

ROCKFIST ROGAN THE FLYING EXPLORER



# THE CHAMPION

3<sup>d</sup>



HE HIT HIS PAL TO  
HELP THE TEAM!  
(Read all about it in  
"Danny of the Dazzlers")

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **DAZZLERS MOVES TO BOSMONT**

Apartheid, which became a formal political reality in nineteen forty eight when the Nationalist Party of Malan and Verwoerd won their first election, grew from a few cancerous cells to an almighty tumour on the soul of South Africa by the beginning of the nineteen sixties.

From the nineteen fifties sustained repression drove Coloureds out of their close knit community in Albertville. The Thomas family, stalwarts of Floranians Football Club, moved to Mafikeng. The Mooi family, founders of Dazzlers, moved to Noodgesig, Eldorado Park, Coronationville and Bosmont. Other families followed a similar trajectory.

The repression of the Nazi Nationalist Party increased in intensity. The most notorious demonstration of Nationalist Party brutality occurred on the 21<sup>st</sup> March 1960. The African Nationalist Congress of Nelson Mandela, followed in swift succession by the Pan-Africanist Congress of Robert Sobukwe, called for a campaign against Pass Laws after it was extended between 1959 and 1960 to include women.

On the 21<sup>st</sup> March 1960 between five thousand to seven thousand Black protesters marched on the Sharpville Police Station. The twenty police officers at the police station at the beginning of the protest called for reinforcements. One hundred and forty police reinforcements supported by four Saracen Armoured personnel carriers rushed to the scene.

With scant regard for the sanctity of human life and with no evidence that the crowd was armed with anything more lethal than rocks, the police—who were always the vanguard of White repression, opened fire on the unarmed crowd. People scattered in terror as they tried to avoid being cut down by bullets from Sten submachine guns and Lee-Enfield rifles. When the dust settled sixty nine people lay dead. (Source Wikipedia).

Apartheid had a major impact on sport in South Africa. As a result of the Nationalist Party's segregationist policies and heavy handed dealings with political parties and demonstrators, the movement to isolate South Africa from international sport started in the nineteen sixties. South Africa was suspended from FIFA in 1963. Proposals to enter an all-white team in the 1966 World Cup and an all black team in the 1970 world cup was rejected. (Source Wikipedia)

The Transvaal Independent Football Association, known as TIFA, met its demise in 1964. Dazzlers had registered with TIFA when it was formed in nineteen forty nine. Dazzlers played under TIFA in Coronationville as well as in Riverlea and Crown Mines on two grounds bordering on Main Reef Road.

Apartheid politics played a major role in the demise of TIFA. The White Football Clubs wanted TIFA to affiliate to them so that the White soccer players could play internationally. This offer was a poisoned chalice as players of colour could not play in White areas. Reggie Veldman, the chairman of TIFA and a personal mentor of Dazzlers, was adamant that TIFA would not be the Whiteman's lackey. His clubs supported his decision.

The Apartheid Regime embarked on a campaign on intimidation. The Nationalist's sent policemen mounted in Saracen armoured vehicles to the Council grounds where Dazzlers and other TIFA affiliated Clubs were playing. Dazzlers dodged the police by changing venues at the last moment. The intimidation intensified when the police started arresting TIFA officials and stopping matches. Eventually by nineteen sixty five the Apartheid Regime had stopped giving TIFA grounds to play on. Without access to football fields TIFA could no longer operate and the Association was forced to close down. Reggie Veldman then joined the Transvaal Association Council of Sport or TRACOS. Clifford Van der Haer, who was the secretary of TIFA from 1955 to 1964 then became available to play the role of Chairman of Dazzlers when TIFA closed its doors.

Human Beings are highly adaptable. People have migrated throughout their history on this Planet. Sometimes the migration has been voluntarily and sometimes it has been forced. After bemoaning their fate under the Apartheid Regime, both those forced to migrate to Bosmont and those who chose to be there rapidly formed a new community. As people started interacting with their new neighbours a strong community spirit was formed in Bosmont.

Community spirit is formed around events or bodies which people can identify with. Dazzlers quickly became a unifying force in Bosmont. Children migrated from playing street football to joining Dazzlers Junior's. Parents turned out to support their children and inevitably social bonds were formed between various families as they met as spectators on the football grounds and as they participated in fund raising activities for the Club.

When Mr Van moved into Bosmont in nineteen sixty three, Bosmont was still a fledgling community. There were a lot of open spaces between houses. His was the third family to move into his section of Bosmont. People started building houses in nineteen sixty two near the Bosmont Hotel. At that stage Bosmont was largely a working class Township.

Many teachers bought stands in Upper Bosmont near Olywnehout, Tafelberg and Cederberg Streets. People were generally very friendly and accepting of each other. Joe in Soutpansberg Street opened a bioscope, informally known as Joe's Truck and Car bioscope, in his garage. He showed movies every evening and reserved Saturday afternoons for movies for children. This helped to build the fabric of the community.

Certain families such as the Beckett's, Thomas's (of Albertville Floranians fame), Rigney's, Basson's, Anthony's, Hoskin's, Symons, Steyn's, Steven's, McCullagh's, Scorgies's and David's became stalwarts of Dazzlers, contributing both players and people power to support the team on the field and to raise funds off the field. The Mooi's of Bosmont, Percy, Lance and Mervyn, played for Dazzler's thereby ensuring that the link with the co-founders, cousins Willie Mooi and Clifford Jousten remained unbroken.

It was part of Mervyn Mooi's daily football routine in Pappegaisberg Avenue to kick around a tennis ball or football in the Street with his school and team mates before school started in the morning and when school finished in the afternoon before getting down to his homework.

Football was in his blood as he started playing for Dazzlers in nineteen sixty seven at the age of six. It was inevitable that he would join Dazzlers at such a young age as his elder brothers, cousins and close friends were all part of the team.

From the nineteen sixties the junior players were numbered in the hundreds. The youngsters attended Club meetings on Wednesday or Friday evenings in the garages and driveways of Dazzler officials such as Mr Buhr and Reggie Thomas. As most of the Youth either played for Dazzlers or went to school together they developed into a close knit community with many bosom buddies. They hung out together at the shops, recreation centre, stations and schools and at the Bosmont Hotel, which was a major social venue.

Very few parents were rich and corks were such a luxury that they were reserved for formal matches. Most corks and other kit were handed down from one generation of players to another in families. Mervyn Mooi felt highly privileged when he received his first pair of brand new corks, black and white BG Continentals with modern studs. The boots were made of pure leather and designed for the football techniques of the day. It had a hard front knob-like design on the front toe side so that you could 'toon' a ball with ease and power. A set of white leather stripes were sewn onto each side of the boot to enable the ball to be gripped when it was kicked from either the top, inside or outside of the foot. This caused the ball to spin, which helped the ball to bend around opposition players. They had no shin pads and injuries were a regular occurrence.

Football was the most accessible sport in Bosmont in the first three decades of Dazzlers in Bosmont as there were grounds available and fundraising took care of the cost of the kit. Access to other sports in the Apartheid era was a bit more difficult and expensive. Football was not just a sport but cheap entertainment for the community and the abundance of 'cherries' from Bosmont, Westbury, Coronationville and Riverlea who came to watch the games was, excuse the pun, the cherry on top of the cake.

For Mervyn and his team mates the sounds of the seventies such as the Bee Gees, Teddy Pendergras, Marvin Gaye and Diana Ross provided the sound track of their lives. After a game simple luxuries were on hand such as ginger biscuits, rooi-koek and Fipso cool drinks. The good times to be had on and off the field with team mates tempered the dark side of Bosmont where gangsters from Bosmont and the surrounding Coloured areas constantly provoked one another. The football grounds generally provided a haven from the gangsters.

Mervyn played or associated with a number of talented Dazzlers footballers such as Trevor 'Trappie Van Buuren, Leon 'Zulu' Eastwood, Pal 'Ccaatt' Symons, Len, Pat, Greg's 'Fingas' Thomas, Basil and Danny 'Oom Daan' Peters, Denzil 'Boere' Renecker, Porkie, Ernie Basson, Piet Malan and Vincent 'Spoonsie' Adams. Basil 'Beeza' Thomas's legs were not functional and he walked with the aid of 'kurke' but he would play football with the guys and he was a champion table tennis player. Mervyn played for Dazzlers until nineteen seventy four when he started school at St Barnabas College where sports were limited. He then played for other Clubs such as Rangers, Everton and Falmenco Football Club.



The Bosmont grounds even helped to foster relationships between future mother and son's in-laws. Glen De Allende's future mother-in-law, Doreen, did not initially like him when he started dating her daughter. He thought that his long hair put her off and she may be afraid that he would whisk her daughter off to Zambia where he had lived for a number of years. After keeping an eye on Glen's conduct for some time Doreen eventually came to accept him.

Doreen would cook Sunday lunch and then take the food to the grounds. She inquired from Glen on a Saturday which field he would be playing on the next day. Glen parked his car on the grounds at ten o'clock in the morning and Doreen dictated to him exactly where he had to park the car. Doreen only watched the Dazzlers matches. After Glen played his match, they had lunch in the car.

Glen's neighbour, and Chockie Beckett's sister, Thelma Rigney approached Doreen most Sunday mornings and enquired in whose car they would sit that day. There was a great deal of community interaction both on and off the grounds. Thelma was an ardent Dazzler's supporter. Together with other community members she arranged fund raisers to buy football jerseys for the Junior teams.

Thelma's nephew, Wayne Rigney remembered her great love for the game. She took particular pride in the success of the Under 8 and Under 10 teams. Thelma behaved like a linesman cum coach as she constantly ran up and down the side of the pitch alternatively 'skelling' players for missed opportunities and shouting encouragement when they showed potential. In later years Thelma had a stroke but this did not deter her support for the Club and she continued going to the grounds in her wheelchair to demonstrate allegiance to the team.

Bosmont grounds were constantly abuzz with excitement on weekends. It had a carnival atmosphere given the large number of people in attendance on weekends. The crowd lined the side of the fields where games were on the go. Vendors earned a bit of money selling cool drinks and ice-creams. There was constant cheering and hoots of derision when a player missed a golden opportunity to score.

Brothers Kevin and Neil Macabe had extremely vocal supporters in their parents and siblings. The whole family packed the grounds most weekends to cheer on the brothers, who were tough characters on the field. The community spirit was fostered off the field as well. Dazzlers held many balls to celebrate their successes. They also arranged the Ms Dazzlers Pageant where the beauties of the day could dress up in their finery and dazzle the teenaged players with their charms.

This community spirit created a tsunami of support for Dazzlers, and unlike other teams which withered away after a few years, Dazzlers continues to be a force to reckon with, at the time of writing in twenty fourteen, their sixty fifth year of existence and their blue sapphire anniversary.

