for the second division. We were all determined to be in the first team but we never got frustrated. Football was so nice - it was exciting. And we could watch [other teams] and not eat the whole day."(28)

While the club obviously didn't cater directly for all "the children of Orlando", there was a network of young friends who were considered to be Pirates as much as the players. These companions and the parents of the players and their peers formed the foundation of the strong following the team picked up as it made a name for itself on the football field and as its patron's reputation as a wise and willing neighbour spread. This theme will be detailed in the final chapter.

In time the club was to become more than an institution catering for its immediate circle of members; it was to become a symbol for Orlando, a source of "civic pride" and a means through which ordinary residents and football followers alike could derive vicarious pleasure.

Holt, writing in a British context, warns against the belief that the rapid proliferation of teams in every locality in late Victorian England was largely the achievement of well intentioned middle-class reformers; rather:

> "... it was the work of the members, of the people themselves. Playing team sports was a way in which men created and sustained close-knit groups in the context of unprecedented urban upheaval ... to be part of a team was to have friends, to share a sense of loyalty and struggle together, and to represent <u>your</u> street or workshop, <u>your</u> patch of territory. (29).

What is significant about Pirates is that they - among the hundreds of clubs that sprouted in the rapidly industrialising Witwatersrand of the late thirties and the forties - were one of the few clubs to comprehensively transcend the type of experience Holt describes above and become an institution and a symbol, not just for a street or a patch of territory but for an entire community - and for thousands more. While many clubs were "peoples' clubs" in their beginings and in their rootedness, none of them developed along these lines to the extent that Pirates did.

Hand in hand with this process, a mythology has developed which attempts to explain, and in the proccess, continued to create, an aura about the club. A large part of this paper will attempt to explain this proccess -

and in doing so, attempt to seperate the myth from the historical reality. An example of how this mythology develops relates to one of the earliest significant moments in the club's history - the choosing of the name Pirates. How the name was chosen is interesting, but of little consuquence, save to illustrate the elaborate tangle of near myth that has developed around the club's past.

In this instance, actual actors in the club's history have themselves unwittingly embellished tales of the distant past. There are numerous and conflicting tales about the proccess by which the name Pirates was chosen. For instance, one of the founders, Isaac "Rocks of London" Mothei mentions a group of youngsters leaving the Boys Club to form another side, Zulu Royals. Mkwanazi's response to this news was that those of them who had chosen to stay were "amapirate".(30)

On the other hand, some recall sitting in the cinema, watching Errol Flynn in the "Sea Hawk": "Suddenly this flag went up - whoosh - the skull and crossbones! "Thats it", we said, "Pirates"."(31) The most poetic perhaps, but an explanation that is rejected by most other sources who trace the naming of the club to the series of meetings held at Mkwanazi's house immediately after the departure from Mashego's Club.

The players sat down and wrote the name of their choice. Most suggested names which did not ring true with the rest of the gathering, but quickly - and almost unanimously - they plumped for the choice of "Haasie", their goalkeeper: it was Pirates. It is likely, those who remember these meetings concede, that the goalie's choice, and the subsuquent response of the rest, was motivated by the influence of popular pirate films at the time. (32)

Armed with a new and fearsome name but with no colours, the young team went about their business on the football field. They made rapid progress. 1939 saw them competing in the Saturday League Division Two of the JBFA and this was immediately followed by promotion to the Saturday League Division One. Matches were usually played in the city, either in Newclare or less frequently because they were still a lesser side, at the Wemmer Grounds which were the Headquartes of the JBFA. The team also played in their home township, and it was here that Bethuel Mokgosinyana discovered them in 1940.

He was an avid footballer, having turned out for a side called Piriphiri and he took an interest in the team of schoolboys. Pirates asked him to become their patron manager, recognising that they required his support if they were to progress. He provided his own home in Orlando East as the clubhouse cum "gymnasium" (replete with a blackboard for tactical planning) and gave the team its first set of jersies.(33)

There is evidence of many other young sides depending on the guidance or material support of older men. Pirates greatest rivals, Moroka Swallows, for instance, started out as a group of unaffiliated youngsters hoping to get a game with whoever came along. In time, "Moroka businesman, Ishmael Lesolang, took the team under his wing and donated a cup for a four team competition".(34) Naughty Boys, amongst Pirates stiffest opposition during their first decade, were formed at the suggestion of a teacher who observed a group of schoolboys kicking a tennis ball around. We do not know if he followed up his early interest with material support, although he is unlikely to have been in a position to do so.(35)

Pirates were also able to call on the support of Mpanza, the leader of the squatter movement in Orlando (see chapter five) while Swallows were also patronised by the Russian leader, Ntoyi, who had organised a squatter camp in Moroka. African Morning Stars, the Sophiatown side which had labelled the young Pirates "kalkoene", enjoyed the backing of big time gangsters, including the notorious Booitjie American, who might have actually turned out in their colours.(36)

The procedure whereby a fledgling club turns to an influential or wealthy man for support, is typical of black team sports in South Africa where economic and infrastructural factors often hinder an ambitious team's ability to achieve basic requirements neccesary to progress to a higher grade of competition and performance.(37) Jeffrey, examining the growth of organised football in Sharpeville discovers a similar pattern. He observed that this trend is still in practice today: "If the person is willing, he will provide the money to purchase a team outfit, as well as some equipment, and will in effect "own" the side. His house becomes the team's club house in which all meetings are held from then on."(38) The only striking difference with this pattern and the experience of Pirates is that Mokgosinyana was not at all a wealthy man; nor was he at that time widely known although he was popular in his own immediate neighbourhood where he was regarded as wise and helpful.

Past players recall Mokgosinyana bringing the first kit along with him from Piriphiri, after a dispute had ended his association with that particular club. The shirts were appropriately black, and they were emblazoned with a massive "P" on the breast which did equally well for Pirates as it had for the previous owners.(39)

Most clubs started out in a similar way to Pirates - as a team representing a distinct group of people; either a street, a neighbourhood or a district, or works and proffessions. Jeffrey's study of street culture and football in Sharpeville appears to confirm the truism that many teams begun from street football, often played with a "jealously gaurded" tennis ball.(40)

Pirates' relatively privileged environment provided them with the chance to quite rapidly elevate their status in the football world and leave behind the street teams. Of course, footballing ability was a crucial factor and Mkwanazi's talent spotting ensured that the cream of the schools who were not already in his team, were very rapidly recruited.*

Pirates may have been Orlando's finest, but they were not its first. Maphisa remembers some of the sides operating in the township when he arrived in 1934, after his family was "moved by the government" from the the Doornfontein slum:

---

* Shabangu recalls that a number of the recent arrivals from Prospect did not remain with the original line up for more than a year or two, because the squad, which was to remain largely unchanged for another fifteen years, was still being completed in the period 1938 - 40. The young team made remarkably rapid progress which laid a foundation for later succeses - other fledgling sides might languish in minor leagues for many years.

> "We had some older "brothers" who made us to love soccer - their play was so good. We found Orlando Bush Rangers here but they had no players to take over from them when they were "old". Orlando Brothers had to take up from them."(41)

The rise and fall of these teams reflects a process typical of the beginings of organised football in that they were based on a neighbourhood or friendship network and faded away as that network contracted over time. The basis for the demise of early teams playing "social" football might be age - as Maphisa suggests - or players might move out of a social circle because of factors such as employment or marriage. Some men who had experienced the sociability of a team might continue to follow the game - like Maphisa - as ardent supporters, providing added backbone to clubs. Belonging to a football team was one of a narrow range of opportunities for young men in a rapidly changing urban setting to experience shared fellowship, objectives and values.

Like Orlando, the other old townships had their sides, Kliptown had Kliptown Killers and Pimville boasted Pimville Champions. The latter were considered great rivals by Pirates even though they never achieved Pirates success on the field. The reason for this rivalry was that Champions were the only other township side in the JBFA during the forties. When Pirates switched to Jafa, this rivalry was heightened. The initial rivalry with Swallows was also related to Pirates involvement with a rival association. (The rivalry between the "Africans" and "Bantu" FAs will be examined in more detail in the following chapters.)

Many of the founders of Pirates great rivals, Moroka Swallows, were youngsters who grew up in Alexandra and were recently moved to the South Western townships after World War II. According to the club history in the World this group of boys used to gather at the football pitch in their new township, hoping one of the scheduled sides wouldn't arrive and that they would get a game. The fact that many fans today believe the club was actually formed in Alexandra and moved lock stock and barrel to Moroka-Jabavu, is a clue to the way in which many of the first generation of players may have culivated their identity as having originated in the "Dark City".(42)

Before the rapid growth of "Soweto", Pirates competed largely against teams from townships and ghettoes in and around around Johannesburg as well as city-based sides of domestic servants or people employed by companies in the city. Eastern Leopards were based in George Goch (Eastern Native Township). There name, and that of their local rivals, Eastern Brothers, reflects the meaning attached to space and the way it was reflected by membership of a football club. Eastern Brothers and Eastern Leopards were conscious - and presumably proud - of their status as east of the centre. Leopards were dominated by a considerable contingent of teachers and students from Kilnerton College. The club wasn't exclusive, though, as it included workers and one of the players was "a hobo".(43)

Another club, also based on the proffessions, was Celtics. They certainly were exclusive: "You had to be a graduate or a matriculant to play for them", Msomi recalls, adding with some pleasure "they were kicked around a lot by other sides".(44) Celtics players were predominantly clerks at Wenela or teachers. After being "kicked around" in the Jafa Sunday League Division I, Celtics fled to the Alexandra African FA, in May 1951.

the accomplished all rounder, school teacher, Grant Khomo, who was the top African tennis player of his generation.

A newspaper profile of clubs in Witbank in 1949 presents some insights into the composition and beginings of clubs playing in two leagues in the district - the one based on the mines was "white run" while the other made up of "town and location sides" was "run by blacks'. (Interestingly, this mirrors the differences between the Council backed JBFA and the fiercely independent Jafa.) Amongst the black run league was a "high school students club" while the top side comprised entirely of teachers. A team of men employed in town called themselves - perhaps with one eye cast towards England - Aston Villas. Another side was singled outfor castigation - it was not fulfilling its fixtures because it was "disheartened" with its performance.(45) The last point provides an insight into the demise of the less succesful sides - it was part of the natural process of the development of organised and competitive football that those who couldn't compete disintergrated, their best players joining more succesful sides. (46)

A club's success, on the other hand, might also be the cause of splinters forming if frustrated reserves felt they were capable of going it alone and left en mass to form a new club.(47) There is no evidence of this occurring at Pirates. Jimmy "Hitler" Sobi waited five years before he got his first team chance:

> "Everybody was determined to get into the first team but we never got frustrated. Football was great, I enjoyed it [and] how could I want to leave - it was Pirates."(48)

An added advantage for Sobi was that, from 1940, Pirates had a second side in which he could perform. Not all clubs shared Pirates' concern to keep their "children" occupied and many a walkout was probably motivated by the desire for regular football.

Some supporters believe that the formation of Nice Time Sweepers was the result of a breakaway from Pirates. The team was started amongst players in the very neighbourhood which housed the early Pirates who had been uprooted from Prospect and one or two former Pirates appear to have been instrumental in its formation. It is not regarded as a breakaway by former players contend, however, that the club was more "social" in its outlook and it was formed by an ex Pirate who assembled a group of post match "boozers". They were scorned by more serious players for living up to their name "Nice Time".(49)

Of course, frequent succesions are also an indication of the rapid growth in participants in the sport. The rise and fall of clubs in this period mirrors similar occurences in ohter countries during the development of organised, competitve football. More succesful players tended to shift affiliation because they felt their talents were wasted in a weak side. This was quite commonplace: "If you've got the ability and don't get the support from your team ... it's unavoidable ... it's natural ... you go somewhere else."(50)

Probably the most striking example of football teams as social cement and avenues to intergration is to be found in the proliferation of "homeboy" sides during the forties and fifties. A glance at the names of Pirates opposition in the JBFA (and later Jafa) gives some indication of

the number of sides based on the association of homeboys which were operating on the Reef: Belfast Olympics, Ladysmith Home Boys, Bergville Lions, Newcastle XI, Dundee United. In 1952, the Bantu World reported the formation on the West Rand of Durban and District FC, with "two divisions of players, each one of them with Zulu blood".(51)

The above sides' players all hailed from Natal, as their names reflect. This might affirm the game's strong roots in that province - going back to the last century - although it is unclear whether the men of Dundee and Newcastle learned their football in Natal or on the Witwatersrand. On the other hand, migrants from middle Natal generally represent a sector who came from communities that had had a longer relationship with the Reef. This suggests that the majority of migrants who got involved in social formations such as football clubs, were longer term migrants, not yet willing and \ or able to settle permanently in the city but nonetheless relatively well schooled in its ways.

Shabangu says that during Pirates first years of campaigning "Xhosa's didn't play soccer very much". Mayer's study of Xhosa migrants revealed a greater tendency amongst them to spend shorter periods on the Reef than others. He categorised them into "reds" - who shunned the trappings of white, urban, capitalist soceity - and "school" migrants who welcomed the advantages "white" education and urban soceity offered them. He observed that "school" migrants joined sports clubs and cited an example of an eager sportsperson:

> "I am particularly interested in all sports. It seems to me that sports forms part and parcel of life in town ... when in sport you have many friends; if you are good at it they will want you to join their own clubs. If you are out of work they all try and get you a job so that you should not think of leaving town."(52)

Football - and other team sports - was a means of intergration into an urban context for migrants. In the early decades of organised football on the Witwatersrand, migrants from a particular area - or even village - would form a club amongst themselves. Often these clubs would draw their membership from a wide range of occupations and even from different townships. Hostel dwellers, for instance, might have township dwellers in their side because they were homeboys - and if their football was up to scratch. During the December holidays, whole teams would return home, and play as a team amongst their local brethren, thus spreading the popularity of the game. Over the next few decades these clubs might slowly lose there "homeboy" character as increasingly their members became intergrated into urban soceity; or they might lose their better players to other more succesful sides. Presumably if a club's players were located predominantly in one place - such as a mine compound - they might stick together longer.(53)

> "Imperial Air Force was strictly for Basutho's. It was like that with the Natal teams too. Many people from Glencoe got jobs at the post office through one Induna. As a result, they were forced to play for GPO Sweepers." (54)

It was not uncommon for players to feel they were "forced" to play for a works team - football skills might get one a job, yet those same skills might prove a barrier to your leaving for another team. Leading players from township sides too, were placed under pressure not too leave. In

Orlando, the community "would try by all means to persuade you not to leave ... you could even be threatened ... if you leave don't play in Jo'burg - or the Transvaal - rather leave for Durban."(55) While Pirates probably suffered less from defections as they developed into a leading side, community pressure on players wishing to leave was probably more pronounced - valued players who broke from the circle, became viewed as traitors.(56)

This was because of the deep symbolic value the club attained amongst the people of Orlando. By the end of the period under review leading members of the Supporters' Club, wishing to consolidate their hold on the football club, were able to appeal for increased powers to supporters on the basis that Pirates was unarguably "the People's Club".

This reputation, cemented over the years, has its roots in the club's founding and the early years of its existance. This process will be assessed in detail in the final chapter. In chapter two, we turn to an examiniation of the club's rise to become the dominant force in African football during the period of amateur football in the 1950s.

CHAPTER ONE - NOTES

1. This section is based on interviews with Sam Shabangu (July 1991) and Rankus Maphisa (July 1991) and a very illuminating discussion with Steve Lebello of the African Studies Institute.
2. Shabangu
3. ibid.
4. Maphisa and Shabangu.
5. Shabangu
6. There is a lack of clarity as to what this division was named. An Article by I. Mothei in It's A Goal (50 years ... in Black soccer), Ed GAL Thabe, p 87, names it the Umteteli Division. A two page history of the club in the World (23/8/63) refers to it as the Union College Division.
7. Shabangu and interview with Elliot Buthelezi (August 1991); Mothei in Thabe.
8. Past players interviewed refer to Mkwanazi as "our founder". They recall him playing a central role in the development of great boxers such as Commonwealth Welterweight Champion, Jake Ntuli, and Greb Mtimkulu, at his boxing gym, Proper, while continuing to discover fresh talent for Pirates, scouring the school grounds of Orlando.
After football, boxing was the most popular spectator and participant sport amongst urban Africans. Many footballers also took up boxing. Most of them simply sparred in the gym to keep fit and because they enjoyed the sport; although there were a few who were equally accomplished at both sports. Darius Dhlomo, one of the first black South Africans to play on the green football fields of Europe, was a Champion boxer who relinquished his title to become a professional footballer overseas. A few of his "soccerite" contemporaries were said to be making a living from professional boxing while playing top level football during the fifties.
9. Shabangu
10. Maphisa and Shabangu
11. Maphisa
12. P Bonner "Family, Crime and Political Consciousness on the East Rand, 1939 - 1955", JSAS, vol 14, no 3, April 1988; pp 393 - 420. D Glaser "Anti-social Bandits", MA thesis, Wits, 1989.
13. Based on interviews with Sidney Mabuza (July 1991), Willard Msomi (August 1991) and Mike Tseka (August 1991). For instance, Mabuza: "Youngsters just didn't drink in those days; it was really frowned upon and our parents would never allow it."; and Msomi: "Our fathers were really strict. We had to sit at home with our books in the evening ... we couldn't just go out. ... If we wanted to go watch soccer at Wemmer on Sunday's, we would have to accompany our parents to church and then creep out while everyone was praying.
14. Shabangu, Mabuza, Buthelezi, Msomi and Jimmy Sobi (August 1991)
15. Once again, I owe Steve Lebello my gratitude for his thought provoking insights and advice. See also K French, "Jamses Mpanza and the Sofasonke Party", MA Thesis, Wits, 1983.
16. Peter Mngomezulu, a life long supporter and one time club coach, who remained close to Mokgosinyana up to the old man's death in 1989, confirms that it was the patron manager's desire that the club should generate enough income over the years to sponsor the building of an old age home and better facilities for children in Orlando. Interview (August 1991)
17. T Couzens; "Moralising Leisure Time" in Industrialisation and Social Change in South Africa; ed Marks and Rathbone; pp 314 - 317. Archer and Bouillon; The South African Game, Sport and Racism; pp 118 - 124.
18. Archer and Bouillon pp 118 -124. See also P Martin, "Colonialism, youth and football in French Equatorial Africa", in The International

Journal of the History Of Sport, vol 8 no 1, for similar attitudes displayed by the Vicar-General in Brazzaville, who established a "Youth Club to be an instrument of moral preservation".
19. ibid
20. Sports Ace, vol 1, no2, November 1983, pp 4 and 41 and T Couzens, "an Introduction to the History of Football in South Africa", Town and Countryside in the Transvaal.
21. Maphisa
22. Mason; Association Football and English Soceity. Walvin; The People's Game; pp 31 - 50. Holt; Sport and the British, A Modern History.
23. Sidwell Mokgosiyane (August 1991) and various interviews with past players (July and August 1991)
24. Sports Ace, November 1983, p 39.
25. The composite picture is drawn from numerous interviews with supporters and former players.
26. Shabangu
27. The words in the last passage are spoken by Buthelezi; but the composite picture is drawn from numerous interviews, once more.
28. Sobi
29. Holt p 153-154
30. Thabe; ed; p 88
31. Maphisa and two other supporters made this point in a video about the club; it was reiterated by Maphisa in the interview I conducted with him. It is probable that the idea "Pirates" did come from watching films but the decision was taken, as he suggests AT the cinema.
32. Based on various interviews (July and August 1991)
33. ibid
34. World, 16/8/63. Interestingly, contemporaries - such as Mngomezulu - give equal, if not greater credit, to "Johnny Walker" Kubheka, as the founder of Swallows but as he was not the one who put up the money, and because he was apparently forced out of ht eclub fairly early on, he is not remembered when the media reports on ht eevent, a mere 16 years later. He is mentioned as a co-founder in reminiscences published in It's A Goal.
35. African Sports
36. Peter Mngomezulu (Interview, August 1991) and Msomi.
37. Archer and Bouillon cite Wilson and Mafeje (working in the Cape Town area): "The rugby clubs also invite as "patrons" middle class people such as an advocate living in Langa, or a minister of religion."
38. Jeffrey; "Street rivalry and patron managers: Football in Sharpeville, 1940 - 1985; History Workshop paper; 1990; p 13.
39. Buthelezi and Shabangu. The famous skull and cross-bone logo came later and for many years only appeared on the club's black blazer. It was apparently first produced for general consumption by Maphisa who begun a screen printing in his back yard in 1959 and was later responsible for the proliferation of various club emblems in ht eform of stickers and so on.
40. Jeffrey
41. Maphisa.
42. World, 16/8/63. It is instructive to trace the geneology of Swallows a little further. The club suffered a major split in the 1960's. The one faction, Moroka Big XV is (more or less) the progenitor of the current Moroka Swallows Ltd in that the person responsible for transforming the club into a limited company in the 1970s was in that faction and employed most of their players. Difference Mbanya, was left to form a group known as Moroka Swallows (Mbanya) - minus the fifteen stars who had left him. This already weak faction was further weakened by a walkout at the start of the National Proffessional Soccer League.

Mbanya, one of the original lads from Alexandra, retreated to his old hometown where the remnants of his team combined with a few other ex-Swallows men who played for another Alexandra side called ... Moroka Lions.
(In an added twist, Lions was bought out by Coloured Passmore, who nostalgically renamed it Blackpool, after another former Alexandra team.)
43. Buthelezi and Msomi.
44. Msomi. Pirates had recently joined the Jafa League and Msomi believes they "saved the league" which lacked other high profile clubs.
45. Bantu World, August 1948.
46. Shabangu confirms this.
47. Archer and Bouillon
48. Sobi (August 1991)
49. Based on various interviews with former players.
50. Shabangu.
51. Bantu World, 12/7/1952. The presence of many "Zulu sides" in Jafa squares with claims that it was "predominantly Zulu" - see chapter two and four.
52. Mayer, 1961; cited in Archer and Boiullon; p 144.
53. Based on interviews with Shabangu, Msomi and Mngomezulu. Also Theo Mthembu - a sports journalist with the Golden City Post during the fifties and sixties - interview (August 1991).
54. Msomi. The name Imperial Air Force, reflects the club's recognition of their country's Protectorate status, as well dating their time of formation to World War II.
55. Shabangu
56. Maphisa and Mngomezulu

CHAPTER TWO:

"SOCCER WAS GREAT THEN"
AMATEUR FOOTBALL (1939 - 1959)

After winning the Saturday League Division Two of the JBFA in 1939, Pirates were promoted to the Saturday League Division One where they competed for the next four or five years. 1945 saw the team - many of whom had dropped out of school by now - line up for the first time in the Sunday League Division One. This was the JBFA's elite division and it attracted the most spectators - Sunday being a free day for all workers. Matches started as early as 8:00 AM to accommodate as many fixtures as possible and games were played back to back till sundown. Many spectators spent the entire day at the ground, paying two shillings and sixpence for the pleasure. Players too, often used to watch their rivals when not playing themselves, arriving home in Orlando in the evening.(1)

By now, of course, Pirates were parading their skills at the JBFA's headquarters - the Wemmer Sports Ground in Von Wielligh Street. This was one of only two enclosed grounds. The other was Jafa's Bantu Sports Ground. Unlike Bantu Sports, Wemmer did not even have the most rudimentary terracing or "steps".(2)

Some indication of the conditions for a big match during the forties are provided by the Bantu World, which described as "a big crowd", the 5 000 who thronged to the ground to watch a JBFA pick beat Jafa 5-4, in September 1948.(3) An accompanying picture shows spectators, clad in overcoats and hats or woolen caps, standing four or five deep all along the touchline. Many of these spectators would have been hostel dwellers or men working in town, but a number used to travel from Orlando, Pimville and other more far flung parts of the south west to get their week's entertainment. The players themselves used to travel to Wemmer by train (finances permitting).(4)

By this time Pirates had already achieved some renown - a defeat at the hands of one of the period's leading sides, African Morning Stars, in May 1948 illicited the newspaper headline "Pirates Beaten"(5), which suggests that though they may have lost on this day, Pirates had turned the tables on their rivals when it came to footballing reputation. A clash with the self same Morning Stars in 1944 is considered to be the match which brought Pirates to everyone's attention. Pirates headed the Saturday League but the recognised method for a team from this division to achieve Sunday League Division I status was to beat the leaders of that league - in this case, Morning Stars. After a sometimes brutal goalless draw, Pirates won the replay (2-1) heralding their entrance to the big time.

The Sophiatown based Morning Stars comprised of a number of members of the notorious Americans gang, who, under the leadership of Booitjie American, ran a racket stealing expensive suits from freight trains. They imitated "American chaps in the bioscopes" and considered the Orlando lads to be unsophisticated. This gave an added edge to the clash.

Lucas "Ace" Buthelezi, (Buick's younger brother) was promoted from the second side for the replay and came in for particularly harsh treatment. Needless to say, his older teammates rallied to his support. At the end

of the match there was no time for Pirates to savour their victory, because, "all hell broke loose". Mkwanazi, who was soon to retire from playing, was beaten so that he was "almost unrecognisable" and Shabangu says he ran the fastest race of his life - "all the way from Wemmer to Park Station" - where the battered "kalkoene" hid in the "whites only" subway.

This match was significant in the development of Pirates for another reason too: thereafter the young side took up boxing and "gyming" under the appraisal of Mkwanazi. From now on they would not be a push over for anyone but it meant the team developed a reputation themselves for being hard. The players assert that this reputation is unfair, that they acted in self defence against teams who couldn't accept defeat on the playing field. Their unrivalled success over the next decade lends some credence to this claim.(6)

After the Morning Stars fiasco Pirates lodged a complaint with the league but nothing came of it. JBFA officials lived in Newclare and Sophiatown at the time and Pirates suspected that Morning Stars was "favoured". Trouble at subsequent meetings of the two rivals did nothing to alleviate these suspicions and after another "battle" a few years later and another unheeded complaint the club left the JBFA.(7)

According to an article on the history of the club published in the Bantu World in 1963, Pirates were experiencing similar problems with Pimville Champions but there is no suggestion that this was a "favoured side". This intense rivalry is more probably related to the two clubs positions as the leading sides of the two "old" townships of the south west. It appears that Champions were already in the Sunday League when Pirates made the grade and this probably added an edge to the local rivalry.(8)

On leaving the JBFA, Pirates helped found an all Orlando football association. Not surprisingly, they found the competition to be very weak and despite their desire to help develop this association, they returned to the JBFA after only one year - for another brief stay. This was followed by a few years of what was called "freelancing" - competing with a wide range of clubs on a friendly basis. This was the quickest route to making any money at all in the amateur game because what gate was taken would be split 50/50 between the competing clubs. Of course, to be a successful freelancer, a club had to already be a drawcard. This was a common route to finding whatever fortune and fame there was to be had from the game, and it was taken by Pirates, intermittantly fot the first thirty years of their existance. By the time Pirates entered the Jafa league in 1951 they were without doubt one of the county's top sides. Only a handful of Reef clubs and some sides from Natal - where organised black football has its roots - were their equal.(9)

---

* South African football can trace its roots to Natal, where the game was introduced - in accordance with the worldwide pattern - by British settlers, soldiers and sailors. According to Archer and Bouillon, Indians and Africans had been playing football in Natal at the turn of the century. The Indian community has a long history of organised football. tal's top African side of the period under review was Durban Bush Bucks, who were formed in 1912 and continue to exist, albeit as a wistful reminder of their proud past.

This period's nomadic existance was not unusual. Clubs frequently defected from associations if they felt they were getting a raw deal and the desire to play on the best terms available appears to have been one of the most important factors determining where clubs placed their allegiances.

It would be appropriate at this point to try and get a picture of the general conditions endured by top class African players and clubs and their fans during the amateur period. The first thing to take into account is that very little money was involved in African football. The existance of most clubs was hand to mouth, and football was played and enjoyed for reasons other than money. Besides the spirit of solidarity and shared fellowship the game engendered amongst players and followers alike football was enjoyed much more for what it had to offer on an aesthetic level, for its intrinsic values.

While football played at the highest level possible provided African footballers with the chance of access to a slightly improved lifestyle (see chapter four) the game was enjoyed by players for all the reasons it remains popular amongst millions of amateur players around the world: the thrill of scoring, the camaraderie engendered by shared effort, the respect of teammates, the knowledge that you're somebody in the eyes of the spectators ringing the pitch.

Even as organised football began to draw on a wider range of followers - who thronged to matches or followed the game in the press - this essence remained throughout the amateur period. The repeated assertions by past players that "before money came into the game, players played for the love of it" is only partly a reflection of disenchantment with the changes that that began to alter the status quo when semi-professionalism was embarked on; it is also a determined assertion of how it really was played.(10)

The following statement perhaps captures the essence of Pirates, the team. It displays an interesting mix of craftsman's pride and the amateur's pleasure:

> "We were not getting payed through football - it was just a pleasure. With us it was not winning that was important but how the goals were scored. We would play to win by all means - but win with style, with pleasure! Win or lose, we would have meetings every Wednesday to talk about football, to improve our play. Winning the game, with us was not to say there were no mistakes."(11)

For the ardent fans and the casual spectators the weekends of non-stop football at Wemmer and Bantu Sports were something to brighten up a week - a bright corner of camaraderie and excitement, perhaps an opportunity to create a world unregulated by mine shifts or pass checks.

Men living in the city hostels were among the most regular visitors to the matches as a supporter who seems to have watched the other fans as much as the action on the pitch relates:

> "Watching matches at Bantu Sports was very great. We had these Zulu teams - they couldn't play nice football but when praising it was beautiful, it was something to enjoy for the whole day. These men were mostly from the hostel ... the way they kept up their teams ...it was good"(12)

Mike Tseka used to watch the first team as a youngster learning the game in Pirates second or third division:

> "Pirates had a unique style and formation. They advanced as a team in a V and when they retreated into defence, it was rhythmical, a musical kind of thing. So it was most exciting for people watching ... [including] fans from outside Orlando ... many were from the hostels."(13)

In chapter four we will examine further examples of what football offered the players and officials. For the fans who streamed to Bantu Sports and Wemmer from the townships, hostels and peripheral slums, football was a means of maximising the quality of their lives. Spectators at a football match might be observed running tirelessly up and down the touchline, exhorting their side to greater efforts as if their lives depended on it; they might boldly join in the singing of rousing Zulu songs; or they might steal away from the action to take an illicit swig of home brew: whatever they were doing at the match, they were taking the opportunity to do what pleased them.

The chance to drink and gamble heavily on the weekends appears to have motivated the attendance of a sector of the Bantu Sports Grounds crowd as much as the hope of seeing good football and this caused disturbances in and around the ground. Police crackdowns on the "young shebeen queens" who plyed their trade at the ground were applauded in the press but the protection punters offered their source of merriment and intoxication (14)

This is what drew Johannesburg spectators, despite the discomforts they had to put up with at every ground. Not only were their insufficient playing pitches, facilities for spectators at the grounds were non existant. At Wemmer there wasn't even an embankment to provide a better view and the the only aspect of the Bantu Sports Ground, besides the football, which drew supporters approval was the illicit beer brewing just outside the ground. Players themselves were no better off, changing under trees for example. The Bantu Sports Ground had the edge on Wemmer - which was used as a car park during the week in the fifties. It was initially controlled by a board of trustees but the City Council took it over at the start of the decade, probably in accordance with the new apartheid policy. Rudimentary improvements were made, during which time Dan Twala, the head of Jafa, had to move out of his office to make way for the foreman of the repairs team. By 1956 the Bantu World was describing it thus:

> "Patches of grass in a heap of sand, with only the white goal posts and the concrete slabs to denote a football pitch. In rainy weather ... the grassed parts become oases. The turfing - if ever done - was not a success and very poorly laid out."(15)

In 1947 there were just 30 football pitches for Johannesburg's African population which numbered about 380 000.(16) By 1952 the JBFA was reckoned to have about 250 teams under its jurisdiction and two years later Carr of the City Council's Non-European Affairs Department (NEAD) estimated the city had about 350 African football teams in toto.(17) The shortage of grounds meant matches were played back to back all day Sunday and from early in the afternoon on Saturday. This obviously contributed to the deterioration of pitches and referees were faced with a problem if the light faded on a still to be completed match. Unscrupulous teams

would sometimes take advantage of this situation by complaining of poor light if they were hanging on to a slender lead. The lack of properly administered, enclosed grounds obviously militated against clubs' abilities to make ends meet. To ensure a "gate" could be taken at any ground other than the headquarters of the two FAs, players, club officials and ardent supporters would have to erect makeshift barriers of hessian or corrugated iron which encouraged most spectators to pay rather than attempt to view a game from a distant tree or through a gap in the sacking.

There were various hazards attendant with playing on an unenclosed ground: it was one thing for a flying winger to have to contend with the outstretched feet of fans hemmed on the touchline, it was quite another when a goalkeeper was left at the mercy of rival fans wielding an assortment of weapons designed to persuade him to have an off day. Fortunately, such incidents were rare but the conditions of playing facilities did nothing to discourage unruliness amongst the crowd.

Both FA's suffered from the game's inadequate infrastructure, and although the "Bantu" strand, tended - broadly speaking - to prefer accomodation with the NEAD to confrontation, the benefits they derived from this relationship were not measureable as tangible improvements but rather in the more negative sense of an absence of official sanctions against them, the full force of which was felt by the independent "African" FAs towards the end of this period and in the sixties.

It is rather simplistic to categorise the two associations as broadly "collaborationist" and independent because we tend to miss the nuances of their existance and their relationship with each other and the state. Furthermore, in some towns the local "Bantu" FA might be in the "African" camp, and vice versa, either due to a switch in allegiance or through a quirk in their naming. The rivalry between the two strands was far less marked during most of the period currently under review, although it was sharpened by the battle for resources that ensued when the enactment of apartheid policy meant that stadia began to be built in townships towards the end of the fifties. Previously, the reluctance of officials to give up positions was the major stumbling block to amalgamation. Unfortunately, space does not permit a sharper focus on the rich history of these two associations.

Once installed in Jafa, however, Pirates never returned to the JBFA fold, although their popularity ensured that they were wooed by competition organisers eager to have their name on the bill. Past players consider the JBFA to have initially been the stronger association in terms of the quality of football on show - but as the fifties progressed the balance swung in favour of Jafa. It was reputedly better organised, hosted the most prestigious tournaments (as we shall see) and had the crowd pulling Pirates in their ranks (as well as the up and coming Swallows). This was also the begining of a period which saw the final eradication of the slums of the Eastern and Western Native townships, and concomitantly the demise or relocation of many of the clubs housed there. Many - though not all - had been JBFA affiliates.

The independent stance of Dan Twala and his JAFA was probably a secondary consideration that won player's and club's favour. Twala, who was revered as "Papa Dan" and "Mr Soccer", was considered to be a great administrator who was able to bring players and public alike the most exciting

competitions. He was the force behind Jafa - and the entire "African" strand of associations in the Transvaal which came together as Tafa.

Sidney Mabuza states simply: "Jafa had the better facilities - it was nicer to play at Bantu Sports and they organised the best competitions. Shabangu concurs with this statement, and, while praising Twala as "a good organiser" and "someone who would tell you straight out what he thinks ... and you could still love him", he insists that it was Pirates "who pulled Jafa up": "At first there was no game where you felt you enjoyed it; it was just long hopeful shots all the time. Eventually [our opponents] started passing. We taught them how to play but then they brought our standard down." Buthelezi says "We made these teams up and gave them good advice", adding with a laugh, "and then it became a boomerang against us - they came back and beat us!"

Most players steered clear of what they saw as "sports politics" but there was general consensus that Jbfa (which had been set up by the City Council) was favoured and that Jafa and other "African" associations were eventually "just squeezed out" by the differential proccess in which resources were allocated.* (18)

When Orlando Stadium - the biggest yet built in a township - was withheld from Jafa it caused bitterness in Orlando, as we shall see in forthcoming chapters. The Orlando African Football Association fought a particularly bitter and protracted battle against the Non-European Affairs Department of the Johannesburg City Council over the question of enclosed grounds till deep into the sixties. It seems that part of the mythology sorrounding Pirates as the "peoples' club" stems from this period when the club was, for whatever reasons, alligned with the independent association, and, by implication, hard done by.

At the end of the day however, players were primarily preoccupied with "getting on with the game" and as long as Pirates were drawing crowds and winning matches they could survive without the turfed Orlando Stadium: "Our [non-playing] officials were involved in the politics of the associations - they never told us. The player's job is to play football."(20)

Play football they certainly did. Pirates kicked off the fifties as the "hot favourites" to win the SA Robertson Cup, which was Jafa's

---

* A comparison with the situation in Durban is interesting. The local authorities had long recognised the Durban and District African FA as the sole association despite its stance which was even more fiercely independent. This meant that a desperate battle over scarce resources, which the local state was able to capitalise on in the Transvaal, did not occur to the same degree. It also probably encouraged a more efficient allocation of resources within football in Natal. (The fact that the D and D African FA was considered to be highly efficient - it was the only FA to submit its books for an annual audit - probably endeared it to white officialdom.) A split eventually occurred in 1959, as a ramification of the differences of opinion around professionalism and the affiliation of the SA Bantu FA to the white Football Association of South Africa. Even then, the allocation of resources was never used as a political weapon to the extent that it was in the Transvaal. (See Thabe; ed; chapter 3 for more on Natal.)

principle knock out competition, staged during the first few months of each year. Former players remember it as the most prestigous and glamourous of all club tournaments. Although it was organised by Jafa, it drew entries from around the Reef, including clubs affiliated to the JBFA. It gave players a chance to pit their skills against the sides they did not usually come up against. This increased range of competition, added to all the drama attendant with knock-out competions was one of the reasons why the SA Robertson was so appealing. It was also the only competition which provided victorious players with personal mementoes of their achievement: the cup winning sides received statuettes.(21)

Another reason for its popularity was surely the record of Pirates - or the "terror of the West Rand" as a Bantu World reporter had dubbed them - in this competition. Begining in 1950, Pirates won the Cup four years in succession. Each year fans flocked to see Pirates emulate the previous season's achievements - or else to see them knocked off their perch.(22)

The 1950 final matched Pirates with their old rivals African Morning Stars who were still among the elite of the JBFA. After a hard fought goalless draw, Pirates won 3-2 in front of 10 000 spectators at Bantu Sports. Like other encounters with Morning Stars it was a tense, supercharged affair, and the referee (a Jafa official) had to step in to avert a possible brawl with the match balanced at two goals apiece. African constables kept the catcalling crowd under control and at one point the Morning Stars trainer had to calm his teams supporters.(23)

Once they had their hands on the trophy, Pirates were reluctant to let go of it. They beat CV Rangers in 1951 (3-0 after a 2-2 draw), and Moonlight Darkies of Alexandra in 1952 and 1953.

The first encounter with Moonlight Darkies is interesting because Pirates fielded a guest player that day and their Alexandra based opponents were shored up with some of the Dark City's best players, whose own clubs ahd not entered the competition. There was nothing untoward with this procedure: the SA Robertson was a summer competition and many clubs would be missing players who had returned to their homelands for the holiday. They would be forced to either forego the competition, or, preferably - especially if they were a good side with a reasonable chance of success - loan players from other, less fortunate sides for the duration of the competition. In the Pirates ranks that day was the legendary Difference Mbanya of Swallows and the temptation to sign him permanently, even though he was not a "child of Orlando", must have been great. He was a highly regarded player and Jimmy "Hitler" Sobi - who was forced to miss the game - must have viewed the winning goal with mixed feelings as Mbanya backheeled the ball for the young Sidney Mabuza to finish. Sobi's fears for his place were unjustified, because Swallows fans, incensed at the thought of losing their hero to the Orlando club, threatened Mbanya with dire consequences should he leave. With no regulated transfer system, save the signing of registration forms with the association, players were relatively free to join a new side if they found their first team chances restricted at their own club. Star performers, however, could expect the community's retribution if they defected. (24)

Pirates are reputed to have achieved a "clean sweep" of honours in 1952 in the process of retaining the SA Robertson Cup. The Bantu World does not provide any confirmation of this, reporting only the lifting of the Transvaal Challenge Cup in November, thanks to "good passing combination

and ball control that thrilled the crowd".(25) If the club entered all competitions on offer, it would mean they also won the Jafa Summer league (which they first won in 1950), and the Robor Shield (another summer trophy). It appears that the Jafa league, at least, was left to someone else, Pirates returning to "freelancing" despite doing well in the league the previous year. Their second side were installed in their place, presumably to gain experience.

In 1953, the hapless Moonlight Darkies squared up to Pirates in the SA Robertson Cup Final once again. The two sides were locked at 1-1 after 90 minutes when Mokgosinyana displayed his ability to motivate his players. In earlier times, Mkwanazi took most of the responsibility for team tactics and interval "pep talks" but he had been forced to find work as a municipal policeman which kept him away from the game a lot. It was left to the patron to lift his team for extra time; the veterans of the team thought this was one match they wouldn't win but four goals in the second half of extra time gave Pirates a record breaking fourth Robertson Cup win.(26)

Pirates entered the Jafa league in 1953 and in their capacity as table toppers they met JBFA leaders, Naughty Boys, and won 7-0 with a hat-trick from Shabangu in front of "one of the biggest crowds in years"(27) A week later however, they came down to earth with a bump, experiencing a rare setback in the honours race when they went down 3-2 to Corrugated Rovers in the Transvaal Challenge Cup Final (28).

The defeat must have rankled - Corrugated Rovers and Moroka Swallows were virtually the same thing. It was really the United Tobacco Company side, but the majority of Swallows players had followed Mbanya into employment with the firm. They were used as sales representatives, the logic being that shopkeepers were more likely to buy from renowned footballers.

By 1954 the era of original Pirates was coming to an end. Although the first team was still graced with the presence of Mothei, Eliot Buthelezi, Steve Mpshe, Shabangu (less frequently) and one or two others, its success revolved equally around the efforts of Willard "Ndoda" Msomi, Sidney Mabuza, Jerry Mazibuko and others who had been promoted from the club's lower divisions. Within a few years a whole new generation - dubbed the "Junior Buccaneers" - would be installed in the first team. 1954 also marked the end of Pirates dominance of the SA Robertson competition. They did reach their third succesive Transvaal Challenge Cup Final, however, but that was scant consolation because the match was never played despite three attempts.

This prompted the magazine, African Sports, to attack Jafa for poor organistion. This the association might have been guilty of but for a number of the young men of Pirates, affiliation to Jafa had brought personal honours over the last couple of years.

Pirates' players regularly graced Jafa and Tafa pick sides after 1952. In 1953, the club's pre-eminence was recognised when six of their number wereselected for the Tafa side which won the prestigious Moroka-Baloyi inter provincial tournament. This tournament, organised by Tafa, was probably the highlight of the football calendar. Players and fans regarded this as the most prestigous tournament of all, and African Sports had no doubts either; previewing a Transvaal - Natal clash in September 1953 it enthused "[This is] the most important tournament ... many

spectators will travel from the Transvaal to see them play Natal", and Twala was praised as "one of the best football administrators in the country" for his role in organising the tournament. Basutoland were trounced 5-1 in the final to give the Transvaal their 11th win in 16 years. The trophy was presented to the delighted players by Mrs Moroka, wife of Dr JS Moroka, co-donor of the trophy.(29) (The appearance of the ANC leader's name on the trophy, by the way, represents a rare instance of a prominent black political figure associating with football.)(30)

Inter-provincial fixtures were favoured by administrators for their crowd pulling potential; by spectators because of their novelty and the appearance of many top players at once; and by the players because of their prestige. Other tournaments which players remember with obvious pleasure were the Mendi trophy and inter-race competitions for the Kajee Cup organised by the South African Socccer Federation.(31)

These competitions often forced the cancellation of league fixtures and the league season itself was frequently not completed. Logistical factors relating to the game's weak infrastructure were obviously also at work here; but the problem was compounded by top club's preference for prestige friendlies, which gauranteed a good turn-out, to mundane league fixtures.(32)

As gate takings were usually split 50/50, it was a rare opportunity to put some money in the coffers, although this money was by no means a certainty. Pirates often charged a "gaurantee" as insurance against a poor gate, which might occur if the hosts failed to advertise the fixture adequately. Clubs like Pirates would quite regularly travel as far afield as Bloemfontein and Kimberley to play local sides - or even other top teams from the Reef, Natal or the Protectorates.

Pirates were among the pioneers of encounters with top Protectorate sides such as Matlama, Lioli and Linare of Basutoland and they were one of the few black club sides to have access to Wembley stadium for big friendlies. Their crowd pulling ability was no doubt a more persuasive factor for officialdom than the colour of their skins. Matches at Wembley came to an end in 1954, however, when a ban was placed on Africans attending Wembley after "Russians" invaded the pitch during the Moroka -Baloyi Cup Final. Clearly the result: Transvaal 8, Basutoland 2 was not to their liking!(33) A few weeks later, Pirates entertained Linare at Wemmer and the Bantu World reported "a record crowd ... to see this match. The Reef's Basutho turned out in force in the hope of seeing their men and the usual crowd of hero worshippers [was also present]." When the visitors unexpectedly scored "pandemonium (thlala) broke out".(34)

Media descriptions depict the carnival atmosphere at these events. The enthusiastic turn out suggest that they provided a highly appreciated

---

According to former sports journalist, Theo Mthembu "The ANC never used soccer. Politics didn't touch soccer seriously. You found it in smaller sports like weightlifting and cricket. The majority who played were Indians and "coloureds" who could see they were missing out on good competition, like the Olymics. Educated guys at the top who think of these things quickly - in soccer you don't find that. A fellow who comes from Bergville way, went to standard two ... all he knows is kicking a ball; all he's interested in is kicking a ball." (Interview, August 1991.)

entertainment, and furthermore, for migrants on the Reef, an opportunity to publically reaffirm their tribal loyalties. the presence of the Zulu paramount, or his regent, at these matches, for instance, would illicit thunderous waves of "Bayete! Bayete!" from the crowd. It is unclear, from newspaper reports, whether the "Russians" who invaded Wembley were members of the notorious gang or whether they were ordinary Basutos exercising a little national pride. Whatever the case, crowd trouble at grounds was on the upswing. Natal at this point seemed to be suffering from it more and there were suggestions that the basis for the unrest was racial. While there was no uninamity on this question, the relative recency of the Durban race riots of 1948 might have been a contributing factor. (Even in the sixties Pirates claimed a vocal Zulu following when they took on Indian owned teams in Durban; this is appears partly a symptom of racial tension and partly due to Pirates overwhelming popularity nationwide.) Journalists became critical of the Federation's inter-race tournaments, which brought together representatives of African, Indian and "coloured" associations, accusing them of promoting racial hostility, although past players don't recall them in this light.

In 1955, angry fans stormed the ticket office when Pirates failed to appear for the Transvaal Challenge Cup Final at the newly erected stadium in Wattville. After that, their opponents, Corrugated Rovers, refused to meet Pirates and it took the intervention of officials to ensure the game didn't go the same way as the previous year's final. When the teams finally lined up "fans from all over the Reef" saw Pirates trounced 5-0. It was a rough game - Elliott Buthelezi was hospitalised with a head injury and Shabangu was left unmarked for a while by fearful opponents. A Pirates fan entered the field brandishing an iron bar at the end, but was stopped by a player.(35)

This match is a milestone in the history of Pirates / Swallows rivalry because it marked the first really violent confrontation between the two clubs. The causes of the trouble can be attributed to the one-off nature of the event, compounded by the bickering following Pirates initial non-appearance, which lead to a great build up of tension and expectation. The violence on the pitch, which reportedly "marred an otherwise good game", could also be a factor, especially given the close personal relationships that existed between players and certain supporters. Obviously, intense localism and inter township rivalry played into the situation as the fast improving Swallows were seen as representing the "new" south western townships, whereas Pirates symbolised the old. The Bantu World simply attributed it to "bad sportsmanship" on Pirates supporters part - an interpretation that most interviewees are go along with.(36)

Various reasons for the increase in crowd violence (other than lack of sportsmanship) were put forward by association officals and the press. Poor refereeing seems to have been one reason - a match official faced the wrath of angry spectators if he was judged to be favouring one side or to simply to be incompetent - and there were many calls for the introduction of proper training for referees, who were, as often as not, association officials stretching their commitment to the game beyond the bounds of duty. Association officials were also blamed. There is evidence that some were able to derive monetary benefits from ticket sales, and they were castigated in the press for disguising the fact that a promised team was not about to arrive until the eager spectators were installed in the

ground. On occassion they were harrassed by fans who justifiably felt cheated. The primitive nature of communications, coupled with the manner in which sides journeyed to matches, lead to frequent last minute cancellations that officials were not to blame for. Poor amenities were cited in the press as a cause of crowd unrest and this was echoed from time to time by association officials. The lack of enclosed grounds and barriers, while not a cause of disruptions, certainly made them easier, especially in a tense atmosphere where enthusiastic punters crammed the touchline.(37)

Past players single out side betting - where a worker might stake his paypacket on the outcome of a match - as a key factor promoting crowd violence and the stoppage of games. Boy Shogwe, a Pirates supporter since the mid 1950's concurs and Twala echoed these sentiments in a newspaper interview.(38)

The players stress that what was considered to be violent behaviour then was usually a lot milder and far more infrequent than what followed in later decades. Somewhat surprisingly, I could find no examples of crowd violence occuring at a point when there was particularly stressful mass upheaval, such as bus boycotts or ethnic conflict. A few years hence, the football authorities were able to get the ban on all gatherings in the wake of the Sharpeville massacre lifted at their grounds, and no particularly untoward disturbances were noted. Nonetheless, any attempt to understand crowd violence in South Africa must take into account socio-economic factors and particular stresses to which the urban African working class are prone.

Allen Guttman makes an obvious but important universal observation about spectator behaviour at mass sports gatherings:

> "It also seems reasonable to assume that societies under stress will suffer more from violence of every kind, including spectator violence. It also seems reasonable to expect that societies characterized by a variety of ethnic and religious differences will have to be either very civilized or very tightly controlled from above if they are not to suffer periodic outbreaks of expressive violence, including spectator violence."(39)

Taking into account the oppressive nature of South African society - the late fifties and early sixties were particularly characterised by apartheid's entrance into all spheres of social life - it seems reasonable to suggest that periodic outbreaks of (usually) mild examples of crowd disorder provide yet another indication of the importance of football as a point where ordinary South Africans had a chance to actually escape the tight control from above.

If Pirates fans were such bad losers, it is just as well that the second half of the decade wasn't without its successes. In 1955 and again the following year, Pirates tasted success in Summer Leagues hosted by Jafa or the JBFA, and they frequently headed the JAFA log at the last date it appeared in the press. The 1958 S A Robertson Cup Final saw another reverse at the hands of Swallows - this time the score was a remarkable 6 - 5. This win meant Swallows had completed a Robor Shield \ S A Robertson double two years running. Pirates emulated this feat the following year in a somewhat bizzare fashion - they were awarded both cups without actually competing in either final. They were awarded walkovers when

Moroka Terrors failed to arrive for the final of the Robor Shield and achieved the "double" when Swallows did not honour the SA Robertson final with their presence. Swallows refusal to honour fixtures with Pirates was to become a repetitive theme over the next decade. The reasons put forward by Swallows invariably revolved around their claim that they were not gauranteed protection in these encounters. On the last occasion this happened it precipitated a major split in Swallows.(40)

In concluding this chapter, it would be useful to try and establish the reasons for Pirates success and their ability to survive where other clubs failed.

By the end of the period under review, Swallows were the only side in the country who came anywhere near approaching Pirates following, reputation and history of success. Although Pimville Champions had briefly flirted with success in the JBFA, they were never able to mount a consistent challenge to Pirates supremacy in the south west. In the forties, Pirates' sternest rivals were clubs based in Eastern or Western Native Township. By the end of the amateur period the balance of power had swung quite decisvely to what was soon to be called Soweto.

The OAFA was becoming one of the largest and most forward looking of the minor regional associations, despite being forced to continue erecting hessian barriers around their bumpy pitches even after the completion of Orlando Stadium in 1959. It is likely that the destruction of the older townships nearer the city spelt the death of some of Pirates old opponents; and while others relocated themselves it is possible that many found their support bases severly weakened.

Other sides succumbed to splits, which, although not always a mark of failure, invariably left one side weakened. Pirates were less vulnerable to succesions for a combination of reasons: the strong unity amongst the players, the club's rootedness in a community characterised by its fierce local pride which probably translated onto the playing field; and Pirates' attainment of the status of a nationally renowned club which probably discouraged walkouts. Of course, success breeds success, and the more Pirates achieved on the football pitch, the more other factors which enhanced their ability to succeed, developed.

It appears that Pirates style of play was virtually unique. The Pirates game was based on short passing and running into space - the mark of any good side, and not something associated with the traditional "WM" formation still employed throughout the world then. They were also fitter than most, which can be attributed to their devotion to "gyming". "We played to a system but we could switch play and use various formations. Trap and push, trap and push; that was our way". Whereas their opponents - especially sides encountered in their first seasons in Jafa - simply used to "kick and run, kick and run - it was not beautiful to watch".(41)

Switching to Jafa possibly boosted Pirates chances of success but it is likely that their opponents appeared weaker than they were because Pirates were so accomplished. Their relative sophistication is attributed to regular sessions spent dissecting each and every game and the expertise of men like Mkwanazi and Mokgosinyana. The maintenance of a relatively

unchanged first team for fifteen years is likely to have ensured a remarkable understanding on the pitch. And while their use of secret signals and code words on the pitch is not at all unique - they are part of the everday practice of good sides - they suggest a team of players who had each other's confidence and were comfortable playing together.

They could also be hard if they had to be - they had learnt their lessons Morning Stars gave them in the JBFA well. When Lucas "Ace" Buthelezi took over the centre forward position Shabangu was moved to the left wing (and in time, he lost his regular place altogether). This scheme worked best when Pirates were pitched against a side which "liked to play football", but when their opponents were hard men, Shabangu would be recalled to pull on the familiar number nine shirt:

> "If a defender was fouling, "Babboon" would say "put it in the air". So we would kick the ball up; the defender would jump, Sam would jump - and the defender would drop!"(42)

Newspaper reports describing their exploits on the pitch support claims by past players that Pirates' play "was altogether different". A newspaperman's report that Swallows had achivieved "a popularity hitherto enjoyed only by Pirates - that of playing to please the crowd and win at the same time", is a compliment to Pirates ongoing success.(43) "Pirates won because of better positional play" ... "they gave the impression of drawing geometric patterns in the ground ... and dictated the pace throughout" ..."their dazzling short passing moves had the defence under non-stop pressure" - all examples of the praises reporters sung when Pirates played.

And the fans sung their praises too: A report of a match which they lost to Pimville Champions says "Pirates drew a big cheer from the crowd - especially the bearded Babboon Shepherd." There is no record of the crowd's response to the winning side that day: either an indication of the support Pirates enjoyed, or a testament to their news value - or maybe both. (44)

Fans enjoyed Pirates swift passing game, especially when it produced goals, as it invariably did. Of course, spectators also adored a good dribbler, but, while Pirates had their fair share of ball players they were expected to harness their individual skills to the team effort - the dictum being dribble by all means - beat one man and we are a man free - then release the ball to a teammate who has taken up a good position. The finer details of team play impressed certain followers:

> "With Pirates it was a different machinery altogether - they could change anytime, accelerate any time, kill the ball any time. My hero was Steve Mpshe - he was the brains behind the team, a great inside forward."(45)

Players believe too much of emphasis on dribbling and playing to the crowd was the cause of many an opponent's downfall:

> "Even the men in the hostels liked us. These teams from outside played their own type of football, but the game Pirates played was admirable; I believe [their fans] would always choose Pirates. All these others failed because of their aimless dribbling - with Pirates it was purposeful ... creating goals to win the game. When

> Scara [Sono] first came into the side he just wanted to dribble. At half time Rocks [Mothei] was so angry, he didn't want to speak to him. "You can't play like that", he said.(46)

Success on the playing field and ardent support of the crowds impacted on each other in a dialectical manner which saw Pirates building up ever increasing support. By the end of the fifties they were already building up a national following as a result of reputation enhancing trips around the province and the Union and matches against Protectorate sides. These prestige friendlies also translated to a few pennies in the bank. This did not make the club rich - no-one was rich - but it made them that much more able to to survive and continue in the same vein as before. This combination of factors, added to their rootedness in their own community, and the support that engendered, made Pirates the most sought after club when money began to enter the game on a larger scale.

Chapter two - NOTES

1. Sobi (August 1991), Buthelezi (August 1991) and Shabangu (August 1991). The rate of "Two and six" was still charged when the currency converted to Rands and Cents.
2. It must be noted that an enclosed ground was not a stadium - more likely waste ground sorrounded by a wall. The Bantu Sports Ground was, in fact, built on wasteland donated to the trustees of the Bantu Sports Club by a mining company in 1932, and there is evidence that, for a period, enclosure for Wemmer meant hessian sorroundings. (Thabe; ed; p 124).
3. Bantu World, September 1948.
4. Based on various interviews with past players.
5. Bantu World, 22/5/48.
6. Various interviews with past players. Their is some uncertainty as to the date of the Morning Stars match - some believe it might have been in 1945. I have gone with the date suggested by most of the players and the Bantu World history of 1963. The nature of the match is also unclear. while most describe it in the somewhat unusual fashion that I have followed, Buthelezi remebers it as "something like a knockout - we had beaten everyone else and so had they". This might square with my interpretation but it does not negate Mothei's description (Thabe; p 87) of the match as a "cup final" which he dates to 1945. In settling for a particular interpretation, I recognise that the frequent upheavals in matches between the two sides tends to blur the memory of one particular event.
7. Buthelezi and Shabangu.
8. World, 23/8/63.
9. See Couzens "Football in South Africa" and Archer and Bouillon.
10. Watching a game with past players, one notes their private disapproval with the way it is played today. They accept the game is tchnically and tactically advanced but they [marvel] at what they see as the modern player's lack of commitment AND lack of enjoyment. Whether or not this is a fair reflection of the modern game, the important point is, this does reflect what the game meant for players in the amateur period.
11. Shabangu
12. Interview with Peter Mngomezulu (August 1991)
13. Interview with Mike Tseka (August 1991)
14. Bantu World April and May 1951. Although an earlier report suggests the brewing and the support it attracted discouraged a lot of fans from attending matches: "As a result of constant police raids by the Police Force round the Bantu Sports Ground a big crowd came last weekend to witness soccer matches...". This was reported a year earlier - Bantu World 4/2/51 - suggesting the people's determined persistance in shaping their own cultural space and norms.
15. World, 12/5/56. The concrete slabs might relate to a planned, new grandstand - the old one was removed during the revamping - but as rumours abounded that the ground would have to be vacated soon in accordance with government policy, no-one expected a new stand to be built - and it never was.
15. Archer and Bouillon; p 129.
16. Bantu World; March 1952
17. Bantu World; January 1953
19. Willard Msomi's summation of the situation is as follows:
    "We preferred Jafa because they had nothing against Orlando Pirates. When Orlando Pirates moved to Jafa the JBFA couldn't any longer command as much money - there was no Pirates. The Nats were

dictating and JBFA accepted whatever the government said. Jafa went along with ideas contrary to those suggested by the government. So the [Non-European Affairs] Department decided: lets give the JBFA facilities and throttle these."(19)

20. Eliot Buthelezi
21. Based on various interviews and newspaper articles. The SA Robertson derived its name from its sponsors. Good Hope were the first winners, in 1946, and then Eastern Brothers won it three years running, an achievement rapidly surpassed by Pirates.
22. The semi-final of 1950 "attracted more spectators than ever"; while, by 1954, "fans came from all over the Reef" according to the Bantu World.
23. Bantu World 12/3/50
24. Based on interviews with Mabuza, (August 1991), Sobi and Shabangu.
25. Bantu World 15/11/52. They beat Moonlight Darkies 3-2 in a second replay.
26. Bantu World 8/3/53. Shabangu embellishes:
"At half time of extra time Mokgosinyana said "look people, this game is not gone, it's still yours." He took me and said "go play left out"; he took "Hitler" and said "go play 8, let "Rocks" play half centre - we're going to operate the "donkey system"."
"That is where your half-backs and inside-forwards do all the running; they have to work like donkies - when they are dead the game is finished. From the restart we took the game, man we hit them with four goals. Even the Alex fans came to us and said they could never beat us again."
27. Bantu World 5/12/53
28. Bantu World 9/12/53
29. African Sports, September 1953. The Pirates six were Buthelezi, Mothei, Mpshe, Msomi, Shabangu and Sobi. The fifth goal in a 5-1 win was described thus: "...it then becomes a Pirates move; the ball travels to J Sobi at centre half, to S Shabangu who is now at the centre forward position and finally to Mothei who waltzed his way through the Basutholand defence to score". Former journalist, Theo Mthembu says: "Every town, when the Moroka-Baloyi comes, was agog with excitement. It played on people's feelings". (Interview, August 1991)
30. Archer and Bouillion assert that it was the "smaller sports" (such as tennis, badminton, cricket and weightlifting) which had a lot of middle class participants, often "coloureds" and Indians, who tended to be more politicised. This squares with Mthembu's comments - see footnote page 26.
31. The Kajee Cup was a favourite with the players because it provided the novelty of inter-racial mixing on the pitch. Towards the end of the amateur period, the Federation, which brought together African, Indian and "coloured" associations was subjected to repeated attacks in the press who saw its approach as one which encouraged racism. A lot of ordinary players, according to Mthembu, "didn't like the Federation because it was predominantly Indian".

The Mendi tournament was held to raise funds for families who had lost men in the Mendi ship disaster. An astonishing number of fund raising matches were held throughout the period covered by this paper. Sometimes the beneficiaries would be victims of floods or bus crashes; on other ocassions they would be players saving to go to Europe for a trial; on one occassion a match was held to pay the way of a boxing team touring Italy! This example of football transcending the normal boundaries of the game is an indication of the central position it held in everyday life; it also suggests that it was a key means of accumulating resources in an impoverished community.

32. Mike Tseka, who took a number of years to break into the first team, recalls joining them as cover one Sunday in December: "Pirates played four matches that day to complete our fixtures - you couldn't lift your legs by the last match!"
33. From cuttings from African Sports in It's A Goal; Thabe; ed;
34. Bantu World, February 1954
35. Bantu World 22/10/55 and Golden City Post 26/10/55
36. Former journalist, Fanyana Shiburi, attributes the violence to the tension riddled build up to the game. He provides an example of even more serious trouble (three died) at a Wembley match agianst Durban Bush Bucks that had been been planned - and talked about - for six months before it finally took place. Pirates were trounced 4-0. (This probably contributed to the Wembley ban.) He believes "Pirates fans couldn't take defeat, they couldn't lose to [what they saw as] barbaric guys from Durban".
37. For examples of journalists opinions on the causes of crowd trouble see Sy Mogapi in the Golden City Post, December 1956 and a reporter in the Bantu World, March 1954.
38. Based on various interviews with players. Theo Mthembu concurs, as does Boy Shogwe (Interviewed September 1991) - see chapter five. Twala's opinions are published in Golden City Post, 7/5/61.
39. Allen Guttman; Sports Spectators; p 173
40. Based on various reports in the Bantu World and Golden City Post.
41. Based on various interviews with past players.
42. Eliot Buthelezi.
43. Bantu World, March 1954.
44. Bantu World, May 1954.
45. Peter Mngomezulu
46. Sidney Mabuza

CHAPTER THREE

"WHEN THE MONEY CAME"
SEMI PROFESSIONALISM AND BIG MEN

By the late fifties, we can discern changes in football and at Pirates which, although it might not have appeared so at the time, were harbingers of a new era in African football. Organised football was slowly becoming more commercialised and sensationalised. This was a reflection of increasing interest in football and it in turn served to generate more interest. A growing number of African players were trying their luck in professional leagues in Europe and this obviously prompted questions on the home front as to whether professionalism was not possible in South Africa. In 1959 both the World and the Golden City Post stepped up and improved their coverage of football, implying that the educated newspaper reading sector of the African community was showing more interest in the game. Another indicator of football's ever rising popularity, as well as the interest shown by commerce, was the more frequent use of "soccerites" to promote products in newspaper and magazine adverts.

At Pirates the first team was predominantly comprised of the second generation of players, although a handful of the old stalwarts maintained their first team places. Of the new generation, both Jerry Mazibuko and George "Ace" Moeketsi were linked with possible moves to Holland, to play for Heracles, the club which employed the pioneering Steve "Kalamazoo" Mokone. Moeketsi was also one of the first non-Orlando men to don a Pirates jersey, having moved to Johannesburg from Natal.

During the decade a working committee of non-playing officials was elected to take responsibility for the day to day administration of Pirates, the rationale being that the players needed to be free to concentrate on their primary task - winning matches. This was welcomed by the players at first - the club remained a close knit unit and they did not feel they were being disempowered - but in time the nature of the Pirates camp began to alter. This was perhaps inevitable, as new arrivals both players and sometimes supporters - attracted by Pirates growing fame and sometimes unknown to the original core of members - joined the club and the altered the previous close knit atmosphere. The strains in the club during the second half of the decade - partly a result of these changes - are apparent on the pages of club minute books. They suggest too, that dissension and bickering amongst players and officials increased as the team's performances on the pitch failed to match previous highs. Certain abuses by officials were also becoming apparent.

These tensions were to culminate in a split in June 1959 when dissillusioned players walked out of the club accusing certain officials of financial irregularity. It seems there had been rumblings of discontent for some time, and certain players had threatened a walkout even before the annual general meeting, where a mass walkout did take place. The treasurer, Philemon Lempe, failed to produce the required financial records at the club's annual general meeting and players were unhappy with the proccess whereby officials were elected. Despite the walkout from the meeting, only a handful of players actually made a clean break, to form Newport United. These included stalwarts such as Sobi and Mabuza who took their skills into the OAFA, to which the new club had affiliated.(1)

Within a few years these players had returned to the fold and Mabuza maintains he never considered the split permanent:

"We were just showing our anger. Orlando Pirates was ours; we belonged to Orlando Pirates ... but what we did did not change matters because then [when we returned to the club] professionalism came in... When the money came, then all hell broke loose."(2)

1959 is the generally accepted date marking the begining of professional football in South Africa, although the term "semi-professional" describes the situation pertaining to the sixties better. According to Archer and Bouillon South Africa's first professional football league was formed that year at the iniative of the South African Soccer Federation and whites followed suit almost immediately with the formation of the National Football League (NFL).(3)

The NFL had rebelled against the governing body of white football, Fasa, which was initially opposed to the moves to set up a professional league. These attempts to establish professional football - or at least to form controlling bodies to usher in professionalism - were made against the backdrop of an ongoing struggle by the Federation to have Fasa removed from Fifa, football's international governing body. Both the NFL and the SA Soccer Federation were planning to apply to Fifa for recognition in their capacities as professional bodies.(4)

Two months after the formation of the NFL, the Golden City Post of 6 September 1959 reported that the Southern Natal Indian Football Association had appointed a commission "to make a report on the possibility of professional soccer" and that most officials of the Association's seven affiliates "had discussed the matter and favour professional soccer".(5)

Natal Indian football represented the powerhouse of the SA Soccer Federation. Ironically George Singh, the president of the SA Indian FA and a central figure in the Federation, was initially against professionalism, fearing it would lead to the exploitation of players. He was not alone in warning that professionalism would not be what many expected: a panacea for all the game's ills. These included a lack of discipline on the field, erratic administration off it, worsening behaviour amongst sectors of spectators and, of course, a grave shortage of capital and facilities.(6)

Despite these, and other warnings, there was a general enthusiasm for professional soccer. Fans, players and clubs were demanding it and journalists were joining officals in whetting their appetites. (7) Dan Twala, for one, was enthusiastic, announcing that it would improve the standard of play and tighten up player discipline.(8) Accordingly Twala and Tafa went about preparing for a proffesional league, under the auspices of Tafa, for 1960. Meanwhile in Durban, football administrators were laying similar plans, with the backing of wealthy Indian businessmen. The outcome of these plans was the Natal Soccer League, which only accepted non-racial sides, and in May of that year Tafa unveiled plans for the Transvaal Football League.

An indication of the state of football is provided by Twala's vision of what this league could achieve. He stressed that most of the envisaged profits would go to improving ground facilities - clubs would only take around 5% ofthe gate after expenses. Players were still described as

amateurs on their new contracts and clubs were expected to allocate "profits" towards the improvement of kit and the general infrastructure of a club. These plans really reflected no more than small steps towards deriving financial benefits, and improving the infrastructure of football, from the game's growing popularity and commercial potential. One immediate response to these developments was the formation of new clubs, or the rationalisation of local playing resources into a strong side which could hopefully take its place in the new era.*

Pirates didn't bother to attend any of the meetings called to plan the league, nor the trials to decide the league's composition, yet the league organisers included them in the list published of those sides who had been accepted. This attempt too woo Pirates with preferential treatment is one more example of the club's standing in and their crowd pulling potential.

Despite all the plans and promises, the proposed league never kicked off and the Natal experiment quickly foundered as well.(9) The foundations had been laid, however, and when Twala and the Natal bosses put their heads together, the South African Soccer League (SASL) was born in 1961. Pirates decided against participation in the league's inaugral season, which saw the recently formed Transvaal United, a multi-racial showpiece from Noordgesig, the "coloured" township adjacent to Orlando, finish champions.

An indication of the change in spirit with the advent of even small money - players never earned more that £4.00 per game in the SASL - is provided by this newspaper piece:

> "There is no doubt that football has become a religion. They play it throughout the year. Now with the rosy future offered by professionalism, all clubs are speaking in terms of the gate.
>
> "Whereas before all they wanted was a patch of ground to play on, these days they want enclosed grounds.
>
> "[An official] explained: "Football demands a lot from a player. Should he get injured and is laid off from work, we must be able to provide for him and his family."(10)

The SASL, like Tafa before, alligned itself with the SA Soccer Federation - after a temporary breach which was healed without much ado.(11) The League already stood in opposition to the state because of its independence, but following the rapprochement with the Federation the battle with the white establishment reached new heights, culminating in Fasa's temporary suspension from Fifa. Fasa and the NFL had the backing of the NEAD of the JCC, and the SASL - like the independent "African" FAs - was caught in the crossfire. The NEAD backed - and assisted in - the formation of the Transvaal Professional Soccer League (TPSL) as a counter

---

* Examples of this include Afro-Asian Dynamos who were a non-racial club which hoped to gain entrance into the Natal Soccer League. They were described as "the first fully professional club" (World 28/5/60); Cape Ramblers, which was formed, with some input from League bosses to ensure the Western Cape could provide a decent "professional" side; and Transvaal United, formed by Indian and "Coloured" businessmen.

to the SASL. It was unable to attract the leading Transvaal clubs who were willing to give the SASL a try, and trusted Twala's leadership.(12)

It did attract some clubs who were disgruntled at being ommitted from the SASL. When the latter responded by forming a second division in the Transvaal, the TPSL was able to play on the grievances of second division club's who were never accorded more than a Cinderella status because the SASL was unable (or unwilling) to muster what resources it had, to their benfit. Within a year the TPSL helped give birth to the NPSL. The latter was to play bridesmaid to the SASL, as far as the fans were concerned, until the demise of the SASL, and beyond.(13)

Needless to say, the state's control over grounds, in combination with the Group Areas Act, became the weapon used to bring the multi-racial league into line. Many NPSL matches were played before paltry crowds in stadia dubbed "white elephants" by the media, while the SASL fought to cling on to the solitary ground it had leased from an Indian sports body in Johannesburg. The SASL was able to gain access to Curries Fountain, in Durban, which had not yet been designated to any particular race, and the Showgrounds in Pietermaritzburg.(14)

The grounds weapon was to prove a slow but sure killer of amateur associations around the Reef, as well as the SASL. It constituted "the sword of Damocles, hanging over our football's head" according to one imaginative writer, in 1968. By that time the SASL and Twala were gone and most minor FAs were capitulating.

The SASL did not die without a tremendous fight. A long and costly court battle to hold on to the Indian Sports Ground in Natalspruit eventually foundered in the Appeal Court. At one point during this saga, at the start of the 1963 season, the NEAD uprooted the goalposts and put a padlock on the gate. The League wasn't standing for this and Twala arrived with a spare set of posts. When he and the two sides who were due to get the season underway scaled the iron fence sorrounding the dusty pitch they found enterprising fans had already installed a set of posts. The match was started and Twala was, for once, surely happy to see fans scaling the fence. The League followed up these guerrilla tactics by getting a court injunction to prevent the NEAD from repeating its sabotage.(15)

Ultimately, however, the league had to relocate in Kliptown. The area in which this ground was situated was declared a "coloured" group area, prompting a move to another ground in Kliptown - the Parents Ground. This ground was so small and inadequate that the league had to publically place a limit of only 6 000 on Pirates - Swallows clashes. At the 'Spruit - as it was affectionately called - the two rivals attracted as many as 45 000 spectators; and Pirates could rely on gates of over 25 000 for most league matches. By comparison, the first ever SASL match at the 'Spruit had drawn 8 000. Pirates entrance into the league in 1962 was the move that really launched it in the public's imagination.

The reasons behind Pirates decision not to compete in the SASL's first season are not completely clear. Most of the players favoured the idea but Mokgosinyana was not very enthusiastic:

> "Orlando Pirates accepted professionalism wholeheartedly; we had very good players and knew we would succeed. We thought it was a great

thing - especially as the SASL was national. But Pirates was not taken up by anything that comes along. Our president wanted to be clear on things before doing anything. He would weigh the situation and wait and see."(16)

Mokgosinyana's uneasiness with the concept may have been the crucial factor behind the club's reluctance to respond to the blandishments of the professional bosses. On the other hand, his hold over the club at this point looked less sure than it had ever been. There was a new man on the scene who was opposed to the SASL but - as we shall see - for entirely different reasons to the Life President. He favoured "professionalism" and was very much a man of the times. This man was David Motsomai.

Motsomai had appeared suddenly on the scene in the Spring of 1960. He was a rich man who had made his money in Sophiatown. He owned shebeens, taxis and a shop, and, according to the press, "ran around in a big car". He was prominent in boxing circles as a promoter and he owned his own club but he was not well known in football. He was introduced to the club by Lempe and Elliot Buthelezi while Mokgosinyana was visiting his home for an extended period. Apparently Motsomai had wanted to be the club's patron.(17)

The players thought this was a good idea - after five lean and sometimes strife torn years he probably appeared to be just the man to usher the club into a new era and he was welcomed into the club as an associate member, which was the status given to any joining supporter. Early the following year - almost certainly with Mokgosinyana's consent - he was officially installed as club patron. According to the journalist, Theo Mthembu, who followed the next year of the club's history very closely "he worked his way through some of the boys".

According to Mabuza, Motsomai "priviledged the first team, investing money in them". This he certainly did, buying the club four new sets of playing kit - at least one strip was imported - in little over a year. He also purchased other equipment as well as an Austin bus which must have been particularly welcomed. All this generosity was accompanied by much fanfare in the press. In April Motsomai announced he was looking for land to build Pirates their own stadium - "otherwise how can clubs make football pay?" - and a few months later he had his "natty Pirates" posing in their "new imported kit" in a magazine. "Oom Dey", as he became called, knew how to play to the media: As early a March he was stealing headlines from the new SASL, loudly challenging "any team in the country to beat us". Later, when it was tentatively suggested - by a Fasa desperate to impress Fifa - that Pirates and Swallows might be able to play a curtain raiser to an NFL match at the Rand stadium, he scornfully refused to entertain the idea, saying they would rather play the main match because they would be able to collect "a record gate."(18)

While Mokgosinyana's position as Life President was never threatened, Motsomai was able to significantly erode his powers at the club. Court records and club minutes reveal some of the whirlwind changes to the way things had been done before, which followed Motsomai's arrival. They also reveal the president's bitterness. At one point Motsomai had the kit fetched from the president's house - ostensibly because he had found a cheaper place to have it washed. He also removed all other equipment. When the president raised the matter, the club agreed that it was wrong to embark on such action without consulting "the House of Pirates". The

patron soon convinced players, however, that his methods were more efficient and the democratic principles of the club were put aside. This action might have been symbolic but in time Motsomai was installed officially as manager\patron. This came after a particularly tempestious meeting, which saw the president storm out after a row over the club's funds and Motsomai threaten to resign, claiming - among other things - that the president had said "no house can be built on another house".(19)

This was not the first time the new patron had threatened to resign, and, as before, his threats were met with a chorus of pleas from the players, who reaffirmed his value to the club. Well aware that his wealth made him invaluable, he was able to install himself in this way. Lempe, the treasurer, also handed the clubs finances over to Motsomai, apparently because he was a succesful businessman who was likely to handle the finances efficiently. There is no record of how the money was spent.(20)

The following excerpt from the club's minutes gives some indication of the changes wrought by Motsomai and the style of operation of the patron:

> "Still holding the floor, the Patron informed the house of his intention that he intends to elevate the very elevated standard of football at the club. And as such, his aim was to get a player from the Free State by the name of "Sugar" among soccer fans. He told the house that the transfer fee which he is prepared to offer this palyer is £25:00 and that he would get him employed; and that he would make him sign a contract. The house moved a motion of thanking the Patron towards the love he has shown and done to the club."(21)

Previously such a suggestion would have brought a protest from the floor that the player was not from Orlando and even if he was accepted, his footballing ability, character and willingness to perform loyally would have been ht esubject of much discussion. There would probably have been questions asked about the origins of the £25:00 which was a big amount to offer a single player. Now, against the backdrop of the euphoria greeting "professionalism" and with the patron increasingly making himself indispensable, his suggestions were accepted with effusive gratitude.

1961 probably provided Pirates players with an opportunity to earn a noticeable amount of money for the first time in their carreers. The club decided - against the president's wishes - not to affiliate the first team to any association because, as the patron pointed out, it had "a string of matches ... which [are] beneficial to the club." Motsomai was referring to the endless stream of money spinning friendlies which he arranged throughout the year, bringing his prowess as a boxing promoter to football. Lesser opponents would even have to forgo the tradition of splitting the gate "50/50" as Pirates demanded cuts of 60% and upwards.

There wasn't a shortage of opposition, and Pirates don't seem to have been feeling too left out of the new professional set up. They combined with Swallows to defeat the popular touring Copperbelt XI 4-2 - at Orlando Stadium; and they demolished Matlama FC of Basutoland 6-3 at the same venue. Towards the end of the year they drew 5-5 with a leading Durban side, Sokesimboni, at Kingsmead. They also played at the Moroka-Jabavu Stadium, on Republic Day, going down 6-5 to Swallows in a thrilling match which had the 30 000 crowd thinking Christmas had come six months early - the match was free, a gift from the NEAD. This drew howls of protest from Jafa which felt the Department had "no right to negotiate with our clubs

without consulting us". It pointed to numerous "fruitless" attempts to arrange such matches in the past.(22)

The difference between the past and the present was probably Dave Motsomai. It's not known whether he personally benefitted - in money terms - from any of these fixtures, although the Post records "A terrific money making spree for the Buccaneers ... last weekend ... in four games they collected 33 goals and substantial sums."(23) His ability to secure council grounds provides a clue as to where he stood in relation to the battle between the NEAD and the independent football bodies. He had launched a blistering attack on the SASL at the start of the season, when Pirates had elected to stay out of the League. Yet towards the end of the year he was talking about "plans to go into pro soccer in a big way". Just what these plans were, everyone was soon to discover.

In December, the shock announcement was made that Pirates was joining the newly formed rival to the SASL, the TPSL. They debuted a few weeks before Christmas, beating Katlehong 7-0 at Orlando Stadium in what was described as "a drab game before a small crowd".(24) Certain players were unhappy, however, and Jerry Modibedi and Reggie Nkosi both refused to turn out in the new league, claiming the decision to affiliate was taken with only the first division present. Some players claimed to have found out about the affiliation in the "white press" and appeared shocked at the way Motsomai had negotiated the affiliation "on his own".

Modibedi and Nkosi - who were both office bearers on the club's executive - released a joint statement: "We are well aware of what is going on in world sport. We cannot be part of anything that will retard the progress of our sport internationally."(25) Nkosi added that "it wont serve the cause of the African people [so I will] rather retire than play in the league. I have been with Orlando Pirates since childhood and will not leave [for another club].(26)

Most of the older generation, no longer playing but still intimately connected with the club as honourary members, officials or supporters, were also opposed to Motsomai's plans:

> "He said, "Why should we go [to the SASL] to make Indian's rich when there is a league for Africans?" But the players we were not keen for the club to join the NPSL. The teams that started it were all second division teams; the top teams were not interested - they only came when they had no other place to go."(27)

The club's year end general meeting fell apart in pandemonium and another meeting was called. The patron was not present and only three first teamers attended - the aforementioned Modibedi and Nkosi and club captain Eric Sono - but the other three divisions, containing the young schoolboy talent as well as some of the survivors from the first generation, were there.

---

* For the people of Orlando to stay away from a Pirates match at in their township and at Orlando Stadium whats more, something had to be seriously amiss. One can infer from this report that Motsomai's move did not have the supporters backing.

Motsomai was forced out of Pirates. With him went Lempe, who had been the treasurer for over a decade but had fallen out with the president during the wrangle about the club's finances, and seven leading players - including Buthelezi and Msomi. Black Pirates was born. The new side played in the kit Motsomai had bought Pirates. Motsomai immediately began negotiations with the NEAD's Recreation Department to install floodlights at Orlando Stadium - at his expense - for the rebel team. The split culminated in a drawn out court case as Pirates tried to recover their kit and other material from their former patron.

Elliot Buthelezi, who appears to have been quite close to Motsomai, took up a position of player coach with the new side. Motsomai was probably not in a position to offer any of the other veterans such an incentive, although it is doubtful if many wiould have responded positively anyway. Buthelezi appears to have favoured the decision to affiliate to the TPSL all along and was the only member of the first generation to be selected against Katlehong. His reason for leaving Pirates rather than stay with the rest of his companions since school days was simple:

> "I was no longer a player then but I still had a feeling to play. That pride that was before - I was a good player - prevented me from playing in the lower divisions."(28)

It is significant that the majority of the players who went with him were at the peak of their careers and were obviously concerned to secure the best possible future. Past players do not believe there was much more money to be made at Black Pirates but it is clear that Motsomai's own style had added a new dimension to players' lifestyle. Peter Mngomezulu recalls the impact this had on some of the younger players:

> "The players didn't leave for money. They enjoyed going to Motsomai's house. He had these big pots of rice and mutton. Kaizer Motaung used to go there after school and stay there and eat. He would only go home after he had his supper; his parents had no money to buy food. Black Sash [Mazibuko] used to do this too."(29)

In the end Mazibuko and the 17 year old Motaung both stayed with Pirates where they were rapidly drafted into the first team. It must have been a tough suggestion for the latter: Maphisa, who was still the club "minder", hints at the sound beating the youngster received as a means of persuasion.(30)

The responses of first teamers like Modibedi, Nkosi and Sono, serve as a reminder of the tremendous bond that existed between club and community. None of them are remembered as being particularly better placed financially than their peers and their choices don't seem to have been governed by questions of financial gain or the chance of an improved lifestyle.(31)

Most of the youngsters had nothing to gain by leaving; nor did the older players who would not have been gauranteed of a first team place. They were also more likely to remain loyal to Mokgosinyana. Clearly, so called "professionalism" only had something to offer players in their prime. Clubs could not muster the resources to maintain anything more than a small squad of paid players, even at the rates offered at that time. In the SASL players were receiving about £4.00 per week - which was contingent on their playing on the weekend. The TPSL\NPSL clubs would

have been in even less of a position to make football pay for a mere reserve.

Motsomai, for his part, continued to keep his name - and that of Black Pirates - in the news. He added the names of five rising stars, poached from Western Rangers, to those Pirates who had followed him on his quest. He was elected treasurer of the NPSL and his side very quickly established themselves as the top team in what was a very weak league - Katlehong were one of the other founding clubs. Very few Orlando Pirates supporters switched allegiances and an eerie atmosphere must have prevailed at the rambling Orlando Stadium when Black Pirates played their league matches in front of a 200 spectators. It appears that football fans knew they would get their money's worth in the SASL and there are indications, too, that the NPSL was quite broadly derided as a body which consorted with racists.(32)

Motsomai's penchant for organising glamour friendlies did not desert him, however, and for a couple of years his club rode this wave - although the often rumoured friendlies against NFL teams came to nought. Black Pirates were big fish in a small pond in the NPSL, where the standard of play was a lot lower than the SASL - which boasted the top sides and attracted the most media attention - and it was Motsomai's eye for publicity which maintained his side's status for a few years.

Motsomai was the first of the wealthy, glamourous patron managers to be associated with the game. He lead the invasion of what World sports editor, Leslie Sehume, called the "Rands and Cents lords". Other wealthy men who followed Motsomai into football were Richard Maponya (soon to head the Chamber of Commerce), Boxing promoter John Dube and Elijah Msibi, the wealthy shebeen king, whom Pirates invited to replace Motsomai when they entered the SASL. The arrival of these men reflect both what the underdevelopmed game felt it required to "professionalise" and what it had to offer a small but growing class of African businessmen. "Dave Motsomai spoils his players ... They do feel that they belong", Sehume observed.(33)

Alfred "Russia" Jacobs is well placed to assess the qualities of Motsomai as well as his succesor at Pirates, Elijah Msibi. Jacobs was recruited by Black Pirates after impressing in a friendly in his home province, the Orange Free State. In 1965 he was snapped up by Orlando Pirates after inspiring his side to a rare victory over the Buccaneers.

> " "Oom Dey" treated his players well but he had complete control of the club. He had an exec but he was the main man on it - everyone had to listen to his word. He made us train hard, even during the day because he was not working in an office like others.
>
> "Msibi was a darling - a real darling. He spent a lot of his money on [Pirates] because the club did not have a lot of money. On trips to Durban we would stop to fill up at Harrismith and he would say "Okay boys, what do you want?". He would pull money out of his pocket and buy us all food. We used to take Msibi because he had a lot of money - we called him a patron manager. I used to drive his car, a Chev Impala ("six mabona"). He used to buy bigger cars so we could be comfortable when travelling."(34)

Msibi is remembered fondly by most former Pirates players. Soon after

Motsomai's departure and the club's entrance into the SASL, the influential Sono and a number of other players approached him to be the club's patron. That they saw it necesary to replace Motsomai is an indicator of the changing imperatives facing clubs who wished to compete in the semi professional leagues. They required a more sophisticated club infrastructure - including vastly improved training material - and they required reliable means of transport to facilitate frequent trips to Natal - and at one point Cape Town - for league matches. Significantly when Msibi agreed to become Pirates patron, one of the central terms of his assuming the position revolved around his ability to provide a vehiclefor club trips - even if it was a delivery van.

The central image of the Msibi era is flashy American cars; supporters memories of the players relate almost as much to their cruising around Soweto in large cars, wearing the latest American fashions as they do to their exploits on the football pitch. Msibi's lavish parties were also a central Pirates theme at the time. Msibi's gregarious nature and his generosity enabled him to build up a rapport with the players and the supporters.(35)

In return, Msibi's shebeen did a roaring trade. Pirates supporters naturally congregated at the watering hole on weekends to preview a match or to celebrate a victory. "If you had a shebeen and you were with Orlando Pirates you could be very succesful", Fanyana Shiburi remembers. "Everything hovered around Msibi and his big shebeen. He did not get a cent from the club - it was pure status symbol".(36) The following extract, from Boy Shogwe - a self styled "clever" who followed the club avidly - supplies one more advantage Msibi's might have had over his rivals in the trade.

> "Through the "clevers" he could sell liquor. He was also selling "soft goods" - shirts and things like that - but because he identified with Pirates he could sell liquor. Police respected him because he was Pirates. If you smuggle liquor with a van that says Orlando Pirates then they say "let him through, it's okay"; and if they catch him, he's got money to bribe them: "Ek sal more kom" - they escort him again just because he's Pirates."(37)

It's not clear whether Msibi had a licence to sell liquor - Shogwe's comments and subsequent court appearances suggest not. Nonetheless, recent loosening of restrictions on liquor dealing had provided a number of small businessmen with the opportunity to quite rapidly accumulate capital. An archetypal football patron during the sixties would be a shebeen king. As Msibi's example shows, a shebeen owner could realise profits by associating with a football club because his shebeen would be patronised by football fans. (38)

A taxi owner too might be able to directly measure the profits accrued through their association with a particular club whose supporters would make a point of riding in his taxi. It is interesting that a number of boxing promoters moved into the arena of football and there were frequent questions in the press as to who got rich from the takings at specially arranged glamour matches. Sehume claimed that amounts of up to £1 200 were being dangled in front of white clubs to take part in "black v white" fixtures. He believed the NFL feared black promoters who could get rich in the same way as they did in boxing "where they exist in a conflict situation whith white promoters". These "black \ white" matches

repeatedly failed to materialise in the face of official opposition but the newspaperman's comments do suggest the opportunities that awaited a skilled promoter.(39)

Obviously the power most patrons wielded over their clubs meant they were the men who controlled the books - indeed it was likely that they were trusted with the books because of their wealth and success in business. As club organisation tended to be rudimentary and most supporters were more concerned with what went on on the playing field, the opportunities were there for someone to line their pockets. Some past players and supporters hold that such opportunities actually underpinned some decisions to assume patronage. It is difficult to prove these assertions but circumstantial evidence is there to be found. The constant assertions in the media by patrons that they were there strictly "for the love of the game" indicates their awareness of the accusations of dishonesty.(40)

It is nonetheless difficult to argue with certainty that patrons generally entered football with clearcut plans for accumulating wealth. In most cases this motivation would be subordinate, it seems, to a desire for prestige and an outlet for personal and social ambitions. Generally, an African businessman did not have many opportunities to exercise his organisational and political ambitions and his avenues for investing his wealth were also limited. A football club would be an attractive investment because of the status football had attained within the African community.

The other side of the coin, of course, was the desire of clubs to have a patron. People whose social ties are limited might look to a successful man to provide goods or services in return for less tangible benefits such as political support. Patronage, as a social phenomenon, classically arises in a context of political domination, poverty and limited resources.(41)

In return for providing financial support, some patrons - such as Motsomai at Black Pirates - would assume almost dictatorial powers. The team and all that went with it would be the patron's and this enhanced the prestige that accompanied support of a club; it also provided a rare outlet for a successful man's political or organisational ambitions.

Many patrons controlled clubs by virtue of the fact that they had formed them - or had provided a group of eager boys with the necesary resources and infrastructure to run a club. Jeffrey notes this in his study of Sharpeville and it was an especially prevalent phenomenon in the years coinciding with the attempts to establish semi professional football. As has been noted, many clubs sprung up - often as amalgamations of a number of smaller sides or as the result of a succesion from an older side - to meet the challenge of payed football. In some cases these developments were stimulated by a wealthy and powerful community figure who then assumed patronage of the new side.

A case in point is John Dube, a former herdsboy turned socialite, boxing promoter and general dealer. He had played football - despite a deformed leg - for a minor Kliptown side in the fifties. When semi professional football kicked off he formed Northampton United. He was unable to get this unknown quantity into the SASL and had to settle for the NPSL. Later on he amalgamated his side with Blackpool, a troubled SASL side, in a bid to enter that league. (This arrangement didn't last long.) He is reputed

to have tried to gain acceptance at Pirates as well but he found a club that was wary of having "too many big men with money". Like "Oom Dey", Dube had an ability to generate publicity which kept his name in the papers and his club under a spotlight it hardly warranted.

The two men once had a much publicised big money better on a specially arranged encounter between their sides (the result was a draw). That they were both regarded as "underworld" figures probably added to the attraction of their exploits and the name of Black Pirates and Northampton would appear on pages of newspapers and magazines which were not normally the home of football teams. This was, of course the experience of Pirates under Msibi too, and they cultivated a fashionable reputation as clothes conscious party goers who loved to cruise around in big American cars.(42)

Richard Maponya presents a different figure. He was not associated with the "underworld' and served as president of the Chamber of Commerce. He was not regarded as a sports figure and didn't display the same ambition to own a club that others did. African Morning Stars approached him to be their patron as they attempted to recapture past glories in the era of semi professionalism. He seems to have assumed great powers at the club too and this was mirrored by a host of other lesser businessmen and socialites who took control of existing clubs or cobbled their own sides together with their money. There were frequent complaints from Jafa and the JBFA that the "professional" sides were plundering amateur clubs and this was one of the reasons behind the demise of many once famous sides.

Johannes Ramela, a wealthy relative of the many Ramelas who played for and supported Pirates, adds a final twist to the tale of patrons and the saga of Black Pirates. This taxi owner formed his own side, Giant Aces, after acquiring a number of disatisfied players from Motsomai's club. Russia Jacobs, who remained loyal to "Oom Dey" until he found the burden of being the last surviving good player too great, believes his team mates opted out because they felt Motsomai should pay them more and they were unhappy with his often dictatorial attitude. The press reported that the club was "flooded with players" with the result that men who expected first team football found themselves in the reserves. They further reported:

> "Ramela said "Because of my generosity and my love for football I went out of my way to buy a football outfit which cost me a cool R457. I threw an able bodied invitation to able bodied young men who are keen on the game to join forces with me."
>
> "The Meadowlands magnate added: "There was simply no bait brother", (they came on their own). ... The meeting at his posh house ended with a swinging jazz session."(43)

As it became clear that his club would never match Pirates, Motsomai increasingly turned his attention to his role in the NPSL. This probably added to the rivalry between himself and Pirates, rather than diminish it, however, and there are allegations that he played a role in Msibi's final downfall. Msibi probably had good cause to feel aggrieved, when, in 1967, he made a series of court appearances on charges of illegal liquor dealing. In the past he had been able to convince the authorities that the excess liquor on his property were for the use of the Supporters' Club and Pirates parties but this time some of the elected leadership refused to support his claims that the liquor was the club's. He was relieved of his position as patron. Mike Tseka, who had risen to the position of

club chair believes Msibi the feeling amongst prominent Pirates officials was that "Msibi had to go" because he had become an embarrasment to the club.(44)

Pirates never gave Msibi the opportunity to wield the kind of control other patrons did and by the time of his demise the club was increasingly in the hands of a powerful group of educated men, most of whom were supporters. Mokgosinyana remained as the Life President, but his power and personal contact with team affairs, which had been eroded with the arrival of Motsomai, was never recovered. (Motsomai himself suffered a fall from grace. Having survived numerous prosecutions for illegal liquor dealing, he remained as treasurer of the NPSL until he was jailed for fraud after some of his colleagues had abused blank cheques signed by him.)

The phenomenon of "big men" at the helm of football clubs was mirrored in the associations from the time of their inception. The main source of inspiration behind the JBFA in its early days was Gabriel "Snowy" Senoane who is remembered as a "naturally gifted administrator" who didn't "like anybody who questioned his authority.(45) Like Senoane, DR Twala at Jafa had risen through the ranks of the NEAD's sports section. He held the reigns at his association for over three decades with hardly a break. He held posts in Jafa, Tafa and Saafa - sometimes simultaneously - during the fifties.

The "African" strand was dominated by a few men holding positions for many years - something for which the Durban and District African FA was also noted. The latter body was reputed to be the best organised in the country; Jafa could lay claim to that mantle in the Transvaal. The JBFA, after Senoane's death, was noted for sweeping changes atexecutive level at almost every annual general meeting and its reputation for infighting and position mongering continued through the sixties.

Archer and Bouillon, drawing on the work of anthropoligists, note the plethora of black sports organisation and their tendency to split.(46) Anthropoligists tended to explain this in terms of officials' personality clashes but differences in personal opinion often masked more deep rooted motives for preventing unity in football bodies. The political economy of South African society which has historically blocked access to accumulation of wealth and - concomittantly - power for the African majority in almost every sphere of life, must be considered as a crucial factor operating here. What has already been illustrated to some extent in this paper, however, is that organised football - or sport in general - has provided a degree of space in which some Africans can exercise a certain amount of control over their lives and create a relatively independent and productive sphere for themslves to operate in.

This works at various levels in football: for the fan of a prominent club such a Pirates, who is simply afforded an "escape valve" and a source of local pride by his\her vicarious participation in a favoured team's success; for the players of a succesful team, like those Pirates who have been afforded a certain status as well as benefits and opportunities by virtue of their footballing prowess and popularity; and for the club or association official whose benefits derived from his position in the game's structure range from the improvement of local status and personal pride, through enhanced business opportunities and elevated standing in the community. For some, this power might even translate into potential

financial rewards; or, as Jeffrey's study of football and patronage in the Vaal shows, it could be a stepping stone on the path to local political power.

This could work in the other direction as well: an indicator of the centralitilty of the game in the African community is the importance certain prominent local politicians placed on the attainment of positions on the associations. For example, George Xorile, leader of the Asinimali Party which contested the Orlando Advisory Board against the Sofasonke Party of James Mpanza - himself a Pirates follower - stood for president in the JBFA elections in 1960 (one of his opponents was a city based attorney). Politicians like Xorile, of course were operating largely within the limits determined by the state; it does not appear that leading figures in nationalist movements involved themselves in football administration in the Transvaal.(47)

A further reason put forward for the number of governing bodies, and their failure to unite, was ethnicity. A number of journalists writing at the time saw this as outmoded behaviour and generally pooh-poohed the theory that the "Bantu" were predominantly Sotho and the "Africans" Zulu. There is probably some basis to these claims, however. In a situation where resources are scarce, and opportunities for advancement are few, an organisation dominated by a handful of powerful individuals is quite likely to be characterised by the operation of patronage. In the context of rapid urbanisation, it was common for these lines of favour and support to be drawn on ethnic bases. This "homeboy" ethos was initially derived from the need amongst migrants for solidarity in alien and often forebidding sorroundings. It is not unlikely that this situation operated in the football associations. The example of Dave Motsomai, who refused to consider taking Pirates into the Indian dominated SASL, or of Sabfa president Beth Morolo who publically stated "from now on you are Africans, I don't want any more coloureds, Malays or Indians in our soccer" can be partly understood in relation to African sensitivity to domination in the small corners of "own affairs" where they had achieved some control.(48)

Contemporary journalists castigated officials for their lack of imaginative administration, which they seemed to associate with officials' preoccupation with position seeking and the infighting it engendered. African Sports traced organisational problems to "a common disease of aspiration which might be termed "positionitis"".(49) The amalgamation the "Bantu" and "African" was often blocked by lesser officials who feared this proccess would cost them their places in the heirarchy. At certain points in the fifties, unity appeared to be conceivable but the "Bantu" - and occassionally the "Africans" - would vote out entire pro-amalgamation executives.(50)

Twala himself favoured amalgamation - arguing that it would bring richer pickings for all - but he was in the best position to push unity, because as the most respected official (the undisputed "Mr Soccer") he was least likely to lose out. The energetic and charismatic administrator combined his numerous association duties with what today might be termed PR work. Commercial and manufacturing firms - including the aforementioned UTC - employed him as an agent endorsing their products. For the "smaller" official, however, a loss of position would firstly mean the closing down of one of the few sources of local power and prestige. It would also mean, in a number of cases, the loss of access to money.

Most association officials received an honorarium that was intended to cover expenses and, in some cases, compensate for loss of income elsewhere but many were able to use association positions to augment their income. The press charged that certain officials were "making a living solely out of soccer" and it does appear that enterprising men were able to achieve some monetary reward in the form of a percentage of gate takings if they organised, or consented too, certain friendly fixtures.(51)

Pirates players and officials always regarded the plans of associations with suspicion, resenting the amount of money they presumed these bodies were making out of their efforts.(52) A former player alleges another way in which certain officials' were able to line their own pockets was through their control of the tickets. "When they were handed a role by the municipality they would print another one and sell both", keeping the procceeds from the second role for themselves, of course.(53)

With the growth of the "money" ethos and the glamourisation of the sport, the incidence of prestige matches or mini-tournaments organised by men prominent in the proffessions or business, increased. This was especially prevelant after the demise of the SASL, when these matches filled the vaccuum it left. Collins Ramusi, a succesful attorney and Pirates supporter, was amongst those who organised crowd pulling challenges. For example, in 1966, after beating neighbours Noordgesig Arsenals to win the "Special Cup" competition organised by Ramusi in Pietersburg, the players were treated to an ox braai at the attorney's expense.(55) It seems safe to suggest that a slowly increasing commercialisation of the game provided added incentives to position seekers.

The sixties saw the return of another strong man to the JBFA ranks and he was to dominate matters for almost a decade. Bethuel Morolo appears to have returned to football organisation from years of obscurity. He had the backing of white football officials because of his role in bringing about the unequal union of Sabfa and Fasa. He rose to become the first President of Sanfa - Sabfa was its progenitor - before being ousted by another strong man, George Thabe.

Morolo was reportedly reviled around the country for preventing a prestige match between Pirates and top white side Highlands Park, because the presence of coloured players at Pirates contravened state policy. He is also remembered as the "black face" at a Fifa meeting in Chile, ostensibly representing considered black opinion but essentially arguing the case for white soccer. On the other hand, Fanyana Shiburi, a journalist close to Pirates, while agreeing that Morolo was "autocratic", paid tribute to him as someone "who liked to sound off at the establishment".(55)

This apparent ambiguity points to the tightrope African officials often walked between the wishes of local authorities and the needs of their own constiuency as they tried to steer organised football on as independent a course as was possible while continuing to service their own careers.

After the Black Pirates split, Orlando Pirates moved quickly to try and restore stability. A promising crop of youngsters in the third team, who had played together as members of Rockridge while at Orlando High where Sono had discovered them, were promoted to the first team. The club joined the SASL, which was so eager to have them that its officials overlooked the club's amateur constitution. The front page of the Golden City Post was devoted to the club's affiliation to the League, enthusing

"Crash! Wham! Bang! That's Orlando Pirates, the bulls of soccer since the late thirties, breaking away from the all African TPSL to join our non-racial SA soccer League". This was, in fact, the first time football made front page news in this newspaper. This is indicative of the status Orlando Pirates had achieved in African soceity generally; it is also reflective of the extent football - and the exploits of its "big men" - was capturing the public's imagination.(56)

Pirates opened their first season in the SASL in style. They won all their pre-season friendlies (including a 3-2 win over Swallows) and a 6-2 thrashing of Cape Ramblers at the end of February had the press predicting that the R2 000 prize for winning the league would be going to the swashbuckling Buccaneers.(57) This good start was followed by a couple more convincing league wins, but the run came to an end when they met Swallows at the endof March. Clearly the "birds" were in a different mood now that it was for real - they won 5-1 in a quagmire at Natalspruit before 24 000. This was followed by a 6-2 reversal at the hands of Durban Aces in their first league match in Natal. Pirates didn't manage to get the measure of the better Natal teams on their turf - they weren't used to playing on grass - and they finished the season a dissapointing fourth. Swallows (who collected R2 000 for winning the SASL knock out cup) finished third with Durban Aces and Natal glamour club, Avalon Athletic, sharing the League title. The Reef pair may have been bridesmaids when it came to league honours but they proved to be the biggest drawcards with the fans.

Pirates crowds crept steadily over the 30 000 mark for matches against top teams at Natalspruit and in Durban they attracted a sizeable Zulu following. The peak attendance was the 45 000 who crammed into Natalspruit for the return fixture with Swallows, which Pirates won 2-1. Tragedy struck after the game, however, when 12 people were crushed or suffocated to death on the steps of Jeppe Station as returning fans rushed to make the train home. This prompted an outburst from Gilbert Sekhabi, the secretary of the recently formed Supporters' Club, who demanded that the league provied extra trains as "whites have that priviledge" (58)

This is one example of the difficulties the league faced in attempting to develop the neccesary infrastructure around the game in the face of official opposition to their endevours. While the NFL was losing its African fans to the SASL - partly because of the treatment they received at "white" matches - SASL officials were trying to find ways to cope with crowds that were dangerously too large for the stadiums they streamed to.

Pirates rounded off the year with vistories over the pick sides of Jafa and the Durban and District AFA, symbolically laying their amateur past to rest. Scara Sono was elected Post sportsman of the year. Early in 1963 Pirates made a return to the Bantu Sports Ground for a pre-season friendly against Blackpool, amid threats to Jafa, by the authorities, that they should not allow the game to go ahead because Pirates opposition were "coloureds". Undetered Pirates won 5-4 in front of 10 000 fans.(59) Pirates broke their Durban hoodoo in the opening league fixture with a 3-2 win over Berea at Curries Fountain but it was to be another poor season by Pirates standards - one thing the SASL had provided was stiffer competition.

Avalon Athletic performed a league and cup double, while Swallows remained unofficial Transvaal champions by virtue of their runner's up spot. One

of the highlights of Pirates' season was a whirlwind spell when one of the Rockridge products, "Mainline" Khoza, an accomplished half-back who ran the midfield, was drafted into the forward line and scored eight goals in two games. Of more broader significance was Swallows refusal to meet Pirates for a league fixture, claiming they would not receive the required protection. Pirates assured there would be "no interference from spectators" but Swallows were not in the mood to compromise. Nor was the league, which fined the Birds R500. This resulted in the club splitting when fifteen leading players hived off to form Moroka Swallows Big XV and made peace with the league and their rivals.

While it appears that a degree of intimidation and incidents of minor violence was the norm at many matches, encounters between Pirates and Swallows, and between either of the two and visitors from Natal, were becoming characterised by a more frightening brand of violence. In Pirates case, the culprits were invariably the self styled "Clevers" - tsotsis in their teens or twenties - who claimed retribution against any "Moegoes" (outsiders) who crossed their path. This behaviour was characteristic of the gangs that ruled Reef townships in the forties and fifties. Ironically, at a time when mass schooling and a more concerted clampdown by the state was eroding the power of gangs, an element of this youth sub-culture appears to have taken root around Pirates.(60)

The following year, when Avalon visited Pirates at Natalspruit in May, the newspapers reported "a riot" involving "a handful of unruly supporters". Boy Shogwe was the leading figure in this action:

> "I struck a bet with the Moroka Swallows president that Avalon would not win. Problem - I had no money. I was working with Scara (Sono) at the Stock Exchange and on Friday afternoon my boss gave me money to bank. We decided to keep it for the bet. On Monday we would have doubled it and my boss would have his money. I gave it to a guy who ran the only driving school in town. I said "Keep it and only give it to the official winner".
>
> "So I took my place in the pavilion - it was the only one and it belonged to us, the "Clevers" - and waited. Avalon scored first - "Okay, it's nothing". Its 1-1 at half time but the boys are playing bad. I went on to the pitch - no-one could stop me and said "hey, whats wrong?" Scara shook his head, "Boy, I don't know. I'll signal you - we'll beat these guys".
>
> "After half time ... 2-1 to Avalon! Hey, these guys are the players and they can't do anything. Ten minutes to go! I have taken my boss's money! Avalon are hammer and tongs. I stood up - I signal to Scara, he shrugs. Man the place was full, the margin of the ground was spectators - I just jumped over them. I went to their goalie - I hated Eastthorpe because he once broke Scara's leg. I threw sand in his bloody face [and] he ran away from the poles. Then I hit his father with the fist - down!
>
> "Still no goal. Somebody gave me a gun, a .38. I thought "public murder? No,no,no." I gave the gun back. Then the ball came suddenly and I turned it in - "Goal!". The crowd followed me: "Goal!". The referee ran back and said "goal". 2-2. I ran out of the stadium, collected my money and was gone. On Monday my boss got his money."(61)

Shogwe's tale illustrates the general inadequacy of facilities for spectators and the conditions which helped breed violence. There is an obvious lack of policing too - cause for complaint by league officials to the authorities which was only partly rectified for big matches. It also provides graphic evidence of side betting as a catalyst for crowd violence.

The match against Avalon is remembered for another reason - it was Scara Sono's last game for Pirates. He was tragically killed in a head on collision in the Free State at the end of the month. Despite this setback, 1964 was to be Pirates best campaign in the SASL and they ran Avalon all the way in the league before finishing runners up and collecting the paltry R200 second prize. The two sides in fact finished level on points, but - unlike the previous season when two Natal sides were drawn - the championship was decided on goal average. Pirates might have felt hard done by, but what really aggrieved them was the manner in which the season was concluded. A couple of clubs were on the verge of collapse and one of them had failed to fulfill the last fixture of the season - against Pirates. The Buccaneers were awarded the points, but complained to the league that they would have run up a cricket score against such a weak, disheartened side, thus edging Avalon on goal average.

Pirates' sense of injustice was compounded when the League slapped a fine on the club after some of their auppporters had invaded the pitch during the cup final against Avalon in Durban. Pirates had been outplayed and were losing when the crowd invaded. The club acknowledged this much but claimed they were mounting a comeback which was frustrated by a biased referee. Court action followed and when the League settled with Pirates, Avalon were proclaimed League Champions and Pirates walked away with the cup prize money. Transvaal clubs had long harboured suspicions that the Durban run League "nursed" certain Natal sides.

> "There was no money in the SA Soccer League. Those Indians never had any plans, nothing was offered to us. We would sleep in a lodge in Grey Street, in the linen rooms, four in one bed. It was better when they put us in a hotel [but] one night at Kismet Hotel, they cooked our food seperately. When one o'clock strikes, everyone was running to the toilet. They beat us 5-0. Half the time our goalkeeper was somewhere else!"(62)

This view might be particularly jaundiced - if picturesque. Some of the veterans who remained with the team hold fonder memories of the SASL - but then this might just serve to show how tough it was in the old days! The Transvaal's frustrations were compounded whan the weaker up-country clubs were not given the financial assistance they felt they deserved and were rather unceremoniously relegated. Certainly the League didn't do much to dispel these allegations but in fairness it was also fighting a battle for survival and when the Transvaal sector collapsed, Natal was unable to survive.

The following year saw an attempt by the SASL to rationalise their resources by dividing the League into two provinces. The SASL Transvaal division also provided more space to the Transvaal clubs. This was welcomed by all but the big two - Pirates and Swallows refused to take part because they would be porviding money spinning fixtures for the Transvaal's minnows, without the reward of the really big gates their

matches with the top Natal sides gauranteed. Eventually the League bosses capitulated, acknowledging that no league could be viable without the Transvaal giants' participation. They reverted to a national scheme and Pirates finished runners up again - to Swallows. Avalon, not to be outdone, made it three cup finals in a row - trouncing Pirates' neighbours and newcomers to the league, Noordgesig Arsenal, 6-2 in the final.

The writing was on the wall however and the following year saw the end of African football's first genuine attempt to make football financially viable as the SASL withered into a Natal competition. Twala briefly tried to keep things afloat by launching his own SA Football league, which drew a number of Natal players - Banana City was formed by Aces United and Avalon players eager to continue competing on the Reef - but Pirates and Swallows, after weighing matters up, decided to return to freelancing. The first match of the new league was to have been Pirates against a rejuvenated Bush Bucks at the Somtseu ground in Durban but Pirates did not arrive. This prompted Twala to lament "Orlando Pirates and Moroka Swallows hold the key to the success of any league. They were the cornerstone of the South African Soccer League; and they could always be tempted to the NPSL to get Orlando Stadium."(63)

The pair shunned the NPSL, which was characterised by "position mongering" and splits, according to a statement by Swallows. They still found their way to Orlando Stadium, however, taking an entirely different route to the one envisaged by "Papa Dan": they paid R12 to affiliate to the JBFA (claiming to be amateurs). Money spinning matches under floodlights on Wednesday evening followed - a rare treat for the football going public, prompting Sehume to write: "1966 was the year Orlando Pirates proved the importance of Orlando Stadium's existance".(64)

Pirates return to the stadium was marked with a 3-1 win over Blackpool and it was followed with an 8-0 thrashing of the up and coming Mamelodi Sundowns. They also overcame old foes Linare and Matlama and breezed past Swallows (Mbanya), scoring four with no reply. In fact, Swallows Big XV were the only side that Pirates met that year whom they didn't beat, there year end encounter ending 2-2. this set the scene for the rest of the decade, with only the Old Dutch League - which lasted a year and was won by an undefeated Buccaneers - to formalise their superiority. Despite this lack of formal competitions, this was the period in which Pirates entrenched their reputation and increased their countrywide following. Fans were enraptured by the combination of Kaizer Motaung, "Chippa Chippa" Moloi, Russia Jacobs, the Khoza twins and a host of "Coloured" players such as Bernard "Dancing Shoes" Hartze and Manny Davids. Off the field, officials and leading supporters of the "Peoples Club" moved to capitalise on these achievements.

Chapter three - NOTES

1. Based on interviews with Mabuza, Sobi, Msomi and Buthelezi, August 1991; and Shabangu, July 1991; also various articles in the World and Golden City Post.
2. Sidney Mabuza
3. Archer and Bouillon p 100
4. World, 27/6/59
5. Golden City Post, 6/9/59
6. Mokone, amongst others, also warned that the time was not ripe as African football was inadequately organised (see Thabe (ed) p 42). His reasoning was similar to that given by other who cautioned against moving to fast. See World, 5/9/59 and 3/10/59, for example.
7. Leslie Sehume, for instance, favoured the plans to introduce peofessionalism: "Club directors will make certain that the money they have sunk into the set up will not be abused - that will make for better administration." furthermore, he expected "professionalism" to "open the way for a final blow against ... racialism in sport" because clubs will want to sign "the best players, regardless of colour".
8. World 25/7/59. See also Golden City Post, January 1960: Sidney Sepanya of Saafa called for an "experimental" professional league in his annual report to the national association.
9. Tafa did not see the need to get permission from the City Council to use the grounds for professional football that they already used for amateur matches. Carr and the NEAD saw otherwise the project foundered before the first ball was kicked.
10. Leslie Sehume in World, 17/6/61. One of the club officials he was referring to was Dave Motsomai, Pirates' new patron manager.
11. In the proccess of setting up the SASL, Twala (the league's first vice-president) and Lutchman (the sectretary-general) broke from the Federation, echoing the frequent indictments of the "Bantu" strand by accusing it of racism. This allegation was often laid at the Federation's door by officials of Sabfa who ironically chose rather to go into an unequal alliance with the all white Fasa. When it was echoed by officials usually associated with the "African" strand it was remarkable as the Federation was in the process of disbanding racially based bodies into single non-racial provincial units. For years it had come under attack because its affiliates were associations based on race but when it attempted to intergrate associations it met with some opposition from the game's administrators. Cynics would say those who dragged their heals did not relish the possibility of relinquishing their posts. In time a rapprochement was achieved between the SASL and theFederation, at least. The Federation probably realised that it needed to get its own house in order to convince Fifa of its case.
12. Dave Marais, one of the NFL's "strong men" had a spell as mayor of Johannesburg. He could hardly have been disinterested in the ongoing dispute, and was at one time revealed to have written a letter to the Nead's Carr, urging him to clamp down on the SASL's access to grounds. Johannesburg was not the only site of this struggle. Brink of the Springs NEAD rounded on the "SASL run by Indians", playing on the fears of African administrators when he said the SASL was stifling them. (Golden City Post September 1962). Viv Granger of the NFL asked the Durban corporation to close Curries Fountain to the SASL and SA Soccer Federation; criticising the Durban City Council for its "half hearted attempt" to close some of its "Bantu Fields". (World 20/12/63.)

14. In 1962, seven white players were prosecuted for playing at Curries Fountain. The state's case fell through because the ground had not yet been designated a group area to any particular race. (Golden City Post, May 1962.)
15. Golden City Post, 7/4/63
16. Sidney Mabuza, interview August 1991
17. Based on various interviews, newspaper reports and a portion of the court records of Orlando Pirates v Dave Motsomai.
18. Based on various interviews, club minutes and a portion of the court records.
19. Based on club minutes and a portion of the court records. The gathering highlighted was something of a crisis meeting of the executive and the first team on 5/6/61.
20. Based on club minutes and a portion of the court records. Mokgosinyana stated in court under cross examination - with a hint of irony - that he did not know whether the donations of kit and training equipment were actually paid for out of the patron's pocket or the club kitty.
21. Club minutes. General meeting, 27/2/61.
22. October 1961; and various other reports.
23. Golden City Post, 10/9/61
24. Golden City Post, 10/12/61.
25. Golden City Post, 10/12/61. Pirates were opposed to playing in the NPSL, according to a seperate article in the Post, because it was racist and it was being used by Fasa to aid its bid to regain entrance into FIFA. It was Motsomai's personal choice, the newspaper stressed, to enter this league. and his preference for the rival body was grounded in his opposition to "Coloureds and Indians holding positions in the SASL". Motsomai handed out "Christmas bonuses" to the players - at least the first teamers and some prominent veterans (Shabangu received something) - but this was not enough to still the opposition to his plans. It was alleged during the court case that Motsomai had used the club funds for this purpose, securing a motion in favour of paying the bonuses out of the kitty from the house. Mokgosinyana referred to under the table payments - it could have been this incident or he might have been suggesting that Motsomai had payed players on other occassions as well.
26. World 16/12/61
27. Sam Shabangu, interview July 1991
28. Elliott Buthelezi, interview August 1991
29. Peter Mngomezulu, interview August 1991
30. Rankus Maphisa, interview July 1991. "It was after this that I left Pirates", he says.
31. According to Theo Mthembu, who was working for the Post at the time, "The players walked to my home so I could interview them about the split. Scara, Reggie and Jerry were born and bred Pirates guys; there home was Orlando East; Bethuel Mokgosinyana was their head. They would never desert Pirates. They were very good players - especially Jerry and Scara - and they were very intelligent young men; they wouldn't let anyone mess them around. Rather than the NPSL, they wanted to go to the SA Soccer League - it was non-racial, the NPSL was a white established pro body." (interview August 1991)
33. World 20/1/62
34. Russia Jacobs, interview August 1991. The wounds had healed sufficiently for Pirates to meet Black Pirates on the playing field. however, when Jacobs joined Pirates, Motsomai was livid. There were no transfer regulations preventing an NPSL based player from switching allegiances to an SASL club. Motsomai retaliated by setting "his police"

on his erstwhile centre-forward's trail, knowing full well that Jacobs did not have a permit to live and work in Johannesburg. Jacobs spent his first two weeks as a Pirates player in Alexandra, where Ewert Nene, a leading supporter had hidden him until it was deemed safe to return to Orlando.

35. More than one interviewee drew attention to the van being a central part of the discussion that was held with Msibi. Club minutes from the fifties reveal that the question of long distance transport was a vexacious one in the Pirates camp. The president's 1948 Dodge "bakkie" had become regarded as a death trap by some players and the reliance on the few privately owned cars in the Pirates circle created tensions.

36. Fanyana Shiburi, interview August 1991.

37. Boy Shogwe, interview September 1991

38. Ian Jeffrey refers to the Sanfa Club shebeen in Sharpeville, located next door to former Sanfa supremo George Thabe's house. Football followers patronise this shebeen and football is the chief topic of conversation. Interestingly, football in Britain has always had a close association with pub culture. In the last century pub owners would often make the land adjacent to their pubs available to local players and they quickly learnt the value of associating their enterprise with the local professional sides. As in Msibi's case, fans would flock in to discuss the game over a pint. The first results services in Britain were telexed results pinned up in pubs on Saturday evening. (See Mason, Association Football and English Soceity; and Walvin, The Peoples' Game.)

39. World, 6/13/61. See also World, 13/8/65 - a boxing promoter staged a R1 000 football tournament between sides from warring associations. Money shouted louder than the officials at loggerheads.

40. Mason and Walvin both discuss the role of local politicians and entrepeneurs in supporting British clubs in return for directorships. They cite only one case where the director obviously attempted to squeeze a profit out of "his" club - football simply isn't a paying business, they conclude. It was, however, a popular attraction to local politicians who saw clubs as potential vote catchers. An interesting parralell to the invasion of the "rands and cents lords" is occuring in Italy today where multi-millionaires - the richest men in the country - are all trying to attain the directorship of an Italian Serie A club.

41. See for instance Li Causi, 1971, referred to in Jeffrey.

42. Dube was widely considered to be a criminal who ran operations that broke into warehouses. He made several court appearances in the latter half of the decade in connection with house breaking charges.

43. World, 21/5/65; and Russia Jacobs.

44. World, October and November 1967. Also, interview with Mike Tseka, August 1991.

45. Sports Ace, vol 1, no 2, November 1983, p 4.

46. Archer and Bouillon pp 141 - 150.

47. Golden City Post, March 1960.

48. SA Soccer Mirror

49. African Sports, December 1954.

50. Theo Mthembu concurs with his contemporaries: "The Bantu and African had no chance of getting together because of positions and money. If he loses his position, he loses his allowance - what will he do?" Another motivation has to be added to officials' fear of losing office in the case of a merger: the Bantu FAs dotted around the Reef feared they might have to accept the terms for ground rent which the various African FAs were forced to. The NEAD, which held the key to the struggle over grounds and other resources, also favoured unity - as long as it meant the African FAs would submerge under the SABFA.

51 Based on various interviews.
52. Minutes of club meetings.
53. Sam Shabangu
54. World, 22/7/66
55. Fanyana Shiburi
56. Golden City Post 7/1/62.
57. World 3/3/62. Pirates might have won by a greater margin if Sono hadn't "started his fanciful dribbling, much to the delight of the crowd" once the result was safe.
58. World, 1/9/62.
59. A week later it was announced that "mixed" cricket was banned from the 'Spruit because it was in conflict with the resolutions of the City Council Management Committee.
60. Glaser, "Anti-social bandits", 1990, MA thesis, Wits.
61. Boy Shogwe.
62. Peter Mngomezulu.
63. Golden City Post, March 1966.
64. World, December 1966.

CHAPTER FOUR

"LIFE CHANGED WHEN I JOINED PIRATES"
CLUB ORGANISATION AND THE LIFESTYLE OF PLAYERS

By the end of World War II, Pirates were well and truly on the football map. They had claimed the scalp of African Morning stars and had acquitted themselves well amongst football's "big boys" in the JBFA Sunday League. Many of the players that served Pirates in its early campaigns had left school by now - on the death's of their fathers or when the family's money simply ran out making it too costly to maintain the boy. Football was now central to those youngsters lives and many spent their idle hours at the "clubhouse". The football team was consolidated into a core of about 12 or 13 players who could consider themselves first teamers.

Success did not come easily - perhaps the best measure of the struggle to establish the club is the frequent references in the minutes of the club's gratitude towards its "benefactors" and "supporters". These might be relatives and friends who provided assistance or they might be middle class members of the community who were able to provide financial and material aid. By the late forties some of these men were attending club meetings as associate members.(1)

"Life was difficult then", says Rankus Maphisa, who spent a lot of his time with the team - entertaining them with his penny whistle when they could afford to travel to matches in the city by train.

> "Then, we used to have to pay out of our own pockets - we used to travel by our own [means]. Mokgosinyana and Pele Pele used to find a player a job and if he didn't have work they would pay out of their pockets. Our unity came like that. Even if we buy food - if I haven't got money, four of us will eat one apple. You couldn't eat it alone; we used to share everything accordingly."(2)

Men involved with the first generation of Pirates frequently refer to the "unity" or "brotherhood" that existed amongst them. As we saw in chapter one, this unity derived from a number of factors, including the shared experience of establishing the club; the existing friendship bonds between many of the players; their knowledge of themselves as Orlando's "pick side"; and the influence of older men on the youths.

As we have seen, Bethuel Mokgosinyana loomed large in the lives of his players. His motto might have been "a club which prays together, stays together": every meeting was opened and closed with prayer and the assembled team would pray before matches too. A player who had been castigated for a misdemeanour was often requested to say the closing prayer. Younger players, less at ease in their sorroundings, were frequently warned to come to meetings with prayers prepared because "we cannot expect the highly aged to pray all the time". The meetings were often marked by an obsession with formality, structure and procedure.(3)

A colouful blend of syncreticism was evident in pre match rituals before certain games:

"Before we used go to Bantu Sports we would assemble in the extension [to the house] where we slept. Mokgosinyana would take a glowing coal and put it on the ground ... and he would put a ball of some fatty substance on the coal. It made smoke so that you couldn't see the person next to you, only by feeling his shoulder would you know he was there. But as soon as he strikes a match and puts it on the coal - by the wink of an eye the smoke would vanish. We had to jump that flame on the way out and all the way to the match we wouldn't speak to anyone. We would sit in one part of the train ... a few supporters travelled with us but we would just nod our heads in acknowledgement if someone greets us."(4)

Records of club meetings show they were frequently punctuated by lectures delivered by Mokgosinyana "on how we behave, on Discipline"; stressing "seriousness was to be the motto of every member ..."; reminding "there should be no Pirates in the street"; and deciding that younger players who constantly missed matches "should be walloped in accordance with our laws" and "be told ... about their faults". It was not uncommon for the president to have "polished the talk in an elderly waylike manner".(5)

He was ably assisted by Mkwananzi, who was a disciplinarian yet had his teammates' respect. Once the latter was no longer able to participate on a full time basis after he was forced to take up night shifts as a municipal policeman, Mothei invariably filled the role of the president's right hand man.

Isaac "Rocks of London" Mothei is remembered as one of Pirates greatest sons. Unlike most of the other founder members, he was new to the Witwatersrand at the club's inception, having arrived alone from the Brandfort district in the Free State as a schoolboy in 1937. He lived with an older brother and threw himself wholeheartedly into school football. He was discovered by Mkwanazi while still at primary school. He developed into one of the first team's - and indeed the club's - central figures. After bringing a long playing carreer to an end towards the conclusion of the amateur period he was frequently involved in coaching during the 1960's and early seventies.*

One of the few members of the original side to attain a Junior Certificate, Mothei was frequently elected club secretary and in the fifties he was elected to the Jafa executive. He coloured Pirates' meetings with expansive explanations of "Democracy or Autocracy"; in opposition to "Hitlerism" in organisation and in favour of "brotherhood - giving examples to explain the meaning".(6)

Numerous "benefactors" and "supporters", once they had taken their place in the "House of Pirates" injected elements of their own middle class moral code. There are repeated references to "paving the way for the future" and for "our young ones who will come after us". Before the

---

* Mothei is credited with taking Scara Sono's young son, Jomo, under his wing and grooming him into a great player. Jomo Sono achieved what his late father had seemed destined to do - play at a high level overseas. He played alongside Pele in the star studded New York Cosmos in the late seventies.

election for the 1951 executive, there was talk of the need to elect officials "who will enforce discipline and make the club progressive".(7)

The weekly meetings of the "House of Pirates" displayed a complex mix of democratic practice and dictatorial behaviour. Members were encouraged to air their views and the detailed discussions on the team's performance appear to have been frank and open; yet the president was clearly the boss and heirarchies were entrenched by the tendency to refer to senior members as "mister" whereas juniors were referred to by their first names. While strict formality and deference to "elders" was expected, members referred to each other as "brothers" and from time to time even criticised the president.

The players' primary task was to play football, leaving the "elderly members" to discuss affairs of broader consequence and deal with association politics. Nonetheless, players - especially the more experienced ones - did not feel disempowered and the weekly conferences at Mokgosinyana's house ensured they remained integral to the ongoing affairs of the club.(8)

That the club served as a forum for building discliplined young men is quite clear. It also arguably served as a point where they were able to develop organisational and "life skills". The constant reminders to members to complete their mandated tasks and the frequent assessments accompanied by harangues from the likes of Mothei when tasks weren't being fulfilled provided a degree of organisational training. The annual rotation of portfolios amongst players, also would have served to develop skills amongst the young men.

Sidney Mabuza attests to the life building experience that came with participation in Pirates:

> "Life changed as soon as I joined Pirates. I became popular, a lot of people knew me. I gained a certain amount of confidence in myself as a player, and as a person when I was elected into the Office. I was secretary and had to handle all the correspondence."(9)

Certain crucial responsibilities, such as treasurer or delegate to the association, were entrusted to only a few men, however. As we enter the fifties and football organisation becomes more complex, these portfolios more often than not became the province of non-players. Furthermore, a player who was considered to be reasonably well educated - like Mabuza, Mothei or Tshabalala - was more likely to get the nod from his fellows come election time.(10)

Pirates was more than just a football club - it also combined properties of a friendly soceity and a burial soceity. On the agenda of club meetings might be a proposed goat slaughter; the marriage plans of a relative of a player; the planning of sketches to be put on for the entertainment of hosts in Bloemfontein, or how to ensure that a visiting team from out of town was hospitably received with sufficient food.

One of the most revealing aspects of the club's ongoing business was the frequent discussion of "death cases" and the collections for funerals. The club's minute books of the forties and fifties are as much a register of deaths in a community of relatives, friends and supporters as a record of the pre-occupations of a football club. On occasions, extraordinary club

meetings were called for the sole purpose of collecting burial fees or planning a funeral. It was not uncommon for the club to miss a fixture because of a "death case".(11)

"Death cases" were more dutifully contributed to than mandatory fees which the club required to register for a league. Members often had difficulty providing a few shillings towards the deceased's burial and at times it was suggested that other collections - in one case for a new kit - be redirected towards funeral costs. One excerpt should suffice to illustrate the central place these cases held in Pirates' world:

> "The President again announced the death instance at Mr Sekekete's place. The President asked if he should call at the purse of the club again to make payment for the occasion of misfortune. The President greatly talked on the behaviour of members of not working hand in hand as brothers and as real friends and [said they] should ... appear at ... the funeral.
>
> "... Mr Shabangu also ... sincerely asked the members to give out their half crowns ...[he] appealed to all members to do their work and keep real friendship and trusteeship to our parents."(12)

This passage illustrates an attitude that won the club respect and support in the community; it also makes it clear that the club functioned as a buttress against poverty and "hard times" in the same way as a number of other associations operated in the townships, on an ethnic, class or neighbourhood basis. That Pirates should serve this function in part explains the club's deep rootedness in the Orlando community. (See chapter five.)

A significant portion of many Pirates meetings was taken up by discussions about money - or the lack of it. The interminable debates on how money should be raised and what should be done about "brothers" who were unable to pay provide insights into the tenuosness of urban working class life. The first few months of each season saw elected office bearers constantly reminding their clubmates to pay "joining fees" - which rose from 2/6 in the mid forties to 5/6 for first teamers and those in employment a decade later. Players were constantly digging into their pockets for some collection or other that was needed to keep the club going.

Trips out of town to take on distant opposition were often seen as fund raising missions - members were constantly reminding each other that "this is for business not pleasure". The planning of these trips often generated heated discussions about the funding thereof. The club was usually not in a position to subsidise these trips and players had to find the money. Tensions obviously arose when a player was selected for a trip but could not afford it, although some displayed an almost laconic indifference as they repeatedly reported their inability to make the journey. From time to time the president, a supporter or a working player would sponsor another's trip if the team felt that player's services were indispensible.(13)

Trips were usually successes in footballing terms and the seeds of Pirates national support were already being planted in the early fifties. The victories won on these reputation enhancing journies concomitantly cemented Pirates' support in Orlando and sorrounding townships, providing a community already noted for its distinctive "civic pride" with a further

source of pride.

In addition, Pirates began to take on an increasingly central role in the life of the community of Orlando. It was one of the few institiutions to which people could look for assistance, and as a source of inspiration. As the club's popularity on the football pitch grew, so its circle of close followers expanded, bringing more and more people into its ambit. Thus Pirates, in its organisational form and as an expression of culture, served a number of functions: It was a buffer against poverty; a social club; a point where discipline and organisational skills were inculcated; an outlet for ambition ... and a source of enjoyment to growing numbers of football fans.

Increasing changes in the way the club was run become apparent by the mid fifties. The club had grown in size in terms of the number of teams it was fielding; greater numbers of prominent local men were showing an interest in the club's affairs and the number of supporters adhering closely to the team was also growing. The first two developments will be examined below and the third in the final chapter.

A third side had been started toward the end of the last decade and now a fourth division was in the pipeline. It was both a reflection of Pirates popularity as a football side and the status and opportunities it afforded membership that there were frequent applications from young men eager to join the club. Veteran members, remembering the club's roots, appeared to find it difficult to turn down applications for new membership, unless the person in question was clearly not linked to the township at all. The president "welcomed new men and said as a father he would not chase them away - but wants them indoors".(14)

Jimmy "Hitler" Sobi took over five years to break into the first team after joining the club's first ever second side in 1940, eventually replacing his mentor, Mkwanazi, at centre half when the latter's work commitments curbed his involvement with the club. "Once you were in the side, you stayed in. You didn't want to miss one match for anything because someone else would want to take your place", Sobi says. He maintains that there were few tensions amongst the reserves struggling to supplant the supremely consistent first generation of players. The simple fact that a player was a member of Pirates often seemed enough to dissuade him from wanting to leave, militating against the splits and walkouts that bedeviled less prominent clubs.(15)

Pirates could count on the loyalty of players who spent years in the lower divisions without ever breaking through to the "big time". Abel Dube, for example, joined at about the same time as Sobi and although he never established himself in the first side, he was a mainstay of the seconds for over a decade.(16)

As the older members of the second division begun to be replaced with another crop of youths and scholars in the fifties, the reserves appear to have lost some of their status. Mike Tseka, a founder member of the third team in the late forties, refers to an almost total absence of training amongst the juniors and limited attention being paid to their development as players by club officials. Only a handful of first team players, notably Mothei and Buthelezi, who were both to coach Pirates years later, spent time with the other divisions. There were occasional requests that the club's "elders" attend their matches.(17)

This does call to question exactly how the club saw itself catering for the "children of Orlando", although there was concern about the number of youths who joined the club but fell away soon after. In one instance Mothei requested assistance from other players - he was going to the East Rand to look for "the lost sheep" who had joined the club but no longer participated in its activities.

From the middle of the decade, the minutes reflect growing tensions in the "House of Pirates" which were not only related to the agitation of the reserves. Partly these reflected a drop in the team's preeminence - it is inevitable that a body whose prime motivation for existance is to play sport at the highest level will experience a degree of trauma when they are not proving as succesful as they had in the past. Similar tensions and despondency were apparent in 1949 when the club was experiencing difficulties in the Orlando based association they were trying to promote after leaving the JBFA.(18)

By the mid fifties, however, disagreements and dissension amongst members were becoming more serious. A young player observed in a meeting in October 1955 that "... this is the first time this kind of thing has happened. Each meeting is becoming a caseand we are not teaching each other any more. There are daily quarrels and no more co-operation." The president responded that the team's "play is failing gradually" and "there are unwarranted arguments on the field". The club failed to arrive for a Transvaal Challenge Cup Final against Swallows the following week.(19)

This is a reflection of changes in the club. It was becoming larger and perhaps more impersonal. The numbers of non-players becoming involved at different levels of the the life of the club was increasing. The tone of meetings was changing too - they had become more brusque and busineslike - and the executive was meeting more frequently as a seperate entity. The president himself was more prone to outbursts of disagreement with others - possibly he felt his unique position at the club was becoming eroded.

Towards the end of the decade, the club was turning more frequently for assistance to wealthier men. One supporter, Mr Raphael, came to the clubs' aid when Mokgosinyana was short of money. Nonetheless, Raphael never seems to have occupied any position in the club - besides that of a payed up non-playing member. A number of other middle class benefactors did, however.

As early as 1949, two men, Alan Khumalo and Pat Nxumalo, complained that their status as associate members - whose speaking rights in meetings were subject to strict controls - was "depriving them of their privileges as supporters of the club". This lead to a review of the position of a few helpful supporters and in time both came to serve on the executive. In 1952, the club decided that associate members should be full members; their joining fee was set at 20 shillings and they were to pay an annual subscription of 10 shillings. (20)

The non-playing members came to operate as a working committee, the argument being that this freed players to get on with the job of playing football. Accordingly the working committee would be responsible for a host of ongoing tasks, including liaison with the association and the arrangement of challenge matches and ensuring they were appropriately advertised.

This is a reflection of two things: a continually evolving and sophisticating game; and the presence of men with complex motives for associating themselves with Pirates - a love for the game and the club as well as an enjoyment of a small measure of personal prestige that derived from their involvement. This change in the way the club was run saw the start of the gradual erosion of the control the players enjoyed and placed it in the domain of succesful, educated men. It was a slow proccess which was only to be completed at the start of the seventies.

A typical executive is the one elected in May 1955: President: Bethuel Mokgosinyana; Vice President: M Modisane; Secretary: Sidney Mabuza; Asst. Secretary: Steve Ramela; Treasurer: Philemon Lempe; Chairman: Sam Shabangu; Delegate to Jafa: Pat Nxumalo; Captain (first team) Elliott Buthelezi; Vice Captain: Jimmy Sobi; Captain (second team): Dino Ramela; Vice Captain: Mike Tseka. Jersey care takers were also elected and Lempe's perrenial responsibility as ticket collector at matches was confirmed, with Steve Dlamini - who was an executive member of the supporters club over a decade later - nominated to assist him.

Besides Mokgosinyana, non players were Lempe, Nxumalo and Modisane, who had had a brief spell as a player. The most unusual feature of this executive is the absence of Mothei who was the outgoing secretary. At this meeting Mr Msomi, father of leading half back Willard, asked to join the club as a supporter. This was accepted.(21)

This approach to organisation reflects a common theme in African social and sporting structures - that of a plethora of posts. Scholars suggest that the maintenance of an executive position which often carried very little real weight or responsibility served almost as a substitute for power that could not be exercised in daily life under the repressive conditions imposed on African society.(22)

The organisation of the club does appear to have grown and altered at least in part out of neccesity, however: "We invited certain men who were helpful to us to be our officals" says Mabuza, confirming that "at the time, players welcomed non-playing members taking on certain responsibilities".(23)

The proccess whereby someone came to be elected as a non-playing official was probably quite informal and again based on consensus. Usually it would be a person already well known to the players as a "dire supporter" - to use Mabuza's phrase - or even a close friend or relative of a member. Most of the early non playing officials were part of a friendship netwrok that included many of the players' parents. The patron's brother served as vice president for a brief spell but most others attained positions because they had something tangible to offer the team.(24)

One of the first to be welcomed aboard was Mr Lempe, a skilled cutter in a garment manufacturers who secured the club its second set of colours in 1947. According to Buthelezi "I was his favourite. He used to look after me and make sure my boots were in good condition".(25)

It was not uncommon for individual players - especially star performers - to have their own individual "patrons" or supporters who looked out for them. Lempe served the club as treasurer for over a decade, with only Mr Msomi senior filling this post besides him during this period.

Willard Msomi's father was wary of football but he was a friend of Mkwanazi, which is probably why he told his teenage son "you will be answering to this man from now on", after club officals had approached him to release his promising young son to the care of the club. Parents knew their sons were safe under the regime of Mokgosinyana and Mkwanazi. Msomi senior, a shopkeeper, owned a large truck which he used to hire to the club when it needed transport to fulfill distant fixtures. Although he was not an enthusiastic follower of football he sometimes used to transport the team himself - which is suggestive of the depth of feeling the club could generate amongst members of the community, especially players' parents.

On one such occasion, in the Vaal region, Msomi senior experienced a conversion to Mokgosinyana's first religion. What sparked it off was the vision of young Willard scoring for the third team - in Shabangu's ill fitting boots - from inside his own half. The conversion was instant: "On Monday I had a full kit, including boots" Willard Msomi recalls. He was thus launched to football stardom that saw him praised as one of South Africa's most accomplished half backs - and his father eventually became a club official.(26)

Another figure, Eban Gwambe, who emigrated from Mozambique, is not considered to have been "a true Orlando man". Besides his origins, this might also have something to do with the low regard in which some former players hold him: "We elected him delegate to Jafa and he made a mess", Buthelezi recalls, "so we kicked him out. We elected him because he talked well but when it comes to fulfilling his duties [shakes his head]."(27)

Gwambe had briefly appeared as a player with the club in the late forties but he does not appear to have been a great success. He might not have been much of a player but he was the most prominent club official in the press during the late forties and early fifties, at times enjoying the moniker of "team manager", although this was not his official title. He also attained the post of selector for the Tafa pick side and sat on the Orlando Sports Board of Control, a body which Pirates had been influential in setting up. His name was also connected with Commonwealth boxing champ, Jake Ntuli, who many believe was the product of Mkwanzi's ability as a trainer, although he did not receive the credit. It is possible that Eban Gwambe is an early example of a man of some substance or prominence who attached himself to the club more with an eye on personal benefits than with the intention to improve the club.(28)

It is ironic that the not infrequent complaints that were voiced at meetings when players failed to fulfill their tasks rose to a chorus of protests against some of the non-playing officials later in the decade. In time these tensions were to boil over into the split which led to the formation of Newport United in June 1959 (see chapter three).

Seven players left to set up Newport United but some did not consider the break permanent and one, Sobi, did not immediately join the new club:

> "The club had money because we used to play all over. When we wanted a financial statement, we found there was only ten "bob". I decided I must stay away. Small boys told me I can't just stop playing, so I went to Newport."(29)

Sidney Mabuza believes the club was being run by "older people" who failed to fulfill their duties in the manner in which players like himself expected:

> "Some players were unhappy about the elevation of status of some individuals and we were under the impression that some money had been made from the club's 50% share of gates. Players didn't care how much money the club made - we didn't get any - it went into paying for the upkeep of the club: the cost of the trip, kit, balls, stationary and so on, but we felt that Mr Lempe, the treasurer, should show where the money went."(30)

It is unlikely that petty rivalries, found in any team, had a bearing on long serving players' decision to leave, especially as their protests seemed to be widely supported by those who did not actaully take the final dramatic step. The Newport case represents players rebelling against an erosion of their former powers and against mismanagement by those who were usurping their powers. Newport only existed for a couple of seasons and both Mabuza and Sobi returned to the fold.

Sobi returned after a bizarre incident: he was beaten up by his former teammates at half time of a match in which he seemed to be inspiring Newport to victory against the Pirates second side, Sea Robbers. Betty Nkosi, a great supporter of Pirates, later to found the women's section of the supporters club, flung herself dramatically on the stricken player, urging his erstwhile teammates to kill her instead. Contrite, they visited the injured Sobi in hospital and lavished him with gifts. When he was discharged he returned to Pirates.(31)

The Newport episode was followed by Motsomai's brief reign as patron and the Black Pirates split. The numbers of non players on the executive committee seems to have decreased for a while during the SASL years - perhaps it was a backlash to the experience of the previous few years. In 1964, the year Pirates lost the title on goal average, Mokgosinyana carried the title "President and Founder". Modisane now occupied the sensitive post of Treasurer, whilst another supporter, Reggie Sekwai, was Assistant Secretary. Shabangu (Vice President) and Mothei (Manager/Trainer) were no longer playing but they occupied their positions because of their footballing prowess and their long service as players. Three players who held posts before the Black Pirates episode and continued to do so were Jerry Modibedi (Chairman), Reggie Nkosi (Secretary) and Eric "Scara" Sono who was the Captain. The young ball wizard and crowd favourite, Kaizer "Chincha Galuva" Motaung was vice-captain.(32)

Sono, who died that year, wielded great power in the club and amongst the supporters. Nkosi and Modibedi were frequently re-elected to their posts because "when we started with the SA [Soccer] League ... running things was different from the amateur league. These boys were a bit brilliant from school, they could handle all the matters of the club - the more advanced organisation and administration."(33) They didn't survive on the executive beyond May 1964, however, reportedly resigning because of a "conflict over administration. They continued as players in the first team for a little while longer.(34)

To some extent these players were victims of the whims of supporters and there are suggestions that their resignation related to this factor. The

Supporters' Club's influence behind the scenes was premised on three factors, primary of which was the fact that they were increasingly recognised as a legitimate part of the club and were able to voice their opinions to executive committee members at weekly meetings. Capitalising on this, supporters wielded power through the intelectual ability of a few educated men who impressed others with their performance in meetings. Secondly, the violence of the "Clevers" who were friendly with some of the players but preferred action to words as a means of lobbying support, was increasingly commonplace at this time. The financial clout of socialites and businessmen who were in a position to "spoil" players and win their support added to the breakdown of older organisational norms and previous unity. Mokgosinyana's power was increasingly eroded and the players' power was realised more and more through certain factions of supporters.

This is ironic because the success of the club was premised as much on its loyal support and the dedicated assistance of a small group of devoted men and women. The meaning of the word supporter came to represent a much broader spectrum of fans as the club's prestige grew. Initially, supporters were a few dedicated, usually middle class men under whose tutelage the young players developed.

We turn now to examine certain aspects of the players' lifestyle, and notice that these supporters were often central in helping the players to assert a space for themselves which allowed them to escape some of the worst rigours of race oppression and class exploitation.

Under the watchful eye of middle class moralisers, temperance and good manners might have been the order of the day but the players of the amateur Pirates did not lead a dull life. Maphisa recalls "I used to pick Hitler [Sobi] up and we used to go to bioscope. Buick [Buthelezi] and I used to like gambling - but we didn't tell the old man."(35)

The cinema was still a major attraction for the young players although it doesn't appear to have held the same fascination it did for fashion conscious tsotsis who used as a point where they could preen their feathers in public. Nonetheless, the players of Pirates were local celebrities in their own right after their successes in the SA Robertson Cup and other competitions, having graduated from cock of the roost in an extended network of friends and neighbours, to sharing the pages of Drum magazine with jazz musicians, politicians and the aforementioned tsotsis.

Players enjoyed the support the community lavished on them: "If you're a player you get given free lunch by people. You never had to walk anywhere, if someone with a car saw you, he would always stop and give you a lift anywhere."(36)

Travelling to a distant town was not an opportunity afforded most young working class men, and despite the attendent organisational difficulties and the constant scrabbling for money to pay for the trip, many players thoroughly enjoyed themselves. Such a journey might provide them with an opportunity to "cover up old friends after the game". Later in the period, when they were a little older and less restricted by the President's [watchful eye], they would retire for a drink to an hotel in Fordsburg, after a long trip.(37)

It was common for the side to play on both Saturday and Sunday - either a league match and a friendly or two friendlies - and most of the players' time was taken up with football on the weekends and work during the week. By the end of the club's first decade, virtually every player who was no longer in school was employed. Sidney Mabuza, who worked in despatch department at a tire manufacturers, says of the fifties: "We were working class - we had our jobs and soccer was a pastime. Of course, being a soccerite helped get the job, everybody was willing to help ..."(38)

A lot of the team were found jobs by supporters, parents of teammates and the club officials. Employment opportunities were quite widely available on the rapidly industrialising Witwatersrand but succesful footballers seem more likely to have been able to secure a more stable, somewhat better paying job, than most of their peers. It is significant that many of the Pirates players only switched jobs once or twice at a time when it was commonplace that workers constantly changed work in an attempt to better their standard of living. The suggestion is that footballers who played for a team as successful and as rooted in the community as Pirates, started somewhere higher on the ladder than most young men.*

One path to employment was provided by some the player's fathers, who would, where possible, obtain jobs for their son's teammates. The Mpshe brothers' father, for instance, was a supervisor at a sweet factory and a keen follower of his sons' progress. When the company where Jimmy Sobi worked relocated in Rustenburg, Lucas Mpshe was able to find the young centre half a place in the production line at the factory. The older of the Mpshe brothers, the goalkeeper Bennett, sold Italian imported material to garment factories and he was able to find a place in this unusual - and probably quite comfortable line of work - for Elliott Buthelezi when the latter was forced to leave school. In the course of his work Mpshe came into contact with Philemon Lempe, a skilled cutter "who was doing alright for himself". He was a Pirates fan and provided the club with its second ever kit. Lempe was consequently invited to become a club official. He in turn used to arrange employment for out of work players.(39)

By the fifties, most of the original players had settled into jobs in the city. Some worked in factories, while others had secured themselves clerical jobs in the commercial sector. Some companies were disposed towards taking on footballers because an influential "induna", or even the boss, was a fan. The Mpshe brothers settled in a pharmaceuticals factory along with inside forward, Dino Ramela.

Shabangu and Buthelezi were among the exceptions. Both had left their first place of employment when they could afford to buy cars and operate as "unregistered taxi drivers" working from the station in Orlando. Shabangu drove a 1936 Plymouth that cost £150 and "Buick" Buthelezi drove a Chrysler. "We used to deliver people house to house from Orlando

---

* There is some evidence of players receiving covert payments from clubs but this was rare at this point. As chapter three illustrates, clubs couldn't afford to pay players during the semi-professional phase of footballs development. The only evidence in Pirates records of undercover payments during the amateur decades relates to a discussion as to the best means of disciplining two players who had appeared for a rival club. A fine was thought to be inadequate as the players had allegedly been paid for their services. (Club Minutes 23/6 49)

station, charging sixpence and then a shilling as things became more [expensive]", Shabangu recalls. Being players helped them in the competition for clients - "people gave us more support because we were Pirates".(40)

Mokgosinyana himself was an "induna" at a factory, before he established his butchery, and he was well positioned to find employment for his players. Association officials also used what powers they had to see that good players were well looked after - Shabangu says he was "fortunate" that an official knew the owner of a motor spares company which took him on towards the end of his playing career. He "never had trouble getting off work for matches and even trips to Natal and Cape Town" and continued with the firm while he held various posts at the club - even though they often kept him away from the company.(41)

Not every player was as fortunate. Some had to forego trips, or join their teammates a day later because they were working on a Saturday. There were times that even a local fixture was missed by a player working overtime and the Saturday League was particularly unpopular with those second team players who worked on Saturday mornings and faced a rush to the grounds after clocking out.(42)

On the other hand, a number of companies such as PUTCO and the United Tobbacco Company were known for their sympathy to the needs of players on their payrole; they obviously saw the benefits of having a well known soccerite on their books. UTC was one of the first major companies to sponsor African football and they used to employ players as agents marketing their goods in township stores. While companies such as these could provide a top player with a relatively well paying and none too strenuos job, they often layed claim to his services. Members of Pirates "second generation", including Scara Sono and Black Sash Mazibuko, also worked for UTC. Sono ultimately had to give up his job to ensure that he did not have to leave his beloved Pirates for the works team. It is likely that the same applied to "Satch" Mazibuko who was thereafter unemployed for much of his playing carreer and turned to petty crime.

Mazibuko's fall from grace, however, took place in the next decade when Mokgosinyana's own powers in the club had waned and the close knit, homespun character of team life had been replaced, to some extent with a glamour that went hand in hand with the new "professionalism".

According to Mabuza, one of the few matriculants in the earlier generation, players were encouraged by the officials to improve themselves but the club had no resources with which to sponsor a player's education. Mabuza says "if you were educated and had a profession you could really make it later in life - most others could not".(43)

A few ex-players got the opportunity to move into the coaching or administrative side of the club, which by the sixties brought small monetary rewards, but their are obvious limits to this avenue of employment. A few exceptions, such as Mothei who had worked as a spare parts packer in an engineering firm, moved up the ranks in an association on the basis of their education and organisational skills. For some, their past glories were a passport to support by the community in later life: Shabangu, who was provided with a "retirment job" as a school caretaker, says "if you are remembered as a Pirate from my day, people will look after you". Sadly, there are many who are left with nothing but

memories. They fill the gap in their lives which was once taken up with playing football with a hobby that insiders call "short passing" - lifting liquor to their lips.(44)

This serves as a reminder that although succesful footballers were able to claim a space for themselves whereby they might escape some the worst afflictions of a racist, exploitative soceity, they still suffered in that they were treated as third class sportsmen and only some of the best performers and the most resourceful of men were able to turn their footballing prowess into a lasting passport to future success.

The era of semi professional football did not bring dramatic changes to footballers. Most - though not all - of the Pirates who played in the SASL worked as their predecessors had and the £4.00 appearance money was seen as a very welcome supplement. They continued to work during the week and play football on weekends, but now the advent of semi-professionalism required that they train most evenings.

Pirates did not miss out on the swinging sixties however, and the dominant image of the club at this time is one of young men cruising around in one of the cars owned by the flamboyant Msibi, "wearing the latest threads and Florsheim shoes", invariably with young women supporters at their side. This period coincided with the formation of the first supporters club - reputedly the first in the country - and players were courted by wealthy supporters. Like most fashion conscious young township men, the players drew heavily on American culture and being in the limelight probably made them trend setters to some extent.(45)

After the demise of the SASL players were able to earn a little more from the prestige friendlies which the club engaged itself in. Pirates' share of the gate was often split on a fifty fifty basis between the club and the players involved in a match. Playing a succession of friendlies was not always a profitable exercise and there were occasions when the club would arrive for a friendly and discover that it had not been adequately advertised, leading to losses at the gate. This uncertainty apparently led the club to abandon its policy of remunarating the players on the basis of the gate in the early seventies. This decision, however, also relates to the decrease in the players' bargaining power as well, as the agreement to share a portion of the takings amongst players was a result of their own lobbying.

Russia Jacobs - Pirates star centre forward in the immediate post SASL era and club captain during its first few seasons in the NPSL - was amongst the most succesful players, who was able to live reasonably comfortably off the procceeds of football alone. He was initially an exception in that he did not work outside football but later in his carreer more of his teammates were existing solely on their takings from football:

> "Things were not so expensive in those days. I used to live with that little money. At Orlando Pirates the money was better because we used to get a good crowd. If we played Swallows we would get R50 or R100 - win or lose - because of the gate. Ooh, it was like a thousand Rand to us. If we win we might get an extra bonus of ten or twenty Rand. That's how Tseka would motivate us: jislaaik, you'd play your heart out - an extra R20!

> "I bought a Fiat for R900; the deposit was about R350. Pirates didn't have a bus ... Msibi's bakery van had crashed ... so when we used to play in Durban, Bloemfontein or Kimberley, the club used to hire my car. It helped me a lot, that. It was an honour to have a car; even at Pirates very few players had cars. After I was finished with soccer I bought a Valiant and started to trade as a taxi. Football allowed you to live a little better. There were guys not working, depending on football alone."(46)

It appears that under the counter payments to players, from the club funds or from officials and wealthy benefactors pockets, was a fairly common occurrence at this stage and young stars were able to further their education through similar clandestine payments. This modus operandi was probably rife amongst the more succesful clubs and it mirrors practices common to the transition to fully fledged professional football in other parts of the world.

A related practice was the offering of inducements to players parents to persuade them to part with their son.(47) This was obviously more common at a time when Pirates no longer recruited so narrowly from within the confines of Orlando. An example of this was the signing of Dingane "D and D" Phakati, who lived on the East Rand, in 1961. The club had been trailing him and bore the costs of his father's funeral when they signed him on. The great Percy "Chippa Chippa" Moloi allegedly cost Pirates two transfer fees - "one for the player and one to his father".(48)

Towards the end of the decade, players like Kaizer Motaung and Chippa Moloi were afforded the opportunity of playing overseas. Motaung was a great success with Atlanta Chiefs in the USA, although Moloi did not make the grade in the sterner testing ground that was Leeds United, England. Moloi was nonetheless able to capitalise on his fame and prowess and appears to have renogotiated a better deal for himself at the club on his return from Leeds, virtually holding it to ransom by walking out. Motaung was also aware of his status in an increasingly commercialised and sensationalised environment and was able to negotiate better terms. These players were exceptions, however, and it is only in the last decade that a greater cross section of leading players have been able to command wages which assured a middle class lifestyle.

The slight improvement in players' earning capacity and lifestyle was matched by an ongoing erosion of their power within the club. This was partly because it was difficult to reproduce the more natural unity and rapport that was prevalent amongst the founders and partly because the nature of semi-professional football encouraged an expanded organisation and the participation, at different levels within the club, of a range of people offering expertise or seeking the perceived benefits that came with attachment to Pirates.

As we saw in the previous chapter, Pirates support had grown ever larger during their participation in the SASL, and it did not drop after their

departure from that league. This decade marked a slow transfer of power from the hands of the players and their close support network of benefactors to the supporters at large - and to a core of influential figures amongst the supporters themselves.

In the mid sixties, Mike Tseka became one of the last men elected to the executive committee in his capacity as a player, by the players - although his first team career came to an end with Pirates involvement in amateur competition a few years earlier. He was elected treasurer and team coach. Well educated, skilled and affable, he soon attained the post of club chair as well.(49)

The irony of the years at the helm of the players' choice, Mike Tseka, is that he did not discourage the growth of supporter power. His line of thinking was largely congruent with that of many of the business people and educationalists who were prominent in the Supporters Club who believed the club had to become more "professional", more businesslike, if it was to succeed in the changing football environment. They ultimately attained control of the club executive in the early seventies, by which time Tseka himself had left (in 1969), fearing for his safety. The attainment of control by the educationalists was the culmination of a process whereby the increasingly vocal supporters had built their influence in the club to a point where they determined who ran the club. This development will be explored in more detail in the final chapter.

Besides the Supporters' Club, the Development Committee and Disciplinary Committee were formed while the club was participating in the SASL. The latter was the domain of men who were powerful within the club, while the other required enthusiastic participation from men - and increasingly women - who were willing to raise funds and expand Pirates support base. Both were staffed by and large by supporters.

Pirates history is in part a story of struggles to survive as a club and to attain financial security. Participation in the cash-strapped SASL did not change this; especially as it required five or six trips to Durban each year (and for a brief spell until clubs rebelled, a journey to Cape Town to play against Cape Ramblers); travelling which the League was not always able to subsidise. Although the "freelancing" in the second half of the decade was more lucrative it was nevertheless an insecure existance.

Ironically, while the struggle for financial security continued, more money was changing hands than before. It is has become something of a truism that certain officials used their positions within the Supporters' Club and in the Club itself to syphon off funds. It is difficult to argue that this access to money was a primary motivation behind some people's involvement with the club and it is better to consider it as operating within a tangle of motivations based on the enjoyment derived from working within a leading institution within African society and the prestige which accompanied this. At times even men who were considered to be stalwarts - rather than "johnny-come-latelies" bent on exploiting the club - were suspected of lining their own pockets.

Mokgosinyana meanwhile, was increasingly peripheral to club activities, partly because of ill-health and partly because he was becoming surplus to the requirements of a new generation whose views and modus operandi he did not relate to. He continued to immerse himself in the concerns of the

community. He showed a great interest in the Orlando Parents Eye, a self-help project of which his wife was a prominent member. It concerned itself mainly with caring for aged members of the community and acquiring funds for weddings and funerals and worked closely with the womens' section of the Supporters' Club. He was also involved in efforts - largely unsuccesful - to maintain and Old Players' Association which continued the tradition of football team as buffer against social and economic insecurity, aiming to provide for players in their old age and ensure they got a decent burial.(47)

The Life President, while retaining that title, eventually severed most of his connections with the club, bitter that he had been thwarted in his final bid to retain some control on the playing side by taking control of the Sea Robbers.

The changes in the club were inevitable, according to the newer generation of officials and supporters. Skumbuzo Mthembu, the current Orlando Pirates (NSL) Public Relations Officer says:

> "The school teachers and principals were elected because people had a belief they would lead. When power changed hands at Pirates, most of the people running the club ignored the likes of Mokgosinyana and he just went into thin air. Some felt the old people's ideas were outdated; there had to be changes here and there. By then he was not playing a very vital role.
>
> "As things progressed it had to be different people from the old gaurd. They had to be educated; people who know something about administration. You wouldn't pick up anyone ... from the street [just] because he's been with Pirates for donkey's years and make him chairman. The trend had to change, it had to be businesslike."(48)

These changes were the source of deep bitterness amongst Pirates founding generation. Lifetime supporter and one time coach, Peter Mngomezulu, encapsulates this disillusionment:

> "Mokgosinyana was with me the day before he died . "Peter, how do we get our club back? Orlando Pirates must support the old people; I formed the team to get money for classrooms and old age homes, but the purpose I had in mind is no longer." When the club changed ... they did not approach the old man. The educated look very low on the uneducated."(49)

Chapter four - NOTES

1. Based on Club Minutes.
2. Rankus Maphisa, July 1991.
3. Club Minutes
4. Mike Tseka, August 1991.
5. Club Minutes.
6. Based on Club Minutes and various interviews.
7. Club Minutes.
8. Based on various interviews and reading of the minutes.
9. Sidney Mabuza, August 1991.
10. Club Minutes and interviews with Shabangu, July 1991 and Mabuza, August 1991.
11. Club Minutes.
12. Club Minutes; meeting held on 6/6/51.
13. Club Minutes.
14. Club Minutes; meeting held on 14/9/50; Tseka; see also Msomi and Buthelezi.
15. Jimmy Sobi, August 1991; Willard Msomi, August 1991; Elliott Buthelezi, August 1991.Club Minutes; meetings held on 15/9/49 and 24/2/52.
16. Club Minutes and Sobi.
17. Club Minutes and Tseka.
18. Club Minutes 16/6/49.
19. Club Minutes 5/10/55; Bantu World, 26/10/55 and Golden City Post, 22/10/55.
20. Club Minutes; meetings held on 15/9/49 and 24/2/52.
21. Club Minutes; meeting held on 8/5/55.
22. Wilson and Mafeje, cited in Archer and Bouillon, ch 6.
23. Mabuza.
24. Mabuza and Msomi.
25. Buthelezi.
26. Msomi and Shabangu.
27. Buthelezi.
28. Based on various press articles and interviews.
29. Sobi.
30. Mabuza.
31. Shabangu, Sobi, Mabuza and Msomi.
32. Club letterhead, 1964.
33. Msomi.
34. Golden City Post, 17/5/64.
35. Maphisa.
36. Buthelezi.
37. ibid.
38. Mabuza.
39. Shabangu, August 1991; Buthelezi, Msomi and Sobi.
40. Buthelezi and Shabangu, August 1991.
41. Shabangu, July 1991.
42. Club Minutes.
43. Mabuza.
44. Shabangu, July 1991.
45. Russia Jacobs, August 1991; Sidwell Mokgosinyana, August 1991; Fanyana Shiburi, August 1991.
46. Jacobs.
47. Based on club records and various interviews.
48. Skumbuzo Mthembu, August 1991.
49. Peter Mngomezulu, August 1991.

CHAPTER FIVE

"THE WAY TO HEAVEN"
THE "PEOPLES' CLUB" - PIRATES AND THE SUPPORTERS

"The Peoples' Club": This slogan, coined in the early seventies, reflects the deep ties which have existed between Pirates and the community of Orlando. A certain mystique has developed which on one hand masks and on the other reflects the proccesses whereby Pirates, and no other club, became the "peoples' club".

Many a supporter, with nothing to go by but an often distorted oral history, will claim some family involvement in Pirates' early history. There exists a sense that Pirates was created "by the people, for the people". Many supporters exhibit a pride in a club that was created by young boys who seemingly had nothing to offer their parents but their football skills - yet developed into the country's leading team. The pride people have in Orlando Pirates is partly the vicarious sense of success a sports fan, or member of a community, derives from claiming allegiance to a succesful team. It is also, in part, a pride stemming from a sense of shared achievement, a belief that Pirates is their team, not just because they follow its fortunes but because it exists as a product of Orlando.

The mystique attached to the club should not be rejected out of hand by the student of history. It provides insights into how people make sense of their worlds, and even how those worlds were lived. If one scratches deep enough, there is a grain of truth to all the tales embellished and handed down by people for whom the "People's Club" is more than a great football team with a proud playing record.

Skumbuzo Mthembu, a supporter since the club's participation in the SASL when he was a young boy believes the history of "the creation of Orlando Pirates by young boys ... is partly the reason for the "Peoples' Club" tag".(1)

According to founder member Sam Shabangu:

> "The reason why people were so friendly to us is that we started this thing with the children of Orlando who wanted to make something for Orlando people. We tried by all means to get as many old[er] people involved in the club ... to get a couple of advisers to help us - not actually much in the play but in encouraging their children to play for us because we were struggling a little."(2)

There is widespread pride in the fact that the club was born out of the efforts of Orlando schoolboys. This is one of the many roots of its "Peoples' Club" status which this chapter will trace. In doing so it will examine the relationship between the club and its support base in Orlando, culminating in the early seventies when "the rule of supporters" reached its peak. Previous chapters have already provided insights into the nature of this support; it is the task of this chapter to draw this together and elaborate where neccesary.

The immediate circle which initially gathered around the young team were

parents and friends who helped the new club find its feet. As the township lads notched up wins against teams of older players from the city, so proud parents would bring their neighbours or work mates along to watch their son perform; in this way support grew slowly but steadily. These initial supporters were considered - and considered themselves to be - Pirates in virtually the same way as players were viewed.(3)

For instance, Peter Mngomezulu, who started watching the club as a young boy in the late 1940s and eventually managed the team briefly in 1973, was always regarded as a "Pirate". He, in turn, views his parents in the same way. Although they were never actually involved in the running of the club, he considers his parents, who "were selling sheep by the station at the time" to be "among the founders; they were friendly with Mokgosinyana".(4)

While the Mngomezulus moved to Moroka, where they ran a small shop - and where young Peter stood out as a lone Pirates supporter* - most of this initial network of young players, friends, parents and football enthusiasts appear to have lived in particular neighbourhoods in Orlando East and this became the support base. A number of the first players who started out with the Boys Club in 1937-38 lived in the areas recently built to accommodate the influx from Prospect Township. The football club served to some extent as a means of retaining bonds established in the teeming ghetto; by the same token, these bonds of solidarity provided a foundation of support for the club.

The sense of community spirit engendered in the team was reinforced by a strictly adhered to ruling that allowed only the sons of Orlando residents to play for Pirates. Furthermore, for the best part of the 1940s, Pirates was the only Orlando club in the JBFA and one of the few from the townships outside Johannesburg. This enhanced its ability to call on the support of the immediate community and in a short while, the players became Orlando's children.

> "Each location had their team - <u>the</u> team. Whenever Pirates played, they wanted to see how their team will do against Pirates (how Pirates will beat them!) so they used to flock to the ground."(5)

The treatment meted out to the township teams by some of their city based rivals probably deepened the sense of loyalty amongst township football fans. The rivalry between the township and the city is illustrated by the notorious incident against African Morning Stars. According to people who witnessed the fracas, when the Sophiatown side attacked the Pirates players, residents from Pimville decided to join the Orlando residents who were defending the players.(6)

A large percentage of fans that watched at Pirates at Wemmer and later at the Bantu Sports Ground were men living in hostels and other town dwellers

---

* Mngomezulu recalls the first match he attended: "It was about 1948 - the first time Pirates played Swallows. They played on the number one ground, Jabavu. Moroka was a new place then. The Russian chief, Ntoi, was watching. He stole the ball when it was 7-0 to Pirates. Everyone pleaded "Please Mr Ntoi, give us a chance to finish". He gave the ball back and Pirates won 9-0." (Mngomezulu, August 1991)

who had easy access to the grounds. Many of these men would cheer enthusiastically for Pirates - as Mabuza says, "if you play good football, you're bound to get a good crowd".(7) Nonetheless, the club built up a strong, if initially small, local following which maintained a face to face relationship with the players and club officials, and probably stood out in the crowd as the true Pirates support.

Of course, as the club became more succesful, so its local support increased too and supporters used to travel by train or car - and even on bicycles or by foot - to the city to root for their team. Former players recall how fans would notice if a player's boots were becoming tatty and offer to repair them or even buy a new pair if they could afford to. A player never had to walk anywhere in Orlando because any follower with some mode of transport would offer a lift.

We saw in the previous chapter how closer ties began to develop - rather tentatively - between the club and a wider network of followers during the 1950s. In 1945, already, "the public" were reportedly eager to acquire their own copies of the new Pirates skull and crossbones badge.(8) An appearance at a club meeting in 1952 by Mngomezulu senior provides insights into the distinction drawn, within this early network between what Mabuza terms "dire supporters", who were more like benefactors and who provided consistant material and hands on support, and a broader layer of enthusiasts who were regularly following the progress of the team:

> "Mr J Mngomezulu said he should be considered a follower as he is always busy ... the President said he should be considered a member because he has payed his joining fee."(9)

This supporter was drawing a distinction between himself and other, more centrally involved men, that is close to Shabangu's distinction, that "a supporter is someone who is very helpful to the club with money and things like that; a fan just gives his love".(10)

These followers who gave "their love", nonetheless, were eager to get as close as possible to the club, and throughout the fifties, club minutes refer to an ongoing debate as to the status of supporters. Initially, the "dire supporters" were acknowledged and allowed to become members. (Mngomezulu, it appears from the above passage, was fortunate to be given membership status because his time commitments only allowed him to be a follower - and in fact, Mothei questioned this procedure.) The second half of the decade, however saw more and more followers applying for membership. The not infrequent complaints voiced in meetings about members who "flock to the club and then don't attend the field of play", suggests that many joined the club for purposes other than playing football. These supporters were likely to be behind the moves, at the start of the new decade, to formalise their attachment to the club in a supporters club. Here they would rub shoulders with a newer influx of fans which included sophisticates and socialites drawn by the club's status.(11)

All this suggests, that great meaning was attached to peoples' affiliation with what was becoming an institution, and that there was more to Pirates than football. For instance, sport appears to have been closely bound up with notions of progress and the well being of the community. Members of the township's small, educated, middle class, especially, were concerned to promote sport for these purposes, and in this way they exhibited

attitudes not dissimilar from those expressed by white liberal moralisers and missionaries. Those that involved themselves in sport accordingly sought to mobilise it in "progressive" directions. When this tendency is added to the context of Orlando, with its fierce localism - enhancing the belief that this township was somehow different - it becomes easier to see why a successful Pirates developed into an instituition which came to represent the community of Orlando.

Partly because of its origins and partly because of the approach of men like Mokgosinyana, Pirates began to take on an increasingly central role in the life of the community of Orlando. It was one of the few "institutions" to which people could look for assistance, and as a source of inspiration. As the club's popularity on the football pitch grew, so its circle of close followers expanded, bringing more and more people into its ambit.

As we saw in chapter one, a particular concern of most residents was the growing incidence of youth delinquency, and organised sports was often posited as part of the solution.* Local sports organisers, including Pirates officials, shared this concern. The Orlando Sports Board of Control was reportedly "very worried about the growing problem of juvenile delinquency" which it related to the "lack of fundamental needs (sic) among growing young people". The Board's chair advocated that "those dealing with the cultural and recreational aspects of our life must do all possible to meet these needs". In 1950 the body called for the building of a stadium in Orlando. (12)

A member of the Board was Eban Gwambe, for a while a prominent "non-playing member" of Pirates, who, like Mokgosinyana, was invloved in organising annual school sports days in the township. Mokgosinyana's concern for the social well being of youth - and the community as a whole - has already been emphasised. It was his desire to to achieve such success with Pirates that the club could build an old age home and a creche in Orlando.(13)

While it is dangerous to assign too much importance to the influence of a handful of men - or one "great man" - it is difficult to deny the centrality of a handful of patrons and officials in the life of Pirates.

Mokgosinyana and Mkwanazi were considered "very important in Orlando because they used to keep our children together", according to Mngomezulu. "They wanted those boys to be happy, to be physical ... not to be playing dice in the street, not to become like tsotsis, selling sweets on the trains", he says.(14)

Mike Tseka recalls his days in the club's lower divisions:

"Orlando wasn't as rough as it is today, but there were some parts,

---

* As recently as 1964, a sports organiser in Orlando was claiming that the presentation of trophies to schoolboys in recognition of their footballing endeavours helped "keep them off the streets". (Golden City Post, January 64) Two years' later, sport and recreation were listed in the press as the second point of a "six point plan", imported from the United States, to help combat juvenile delinquency. (World, June 1966)

> far from your own house, where you couldn't safely go. Our parents were involved in Pirates. Knowing their child belongs to Orlando Pirates made them feel safe - they couldn't let you play for another team. They knew if you left the house, you were playing football or at a club meeting."(15)

As late as 1965, Kaiser "Mtatazela" Mkwanazi's mother was reportedly preventing him from leaving the club, after he had lost his regular place in the side, because he was born in Orlando, and she felt he should not play for any other club.(16)

According to Maphisa:

> "We had unity with the whole of Orlando because of manners. We used to have discussions which were very influential to the proper way of living. We were directors of how to keep your life. We didn't like criminals - we hated them. Mokgosinyana didn't like fighting and war.
>
> "The special police in Orlando were very good at arresting but they knew us; they would say "that one is a soccer player". Pirates was admired in soccer and out. Wherever we went we were welcomed because of Orlando Pirates. Old ladies would say "come in" and give us a cup of tea. A family with a bad father and mother with no manners will be known all over and not accepted. If it has a good father and mother it will be remembered."(17)

One old woman who remembers said:

> "Now Orlando Pirates play is out, it has no merits, it kills the spirit of people. Here in Orlando we are against them fetching players from Bophuthatswana and Swaziland. Before, Pirates used to look after our children and keep them from the street. The boys in the street get discouraged when they fetch a star from Zambia."(18)

The passage of time has lead to a degree of mythmaking about Pirates' impact on society around it. Former players hotly deny claims that they looked after widows, sweeping their houses clean, or that an offical "Orlando Pirates Burial Soceity" existed to care for the community. Behind these exaggerations, however lie examples of an attitude to community life which is remarkable in a sporting institution.

As we saw in chapter four, the club did operate along lines very similar to a burial soceity - albeit more informally - for a much broader grouping than the players and their immediate dependents. Supporter, Boy Shogwe, grew up in Pimville. He was not interested in football until his friendship with Scara Sono, and peer pressure, encouraged him to begin attending Pirates matches in the mid fifties. Nonetheless, he has vivid memories of funerals in Orlando during his boyhood:

> "I think Pirates were the first [club] to have banners. An Orlando Pirates funeral was the peoples' funeral ... they would carry their banners at funerals. People would see: there are those boys there, playing football - but after football they can do something for the community. These funerals cemented the community into the club. it was very different from Swallows and all that."(19)

Other actions and attitudes helped cement the club and the community during the amateur period. At annual club elections, "hospital attendants" were elected along with all the usual office bearers. Free matches were often hosted in Orlando at Christmas time and collections occasionally made for the aged.(20)

It was not unusual for club meetings to be interupted by a resident seeking assistance or financial aid.(21) The team's success and Mokgosinyana's image as a father figure meant that Pirates became an institution which Orlando people felt they could turn to when in need. Msomi explains:

> "A lot of people had confidence in him because Mokgosinyana was head of Pirates. Even if they were not an affiliate of Pirates they would come to him for assistance. He became very popular".(22)

According to Shabangu: "We knew, if you're a sportsman, you're a slave to the people. If you do wrong, they'll point at you: "Look - you call yourself a Pirates player?" Pirates was a pleasure to the people of Orlando."(23) Shabangu may not have swept out old ladies homes, but as a fearsome forward on the football field and a man encouraged by his mentors to mind his manners as much as his marker on the field of play, he became a hero in Orlando's eyes.

In reality, the club only catered directly for a few youths in a sprawling township; furthermore, the club often found it very difficult to respond to individual requests for financial assistance. The important point however, is that the club represented a certain value system which endeared it to the community. This, along with its success in football made it a symbol which Orlando could look up to.

The colourful praisenames with which supporters recognised their heroes is an indication of the club and the players' standing in the township. It has been suggested that these "nicknames" were regenerated in response to the sensationalism and individualism which has become a feature of the modern, capitalised professional game.(24) In Pirates case, however, popular and respected players have been given praise names throughout the club's history. In fact, such names are less common today - "you have to work hard to earn your name, and some of the boys today don't get one".(25)

Although some names could be hangovers from the street corner or school days (Shabangu was called "Babboon" at school by a teacher exasperated at his antics - the "Shepherd" was added later to make it more respectable) and occassionally a player may be dubbed by a club mate (Buthelezi named the young Tseka "Chelsea" after the club in England), usually the names were spontaeously awarded to a player by the supoorters during a match. According to one supporter, Edith "Moipone" Moorosi:

> "The men used to give the boys nicknames. Then you make wonders with these names. It's like our custom ... when you get married, your inlaws give you a new name."(26)

Moorosi's statement hints at one of the roles of naming; it is a means of initiating a newly accepted member into a closed group, a way of saying "you're one of us now"; it is also a way of laying claim to that person. It appears that such naming is deeply entrenched in customary practice - Shabangu says:

> "It is the same with a Zulu warrior ... a recitation: I know your story, you did this, you killed like this ... that's exactly what these names are for: its through your actions, your bravery, that you get your name. The fans are saying these players are their great warriors."(27)

The names themselves were often a reflection of popular culture. "Hitler" Sobi got his name because of his strength: "if he tackled you, you would fall down twice", and "when he stood with his foot on the ball and you couldn't take it from him, he was like Hitler with his foot on the world, ruling it." The name was not considered an insult; besides reflecting Sobi's indifference to the physical attentions of his opponents, the name suggested a lack of reverence for the ruling class who were engaged in a war with Hitler. "Hitler" was a fairly common name amongst township gangsters at the time too.(28)

Similarly Buthelezi's praise name, "Buick", reflects the strength of American cultural symbols in the townships during the forties and fifties. Like the big coaster, he "could slow down and slow you down - even if you come at hime fast - and go like this, go like that, smooth - just like the car - and give the ball to the goalie".(29)

Mabuza was dubbed "Ladies Hour" because he made his debut at 5:00 in the afternoon - a time of the day when young men, just back from work, could be seen courting their sweethearts.(30) Alfred Jacobs was instantly dubbed "Russia" - in reference to his origins - when Black Pirates plucked him out of the Free State. The name stuck when he joined Pirates, but, as in the case of Shabangu, who had perhaps the most bizzarre nickname, the original meaning of his name became obscured for many of his new supporters, who picked up on newspaper headlines which greeted Jacobs' goals with "From Russia with love"; his name thus became equated with the James Bond film.(31)

Some names related directly, and uncomplicatedly to a player's prowess on the football field: the supremely talented Kaiser Motaung was blessed: "Chincha Galuva" - "change directions wizard".

By naming the players thus, the fans were claiming them - and by extension the club - for themselves. They were also carving out territory which marked themselves, as givers of the name, and the players, who received the name, as insiders, people with special knowledge and a private means of communication. In this way, the bonds between supporter and player were subtley strengthened.

It is no coincidence that the club shared the same praise poem as James "Sofasonke" Mpanza, the "father of Orlando", who lead the squatter movement in the late forties and was the leading figure in civic politics and township life for three decades. Like Mpanza, Orlando Pirates was a symbol of the community, a source of civic pride.

To this day, Pirates fans can be heard reciting the poem, claiming for themselves and their club, the township's legacy of standing apart from the rest, of refusing to submit to authority: "Ezinyama nge nkani ezika Magebula eza gebula umhlaba ka maspala" - which roughly translates into "the forceful black ones of Mpanza who usurped part of the Johannesburg municipal ground".

This, perhaps more than anything, illustrates how residents' consciousness - and pride - in being from Orlando was augmented by the support for the club - and in turn built Pirates' reputation as "the peoples' club".

In 1949, having abandoned the JBFA, Pirates became involved in an attempt to set up a football association that would serve Orlando and improve football in the township. The players and officials were filled with a sense of mission. "We thought it could be very progressive, like the association in Alexandra. We hoped to bring up the class of football in Orlando."(32)

The club soon ran into difficulties when the JBFA, whose links with the City Council gave it final say over all municipal grounds, denied Pirates access to grounds in Orlando. After a frustrating season, Pirates returned briefly to the JBFA. They left the Sea Robbers behind to "keep" the association. Their struggle to "usurp the Council's ground", however, and Mpanza's identification with this struggle, cemented the relationship between what was becoming the two most prominent representatives of Orlando. This struggle also won the club many new adherents who had not formerly followed football.

Mpanza, riding a wave of popularity after the previous year's struggle to erect Shantytown, said, in Pirates defence: "I've never gone to Western to take those children's grounds", referring to the JBFA's seat of power, Western Native Township.(33)

"When Sofasonke got involved a lot of people followed. This is one reason for the pride in the club", says Sidney Mabuza. Mpanza's first love was horse racing but he had been a footballer many years previously at Adams college in Natal and his son was a referee. He was "devoted" to Pirates and watched their matches when the team played in Orlando. He occasionally addressed the club's year end gatherings, social events thrown for supporters as well as the needy.(34)

At a club meeting, held in June 1949, when the difficulties of setting up a rival, township based association in the face of City Council antagonism seemed overwhelming, Mokgosinyana

> "explained what the Pirates have made for Orlando and Johannesburg as a whole by forming the Great Sports Board* which has never existed before and he again said that Pirates members who want to join clubs in another association ... are ignorant of what a name they have got and what fame is in them and they are ignorant of the fact that they are sitting on top of gold."(35)

Pirates subsuquent success, as Orlando's pick, was henceforth equated with the township's defiance of municipal authority. After a brief return to the JBFA, Pirates were to remain either unaffiliated or attached to the municipal association's rival, Jafa, for the remainder of their amateur years. There position as mainstay of the independent Jafa further enhanced their status as a team who defied the municipality.

Years later, after the demise of the SASL, Pirates augmented their squad

---

* The Orlando Sports Board of Control

with a number of "coloured" and Indian players, many of them from nearby Noordgesig. This entailed further struggles against the local authorities and their supporters within football's governing bodies. Although the club eventually capitulated in order to remain in the NPSL, the club's reluctance "to segregate in soccer" won it more support and enhanced its reputation as the "peoples' club".(36)

> "Pirates didn't want to identify with the politics of excluding other people. Orlando is intertwined with Mlamlamkunzi [Noordgesig] - it is part of Orlando. It is just accross the road from where people grew up. It was, I think the thing which made Pirates not to know political lines of colour. If they jump over and play football with us, nobody had the right to say they can't."(37)

It is ironic that "Sofasonke" could not come to the club's aid during one of their most bitter battles: to secure access to the newly built Orlando Stadium which was opened in 1959. Pirates, like the Orlando Sports Board of Control, had long been agitating for a stadium in the township: it was Mokgosinyana's dream that the club should have its own home ground; he also saw it as a step towards solving the Orlando's worsening youth problem.

Mpanza, only recently returned to the Advisory Board, was unable to muster the funds or influence to aid Mokgosinyana's fight for the stadium. The handing of control over the stadium to the JBFA proved unpopular with the resident's of Orlando and extra police were mustered in preparation for its opening in response to rumours that "tsotsis" were planning to prevent the event from taking place.(38) The stadium was damaged by youths soon after.(39)

Ironically, the stadium served, for a time, as a point where ill-disciplined youths were taken to receive punishment. Pirates gained brief access to it through Dave Motsomai's influence during his spell as patron in 1960 - 61. When he left Pirates to form Black Pirates, the club lost access to the stadium as a match and training facility. The stadium continued to be used as a point where youths were disciplined and while many Pirates fans were unhappy with the loss of the stadium, others were content to flock to Natalspruit to watch their heroes.

Mpanza continued to be considered within the club as "our father of Orlando"* and when he died in 1970, Pirates and Swallows players bore his coffin.**(40)

---

* even the radicalised supporter, Shogwe, who endured a spell on Robben Island for his involvement in the Pan Africanist Congress, regards Mpanza's as "a true mayor" and differentiates his Board from other "dummy institutions".(BS) According to him, Mpanza was "the grandaddy of the club. It was the same as FW [De Klerk] with the "Blue Bulls" [northern Transvaal rugby team] - a big guy saying this is <u>the</u> thing; it's yours and it's mine - the Peoples' Club."

** Mpanza's links with Moroka Swallows were probably cemented by the move of a number of the original Shantytown squatters to site and service schemes in what was to become Moroka.

Other prominent men involved in community affairs supported Pirates. The Reverend Mooki, a prominent figure in Orlando who was frequently elected to the Advisory Board on Mpanza's slate, was a Pirates fan and - like his friend Mokgosinyana - an avid believer in football as an avenue to social upliftment. He used to visit schools to encourage children to participate in sport. Mike Tseka recalls:

> "He was a great fan of ours, he officiated whenever a death occured in the club. He used to watch us play at Wembley stadium and places like that but never at the Bantu Sports Ground - I think it was too rough for him there. When I was club chair I made him our chaplain - he got the idea when he was overseas for the [1966] World Cup and Pele told him all the clubs have chaplains".(41)

Towards the end of the fifties Pirates' began to develop a "fashionable" image as prominent African National Congress figures and a number of socialites began to identify more with the club. The enthusiastic talk of plans for professional football and Dave Motsomai's brief reign added to the glamour surrounding Pirates and it was at this time that women became visible in significant numbers at Pirates matches. An upsurge in the support of young men, identifying with the new crop of players, and often moving about in their peer group - identified as Clevers - had also been noticeable for a few years.

The new generation of Pirates players were caught up in this mood and were noted for their enthusiastic embracing of aspects of American culture. Certain players, especially Sono, were widely known - both in "respectable" circles and the "underworld". It became a source of great prestige to be connected with the new stars.

> "Pirates people were all over; socially you'd find them anywhere. At boxing, at a wedding ... Whenever a Pirates man was doing something it used to be a big affair, even funerals were a big thing. They had that thing of getting together, they were gregarious people. They had people like Scara Sono, he was a bit of a rascal and these were the kinds of things which gave the club colour."(42)

The club's performances on the field, as they entered the new decade, did not always match the excitement off it. This made the rivalry with the ascendant Swallows all the more fierce. As lesser teams combined or fell away in response to the new demands semi-professionalism made, so the two old rivals competed for the allegiance of these clubs' fans. It became a straight choice between Pirates or Swallows.

Eric "Scara" Sono was the leading figure in the new generation. He was a great player and a charismatic and popular figure off the field. When the club was torn apart by the Black Pirates split, it promoted young third team players to the first team. These players - including Kaizer Motaung, Kaiser Mkwanazi and the Khoza twins, "Mainline" and "Tykie" - had been the backbone of a schoolboy side, Rockridge, based at Orlando High. Sono had "poached" the core of this team, persuading them to join Pirates.(43)

This young side caught the footballing public's imagination, and drew eulogies from the press. Moorosi captures the impact of the new Pirates on the supporters, who turned up in droves to watch them compete for the SASL title:

> "Kaizer, Scara, Satch, King Kaiser Mtatazela ... they would play nice football for you. King Kaiser to Chincha Galuva ... when he changes the way the ball is going with his foot and passes to Scara - oooh! Scara was tough, the backline was scared of Scara ... he pushes the ball to Satch Mazibuko - you knew then he was going to score a goal."(44)

The young fans, and newer, less knowledgeable supporters identified with Pirates, and the new style of play that was exhibited on weekends. The press often castigated the likes of Motaung and Moloi for their excessive ball juggling and dribbling, for "displaying crowd pleasing and dribbling antics ... which the connoisseurs hate".(45)

> "It was a new concept in football, a new style of playing; but the old people still said "these are our boys. Thank you God that you have given us new talent. Look how magical they are". There was already something there about Pirates ... an old club that was good. Those old supporters, they had been with Pirates for <u>years</u>. They were so proud, in their blazer with the skull and cross bones badge."(46)

As we saw in the last chapter, a core of supporters who had adhered to the club for a number of years had attained a privileged position in close proximity to the inner sanctum of players and officials. These men were die hards who gave of their free time and money to the club. Those with cars used to transport the team around the Witwatersrand and accross the length and breadth of the country. A few shopkeepers were known to shut down entirely when the team was playing in a distant centre, in order to follow them. Working men would put in hours after their return from the factories, helping in whichever way they could. These were the dedicated men who helped Pirates survive the departure of Motsomai with most of the first team, consuming hours scouring the dusty pitches of Orlando in search of new talent.

Some of these long serving supporters moved into leading positions in the Supporters' Club when it was set up in the early sixties. Many did not, continuing to relate to the club as insiders because of their proven track record as supporters.

Club minutes reveal that in the previous decade, already, there were heated debates about the status of supporters amongst the players and officials, in response to ever increasing numbers wishing to join as non-players. Adding to these concerns was the growth of an unruly element amongst the followers. After crowd trouble precipitated by the failure of the Basutoland club, Lioli, to arrive for a prestige challenge match, in February 1957, a worried "House of Pirates" convened:

"The House remarked about the so-called members of the club who in reality [are] mere followers who have taken to endangering the club. The house saw deep danger in these men. The House agreed that a joint Pirates meeting be summonsed soon through the press to get the enrolment clearly [sorted] out."(47)

That the press was required as a means of communication indicates the degree of growth of Pirates' support and the worried plans to sort out membership suggests a sense of unease that the club was growing beyond the tighter, more homespun network of followers. Some members probably favoured the institution of some official body to represent and control

fans. Complicating matters was the enthusiastic involvement in supporters affairs of another sort of newcomer, who had the social or financial standing to back up their desire to achieve the insider status that had previously been the prvilege of a few. Elliot Buthelezi, expresses the fears that were aroused by these developments: "Various men wanted to join Pirates, to be part of it. Pirates was for the people but not to be ruled by them."(48)

The rest of this chapter will chart the growth of Pirates support in the sixties and the developments in the Supporters Club which ultimately saw the club come under, what the old generation saw as, "the rule of supporters".

The traditional support base of working men in their twenties, thirties and forties remained. Increasingly, however, the Clevers, young men who had adopted aspects of tsotsi culture, were begining to make their presence felt, giving the club an image of thuggishness. A grouping of young women, based largely in Orlando West - where many of the current players lived - became a regular features at matches in the SASL as well. Finally, numbers of young socialites and relatively wealthier men were gravitating around the team.

These developments were an effect of Pirates broadening appeal as well as the glamour that was attendant with semi-professional football. Orlando Pirates braais and parties, thrown with gusto by the flamboyant Elijah Msibi, were important events on the social calendar. Msibi's shebeen, needless to say, was a focal point of much supporter activity. "You could go there and know football - and Pirates - was going to be discussed."(49)

Frequent trips to Durban to watch the team take on the likes of Avalon were an attraction for men and women who did not normally attend football matches, besides the supporters. A cup final would result in bumper to bumper travel all the way. A newspaper devoted a double spread to Pirates fans enjoying a beach braai while in Durban; a reflection of the broad appeal these trips held. For wealthier fans and socialites these might be ocassions that had little to do with football and there were times some who made the trip were too drunk to watch the football on match day.(50)

The majority of followers, of course, were workers who carefully planned which fixtures they would patronise in Natal, putting money aside for months in anticipation. Young boys would cultivate the friendship of older fans in order to get lifts to Durban.(51)

> "If Pirates is playing in Durban, we will do anything to watch. The club would organise a bus. If you are short of money, sometimes we will donate for you to come with us ... sometimes you can get on the bus at discount. When we reached the hotel in Durban we used to book one room for two people. After the game we used to celebrate with the players and with the fans from Durban and Pietermaritzburg at the Goodwill Hotel."(52)

Miss Orlando Pirates and Miss Sea Robbers competitions, organised by David Nkosi - who ran "Miss South Africa" competitions as well - and his wife Betty, were another attraction which catered for the growing support base and cemented their adherence to the club.

The Nkosis were amongst the first to try and establish a supporters' club. Initial attempts such as these were mainly for the purposes of co-ordinating travelling to distant matches. Supporters meetings would be held in the Donaldson Orlando Community Centre (DOCC) because of the number that would attend. Similarly supporters from outside Orlando - from the East Rand to Durban - would gather to co-ordinate their visits to Johannesburg.

The notion of the "Peoples' Club" was given its fullest expression, in the eyes of supporters, during this decade when, from the mid sixties onwards, weekly supporters meetings were held at the DOCC. These were formal gatherings, open to signed up members who had paid a small annual fee. Although there was no formal launch, and there had been a number of abortive attempts at setting up an official Supporters Club, by this period, the increasing formalising of a structure which represented supporters interests led to the use of the name "Supporters Club".

Membership of the Supporters Club brought its privileges. Signed up supporters could expect the club to contribute to the cost of burials if a family member died. Members were also priviledged with access to an inner sanctum of a club with national support that was becoming institiutionalised and slowly removed from its grassroots base. There would be invitations to the renowned club parties which afforded the opportunity to rub shoulders with star players as well as leading socialites. There were few responsibilities, in return, although supporters who were part of structures - either the Supporters Club executive or the Development Committee and Disciplinary Committee - had tasks to fulfill.(53)

The Wednesday evening gatherings of supporters have attained near legendary status and surviving supporters, largely prevented from making any input into the club's running, remember them with fondness. The presence of club officials - who met on Monday nights - at these meetings, allowed supporters to keep closely in touch with developments in the club, and gave them an avenue to air any grievances. Fanyana Shiburi, former editor of SA Soccer Mirror, and an Orlando man, recalls:

> "When Orlando Pirates was under the rule of supporters meetings were incredibly long. Each and every supporter had something to say and they chopped and changed the rules. A bone of contention was that some supporters felt Pirates must play on its home ground [Orlando Stadium] ... and others felt it had to belong to the national league [SASL]."(54)

For most supporters, the most important issue on any agenda, however, was discussion of "the play". The sensitivity of debating match tactics meant any stranger who tried to enter a meeting had to be vetted by a member present. Mike Tseka, who as club chair from the mid sixties had done much to encourage the involvement of supporters, recalls these meetings:

> "We had a blackboard where I sketched the formations. Most supporters would feel they were being delayed by other parts of the agenda. They were always saying "the blackboard; go to the blackboard Mr Chair". They were interested in how we beat the opposition and how we were planning to beat the next team. I wouldn't say other clubs did this kind of thing."(55)

This approach to team tactics - and even selection - was not favoured by everyone, and many of the former players, now involved in coaching, were particularly opposed. Despite supporters' pre-occupation with these matters, the Supporters Club became renowned for its infighting and the lobbying of different factions of supporters. This politicking was often related to "the play": groups of supporters, often with social connections to a particular player or clique within the club, would try to influence the selection of the team.

The access to a privileged hearing of the club's executive at the weekly meeting, achieved largely by supporters' own agitations, encouraged more ambitious members to see the Supporters' Club as a passport to power. This was another reason for the infighting amongst supporters. Men rose to positions of power amongst the supporters by eloquently criticising the incumbents on the Supporters Club executive and by - in the bitter words of one former player - "speaking too much English." A person's educational qualifications and his social standing were likely to give him the influence needed to garner votes, although acquiring the support of the Clevers added muscle which could be persuasive.

The behind the scenes lobbying became more and more prevalent towards the end of the decade as the Supporters' Club executive developed a close and influential relationship with the club office bearers. Amongst the latter was Tseka's secretary, the taxi owner Jimmy Sojane, who had initally held a portfolio in the Supporters' Club. An increased blurring of the lines of authority occured, and the club had to use the press to stress "... the Orlando Pirates meeting at the DOCC is strictly for players and officials and not for supporters".(56)

By the seventies, the Supporters Club executive had become a recognised stepping stone to attaining a position on the club executive. Willard Msomi describes the caucusing that preceded elections:

> "If I want to be chair of the supporters, I must first convince those who know me. They become my agents. Along the way I find other people and I promise to take them to heaven. We hold unconstitutional meetings. The problem is, I don't know the way to heaven."(57)

Although a working class supporter could wield considerable influence if he was knowleadgeable in football matters or if he had the neccesary backing, educated, middle class supporters were more able to wield influence. Sidney Mabuza provides an insight into the type of people who were able to elevate tehmselves within the club, and on what basis:

> "To be an official - a prominent official - of Orlando Pirates, you've got to be a non-working man, a businessman; and you should be readily available in case of crisis. An ordinary working man - who gets up, goes to work and after eight hours comes back - cannot attend to the needs of the club. You've got to run around the whole day with the players and with the supporters to get their confidence. Now where do you get the time if you're employed?
>
> They cannot take an ordinary man who is employed in town and give him a portfolio because he's poor and [they believe] he is going to embezzle the funds of the club. Now a businessman; people interpret it this way: he's got his own money so he won't fiddle with the funds. They put you in a position of trust because you're financially

well balanced. But when you're a Pirates bigshot - with a few thousand in the bank - you want to elevate your status, you want to be even better than you are."(58)

It is probably no coincidence that self employed businessmen such as taxi owners, shopkeepers and shebeen kings, as well as professionals such as school principals and lawyers were the men most likely to succeed. They had the time to lobby support and ensure that the players were happy; they had the financial security and social standing to impress voters and, as men who had tasted some success, the inclination to pursue their ambitions through the club.

The observations of anthropolgists such as Mayer square in many ways with the Pirates' experience: "the sports club - like the church - provides a welcome outlet for the ambitions and rivalries of the location dwellers. Each club has its President, two or three vice-presidents, a secretary, a treasurer and four to six members." "Whereas", according to Wilson and Mafeje, writing in the same period as the former, "for a white man or woman, there are many alternative opportunities of exercising leadership in work, in politics, in local government ...". What might be burdensome to a white man - "the secretaryship of a ... club" for example - for "most Africans ... carries prestige" and postions are clung to tenaciously as a result.(59)

As increasing numbers of more wealthy and ambitious men began associating with the club so the face of Pirates underwent a change and the previous holders of power became sidelined. Many of the new men were young socialites who had taken on the trappings of black American urban culture and had attached themselves to the club - and to the players - largely for reasons of social prestige and enjoyment.

They provided players with favours and mixed with them socially. Those who could help the club financially were able to further entrench themselves. There is evidence, however, that there were people who saw the club as an avenue to accumulate wealth, besides social standing. The commonsense view among former players and long term supporters is that "when the money came into soccer, all hell broke loose". Men who attached themselves to players not only "wanted to win the fame of the player" but saw the potential in the increasing amounts of money changing hands in semi-professional football to provide themselves with a means of accumulating further wealth.

Attaining office in the Supporters Club was the most obvious way of getting to the heart of the club. For some the benefits might simply amount to trips to Durban with the team and a free stay in hotels; for others they included access to sums generated by fans paying for trips to Natal, or even acquired through access to the gate takings. "We had many great officials, men who would keep the club afloat out of their own pockets", Skumbuzo Mthembu recalls, "but there were also those who embezzled the club's funds."(60)

Ambitious men also attached themselves to players, trying to win their favour and thereby progress within the club. "They try and please all the boys. They do what they think is best", Buthelezi recalls. "If you, as manager, complain they will even go to the extent of buying some drinks." There is a substantial list of men who were stars in the SASL who succumbed to drink, ostensibly plied by fans - well meaning or otherwise.

The flamboyant Ewert "The Lip" Nene is one man who rose from being an unknown supporter at the beginning of the decade to a club official at the end. A gregarious, slick tongued taxi owner, he won the confidence of the players who had him installed as their chaperone, negotiator and motivator. The newspapers referred to him as the "club manager" in terms reminiscent of Eban Gwambe's time at Pirates.

The earliest memories are of him convincing the club to take him along for a match in Durban. "Ewert caused an overload in my car" Peter Mnogomezulu, who transported the players, recalls. "First he went to Scara, and then Mainline, who said "let him in Peter". That day he was running to the toilet with the rest of us after the Indians "poisoned" our curry."(61)

After this baptism of fire, Nene rose to prominence amongst the supporters, and ultimately the club. He was eventually ousted at a club general meeting along with a group of players who were closely associated with him and Kaizer Mataung, in 1969, in what is remembered as of the last displays of player power.

Little bitterness is felt today towards the late Nene and the three players (Zero Johnson, Ratha Mogatleheng and Msomi Khoza) who helped found Kaizer Chiefs on their departure. The reason might be that it was in reality a small group of players and officials who were behind the sacking - backed by a lobby of supporters. These players were closer in outlook to a group of officials and prominent supporters who believed the club should be run along more "modern" lines.(62)

Also backing this lobby was the so-called "apron government" - a core of women supporters reputed to wield great authority behind the scenes. They felt the club - which at this point appears to have been wracked by internal divisions - was becoming complacent and they demanded firm action.(63)

The women supporters had been organised into a unit by Betty Nkosi when many were starry-eyed teenagers watching Pirates in the SASL. Clad in black and white uniforms, they became renowned for their fierce loyalty and inspirational singing and sloganeering at matches. They held fundraising events such as parties and braais (where they did the catering) and beauty competitions (in which they participated) in order to aid the Development Committee.(64)

The social and administrative role the core of women supporters played in the club provides a rare example - perhaps normally only found in the churches - of African women gaining the opportunity to involve themselves in organisation and to have some influence over the passage of events in public life. Perhaps it was a recognition of their organisational abilities that prompted club chair, John Mposula, to place the women at the head of the Development Committee in the 1970's. Edith "Moipone" Moorosi, who still plays a role within Pirates affairs says:

> "The late Mposula, when he became chair, destroyed the Disciplinary Committee which was all men and put the ladies in charge of the Development Committee. Our task was to raise funds by selling rosettes, small flags and badges at matches, and to open new branches. If [the executive] said go open a branch somewhere - Bloenfontein, Kimberley - we enjoyed doing it. We arranged funerals

> and sang in the choir at the funeral. We were put in charge of the Development Committee because the men are lazy to work."(65)*

There were many players and supporters who resented the "apron goverment", suggesting they were the power behind the throne. Male chauvinism probably played a part in fuelling these antagonisms but they were not entirely groundless.

Jimmy Sobi, for instance, was reputedly sacked as team manager at the behest of the women supporters who would not accept his continued selection of Abyssinia "Asinimali" Motseme. Moorosi does not entirely dismiss allegations of behind the scenes caucussing: "We tell them we want an AGM. There in the AGM we manoeuvre. Then we take this one out."(66)

She asserts, however, that people were usually removed from office for "eating the money" - an indication that corruption was fairly commonplace - and not because of disputes over team selection. She claims supporters and the coaching staff worked well together:

> "The coach tells us if there's problems with a player and [then] we talk to the player. We would encourage the players to attend the [supporters'] meeting. The executive would be there too. All supporters there would make the scheme ... so and so will be substituted ... so and so must not play. We would vote for our choices. The players used to listen."(67)

Ironically it was these very practices, which for many supporters were what made Pirates the "peoples' club" in the sixties, that created tensions between them and former players in the coaching staff and older supporters. It also helped create, and fed into, tensions within the current team and officials.

According to Boy Shogwe, in the Supporters Club:

> "It was not the rule of the people, it was the rule of the Clevers. The Supporters Club had to conform to our rule. We came to meetings with sjamboks - officials had to do what we wanted them to do. But the Clevers did everything that pleased the people. If Pirates loses, but we win by force, then the people are happy.
>
> "When they formed the Supporters Club and it comes to positions people stand up and say "zamzation, zamzation..." "logic and facts..." "we want to debate" ... and they put it scholastically. Clevers are mostly people who did not go to school so we decide, when its elections, they must represent us. That's how the Mnqibisa's, the Nkosi's, all the learned, got there. But the Clevers were the nucleus that ran it. We tell them what they must say when they go in the delegations [to the club executive] to talk for us. If they got it wrong ... haai man! We beat them up."(68)

The Clevers, older "tsotsi's", in their twenties and early thirties and

---

* Moorosi remains the only woman ever to have scored a goal for Pirates, palming ashot from "Inch" Gramanda that was going astray, past the goalkeeper, Easthope in a SASL fixture. The referee awarded the goal.

often employed - thieves and workers with money according to Shogwe - had become the real force in Pirates. They displayed aggressive territorialism not unlike Orlando's youth gangs and similar to that which has more recently prevailed amongst youthful fans in a number of European countries. At Natalspruit they occupied the only grandstand - dubbed the "Belgian Congo" because of its anarchic atmosphere. Pirates fans used to congregate under a skull and crossbones flag in stadiums at the start of the "needle matches" against Swallows or one of the Durban teams. There was safety in numbers and the Clevers would come to the rescue of anyone in trouble - if s/he was wearing black and white. When Swallows played at Orlando Stadium, their supporters were obliged to make the sign of the skull and crossbones with their arms to signify Pirates territory.

> "They had to do it even if they won. Swallows could beat us on the field but afterwards we could beat them [ie their supporters] up. All the Clevers were Pirates - even if they were not Orlando people. Once you identified with these you were in a safe crowd man. At a party ... if there's a fight ... you say Pirates and you're okay. We were the boys."(69)

The influence of the Clevers behind the scenes and their aggression at matches earned the club the unwelcome title "club of thugs". The last few years of the sixties and the first few of the seventies were particularly turbulent ones behind the scenes at Pirates, with rumours of splits, chopping and changing of coaches and rifts amongst players. After Tseka departed as club chair in 1969, the club went through an annual succession of chairmen.

Tseka's replacement was one-time goalkeeper Tim Mahlaba - the last former first team player to hold this post. Mahlaba had been one of the men who followed Motsomai to Black Pirates. According to Russia Jacobs he returned via the Supporters' Club "where he started to build up his reputation". He was elected because he was a former player and people thought "maybe he could change some administation problems ...". (70)

A ruling that the club chair had to have been a member for at least five years did little to provide stability at this time. In 1971 supporters forced an amendment to the constitution which gave them a say in all elections. This was the final blow to the control players and founder members had enjoyed in the club and it signalled greater disunity and confusion. Each offical reputedly had his own gang of bullies who would help him maintain his position. Rivals who had been ousted, meanwhile, would be plotting a comeback - and revenge. Jacobs recalls the disquieting effect this had on players, who after a match would see the rival groups huddled in tense conferences in different parts of the stand.(71)

Nick Koapeng, a disgruntled former coach, told the SA Soccer Mirror in August 1972 why he had walked out on the club before that season had got underway:

> "Some supporters have been allowed to pick their own teams for some league games. This has caused unnecesary confusion between the manager and captain. Misunderstandings between players, officials and supporters nearly split the club. I persuaded four players not to resign. There is no unity among officials."(72)

This had been a disasterous season for Pirates and they conceded the NPSL title, which they had won for the first time in 1971, to their new arch rivals, Kaizer Chiefs. Confirming the truism that when the team is winning, contented supporters would retain the incumbent officials but when it was losing they would make a clean sweep of all positions, "Buick" Buthelezi was ousted as coach, less than a year after he was given the task of rebuilding the disillusioned side following Koapeng's departure. He incurred the wrath of supporters after dropping ageing favourites, including the captain Russia Jacobs, in favour of a crop of youngsters - including Jomo Sono - who had been groomed by Mothei.(73)

In 1973, Koapeng was back as coach, with the long serving Mngomezulu as his manager. This was to be Pirates greatest year, as they bounced back to win all five trophies on offer. When Koapeng resumed his job, he was still not entirely satisfied with the way things were run:

> "Officials manage the club according to their own needs ... they allow supporters to have a say. Orlando Pirates is an institution, more than a football club, embracing the affections and affiliations of men in all walks of life. From time to time, some of these men were heard too often in places where they shouldn't have been heard at all. They learned things which you should only learn from within the club ... wherever you go in Orlando you hear the gossip."(74)

The succesion of whirlwind changes amongst the club executive should not entirely be dismissed as poor organisational practices, however. For a lot of rank and file supporters club elections were the opportunity for them to reassert their position within a club increasingly dominated by small factions of power brokers. The next two elections saw the elevation of two men who are widely regarded as having restored stability and dignity to the club.

Orlando West schoolmaster and former Supporters' Club chair, Aggrey Mbatane, was elected Club Chairman, proclaiming that the club depended on its supporters but that they needed to be transformed into a "disciplined, contributing mass". On his death in a road accident, he was followed by his friend and fellow school principal, John Mposula. Mposula was a disciplinarian but renowned for his fairness. He was much loved by supporters and players and was re-elected to the post until his assasination in 1977.

Under Mposula, recruitment was stepped up and more branches opened around the country. For the Clevers, this was a time of reckoning. Shogwe concedes that ultimately the "academics" and their supporters wrested control, arguing that in the NPSL discipline was essential, and that the club needed to overhaul its organisation if it was to compete succesfully. "They spoke very convincingly ... we would turn to each other and say "hy praat die waar."(75)

Mposula's death, allegedly at the hand of a supporter who had been an enforcer for many years, served as a reminder, however, that the factionalism was not over. The club henceforth lurched deeper into internecine strife.

Orlando Pirates, remained, throughout the seventies, a club which generated the deepest passions amongst those who participated within its structures and those who followed it. Skumbuzo Mthembu remebers:

"In those days players used to weep if they lost. They had the commitment of a soldier fighting for his country. This patriotism was because he is from Orlando and his family and friends are watching"(76)

Sidwell Mokgosinyana, the patron's grandson recalls:

"When Pirates won something, old ladies would run into the streets banging big pots and singing. That night, you knew, you would be able to buy beer for 10c in Orlando. The players would be right there with you, celebrating.

"Some fans had such love for these players. On Fridays, they would be coming home with their pay. They would go past these big advertisments at the side of the road with the player's face on them. These fans would hold their money up, and kiss it, saying "all this is for you"."(77)

Chapter five - NOTES

1. Skumbuzo Mthembu, August 1991.
2. Sam Shabangu, July 1991.
3. Sidney Mabuza, Mike Tseka and Peter Mngomezulu, Auguat 1991.
4. Mngomezulu.
5. Willard Msomi, August 1991.
6. ibid.
7. Mabuza.
8. Club Minutes, 15/5/45.
9. Club Minutes, 13/8/52.
10. Shabangu.
11. Club Minutes, for instance: 3/8/50 and 13/8/52.
12. Bantu World 22/4/50
13. Mngomezulu.
14. ibid.
15. Tseka.
16. Golden City Post, 1965
17. Rankus Maphisa, July 1991.
18. Mrs P. (This was a discussion held in Orlando in July, 1991).
19. Shogwe.
20. Based on Club Minutes and various interviews.
21. Club Minutes, for example 17/10/56 and 19/5/61; interviews with Msomi and Elliot Buthelezi, August 1991.
22. Msomi.
23. Shabangu, August 1991.
24. Couzens, "An Introduction to the History of Football in South Africa", Town and Countryside, p 207
25. Shabangu, July 1991, Edith Moorosi, August 1991.
26. Moorosi.
27. Shabangu.
28. The explanations are by Maphisa and Msomi.
29. Maphisa.
30. Mabuza
31. Russia Jacobs, August 1991, and Moorosi.
32. Shabangu.
33. Msomi.
34. Interview with Tseka; Couzens, French, "James Mpanza and the Sofasonke Party", Wits MA Thesis, 1983.
35. Club Minutes, 16/6/49.
36. Theo Mthembu, August 1991, Mabuza and Shogwe.
37. Shogwe.
38. World, 25/4/59.
39. Fanyana Shiburi, August 1991.
40. French.
41. Tseka.
42. Mthembu.
43. Shogwe.
44. Moorosi.
45. World 27/1/65.
46. Shogwe.
47. Club Minutes, 20/2/57.
48. Buthelezi.
49. Sidwell Mokgosinyana, August 1991.
50. Based on various interviews. The centrespread appeared in the World 1967.

51. Moorosi and S Mthembu.
52. Moorosi.
53. Various interviews, including Mabuza, S Mthembu and Tseka.
54. Shiburi.
55. Tseka.
56. World, 9/1/67.
57. Msomi.
58. Mabuza.
59. Archer and Bouillon, The South African Game, p 147.
60. S Mthembu.
61. Mngomezulu.
62. Tseka and Mngomezulu.
63. Shiburi and various other interviews.
64. Moorosi and various other interviews.
65. Moorosi.
66. ibid
67. ibid.
68. Shogwe.
69. ibid.
70. Jacobs.
71. ibid.
72. SA Soccer Mirror, August 1972.
73. Buthelezi and various issues of SA Soccer Mirror, 1972.
74. SA Soccer Mirror, January 1973.
75. Shogwe.
76. S Mthembu.
77. S Mokgosinyana.

CONCLUSION

This study, through the prism of a football team, has shed some light on urban working class life in Soweto during the period under review. A backdrop to the history of Orlando Pirates, hidden yet apparent throughout, is the ongoing struggle for survival and advancement of the urban proletariat. The history of Pirates indicates the centrality of sport in African urban working class setting.

Football - and sport in general - was an aspect of this existance which lent itself more readily to attempts by township residents to assert their own control and norms. Consequently, membership of a football team provided people with an opportunity to escape the daily drudgery of working class life.

Besides providing the escapism of participation in sport; attaining membership in the "House of Pirates" meant for various other needs of members were catered for. The club operated similarly to a friendly soceity through which members sought to maximise their own life opportunities and establish a buffer against the drawbacks of working class life. While this was probably a similar experience for many other young footballers, the manner in which the bonds of solidarity forged in the Pirates squad were extended to a broader community of relatives and close supporters, was probably unique.

The value system developed under the tutelage of the patron and president, Bethuel Mokgosinyana, exhibited in the club's willingness to aid members of the community and in the moving funeral proccessions under the Pirates banner, endeared the club to a broad range of Orlando's residents. Pirates became a symbol which Orlando united behind, not only because of its pre-eminence on the field of play (against city based teams on the whole as well as other challengers from the South Western townships) but because of the club's struggles to control its own destiny. Notable amongst these struggles was the ongoing battle to secure a "home ground" which equated Pirates with Mpanza, the "father of Orlando". Supporters, as well as other residents, turned to the country's most successful football club in expectation that it could administer to to their needs, as Mpanza had served the squatters.

An outstanding feature of Pirates' history - and most likely that of other clubs of that time - is the reliance on influential men as patrons who could provide the essential backing and material support to make the club a viable concern. Men like Mokgosinyana, and later Motsomai in his brief stay, wielded great influence over the club. If the Pirates of the 1940s reflects the ethos of Mokgosinyana, so the Pirates that particpated in the SASL reflects the image of Elijah Msibi in many ways.

This is not to suggest that the history of Pirates is the history of "great men". Throughout the 1960s, supporters increasingly came to dominate club affairs. By the end of the period under review, the phenomenon of patrons was falling away, and Pirates was well on the way to becoming the domain of a small grouping of middle class men who were employing methods more congruent with the norms and demands of a game that was steadily becoming capitalised.

This proccess culminated in the decision, by a handfull of supporters and

officials to register the club as a private company in 1983. By now the close bonds of association, and the club regulations, which had ensured that Pirates held a special place in the hearts of thousands of Orlando people, had become attenuated.

The bitterness and cynicism displayed today by many former players, and their supporters, is a reflection of the changes within the club, within football in general and in broader soceity which have altered the values and standards of an earlier period. Values and standards which, to a great extent, were the basis on which people invested such deep meaning in their attachment to the club.

Its proud history lives on, however, in the memories and tales of men and women, who, although they no longer attend "the play", still believe: "once a Pirate, always a Pirate".

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Primary Sources

Interviews

1. Elliot Buthelezi, August 1991.
2. Russia Jacobs, August 1991.
3. Sidney Mabuza, August 1991.
4. Rankus Maphisa, July 1991.
5. Peter Mngomezulu, August 1991.
6. Sidwell Mokgosinyana, August 1991.
7. Edith Moorosi, September 1991.
8. Willard Msomi, August 1991.
9. Skumbuzo Mthembu, August 1991.
10. Theo Mthembu, August 1991.
11. Sam Shabangu, July 1991 and August 1991.
12. Fanyana Shiburi, August 1991.
13. Boy Shogwe, September 1991.
14. Jimmy Sobi, August 1991.
15. Mike Tseka, August 1991.

Newspapers and periodicals

1. Bantu World, 1948 - 1956; World 1956 - 1968.
2. Golden City Post, 1955 - 1968.
3. African Sports, July 1953 - December 1954 (incomplete).
4. SA Soccer Mirror, 1972 - 1973.

Club Records

1. Club minute books, 1945 - 1961 (incomplete)
2. Various clippings, magazine articles, assorted documents and portions of the court records of Orlando Pirates v David Motsomai, in the collection of the late Bethuel Mokgosinyana.

Secondary Sources

Archer, R. and Bouillon, A., The South African Game, Sport and Racism (London, Zed Press, 1982)

Couzens, T., "Moralising Leisure Time", Marks, S. and Rathbone, R., Industrialization and Social Change in South Africa

Couzens, T., "An introduction to the history of Football in South Africa", Town and Countryside in the Transvaal

French, K., "James Mpanza and the Sofasonke Party", Wits MA Thesis, 1983.

Glaser, C., "Anti-social Bandits", Wits University MA Thesis, 1990.

Guttman, A., Sports Spectators (New York, Columbia University Press, 1986)

Holt, R., Sport and the British - a modern history (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1990)

Jeffrey, I., "Street Rivalry and Patron Managers: Football in Sharpeville, 1940 - 1985", History Workshop, Wits University, February 1990.

Martin, P., "Colonialism, Youth and Football in French Equatorial Africa", The International Journal of The History of Sport, 8, 1, 1991.

Mason, T., Association Football and English Society, 1863 - 1915 (Great Britain, The Harvester Press, 1981)

Pearson, P., "Function, Familiarity or Fun? Nicknames in Rehoboth, Namibia", African Studies Institute, seminar paper, October 1988.

Thabe, GAL. (ed), It's A Goal! (Johannesburg, Skotaville, 1983)

Walvin, J., The Peoples' Game (London, Allen Lane, 1975)