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Making Public the History of Non-Racial Sport in South Africa

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ABSTRACT

The article examines the creation of a community-based public history project – the Non-Racial Sports History Project (NRSHP) – by former players and administrators of the South African Council on Sport (SACOS), the premier movement of non-racial sport in South Africa during the 1970s and 1980s. Despite its leading role in organising grassroots sports and acknowledged as the sports wing of the liberation movement, the history of SACOS has received only limited attention. Launched in 2014, the NRSHP has pioneered the co-production of community sports histories and the creation of an archive. Its use of oral history has been the principal method of uncovering hidden histories and highlighting the role of rank-and-file sportspersons and the broader communities that built non-racial sport. The production of new narratives has especially emphasized the crucial and multiple roles women played in the successes achieved by SACOS. These new narratives, together with an emerging scholarship on black sports, challenge dominant white and male-centric narratives of sports histories in South Africa.

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The South African Council on Sport (SACOS) was the largest movement of grassroots sports in South Africa's history. It was also widely acknowledged as the sports wing of the liberation struggle, particularly as a torch-bearer of non-racialism in the 1970s and 1980s. Established in 1973, SACOS grew exponentially from the late 1970s across the country, with strongholds in urban areas. At its height in the late 1980s, the non-racial sports movement coordinated sporting activities of hundreds of clubs and associations based in black schools and communities. Despite, its contributions to sports and liberation its history has remained neglected in the extant scholarship, even as liberation historiography flourished from the early 1990s. SACOS's history has also been the source of contestation, especially in relation to the role of sport in the transition from apartheid to democracy. During the commemoration in 2023 of the 50th anniversary of its establishment, old ideological fault-lines resurfaced, with

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replays of the fractious debates that consumed the non-racial sporting community in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Undoubtedly, these were critical issues that, among other things, shed important light on the intricacies and political compromises of the negotiations process that led to South Africa's first democratic elections in 1994. Nonetheless, the emphasis on these political contestations has tended to stymie efforts to uncover the rich histories of the non-racial sports movement. The Non-Racial Sport History Project (NRSHP), a public history initiative based in Gauteng,¹ has sought since 2014 to produce historical narratives that are not indifferent to the political debates but rather centered on the experiences of rank-and-file sportspersons and their supporting communities.

The NRSHP drew on the tradition of people's history of the 1980s when the production of alternative histories was inextricably tied to the struggle for liberation in South Africa and aimed to place the experiences of 'ordinary people' at the centre of historical research. In the democratic era, liberation historiography flourished and shed new light on multiple dimensions of black resistance. Nonetheless, that body of work tended to emphasize the leading role of the African National Congress (ANC) and its well-known male leaders, leading to the neglect of other liberation organisations, as well as marginalizing the role of people's grassroots movements in communities, factories, education institutions and rural areas. More recently there has been growing criticisms of this ANC-centric historiography and a shift to writing new people's histories, including of other ideological traditions, grassroots movements and community histories.

The NRSHP's emergence should be viewed as constitutive of this new wave of 'history from below' and, crucially as a public history endeavour. It is a collective of former SACOS players and administrators who have shaped every aspect of the project's endeavours, namely, research, archiving and the production and dissemination of new histories. Co-producing historical knowledge has been at the core of the NRSHP's work and has involved a number of groups: the members of the project, the History Workshop (a research centre at the University of the Witwatersrand), former participants in non-racial sport and a few of sports clubs. The work of this collective has also been defined by activism, inherited from members' involvement in the anti-apartheid struggle and contemporary participation in social justice campaigns and community development work. The NRSHP, it is argued, exemplifies the politics and ethos of SACOS and other popular movements of the anti-apartheid struggle, especially its commitment to non-racialism, social justice and activism premised on volunteerism, self-organization and democracy. Espousing the virtues of activism is not perceived as nostalgia but a reflection of the NRSHP members' disposition in relation to the contemporary crisis facing sports in poor communities. Animated by this activism, the project has produced new historical narratives of grassroots sports, with a particular emphasis on the role of women. The NRSHP's contributions to the historiography of non-racial sports should therefore also be understood in the context of the emergence of a new wave of scholarship on histories of black sport that has challenged traditional sports histories in South Africa.

Inspired by C.L.R. James' seminal *Beyond a Boundary*, Desai has written trenchant critiques of cricket in South Africa. Apartheid cricket, he has argued, was sanitised in the transition to democracy: 'The biographies of white cricketers, even when they

were overt supporters of apartheid, have been tidied up and given heroic status in the name of reconciliation. Alongside this, the resistance to apartheid sport is simply written out of these widely read texts.² This critique is apposite to sports biographies and histories in general, which have been dominated by white sports personalities, especially elite sportsmen. There are some exceptions, including biographies of prominent black players such as Siya Kolisi whose captaincy of the recently successful rugby team has elevated his stature.³ Sports lends itself to hagiographic accounts in which individual excellence is celebrated, often with only perfunctory references to political and social contexts. Sport biographies mostly focus on the lives of elite athletes and largely ignore the majority of sportspeople who are also from poor communities and schools. Biographies of black sportswomen are negligible, with few exceptions, such as Caster Semenya, whose sporting achievements and struggles against international sporting associations have made her a global icon.⁴

Over the last decade a growing, but still relatively small, body of scholarship has challenged the dominant paradigms and has provided fresh perspectives on the histories of black sports, with notable contributions on cricket history. Far from simply inserting the stories of black players in pre-existing, white-dominated narratives, scholars have underscored the autonomous histories of black cricket and its mutual interaction with broader socio-political processes.⁵ Odendaal's series on the history of cricket in South Africa, for example, has aimed to produce a 'post-colonial general history' of the game 'by integrating, from the beginning, at every stage and in every area, the experiences of hitherto excluded black cricketers in the country'.⁶ Desai et al., have similarly written an innovative and critical history of cricket in KwaZulu-Natal.⁷ These publications have also exposed pervasive racism in white cricket and black players' resistance to it. In similar vein, Badat examines the 1971 tour by six black tennis players, who were members of the non-racial South African Lawn Tennis Union, to Europe where they confronted 'the shameful collusion of international tennis associations with the racist, whites-only South African tennis'.⁸ This scholarship has opened productive lines of enquiry into the politics and making of black community sport, to which the NRSHP has aimed to contribute. There has been renewed interest in histories of non-racial sport movement that has resulted, among others, in a handful of self-published books and academic articles.⁹

Black Sport and Early Resistance to Segregation

In 1977, South Africa's official yearbook on sport declared that,

[I]t is only comparatively recently that the Black peoples have shown a marked interest in what may be called modern sporting activities. For centuries they found their recreation in traditional activities, such as hunting and traditional dances. It was the White nation, with its European background and tradition which participated in the recognised sports.¹⁰

The idea that 'modern sporting activities' were the exclusive preserve of white people highlighted the deep-seated racism and widespread ignorance of the history of black sport among apartheid officials and white society in general. Equating whiteness with modernity was a cornerstone of apartheid and used as a justification for

racial segregation and discrimination, resulting in the underdevelopment of all facets of black people's lives, including sports and recreation. Relatedly, the denial of the existence of black sports constituted one thread in the production of white-dominated histories. In reality, as some of the abovementioned scholars have explained, black people played organised sports since the late nineteenth century when several codes were introduced in the region.¹¹ There is evidence of black cricket being played as early as the 1870s, while soccer first appeared in the British-controlled province of Natal at the end of the nineteenth century and subsequently became a popular form of leisure and competition among black mine workers.¹² At the same time, black and white national associations of soccer, rugby and cricket were established in Kimberley, the country's first major mining town.¹³ Rapid urbanisation from the 1930s resulted in unprecedented expansion of black locations, which were home to African, coloured and Indian people and the primary spaces of the production of an urban working class culture infused with oppositional politics, culture and leisure. Sports proliferated in these areas and mirrored their social entanglements and fissures: often mixed teams comprising African, coloured and Indian players were created but these co-existed with racially segregated clubs and leagues.¹⁴

The advent of apartheid in 1948 resulted in the promulgation of a battery of laws that entrenched and expanded racial segregation, and disrupted, often violently, efforts to transcend 'race' as an organising category in sport and other facets of people's lives.¹⁵ For example, the Group Areas Act (1950) imposed strict racial segregation of residential areas, which led to the destruction of mixed locations and the forced removal of their denizens to racially defined townships. Other pieces of legislation prohibited 'mixed marriages' and racial interaction in education, transport and in public spaces. Initially, there were no specific segregation laws affecting sport, but the ruling party was determined to forbid any kind of social interaction. In June 1956, the Minister of Interior articulated the government's approach towards sport: 'Whites and non-whites should organise their sporting activities separately, there should be no inter-racial competitions within SA, the mixing of races in teams should be avoided'.¹⁶ An amendment to the Group Areas Act in 1965 effectively 'banned black spectators from social or sporting events at which other racial groups were present, unless a permit allowing racial mixing had been granted'.¹⁷ Applications for such permits were usually denied. As apartheid was entrenched and its law violently enforced, even the movement of people between various black areas became exceedingly difficult. In particular, access to African townships was strictly controlled and non-residents required special permits to visit there.

Black people responded to the introduction of apartheid with resistance and in the 1950s waves of mass protests swept across the country: women marched against the pass system, communities resisted forced removals, and national campaigns were organised against the introduction of Bantu Education and other apartheid laws.¹⁸ It was in this context that black sportspersons first began to organise themselves nationally to oppose racism and inequality in sport. Some of the protagonists in this initiative were already involved in the anti-apartheid movement. Among them was Dennis Brutus, a weightlifter and activist from Port Elizabeth (now Gqeberha), who participated in the formation in 1955 of the Co-ordinating Committee for International Recognition in Sport (CCIRS) whose main objective

was international recognition for non-racial sporting bodies.¹⁹ Brutus, who later became a renowned academic and poet, remained an influential figure in the development of campaigns against apartheid sport internationally.²⁰ In 1958 members of the CCIRS contributed to the establishment of the South African Sports Association (SASA), which espoused more ambitious objectives than its predecessor. It incorporated the CCIRS's aim of winning international recognition and also aimed to play a co-ordinating role in black sports in order to 'advance the cause of sport and the standard of sport among non-white sportsmen'. Crucially, SASA's commitment to non-racialism was a direct repudiation of the state's policies of racial segregation.²¹

Whereas the CCIRS was mainly a vehicle for a small group of activists to campaign in the realm of international sporting associations, SASA comprised sporting bodies with a combined membership of approximately 70,000.²² It was an impressive figure considering that in the early 1950s the African National Congress (ANC), the leading liberation organisation, claimed a following of 100,000.²³ SASA had thus established the organisational foundation for the development of black sports nationally. However, the tumultuous events in the early 1960s struck a heavy blow against SASA, as it did for other progressive organisations. The Sharpeville massacre of 1960 rapidly transformed the country's political landscape as the state unleashed a wave of repression, including the banning of black political organisations, widespread detentions and general harassment of political activists. This orchestrated campaign of violence by the white government was condemned internationally and generated sympathy for the campaigns to isolate apartheid, including in sport. In 1962 SASA demanded South Africa's expulsion from the IOC and the following year it helped establish the South African Non-Racial Olympic Committee (SAN-ROC) to further this campaign.²⁴ An escalation of state repression in the mid-1960s scuppered the work of these organisations, resulting in a sharp decline in protests and weakening of organisations. Several sports activists followed their political counterparts by going into exile to escape harassment and imprisonment, thus contributing to a period of 'relative inactivity' inside the country.²⁵ By the end of the decade, white power and privilege seemed firmly entrenched and unassailable. However, cracks soon began to appear in apartheid's armour, not least due to the revival of black resistance in the early 1970s.

'No Normal Sport in an Abnormal Society'²⁶

Black students and workers were the principal drivers behind the re-emergence of the anti-apartheid movement. The formation in 1969 of the South African Student Organisation (SASO) propelled the growth of the Black Consciousness Movement and injected a spirit of dissent among black students that in 1972–1973 triggered a wave of protests on black campuses. In 1972, SASO helped to establish the South African Students' Movement (SASM), which in 1976 played a leading role in the high school students' rebellion against Bantu Education.²⁷ The second key development occurred in 1973 when black workers in the port city of Durban in the province of Natal (now KwaZulu-Natal) went on strike for higher wages, the first major strike wave in more than a decade. Their action inaugurated a national process of

establishing new, radical black trade unions. Despite stubborn opposition from the state and employers, these unions consolidated and expanded, culminating in the formation in 1979 of a national federation (the Federation of South African Trade Unions).²⁸

The rebirth of black protests in South Africa was also inspired by global emancipatory movements, not least the anti-colonial struggles that had swept across Africa from the 1950s, as well as the Civil Rights Movement and student protests in Europe and the United States. These movements energised the exiled South African liberation organisations, including SAN-ROC whose efforts to build a network of solidarity in the sporting world began to bear fruit. From the late 1960s onwards it won support from the Supreme Council for Sport in Africa (SCSA), HART (Halt All Racist Tours – New Zealand), the American Co-ordinating Committee for Equality in Sport and Society (ACCESS), Stop the Tours Movement (STM), the International Campaign Against Racism in Sport (ICARS) and the Australian Committee Against Racial Discrimination (CARD), among others.²⁹ Their campaigns succeeded in South Africa's expulsion from the Olympics, and either stopped or disrupted tours by white national teams (especially rugby and cricket).³⁰

Inside the country, the first step to fill the organizational gap left by SASA and SAN-ROC occurred in 1970 and was led by the South African Soccer Federation (SASF) in response to the Johannesburg City Council's decision to deny it the use of municipal facilities. SASF convened a protest meeting of sports organisations where it was decided to establish the South African Non-Racial Sport Organisation (SASPO). Inspired by Black Consciousness, SASPO denounced black officials who participated in white-controlled sport and the state's multi-national policies.³¹ In 1973 it played an important role in the establishment of the South African Council on Sport (SACOS), which led to the transformation of non-racial sports in the country. The founding conference of SACOS was a low-key affair, with only eight sporting codes in attendance. However, in the context of the revival of anti-apartheid organisations, the new non-racial sports movement soon registered notable growth: in 1975 it had thirteen affiliates and in 1980 that figure had increased to 26. Two of its main affiliates, the Primary and High School Associations, in the early 1980s had approximately 200,000 players nationally, which reflected a history of building sports in black schools since the mid-twentieth century.³² Considering its continuous expansion, SACOS's membership probably numbered several hundred thousand by the end of the 1980s, although precise figures cannot be verified. SACOS was a co-ordinating structure, comprising national and provincial affiliates, under whose auspices hundreds of sporting bodies organised an array of activities, from competitions in schools and communities, to representative tournaments at provincial and national levels. In 1982 and 1988, it convened national Sports Festivals, also known as the 'Olympics of the oppressed', with participation from more than 2500 athletes.³³ By this time, SACOS was the largest movement of grassroots sports in the country's history.

In addition to its achievements in the sporting arena, SACOS was also the most important resistance movement in sport and its iconic declaration, 'No normal sport in an abnormal society' became an important rallying slogan across the country. As the tempo of anti-apartheid struggles increased from 1976, it advocated more explicit and radical political positions. Thus, in 1982 SACOS committed itself 'to strive for a

single undivided democratic country free of discrimination, oppression and exploitation.³⁴ Reflecting the widespread rejection of racism, the organisation's biennial conference in 1985 resolved, '[t]o foster a spirit of goodwill, equality and fraternity among all people, without any discrimination whatever on the ground of race, colour or creed and to prevent racial, colour, religious, or political discrimination amongst sportsmen (sic)'.³⁵ As a mass-based national organization, SACOS joined other movements such as the United Democratic Front, National Forum and the Congress of South African Trade Unions, among others, in creating a formidable mass movement against apartheid.

In the late 1980s, a serious fissure opened in the non-racial sport movement when some members of SACOS broke away to form the National Sport Congress (NSC). This group was ideologically aligned to the ANC and accused SACOS of strategic inflexibility and not being sufficiently represented in African areas. SACOS rejected these charges and accused the NSC of splitting the non-racial sports movement. Although the NSC represented only a fraction of SACOS's members, its alliance with the ANC placed the new organization in an advantageous position when negotiations commenced in the early 1990s.³⁶ The NSC quickly gained legitimacy as the main advocate of sports unity (that is, the amalgamation of black and white sporting associations). In the context of broad support for the political negotiations, the new organization was able to augment its status as the representative of the aspirations of sports people across the racial divides. The split between SACOS and the NSC was acrimonious and led to the further splintering of the former and its eventual demise.³⁷ The legacy of this unification process, many former SACOS people have argued, has been the collapse of grassroots sports. For those intimately involved in building SACOS, these events were traumatic and debilitating. It would take twenty years before a group of them in Johannesburg would gather to confront this past.

Activism and History

In 2014 a few former members of the Transvaal Council on Sport (TRACOS, a provincial chapter of SACOS) convened a series of conversations about two overlapping concerns: the dire state of sports in poor black communities and the lack of public knowledge about the history of non-racial sport. These former members had been leading figures in SACOS, either as players or administrators, and were mostly still active in promoting community development, including advancing sports in poor areas.³⁸ Their initial discussions centred on concerns about the widening inequality between elite and grassroots sports since the advent of democracy, the causes of which they located in the reconfiguration of sports in the early 1990s. At the time, the unification process and the country's readmission into the global sporting community were celebrated as key contributors to the political objectives of reconciliation and nation-building. They were also meant to establish the foundations for a transformation programme aimed at developing grassroots sports and ensuring that representative teams would reflect the demographic realities of the country. Successes in major sporting events (the Rugby World Cup, Africa Cup of Nations, test cricket and participation in the Olympics) generated broad excitement and seemingly augmented

the project of national reconciliation. This was exemplified by the iconic image of Nelson Mandela, dressed in a rugby jersey, handing over the 1995 Rugby World Cup trophy to Francois Pienaar.³⁹ But these fleeting spectacles of national pride glossed over the persistent problems in sports along the familiar fault-lines of race, class and gender. In his critique of the structural inequality in sports, Desai invoked a vivid image of ‘two sporting fields’:

One of which is represented in the state-of-art high-performance centres and the incredible stadiums ... It is also to be seen in the old white schools, with four or five rugby fields, floodlights, Olympic-size swimming pools and highly qualified coaches. The other sporting field consists of the sandpits that pass for football pitches, the lack of even rudimentary equipment, and the erosion of organised school sport. In shack-lands across the country footballers barely carve out a tiny piece of land that becomes ‘home ground’ for five to ten teams, before it is gobbled up by more shacks.⁴⁰

Despite the government’s routine promises to transform sport, including undertakings to invest in schools and the adoption of transformation charters,⁴¹ the state of sports in poor communities has been on a downward spiral for many years. One crucial expression of this is the near collapse of sports in poor schools. A 2021 report revealed that 43% (10,038 out of 23,276) of public schools had no sports facilities that, inevitably, caused young people’s participation in sports to plummet.⁴² A parliamentary report in 2015 estimated that less than 10% of schools were active in sport and 5 years later the situation remained unchanged.⁴³ The former SACOS members who met in 2014 decided to act collectively by drawing on their historic and contemporary activism in community sports to confront these depressing realities. They established the Non-Racial Sport History Project (NRSHP) ‘to encourage/facilitate/assist clubs and associations to tackle authorities to secure better facilities [and] to encourage local sports activities’.⁴⁴ Every meeting of the new organisation considered one or other facet of the malaise in sport, from the government’s failure to root out racism in sport to the lack of adequate sports facilities in communities and schools. A meeting in 2016 was representative of this focus and involved ‘robust discussion’ on the urgent need to promote ‘sport where it does not exist, assist the poor in playing sport and promote sport across artificially created boundaries as organised sport are not in a position to do so or haven’t the capacity to do so or not interested to do so’.⁴⁵

The name of the organisation reflected the founders’ continued commitment to the politics and ethos of non-racial sport which they had imbibed in the 1970s and 1980s. An interim steering committee was established to consult like-minded people who were also still active in community sport.⁴⁶ It was a conscious attempt to instil a participatory praxis as a central tenet of the organisation’s emerging *modus operandi*. Meetings were held across the province of Gauteng involving several sporting codes such as rugby, football, cricket, hockey, baseball, volleyball, netball and darts. For many participants these interactions were the first occasions since the demise of SACOS in the early 1990s where they could collectively reminisce and reflect on their involvement in the non-racial sport movement. The resultant enthusiastic endorsement for the project led to the official launch of the NRSHP on June 20, 2015, where a commitment was made to ‘[a]ssist with reviving the concept of community sport and actively promote and support the formation of community-based sporting

bodies.⁴⁷ Importantly, the consultative process also underscored the necessity of undertaking historical research, which the preamble of the constitution summarised as an endeavour 'to uncover, record, archive and disseminate a crucial, but sadly neglected, part of our collective history'.⁴⁸ Such a history, it averred, would 'bring into focus the rich and colourful stories of sportspeople – players, administrators and supporters – who operated under enormously difficult circumstances. They gave meaning to sports as a community endeavour and contributed to transforming non-racialism from political principle to everyday practice'.⁴⁹

The constitution was itself the product of protracted conversations about what a public history project should entail and was elaborated in the following objectives:

[To] preserve and publish the history of non-racial sport by collecting, collating and archiving all written, oral and other records of events and activities; popularize this history and bring it alive for future generations so that the struggles and achievements of this part of our communal lives is restored to its proper place in history and provide some space for collective memory sharing and healing.⁵⁰

From the outset, the NRSHP was thus perceived as a collective space where the production of new narratives of sports would be connected to the broader histories of black communities' experiences of oppression and resistance. Its constitution pledged to overcome the erasure and marginalisation of black sports histories and to reclaim SACOS's role in the liberation struggle.

These aims aligned with the intellectual traditions of the History Workshop, the principal research partner of the NRSHP. Founded in the aftermath of the 1976 students' uprising, the History Workshop was a pioneer of 'history from below' that became an influential intellectual strand in the radical transformation of South African historiography from the 1970s.⁵¹ It was also one of a number of university-based research groups involved in the production and popularization of alternative histories, known in the 1980s as people's or popular history.⁵² These were nascent manifestations of public history and experienced significant growth in the 1990s with the transformation of the heritage landscape. The History Workshop has also produced numerous local histories, especially of poor black communities and has increasingly combined this field of research with public history.⁵³ In these respects, its research agenda corresponded with the NRSHP's broad objectives of collecting oral testimonies and writing histories of people who have been excluded from the main narratives of sports histories and to make these accessible to multiple audiences.

Constituting a Public History Project

Since its founding a decade ago the NRSHP has established itself as an important community-based public history initiative. Its relatively modest achievements are noteworthy considering the resource-constrained environment in which it has operated. Compared to the early years of democracy when the state invested heavily in the transformation of heritage (including significant funds for new museums and heritage projects), the period under review has been characterised by austerity in the sector the adverse effects of which have been especially pronounced in poor areas.⁵⁴

Furthermore, the lack of social and material infrastructure in these communities, such as the decimation of community and school sports and the various social ills (e.g. pervasive poverty, unemployment, drug abuse and violence) have presented significant challenges to the effectiveness and sustainability of the project. Reflecting on how this context shaped the functioning of the NRSHP, Haroon Mahomed, the first chairperson of the NRSHP and former soccer player, wrote in his report to the Annual General Meeting of 2017:

If we assess our progress in terms of the context of implementation and resources available, we have made progress, notwithstanding many challenges, past and present. We are a committed band with limited time available for this work. We have touched the lives of some people in deep ways; we have developed a base of support, albeit still small, and a functional organisation.⁵⁵

Mahomed's insights were important for underscoring the culture of self-help that has been a hallmark of the project and that drew on the experiences of activism in the 1970s and 1980s, particularly in the non-racial sport movement. Michael Kahn, the long-standing secretary of the organisation and former leading administrator in SACOS, defined the NRSHP 'as a club of volunteers that are paying an annual fee to enable them to record the history of non-racial sport, voluntarily'.⁵⁶ The virtues of the 'spirit of non-racialism and volunteerism' were regularly extolled and members were encouraged 'to get their hands dirty'.⁵⁷ Members took responsibility for every aspect of its administration, from routine functions such as convening meetings and producing reports to ensuring financial probity. It is an approach that engendered a strong sense of ownership of the project, which was manifested in the formulation and implementation of research plans, including conducting interviews, creating archives and producing exhibitions and written material. The NRSHP's volunteers epitomised what Raphael Samuel described as 'the "do-it-yourself" enthusiast and the local historian'⁵⁸ who took time to learn basic research skills and dedicated themselves to writing their own histories. In this sense they resembled the worker historians of the 'Dig Where You Stand' movement who, in the words of its inspirational founder, Sven Lindqvist, 'empower[ed] themselves and their community by researching their hitherto excluded and devalued histories'.⁵⁹

The enthusiasm generated by the launch of the NRSHP in 2014 and the ensuing consultative process resulted in a burst of research-related activities over the following three to four years. One of the first steps taken by the executive committee was a survey of the extant scholarship and archives (including media), which confirmed the dearth of references to non-racial sport. The mainstream media had generally ignored black sports and although the growth of alternative media from the 1970s brought about welcome improvements in this respect, their focus was disproportionately on popular male sports. The lack of primary and secondary material on black sports mirrored the problems historians confronted when researching histories of black people. Especially from the 1960s, scholars turned to oral history as the main research method to uncover histories that had been erased and marginalised in colonial archives. Influenced by scholars such as Vansina, Thompson and Portelli,⁶⁰ members of the History Workshop used oral history to write new histories of various subaltern groups. They generally collected full life histories that yielded rich and textured insights and

accorded appropriate dignity and affirmation to those providing the testimonies. At the same time, oral historians engaged debates on the challenges of this method, particularly in relation to the complexities of memory. These ideas and practices were explored in the NRSHP's research workshops where both the potential of oral history to create conditions for the co-production of historical knowledge and the challenges inherent in the reliance on individual and collective memories were examined.

A primary objective of these workshops was to provide members with the basic skills to conduct interviews, which led to animated conversations about who to interview and debates about whose voices and what histories to prioritize. These deliberations produced an interview plan aimed at collecting stories from older sportspersons who pioneered non-racial sport from the late 1950s, as well as from as many codes and geographical areas as possible. Recognising the dominance of men in sports, these workshops resolved to ensure an appropriate gender balance in the interview process, an issue that is discussed later. They also engendered critical reflections of members' perceptions of the past and, importantly, an acknowledgement of the existence of varied and sometimes contending recollections of their own experiences in the non-racial sports movement. Through these participatory discussions members determined the project's research agenda, including the compilation of potential interviewees and guiding questions. These plans were routinely reviewed. A crucial facet of the research was the role of members as the principal interviewers, with occasional assistance from the History Workshop's postgraduate students and academics. One year into the life of the project, Kahn lamented an initial lethargy in the interview process 'but once members got used to the challenge this project accelerated tremendously', resulting in a relatively short time in the completion of 84 interviews, 40 of which were transcribed.⁶¹ Interviews varied in length and quality but created a rich archive of oral histories of people who had not been interviewed before.

The NRSHP's decision to create an archive opened an exciting area of work at the intersection of public history and community archives. It was also path-breaking as there were no formal archives of the non-racial sports movement. However, there was some trepidation in undertaking this novel exercise because none of the members of the NRSHP had any experience of archives. To mitigate their concerns, the Historical Papers and Research Archives (HPRA), based at the University of the Witwatersrand, was approached to organize an educational workshop on the roles and functions of archives and to introduce the development of archival practices in South Africa since the 1990s. Established in 1966, the HPRA is one of the largest public archives in the country with collections from NGOs, trade unions, political parties, women's organisations, church bodies, human rights activists and political trials.⁶² Together with the History Workshop and the South African History Archives (SAHA) it makes up the Archives Hub at the university, whose aims include collaborating with community groups and civil society to promote archives for social justice and creating community archives. In pursuit of these objectives the Archives Hub organized in 2017 and 2019 conferences on 'Archives and Democracy' and 'Public History and Archiving Struggle from below' respectively. Both were premised on the importance of challenging outdated ideas of archives as neutral and passive custodial spaces. Proceeding beyond critique and drawing on their collective experiences, they elaborated ideas

and practices of 'activist archives,' especially a commitment to practices of democratizing the making of archives in conjunction with social justice activism.⁶³ This approach to archiving was integrated into the broad aims of the NRSHP, leading to its occasional participation in the existing network of social justice archives.

Early discussions on the archives focused on the critical questions of ownership and access, as members debated who should create the archives, where it should be located and who would use the material. The absence of a venue in the areas of the NRSHP's operations where archives could safely be stored and under appropriate conditions led to the decision to create a collection at HPRA. A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) confirmed the NRSHP's ownership of the collection and the HPRA's role as custodians, which assuaged the concerns of many individual donors that they were permanently handing over material to the university. Although the HPRA is a public archive, difficulties in gaining entry into the university makes access to the physical collection a challenge for most people. This problem has been partly mitigated by the digitisation of the material and their availability on the HPRA website. The NRSHP also insisted that it wanted actively to participate in deciding what should constitute the archive and in designing its classification structure.⁶⁴ Ajit Gandabhai, former cricketer and finance secretary of the NRSHP, has been the pivotal figure in the creation of the non-racial sport archive. He has led the processes of collecting material from numerous individuals and clubs, formulating the classification structure (which mirrored the architecture of SACOS) and overseeing the capturing of data and the digitising process. In the first two years, approximately 320 items were archived, including minutes and reports of several clubs and associations, publicity brochures, photographs and programmes of sporting events.⁶⁵ The archive was officially launched on June 30, 2018 and has continued to grow. Currently, there are 545 items in the collection with a further 130 in the process of being added.⁶⁶ It is now one of the most significant collections on non-racial sports and has been used by academic researchers, as well as being the primary source for the creation of exhibitions.

The third focus of the project has been to popularize and disseminate histories of non-racial sports, mainly aimed at three audiences: current and past members of sports clubs, the communities in which non-racial sport had a presence and youth, who seem mostly unaware of SACOS. Initially, the exhibitions sought to create awareness of the NRSHP and took the form of relatively inexpensive mobile exhibitions, comprising photographs of players, administrators, tournaments and so forth. The first of these mobile exhibitions was mounted on March 20, 2015 to coincide with the 50th anniversary of the Bosmont Football Association (BFA), which has been the anchor sports association of the NRSHP.⁶⁷ Over the next 6 months, similar exhibitions were mounted in different parts of the province. 'At all these launches,' the secretary reported, 'the mobile exhibition was displayed, pamphlets were distributed, and the projects aims and objectives were outlined. All this advocacy work was well worth the efforts in that many people and all corners of the province were reached.'⁶⁸ Buoyed by these successes, the NRSHP organized a gathering on February 27, 2016 in Johannesburg that was attended by 500 people, probably the largest social meeting of the non-racial sports community since the mid-1990s. Addressed by Frank Van Der Horst, a former president of SACOS, the event was a combination of celebratory dinner, activist rally and vivid story-telling, laced with a fair amount of nostalgia. It

was an exciting expression of public history in practice. An exhibition of approximately 300 photographs generated excited discussions about community sports and helped the NRSHP identify gaps in its research.⁶⁹ Within two years of its founding, the project therefore reached several hundred people who had previously been part of SACOS and generally created wide interest in its endeavour to write histories of non-racial sport.

Despite these quite remarkable achievements, the project has faced perennial challenges that have hindered its ability to sustain the high level of activity of the first few years. In fact, the executive acknowledged that dependence on volunteers, for all its virtues, meant that 'progress will be slow and patchy' and recognized the importance of 'a wider strategy of resourcing that enables progress to be made more sharply, and events and publications to be produced regularly and at the levels of quality required for social impact'.⁷⁰ Such resourcing was not easily accessible, although a grant of R100 000 from the Foundation for Human Rights in 2015 funded some of the initial research activities, particularly the transcribing of interviews (before reliable transcribing software became widely available). Once these funds were exhausted all activities relied on volunteers, with occasional support postgraduate students associated with the History Workshop. Problems were especially manifest in the attempts to develop a digital media strategy to popularize the new histories being produced. Foundational to this work was the writing of short biographies, based on the interviews, that were to be disseminated on various platforms. In 1 year (2015), only ten such biographies were completed from several dozen interviews.⁷¹ Moreover, the project's social media presence remained rudimentary and almost entirely dependent on the secretary. As a result, the NRSHP only managed to create a basic Facebook profile while plans to develop a website have consistently stalled.⁷² The Covid pandemic effectively brought activities to a halt and in 2022 it was reported that '[n]o interviews were completed during the state of disaster'.⁷³

The hiatus in activity was overcome by a request for the NRSHP to co-ordinate activities in 2023 to mark the 50th anniversary of the founding of SACOS. To this end in October 2022, a national meeting was held in Johannesburg where the Remembering SACOS Committee (RSC) was established to plan commemorative events. During 2023 numerous activities were organized nationally, including seminars, public meetings, exhibitions, book launches and sporting events, and culminated in a two-day colloquium at the University of the Witwatersrand. Framed as an opportunity critically to reflect on the history of SACOS, the colloquium consisted of more than 40 presentations by ex-SACOS members, activists and scholars, as well as panel discussions (on women in sport and the role of provincial structures), book launches and an exhibition. Although there were some debates about the contentious unity process of the early 1990s, many of the presentations highlighted and analysed the different facets of the sporting achievements of SACOS. Several of the themes that ran through the papers corresponded with the NRSHP's research: the interconnectedness between communities and non-racial sport; the sustained efforts by grassroots activists to build clubs and associations; the inseparability of sports and resistance politics and the joys of sports in times of socio-political hardships. For the NRSHP, many of these themes converged in its focus on the role of women in sport.

Women in Non-Racial Sport

Gender inequality in sport, as in the rest of society, has deep historical roots and has been exacerbated by the monetisation of elite sport. Feminists, such as Cheryl Roberts (former non-racial tennis champion), have been in the forefront of challenging patriarchy and gender discrimination in its multiple manifestations. She was one of the most influential campaigners against gender discrimination in sport and published a popular blog from 2012 (*africanwomanwarrior*) in order to 'center black women in my writings, talks, resistance and activism in sport and society because black women are the most discriminated against and treated as if they hardly exist.'⁷⁴ Roberts' writing challenged the persistent marginalisation and discrimination of women in sport and exposed the gender bias in contemporary and historical scholarship on sport. In South Africa, liberation historiography proliferated during the democratic transition and opened new areas of research. However, much of this scholarship reproduced male-centric narratives and analyses, resulting in women being rendered as peripheral actors or inserted into pre-existing master narratives that entrenched conventional gendered tropes of women as 'mothers of the nation' or auxiliaries to men.⁷⁵ Beyond elaborating strident critiques of the standard historiographies, feminists have produced new histories that highlight the pivotal roles of women in emancipatory politics.⁷⁶ Some of these scholars have also demonstrated that while men invariably dominated formal or public political spaces, women tended to be more influential in the constitution of protest politics in the informal spaces of locations, such as homes, yards, streets and associational networks. It is in these spaces of intense sociality where politics intersected productively with other facets of people's lives, such as culture, religion, family and leisure.

Non-racial sports emerged as an important site of women's involvement in grass-roots movements. Following the launch of SACOS and the development of more organized sporting activities, women's participation in sports registered remarkable growth in schools and communities, evidenced in the multiplication of women's clubs in codes such as hockey, softball, netball, volleyball, tennis and table tennis. Members of the NRSHP were of course aware of this history and also of its erasure from mainstream histories of sport and liberation. In response, and under the leadership of women on its executive, the project committed to recovering and popularising the experiences of women in sport. Progress on this front was initially quite tardy but in 2016 a decision was taken to mount an exhibition to profile women who were involved in SACOS. In May 2017, '[t]he biggest exhibition of pictures of women in non-racial sport' was hosted at the Apartheid Museum (in Johannesburg) and was attended by approximately 150 people, mostly women.⁷⁷ The success of the event was a further confirmation of the importance of highlighting women's histories and led to the decision to publish a book on women in SACOS.

Aspiring to create conditions for the co-production of historical knowledge and centring of women in this process, a participatory research plan was devised for the production of this publication. Under the leadership of the second chairperson of the NRSHP, Rosalie Manning, and executive member, Corin Matthews, a series of consultations were convened with former women players to explain the objectives of the research and to solicit their participation. Thereafter, code-specific group discussions

were organized for the former sportswomen to review and shape the research plans. Importantly, participants reflected on the general reluctance of women to be interviewed, a challenge faced by the project since its inception. Often women deferred to men as the supposed authoritative voices on SACOS's history because of their leadership in formal structures. Openly acknowledging this problem represented an important step towards these sportswomen claiming the right to tell their own stories. This awareness of how existing gender power relations affect research, including of oral history, resonates with feminist critiques of conventional research methods. Importantly, this scholarship has proposed the necessity for oral historians to be attentive to building relations and solidarities, working with collectives, informal conversations and various forms of engagement beyond the formal interview.⁷⁸ These discussions represented an important breakthrough in the production of non-racial sports histories, in which the multiple and often hidden experiences of women would be prioritized. Jackie van Staaden, champion tennis player in the 1980s, initially also demurred when approached to share her experiences but, following the aforementioned consultative process, became an enthusiastic advocate of the process. She took to social media and received an unexpected 'overwhelming response', and later reported that 'ex-SACOS supporters and participants started going through their archives. They started posting their own little stories with black and white pictures and some in colour. The long overdue conversation about the current progress in sport became alive again'.⁷⁹

Another important outcome of the consultation process was a recommendation to involve younger people in the research with the aim of engendering inter-generational conversations to enlighten youth about the role of black women in sports. In pursuit of these objectives, a cohort of postgraduate students, mainly women, was recruited to conduct interviews and write short biographies. Over the course of a year, they interviewed a few dozen women and wrote 70 biographies. The production of the book, *Women in Non-Racial Sport*, was a truly participatory process from its conceptualisation to the research and writing. It was launched on March 13, 2021 in a virtual meeting attended by 100 people, including many women interviewees.⁸⁰ Although the book's geographic scope was limited to the Gauteng province, the biographies shed light on the multi-layered experiences of sportswomen across the country and thus as a counter to the dominance of men in sports histories.

For Cheryl Roberts the book's biographies represented 'women who have been marginalized, seemingly forgotten about, ignored as if they never existed'. These oppressed women, she declared, 'struggled against apartheid's oppression, didn't have much facilities and resources in their communities to play sport, were not sponsored, were ignored by the white owned commercial media, yet they still overcame all the challenges and struggles and built-up club and community sport'.⁸¹ Yasmin Sooka, a leading international human rights lawyers and former member of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, offered similar reflections of the book as 'a testament to the courage of Black South African sportswomen and tells the story of their courage in confronting racial and gender exclusion as well as discrimination and overcoming massive obstacles through their indelible resilience during the period of apartheid'.⁸² Evidently, the research revealed rich seams of women's histories in non-racial sports, of athletic excellence, the joys and hardships of building

community sports, as well as uncomfortable revelations about their experiences as women.

SACOS, like the rest of the liberation movement, took time to confront the pervasiveness of gender inequality in its ranks. Throughout its existence, men occupied the top administrative positions and dominated the organisation. In the first decade of its existence, there were no women on the SACOS national executive. This only changed in 1985 when Avis Smith was elected to the position of Internal Secretary, reflecting a deep-rooted patriarchal culture that deemed women as suitable only for secretarial roles. Yet women were actively involved and critical to the functioning of SACOS at every level and constituted nearly half of its membership.⁸³ Mounting criticism of gender discrimination in the organisation resulted in 1987 in the publication of a document entitled 'Sexism and Sport', which declared that '[s]ocial liberation from racial discrimination, national oppression and class exploitation will not be complete without anti-sexism in sport.'⁸⁴ While the belated acknowledgement of gender discrimination marked an important shift in the politics of the organisation it remains unclear if these views cascaded into the ranks of the organisation.

In the southern Transvaal during the 1980s large numbers of women played in several codes: hockey, volleyball, softball, tennis, table tennis, athletics, soccer, chess, swimming, netball and squash. Non-racial sports represented one of the few spaces of organised recreation available to black women during apartheid, which made these sporting codes enormously popular in schools and communities. Despite poor facilities, women athletes from the region excelled as individuals and in teams. Their achievements were celebrated in local areas and acknowledged by being selected for provincial and national teams. Some of the most well-known stellar performers were: Karen and Liesl Jacobs (swimming), Jackie van Staaden (tennis), Elvina Munni (netball), Gwendolene Bennet and Glynnis Peters (softball), Gabriella Jacobs-Tucker (volleyball), Margaret Luckay (table tennis) and Joan Edwards (hockey).

Women's contributions to SACOS were not confined to the fields of play and were pivotal in every part of SACOS, from the routine functions of clubs to weekly competitions and national tournaments. Although women players became more visible in the 1980s, there were countless volunteers who remained in the background and whose influential roles have remained obscured. In addition to being players, coaches and administrators, women were heavily involved in fundraising, providing food, nursing injured players, cleaning sports kits and providing space in their homes for meetings. National tournaments were the apogee of SACOS events, the success of which depended on thousands of players annually being hosted in people's homes across the country, from the main urban areas to rural towns. There were hardly any hotels available to black people and the costs would in any event have been prohibitive for the cash-strapped non-racial associations. None of this would have been possible without women caring for players, often being *in loco parentis* to teenage athletes criss-crossing the country. Interviewees in the project usually spoke perfunctorily about their role as care-givers, regarding it as part of their responsibility, rather than a burden. The interviews highlight the centrality of this work in making non-racial sports a grassroots movement.

Among the expanding legion of sportswomen who built the organisation in the southern Transvaal, teachers were especially influential. Teaching was among a few

professions available to black women who were able to register for tertiary education. In Johannesburg they tended to study at the Rand College of Education, a teacher training institution for coloureds, where they were able to continue sports activities. These teachers invariably carried their commitment to non-racial sport into the primary and high schools across the southern Transvaal. During her ten years as a teacher at Bosmont Second Primary, Heather Carolus coached netball and athletics.⁸⁵ Delphine Feldman taught for 14 years at Newclare Primary, where she honed her skills as an organizer of sporting events, especially athletics and swimming. Felicity Anne Rose-Fraser was the physical training teacher at four schools across the province. Although specialising in athletics, she was expected to be involved in all other codes for female students. Beyond her role as a coach and tournament planner, she remembers 'waking up at 5 am to feed visiting children [players from other provinces], making sure they got to their stadium, checking that all the necessary equipment was available and the events were properly arranged, rushing off to check that the food was being prepared and ready in time for lunch.'⁸⁶ Several other interviewees related similar experiences, which were the foundational activities on which the highly successful Transvaal High School Sports Association was built. In this work they were actively supported by Reginald Feldman, principal at Chris Johan Botha High School in Bosmont and an influential leader of SACOS in the province.

Women may only have been elected to the highest structures of SACOS from the mid-1980s, but they were instrumental in running the organisation at almost every other level, from clubs and schools to provincial structures. Carmen Bennett worked with her uncle-in-law and stalwart of SACOS, Edwin Bennett, in the early 1980s to build softball in the Johannesburg region and within 2–3 years they established a number of clubs and a functioning league in which she played a prominent role.⁸⁷ Rosalie Manning was nurtured from an early age by two prominent women hockey players and administrators, her mother, Joyce Manning, and Olga Hilton, who had established local hockey leagues. She was drawn into administrative duties and was elected secretary of the Hockey Union and became head of umpiring. While at school, she was recruited to be part of the TRACOS secretariat, initially as an observer and within a year as a member. The book, *Women in Non-Racial Sport*, is replete with examples of women's involvement in every facet of the organisation's operations.

The interviews also shed light on some challenges and disappointments. Men and women who excelled in their sporting disciplines understood that apartheid imposed a ceiling on their achievements. They were not allowed to enjoy the benefits of using world class sporting facilities or compete internationally. Women faced additional challenges. Hockey players recalled having to wait for male teams to play before they were allowed to take to the fields. Marriage and parenting often brought women's sporting careers to a grinding halt. Claudette McLean was a star hockey player in the 1970s, representing her province at junior and senior levels, as well as being selected for the national team. When she married in 1980, there was an expectation that she should abandon her playing career to focus on family and rearing children.⁸⁸ Debbie Prim and Kumud Dullabh, hockey and squash player, respectively, shared similar experiences.⁸⁹ These expectations of course did not apply to men who, if they chose to, could continue playing sport, usually with the support of their wives.

As an integral part of the anti-apartheid struggle, SACOS contributed to the political principles of non-racialism, equality, freedom from discrimination and dignity being integral its members way of being. Perhaps its major achievement was to mobilize hundreds of thousands of sportspeople behind the profoundly political banner of 'No normal sport in an abnormal society'. Liesel Jacobs, a top high school athlete and swimmer recalled the transformative impact of non-racial sport:

We were not just involved on focussing on the swimming. It was the development of the child as a whole in improving the child and the community. It was not just about the sport. Sport initially got us together but there was a feeling of growing the individual, the family and the community. It was

not just about sport in my entire career in SACOS.⁹⁰

Being in SACOS meant participating in creating communal solidarity in sport and politics. Tournaments typically contained political education workshops, where young people were exposed to histories of resistance and political debates. It was often at these sporting events that athletes were converted to life-long political activism. SACOS was thus both an organizer of sport and a school of activism.

Grassroots Resilience

The NRSHP developed in a context of declining state support for heritage and public history projects, creating a crisis of sustainability and has limited possibilities of growth. Simultaneously, it has been representative of renewed vibrancy in the public history sector, albeit unevenly developed across the country and mainly manifested at a local level. Community-based public history projects have been forced to rely on their own resources, rendering many of them precarious. Nonetheless, where groups have gathered to build such projects based on active community support and operating with modest objectives, they have often proven to be productive and resilient. This marks a shift from the previous emphasis on state-funded mega-projects, which were rarely rooted in communities and struggled to survive beyond the moments of their spectacular openings. Organised by people who had no previous experience of historical research, the NRSHP drew on past and present examples of public history and community archives to create an activist-based project. It is an activism based on practical engagement to improve sports in poor communities, an approach that also defined their production of non-racial sports histories.

The NRSHP has made a modest but important contribution to producing new histories of non-racial sports by uncovering hidden histories, creating archives and writing biographies of many hitherto unknown athletes and administrators. In this sense, it has adopted a 'history from below' approach that has also animated new scholarly research on histories of black sport. By centring the roles of ordinary community members, including women and teachers, in new historical narratives, the NRSHP's work has brought to light the enormous efforts by legions of volunteers to sustain a movement grassroots sport. Its emphasis on women in sport has arguably been seminal, and has highlighted women's sporting excellence, their pivotal contribution to the administration at every level of SACOS and, crucially, their largely hidden but fundamentally important role as care-givers. In the context of the proliferation of popular resistance,

the non-racial sports movement emerged as an important site of mobilisation. SACOS' success was arguably an outcome of its ability to create a grassroots movement at the intersection of politics and sports, which was developed by the efforts of countless participants of the organisation. The demise of SACOS at the moment of the birth of the new South Africa, signalled a rupture between national sporting associations and grassroots sports, with deleterious consequences for the latter. The NRSHP is a product of the efforts by former non-racial sportspersons to both confront the marginalisation of SACOS' history and the neglect of sports in poor communities. It has done so through the vehicle of a community-based public history project in one part of the country. Although it has registered success in terms of numbers of interviews, exhibitions, publications and the creation of archives, its principal contribution is probably in the revival of collective work to make new histories and rebuild grassroots sports.

Notes

1. The NRSHP's geographical focus is the province of Gauteng, which approximately coincides with the former Southern Transvaal region where the project's members were active.
2. Ashwin Desai, *Reverse Sweep: A Story of South African Cricket Since Apartheid* (Johannesburg: Jacana Publishers, 2016), 10.
3. Jeremy Daniel, *Siya Kolisi: Against All Odds* (Johannesburg: Jonathan Ball Publishers, 2019); Herschelle Gibbs, *The No-Holds-Barred Autobiography* (Johannesburg: Zebra Press, 2011); Nikolaos Kirkinis, *The Curse of Teko Modise* (Johannesburg: Jacana Publishers, 2017).
4. Caster Semenya, *The Race to be Myself: A Memoir* (London: Penguin Books, 2022).
5. See also, Andre Odendaal, *The Story of an African Game: Black Cricketers and the Unmasking of One of Cricket's Greatest Myths, South Africa, 1850–2003* (Pietermaritzburg: University KwaZulu-Natal Press, 2003); Andre Odendaal and Peter Hain, *Pitch Battles: Sport, Racism and Resistance* (London: Rowman & Littlefield, 2021); Ashwin Desai, *Wentworth: The Beautiful Game and the Making of Place* (Pietermaritzburg: University KwaZulu-Natal Press, 2020).
6. Andre Odendaal, 'Reflections on Writing a Post-Colonial History of a Colonial Game', in *Exploring Decolonising Themes in SA Sport History: Issues and Challenges*, ed. Francois Cleophas (Stellenbosch: SunPress, 2018), 2.
7. Ashwin Desai, Vishnu Padayachee, Krish Reddy and Goolam Vahed, *Blacks in Whites: A Century of Cricket Struggles in KwaZulu-Natal* (Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press, 2002).
8. Saleem Badat, *Tennis, Apartheid and Social Justice: The First Non-Racial International Tennis Tour, 1971* (Pietermaritzburg: University KwaZulu-Natal Press, 2023), 1.
9. Jerry Seale, *South African Council on Sport: The Lies, Sell Outs and Betrayal. The Truth* (Cape Town: Gavin Joachim Publishing, 2020); Viroshen Chetty and Rajen Naidoo, *Master of Turbulence: Morgan Naidoo and the Struggle for Non-Racial Sport* (Durban: Rebel Rabble, 2023); Cleophas, 'Origins of Non-Racial School Sport'.
10. Robert Archer and Antoine Bouillon, *The South African Game* (London: Zed Press, 1982), 8–9.
11. Andre Odendaal, 'South Africa's Black Victorians: Sport and Society in South Africa in the Nineteenth Century', in *Pleasure, Profit, Proselytism: British Culture and Sport at Home and Abroad, 1700–1914*, ed. J.A. Mangan (London: Routledge, 1988).
12. Archer and Bouillon, *The South African Game*, 91; Tim Couzens, 'An Introduction to the History of Football in South Africa', in *Town and Countryside in the Transvaal*, ed. Belinda Bozzoli (Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1983), 203–10; Peter Alegi, *Laduma! Soccer, Politics and Society in South Africa, From Its Origins to 2010* (Pietermaritzburg: University KwaZulu-Natal Press, 2010).
13. Andre Odendaal, *The Founders: The Origins of the ANC and the Struggle for Democracy in South Africa* (Johannesburg: Jacana, 2012), 183.

14. See, for example, in various histories of black locations. Yusuf Agherdien, Ambrose C. George and Shaheed Hendricks, *South End [As we knew it]* (Port Elizabeth: Kohler Carton, 1997), 48–62; Ashwin Desai and Goolam Vahed, *Durban's Casbah: Bunny Chows, Bolsheviks and Bioscopes* (Pietermaritzburg: University KwaZulu-Natal Press, 2023), 249–378; Philip Bonner and Noor Nieftagodien, *Alexandra – A History* (Johannesburg: Wits University Press, 2008), 151–69.
15. Philip Bonner, Peter Delius and Deborah Posel, eds., *Apartheid's Genesis, 1935–1962* (Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1993); Deborah Posel, *The Making of Apartheid, 1948–1961: Conflict and Contradictions* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991).
16. Cheryl Roberts, *SACOS 1973–1988: 15 years of Sports Resistance* (Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press, 1988), 6.
17. Archer and Bouillon, *The South African Game*, 45.
18. There is an extensive scholarship on popular struggles in this period. For an overview see, Tom Lodge, *Black Politics in South Africa Since 1945* (Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1983); Julie Wells, *We Now Demand! The History of Women's Resistance to Pass Laws in South Africa* (Johannesburg: Wits University Press, 1993); Philip Bonner and Noor Nieftagodien, *Ekurhuleni: The Making of an Urban Region* (Johannesburg: Wits University Press, 2012), Chapters 7–9.
19. Michael Davy, 'The Politics of Unity in Sport: A study of Unity Processes and Their Consequences in Non-Racial Swimming, 1973–1996' (MA diss., Department of History, University of the Witwatersrand, 2024), 41–2.
20. Tyrone August, *Dennis Brutus: The South African Years* (Pretoria: Best Read, 2020), 78–82.
21. Archer and Bouillon, *The South African Game*, 190–1.
22. Ibid.
23. Lodge, *Black Politics*, 61.
24. Roberts, *SACOS 1973–1988*, 12 and Archer and Bouillon, *The South African Game*, 192.
25. Noel Goodall, 'Opposing Apartheid through Sport. The Role of SACOS in South African Sport, 1982 –1992' (MA diss., University of Johannesburg, 2004), 12.
26. This defining slogan was coined by Hassen Howa, the president of SACOS between 1977 and 1981. See, Archer and Bouillon, *The South African Game*, iv–v.
27. Noor Nieftagodien, *The Soweto Uprising* (Ohio University Press, 2014); Sifiso Ndlovu, *The Soweto Uprising: Counter Memories of 1976* (Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1988).
28. Johann Maree, ed. *The Independent Trade Unions, 1974–1984: Ten Years of the South African Labour Bulletin* (Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1984); Dave Hemson, Martin Legassick and Nicole Ulrich, 'White Activists and the Revival of the Workers' Movement', in *The Road to Democracy in South Africa, Vol. 2, 1970–1980* (Pretoria: Unisa Press, 2006).
29. Davy, 'The Politics of Unity in Sport', 55–6.
30. The UN Security Council formally adopted this definition of apartheid in 1984, but the description was tabled in the General Assembly from the mid-1960s and was crucial in the mobilisation of the international solidarity against white minority rule.
31. Davy, 'The Politics of Unity in Sport', 60–1. The idea of 'multinationalism' was premised on the apartheid state's policy of separate development for various racial and ethnic groups.
32. Archer and Bouillon, *The South African Game*, 229–30; Cleophas, 'Origins of Non-Racial School Sport'.
33. Davy, 'The Politics of Unity in Sport', 119.
34. Goodall, 'Opposing Apartheid through Sport', 14.
35. SACOS: Sixth Biennial General Meeting, Durban 1985, quoted in Goodall, Ibid, 13.
36. Douglas Booth, 'The South African Council on Sport and the Political Antinomies of the Sports Boycott', *Journal of Southern African Studies* 23, no. 1 (1997): 58–65.
37. Ibid, 63–5.
38. The founding members of the Non-Racial Sport History Project were: Ajit Gandabhai, Michael Khan, Rosalie Manning, Haroon Mahomed, Corin Matthews, Youndaid Waja,

- Thushan Padayachee, Denzil Bennet, Derek Eastwood, Greg Bergestad, Fatima Jadean and Delphine Feldman.
39. Prishani Naidoo and Zanele Muholi, 'Women's Bodies and the World of Football in South Africa', in *The Race to Transform: Sport in post-apartheid South Africa*, ed. Ashwin Desai (Pretoria: HSRC Press, 2010), 105.
 40. Desai, *Ibid*, 77.
 41. The Sport Transformation Charter was adopted by the National Sport and Recreation Indaba in 2011.
 42. S Mthombeni, Y Coopoo and H Noorbhai, 'Factors Promoting and Hindering Sporting Success Among South African Former Olympians From Historically Disadvantaged Areas', *South African Journal of Sports Medicine* 35, no. 1 (2023): 6. <https://www.education.gov.za/Portals/0/Documents/Reports/NEIMS%20STANDARD%20REPORT%202021.pdf> (accessed March 29, 2024).
 43. <https://pmg.org.za/committee-meeting/20995/> (accessed April 2, 2024); <https://www.news24.com/sport/othersport/minister-concerned-by-rate-of-transformation-in-sa-sport-20200606> (accessed April 2, 2024).
 44. Non-Racial Sport History Project (NRSHP), Minutes of meeting, March 28, 2015.
 45. NRSHP, Minutes of meeting, August 20 2016.
 46. The interim steering committee comprised Haroon Mohamed (football and interim chair), Ajitkumar Gandabhai (cricket), Michael Kahn (football), Greg Bergstedt (rugby) and Nazir Ahmed Dawood (Football). Noor Nieftagodien (History Workshop) served as the research adviser.
 47. Aims and Objectives, Constitution of NRSHP (Gauteng).
 48. Preamble, Constitution of NRSHP (Gauteng).
 49. *Ibid*.
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