



**NON RACIAL
SPORT HISTORY
PROJECT - Gauteng**



Introduction

The highly acclaimed Czech novelist, Milan Kundera, famously wrote in his book, *The book of laughter and forgetting*: 'The struggle of man against power, is the struggle of memory against forgetting.'

Penned in the aftermath of devastating events such as the Vietnam War, the CIA orchestrated assassination of Chilean president Allende and the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia, Kundera was making an appeal for people not to forget these defining moments. More significantly, he pointed to the ways in which those who have power actively engender forgetting and produce selective histories to support to justify their power. Acts of remembering and histories of marginalized people are therefore important, not only to counter processes of forgetting but to assert the central role of ordinary people in making history.

Over the past 2-3 decades South Africa has experienced a remarkable uncovering of histories of the oppressed that were

deliberately denied under apartheid. For various and understandable reasons these new histories have emphasized resistance politics, especially of the current ruling party. Many gaps remain: women, rural areas, youth, smaller political parties and trade unions are inadequately represented. Another important part of our history that has seriously been neglected is non-racial sports. This was a crucial facet of the anti-apartheid struggle and, crucially, was probably the most effective arena of independent and community-based sports in black communities. Moreover, non-racial sports was intrinsically linked to communities and their schools, and depended heavily on voluntarism for its enduring success. This project aims to recover, record, preserve and popularize this rich and multi-faceted history.

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Background

For some years now, past members of non-racial sports in the former Southern Transvaal, have attempted to initiate a history project on non-racial sports.

Aware of the absence of such histories and concerned about the lost legacies of community-based sports and commitment to non-racialism, it was felt that such a project was both necessary and urgent. The non-racial sports movement was of course never simply about sports. It was a commitment to non-racialism and a stand against social injustices as well. Today, we would suggest, commitment to non-racialism and community involvement (defined by a spirit of voluntarism) seemed to have become relics of the past. Our project seeks, modestly, to contribute to their recovery.

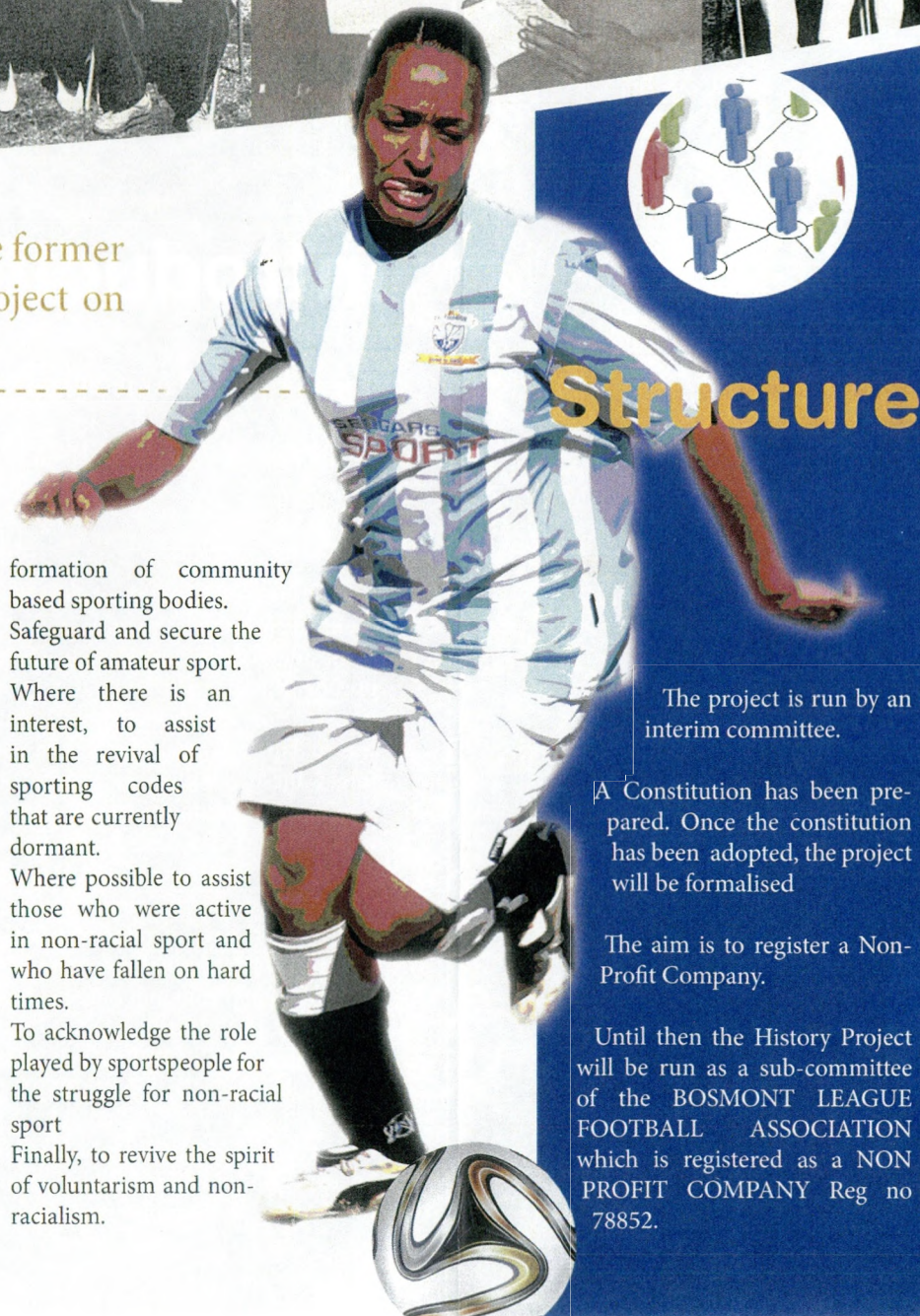
Earlier this year the members of the non-racial sports movement organized a series of discussion to revive the idea of a history project. A workshop was held to introduce participants to oral history and to formulate a plan to interview elderly sports people and administrators who were prominent in non-racial sports. Arising from this process it was decided to concentrate our efforts on recording as many oral life histories as

possible. We do not only want to interview people about their sporting life, but to capture their life stories and in their own words.

The Project has not yet been formally constituted, although a decision was taken to draft a constitution and to consider formal registration. In the meantime, the project is being hosted by the BLFA.

The primary mandate of the project is to record the histories of non-racial sport from the ground up – clubs and their administrators and players, provincial and then national, paying special attention to the role played by women. However, we see the project as contributing to the revival of the ethos that characterised the non-racial movement. To this end, some of the main objectives of the project are:

- Revive the concept of community sport (which represents the majority of our population) compared to professional sport.
- Actively to promote and support the



Structure



The project is run by an interim committee.

A Constitution has been prepared. Once the constitution has been adopted, the project will be formalised

The aim is to register a Non-Profit Company.

Until then the History Project will be run as a sub-committee of the BOSMONT LEAGUE FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION which is registered as a NON PROFIT COMPANY Reg no 78852.

formation of community based sporting bodies.

- Safeguard and secure the future of amateur sport.
- Where there is an interest, to assist in the revival of sporting codes that are currently dormant.
- Where possible to assist those who were active in non-racial sport and who have fallen on hard times.
- To acknowledge the role played by sportspeople for the struggle for non-racial sport
- Finally, to revive the spirit of voluntarism and non-racialism.

History Project Objectives

Some of the key and general outcomes envisaged for the history project are:

- To interview prominent participants in non-racial sports
- To collect documents and artefacts for an archive
- To support different codes and associations to write their histories
- To publish history books on various aspects of non-racial sports (these could take the form of short articles, magazines, popular histories (coffee

table publications) and academic monographs.

- To create a website with the assistance of the SA History Online organization.
- To curate exhibitions of different scales

We have established an archive based at Wits University's Historical Papers where all material is being stored.

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JAMES BALDWIN said in 1963

"The truth of the past is really all we have to guide us in the present"

DATA



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