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Taking up the White Man's Game: the Rise and Decline of African Cricket in Durban, 1930-1960

Goolam Vahed

The domination of cricket by white players, administrators, spectators and sponsors until the 1990s resulted in white cricket history being regarded as the history of South African cricket, especially by the international cricket fraternity. In fact, the undercurrent in most post-1990 discourse on cricket is that Africans took to the game when white administrators introduced it to African townships across the country through their 'development' programmes in the mid-1980s. According to Nauright, "all geography of the mind pervades South African society, allowing whites to safely tuck away blacks as ‘out-of-sight’ townships, and either forget about what they might do, or assume that they are drinking and committing crimes as the media and their educational system taught them in the apartheid era."

On the contrary, Odendaal reminds us, "Black South Africans have a long, indeed remarkable, sporting history". However, Odendaal lamented in the mid-1970s, "little is known about African cricket. The period before 1950 is largely obscure with almost complete absence of official records and scant media coverage of African cricket have been preserved down the years."

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There was little change in the last decades of apartheid. Nauright observed in 1997, 
more than two decades after Odendaal's lament, that

... very little has been written on black socce, rugby and cricket, or other sports in which
blacks have participated, and the early historical record is often sketchy as records were
not always kept and authorities were not interested in many of the intricacies of black
sporting organization.14

There has been much progress since Nauright's comments of 1997. The United 
Cricket Board of South A'ica launched its Transformation Charter on 1 January 1999 to
make the game more representative of the demographics of the country. The
Charter contained ten strategic transformation thrusts, one of which, "Reclaiming our
History", was driven by the appreciation that very little was known about black

cricket in South A'ica. The initiative by provinces has resulted in several publications
of varying quality. These include Allie (2001) on the Western Cape; Desai et al.
his synthesis, sketches the broad trajectory of black cricket in South Africa. Odendaal's objective, he tells us, was to expose "one of the most important dimensions of\n"sport", namely that there were no black cricketers in South Africa before Ali Bacher's
'development programme'. Odendaal, on the other hand, argues that cricket was
central to black culture.7

Odendaal's informative and invaluable study covers over a century and a half of the
African Game; further, it pays special attention to one family, the Majolas. Eric
Majola was a legend in the 1950s and 1960s: his son Khaya spearheaded the
development programme' in the 1980s and 1990s, while younger brother Gerald
came the first African Chief Executive Officer of the United Cricket Board of South A'ica.
On 1 January 2001, Odendaal presaged that his study "does not claim to be the final word
and lucid narrative does not examine cricket's development in depth in all provinces.
In fact, Odendaal himself presages that his study "does not claim to be the final word
on the subject. ... [It] must serve as a platform for further studies, thus deepening our
insights and understandings of the past."8

This study augments Odendaal's survey by focusing on attempts to spread cricket
among Africans in Durban, and drawing attention to similarities and differences from
the experiences of Africans in other parts of South Africa, particularly the Eastern
Cape. Did black cricket to Africans in Durban, and what has been the impact of the


5. 'Black' will be used when collective reference is made in quotation marks as 'A'icans', 'Indians' and
'Coloureds'. Even though the author's position is that there are no historically 'differentiated race groups
to which we can attribute specific features, and some of these terms may not have a fixed social
meaning, they continue to be accepted in official policing of 1994 on township-such as the national census and
applications for job. Furthermore, they have been widely internalised by many South African and are
used in political discourse and debates. Other post-aquittal designations have also been used. 'Indian'
describes those whose ancestors arrived in the Indian sub-continent from 1806; 'African' is used to
describe indigenous Africans who are described in Census 2001 as Black. "African" is defined as
"a black person or a native", while "white" is defined as "a white person or a native". "Black"
divides this category into 'Cape Malay', 'Other Coloureds', 'Khoisan', 'Bastards' et al.

6. M. Allie, More Tall A Game - The History of the Western Province Cricket Board in the Western
Provinces 1897-1985 (Cape Town: An Atlas of Cricket in Western Cape, 2001); A. Desai et al. Buhls in
(Amahlaba), The Bantu World, 12 The History of KZN: Cricket Board, Johannesburg, 2003;


matches. As soccer, the most popular sport, was played for most of the year, there was little time for cricket practice or opportunity to use the fields.

The American Board Mission also established a school at Inanda in 1847 under Reverend Daniel Lindley (1801-1877). John Dube, who studied at Inanda, Adams College and Oberlin Theological Seminary in the USA, founded the Ohlange Institute in 1901. Children at Ohlange played regularly against Adams. The school attained fame in the 1950s when the great Ben Malamba played there for one season.

The Church of England (Anglican) and the Wesleyan missionaries (Methodist) were also present in Natal. John W. Colenso, a Cambridge-educated linguist sent by the Church of England to Natal, where he became the first Bishop, observed in 1856 that Afrikaners "would make excellent cricketers, and even now pitch and catch a light ball, as if they had been used to it all their lives." Despite the earnest efforts of missionaries the rate of conversion was slow. By the mid-1870s, after three decades of mission work, there were less than five hundred converts. This changed from the 1870s when land and education became scarce. Missions proved attractive because they offered both land and education.

Edendale, a Methodist mission in central Natal founded by Reverend James Allison (one of the original 1820 Settlers, who bought the farm 'Welverdient' in November 1851) and renamed it Edendale, attracted large numbers of Afrikaners and became the base of Afrikaner cricket in Pietermaritzburg. By the 1880s there were three thousand African children in mission schools in Natal. The prosperity of missions was short-lived. Self-government in 1893 gave white settlers the political means to reduce the power and independence of Afrikaners. Discriminatory legislation, coupled with mturul disasters, eventually led to the decline of this kholwa (Christian) class. The decline of the kholwa made it difficult for cricket to establish itself among Africans.

African leisure in Durban

The growth of cricket in Durban was due to the local government increasing the leisure time options of Afrikaners in the 1930s, assisted by the arrival of individuals who had been exposed to cricket in other parts of the country. The African population of Durban increased considerably in the early twentieth century, from 8,929 in 1904 to 64,023 in 1936.26 Africans were mainly male and migrant. The male to female ratio was 6.6 to 1 in 1921 and 3.6 to 1 in 1936.27 Of all the Afrikaners in Durban in 1936, only 20,000 were considered to be settled in the city.28 In the labour hierarchy in Durban, skilled posts were reserved for whites. Indians and Coloureds comprised semi-skilled labour, while Afrikaners occupied poorly paid unskilled positions like domestics, cleaners and packers. The increased population forced the municipality to extend social services to Africans.

As Marks has pointed out, while Natal "probably experienced the most concentrated missionary effort in Africa", it has also "been the scene of the most sophisticated attempts to rule through 'traditional authorities'."29 The result can be seen in novelist Ezekiel Mphahlele's account of his stay at Adams:

I left Adams with a nagging memory of the strong spirit of tribalism that prevailed in Natal. Natal had two tribalisms: the English and the Zulu brands. The bulk of the students at Adams have always been Zulu. They did not like non-Zulu boys and girls coming to the College.30

White Natal did not attempt to incorporate Africans into the colonial order or mould the Afrikaner elite along Victorian standards.31 Whites saw themselves as a homogenous group threatened by Indians and Africans, and introduced segregationist policies.32

The absence of a cricketing culture was also due to the fact that the American Board Mission dominated the mission fold in Natal from the 1830s.33 Dr Newton Adams, a medical missionary of the American Board, arrived in Natal in 1836. He established a mission at Amanzimtoti, with a school being opened in 1853.34 Cricket only began in earnest in 1931 with the arrival of D. Mtumkulwano from Fort Hare, "a keen player and student of cricket."35 The game was given impetus by the activities in 1934 of Scotsman T. Erskine, "a keen cricketer who was officially made in charge of cricket".36 Both general and cricket in particular prospered under the principaship of Edgar Brookes (1935-1946) and G.C. Grant (1949-1956), a former West Indian test cricketer. Both emphasised sport as a means of developing the 'total person' and encouraged sports, arts and other extra-curricular clubs, as well as contact with white students at Michaelhouse.37

There was keen competition for places in the school team, known as Shooting Stars Cricket Team.38 L. Lunnon observed in June 1936 that the cricketers "put every ounce of enthusiasm into their play, so as to hold their places to the end of the season."39 The team was affiliated to the Durban & District Cricket Association. Durban 1896 Stars won the Coronation Cup under the captaincy of Caleb Hashe.40 Outstanding players in 1937 were the captain, Caleb Hashe, "our steady and sure batsman...good captaincy is always the course of victory"; Waterston T. Bokwe, "our excellent all round player"; and Mafura Senoane, "for his humour and fine batsmanship as Cricketer's progress was hampered by the absence of adequate playing fields and the paucity of resources.41

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The state attempted to 'moralise' leisure time. The Native Beer Act of 1908 gave the municipality monopoly over the sale of beer, with profits used to build locations and put in place measures such as policing to tighten control over Africans. A Native Affairs Department (NAD) was created in 1916, while municipal by-laws laid down stricter controls for worker registration and service contracts, and imposed a 9:00 to 17:00 curfew on Africans. AFS resisted attempts to exert greater control over their lives. Labour unrest during the late 1920s and 1930s has been covered extensively. Prior to 1927, African resistance centred around worker issues; after 1927 it was more broad-based as a result of the rise of the Industrial and Commercial Union (ICU) under A.W.O. Champion, whose activities culminated in militant protests in 1929 and 1930 to protest the state's monopoly of beer sales.

The 1930 De Waal Commission called for an improvement in the social conditions of AFS, the appointment of a Native Advisory Board (NAB), and the channelling of funds into African recreation and welfare in order to diffuse 'unrest.' The reinforcement of police strength, the banishment of Champion from Durban and the more ameliorative role adopted by the local state diffused African militancy during the 1930s. "Amelioration" included the paternalistic use of leisure forms to 'counter black political mobilisation and to check autonomous cultural activity and vitality.'

White liberals helped to transfer European ideas on how free time should be spent. In September 1929, Norman Henwood, secretary of the Durban Rotary Club, notified the Durban Town Council (DTC) of the Club's "earnest desire" to see "Native Recreation" placed on an "organised basis". The appointment of a Native Welfare Officer (NWO) was regarded as "essential." The Durban Chamber of Commerce had "sympathy for the Native in his struggles to find healthy outlets, in the forms of innocent recreation, for his energy. In view of the bearing of this matter on the public health of the Borough as a whole ... business employers would be glad to take steps which would ensure adequate use being made of additional facilities which the Corporation may provide."

The DTC appointed J.T. Rawlins as NWO in April 1930. Rawlins, who was 45 years old, born in Bedford in the Eastern Province. He had worked among AFS all his life, having lived in Transkei and Zululand where he was an official of the Government Veterinary Service, and later Inspector of Crown Lands in Northern Natal. He was fluent in Zulu, Xhosa, Swazi, Sesotho, English and Afrikaans. Rawlins felt that his greatest strength was his "sympathetic insight into native customs and habits ... I do understand the native thoroughly and am able to gain his confidence." Rawlins was determined to increase opportunities for AFs recreation, because the whole question centres around the matter of 'superfluous energy.' Energy cannot be suppressed. An attempt at suppression very often results in insurrection. As far as the native community is concerned, this superfluous energy is being deviated into channels of vice, and this vicious influence is an attraction, and is tending to spread ... I feel that the interest of the part of Europeans ... the native community of Durban could be moulded into a law abiding section of the Borough."

Bantu Recreational Grounds Association

Rawlins introduced a range of activities for AFS. These included a Bantu Men's Social Centre (1933), weekly movies, tennis, cricket, dancehalls, and sports galas. Rawlins was concerned that soccer only occupied AFSs for nine months of the year and wanted to introduce tennis and cricket so that "the natives should not be idle." Sid Phashe, who had moved to Natal from the Transvaal, approached Rawlins in December 1930 for a cricket-ground. According to Rawlins, AFSs had been playing cricket "for some time now though they have been handicapped by lack of proper facilities .... The pitch was just a piece of ground that is both uneven and bumpy." Rawlins recommended that a proper pitch be laid to make Somtseu Road "one of the finest grounds in the Borough." Rawlins convened a meeting in February 1931 to 'harmonise' AFS sport. G. Connwa, A. Mzimba and P. Luhodi represented cricket. The Bantu Recreational Ground Association was formed on 11 April 1931 to improve cooperation between sporting codes and liaise between African sports bodies and the DTC. "Rawlins wanted the Association to be made into a power to antagonise the downward pull of the custom of heathenism, ... I feel sure that the inadequate and poor recreation facilities offered at the moment is responsible for the fact that the native during his weekend has nothing better to do than to listen to unwholesome speeches, which with the accumulated energy and the necessary 'spark,' results in rioting and consequent damage." Mayor Lamont was elected patron and trustee of the Association. W. Campbell of Mount Edgecombe president, while board members included Dr Shearer and Douglas Evans. Evans of the Grounds Association noted that tennis [and cricket] was to the "more enlightened Native as popular as Football is to his less enlightened brother." Cricket was played mainly by Christianised AFSs comprising the clergy, clerks, interpreters and teachers. By 1933, the Association controlled four football-grounds in Dalton and Somtseu Roads, as well as four tennis-courts and provided training for boxers. Pressure by the Association led to a proper pitch being laid at Somtseu Road where the first game was played on 7 March 1931.
The Natal African Cricket Union and the NRC Trophy

At a meeting in Cradock in 1932, African cricketers, unhappy with their treatment by the South African Coloured Cricket Board, formed the South African Bantu Cricket Board (SABCB). The breakaway confirmed that the attempt to form a united black cricket culture had failed. Afriicans, Indians and Coloureds played cricket separately for the next three decades. The crucial role of the mining industry in patron in African cricket is reflected in the fact that the Chamber of Mines presented the Board with the Native Recruiting Corporation (NRC) Trophy, for which A-Fican provincial units competed. For mines, "cricket was part of a marketing strategy and a way of maintaining a stable workforce."56

52. Bonza. 3 January 1934.
54. /Ilanga. 21 January 1934.
55. Beiba. 4 December 1933.

The first national inter-provincial tournament was held in East London from 23 December 1933 to 2 January 1934. Natal was not allowed to participate in the inaugural tournament because there was no provincial body. However, J. Masiza of Kimberley, secretary of the SABCB, felt that Natal should be represented at the Board meeting in Johannesburg prior to the tournament.57 On 18 December 1933, a meeting of stakeholders of Natal cricket, including Reverend Xaba of Richmond, A. Senoane of Amanzimtoti; and A.Z. Mazinga, A.J. Sililo, C.P. Motsenene and S.M. Pashe of Durban, decided to send C.P. Motsenene and D. Mitikula to the Johannesburg meeting of the South African Bantu Cricket Union Board on 22 December 1933: Western Province, Border, Griqualand West and Transvaal participated in the tournament which was won by Transvaal. Handling the trophy to the winners, H.B. Plisko, acting vice-president of the SABCB, thanked the Chamber of Mines for donating the trophy and pointed to the role that cricket played in "promoting good feeling among communities."59

The tournament provided impetus for a Natal Union. This was facilitated by the formation of the Pietermaritzburg and District Cricket Union in March 1934 under the chairmanship of Reverend Mestywa. The vice-chairman was Reverend Xaba, while Reverend Sililo was treasurer. "Cricke was dominated by the clergy, with its roots in Edendale, understandable given that 'civilised' culture, which included Christianity, education, as well as social and sporting practices based on European models, was central to their being.

A Natal Cricket Union was formed on 20 April 1934 at a meeting between Durban, Pietermaritzburg and Amanzimtoti. A.J. Sililo was elected as president, Reverend Xaba vice-president, C.P. Motsenene secretary and treasurer, and A. Xaba as auditor. The patron was the Chief Native Commissioner of Natal, Lugg, a Rotarian. D.S.B. Anderson was made honorary president, and Horsfall (the NRC Superintendent in Natal) was honorary life president.56 For Ben Magubane, identification with paternalistic whites marked the ideological subjugation of African elites by whites. British hegemony, he concludes, saturated African "society and its values to the extent that there would become common sense for the people under its sway. It was so enshrined in a set of meanings and values which would be confirmed by practice."62 Natal sent a team to the national tournament in Port Elizabeth in December 1934. This was regarded as important for reasons other than cricket. According to /Ilanga: "Natal is forging to be known as an Educational Centre. True education is an operation performed on the whole man and not an abstraction called his mind. Let us move on in sport and remember that our sister provinces are prone to belittle Natal's true worth."

A meeting of the executive in November 1934, chaired by Reverend Mthimkulu, decided to send a squad of fourteen. The selection committee comprised of the captain Reverend Xaba, vice-captain Don Mthimkulu, Phashe, Mzimba and Sosibo.53 A.J. 57. /Ilanga. 8 May 1934.
59. /Ilanga. 6 January 1934.
60. Bwabwa World. X December 1934.
63. /Ilanga. 8 May 1934.
64. Bwabwa World. X December. 1934.
Sillilo, who was a clerk in Rawlins' office, an executive member of the Bantu Social Centre and secretary of the Bantu Recreational Grounds Association, accompanied the team as manager. H.W. ('Herby') Taylor, an outstanding white cricketer of the era, coached the team prior to the tournament. Funding was a serious problem because the Union was unable to generate income from gate takings. Notwithstanding this, the DTC turned down a request for financial assistance. Rawlins therefore approached employers of team members for contributions, while Reverend Mthimkulu persuaded the Native Administration Committee to contribute £2.66 Natal students studying at Fort Hare were included in the team to reduce travel costs and strengthen the team. According to Sillilo, although Natal lost all 16 matches, the team was complemented for its sportsmanship and good behaviour, and the players benefited enormously from the experience.66 Transvaal emerged as champions.

The NWO reported that cricket was played during the 1935/36 season. He reported as follows to the Native Administration Committee on 8 November 1935:

Cricket has been played fairly regularly though three of the matches were played on the cricket field through the courtesy of the Cricket Union. A match between an Adams Mission Team and the Durban Pilots was commenced but not finished, play to be resumed at a later date. Practice games are also played every Sunday, while on weekdays the Taylor Street School Boys' Club use the pitch. The growth of grass is so rapid that the ground will soon be unplayable.67

In February 1936, the NWO reported that "a match was played against a Martizburg team on January 26th which ended in a draw. A reception was later held at the Bantu Social Centre to entertain the visiting team. Regular practice games are played."

Natal also participated in East London in December 1936. In addition to funding from the DTC and employers, DDA CU organised a "Tournament Fund Drive" concert at the Methodist Institute. Performers included Faith Caluza, T. Phakie and the 'High Steppers', as well as R.T. Caluza, director of Music at Adams who had obtained his BSc and MA in Music from Columbia University -in the United States. The first match was played against a Martizburg team on January 26th which ended in a draw. A reception was later held at the Bantu Social Centre to entertain the visiting team. Regular practice games are played."

Natal again performed dismally in the tournament which was won by Border.

The National Tournament comes to Durban, December 1938

Natal did not send a team to the 1937 tournament, which was held in Cape Town and won by Border. The next tournament was held in Durban in December 1938. In July 1938 DDA CU applied to the DTC for a 'donation' of £100 to cover the costs of coaches, pads, wickets, gloves and balls. The manager of NAD considered this appeal "unreasonable" and proposed £5 be given. The DTC resolved on 13 September to contribute £50, while local businesses donated goods to the value of £57.2.1. The tournament was truly national with seven teams, namely Eastern Province, Border, Natal, Griqualand, Northern Cape, Orange Free State, Transvaal and Western Province participating from 26 December 1938 to 3 January 1939. According to the Bantu World there were no clear favourites:

The match was played against a Martizburg team as follows:

What is believed to be the first cricket match between Indians and natives was played at Currie's Fountain, Durban, on Sunday last; when a representative Bantu XI under the captaincy of A.R. Mzimba, met a picked eleven of the Durban and District Indian Cricket Union, led by P. Moosa. The natives batted first, and some of them showed skill as batsmen. Their fielding and bowling were good. The natives were all out for 122 in their first innings, replaced with 173 (Chengalal 39 not out; P Moosa 22, Rajoo 21, Dockrat 20). The native team which played against the Indians at Curries Fountain on Sunday last, will take part in the interprovincial cricket tournament, organised by the Chamber of Mines. This year's take will be

Some games were played on grounds made available by the White urban Cricket Union, the first time that many Africans had played on turf wickets. According to the Natal Mercury:

The Tribune, 22 December 1936.

The Bantu World, 3 December 1936.
Cricket, that most English of all English games, at this moment making history by taking root in the life of the Zulu. It is not merely becoming transplanted to African fields. It did that long ago. It is taking hold of the Africans themselves, bringing them in flannels to the wicket, filling them with enthusiasm and despair, and making known to them the sound of the shattering stump; till the feeling of the long walk back to the pavilion.

Buoyed by the enthusiasm for cricket, the DTC resolved that "some form of civic courtesy be arranged to the delegates attending." Teams were welcomed with a civic reception by the Mayor of Durban, Fleming Johnston. There was much enthusiasm among local whites who patronised the matches. Ironically, few Africans attended matches. Sid Phashe explained that this was because "they are not cricket-minded yet". He was hopeful that...

The tournament was won by Transvaal, with the Orange Free State finishing second and Eastern Province third. A 'Social and Dance' on 4 January 1939 was attended by a good number of Europeans who, through their conduct on and off the playing field was a great credit to the tournament, according to Mayor Johnston, was "the impression created upon the European spectators by the players, through their conduct on and off the playing field was excellent, and the various Bantu officials expressed their praise and thanks for the arrangements made." The Africans throughout the tournament, according to Mayor Johnston, was "the impression created upon the European spectators by the players, through their conduct on and off the playing field was excellent, and the various Bantu officials expressed their praise and thanks for the arrangements made." The African elite appreciated the contribution of whites. A.B. Neshinga, secretary of Eastern Province, noted that our European friends have always shown sympathy and willingness to help the struggle for Bantu up the ladder. It is pleasing to note that the number of Europeans who see the value of recreation to their Native servants is growing.

Cricket fails to take root

While Sid Phashe felt that "we shall do well at cricket and it will do well among us" the Second World War was a huge setback. After 1939, there was virtually no coverage of African cricket in Natal in *Vanga or Bantu World*. Natal sent a team to East London in 1948, where the team performed disappointingly. Natal had another disastrous tournament in Kimberly in 1950, losing five of six matches with one match washed out. Natal lagged far behind their experienced counterparts from other parts of the country. Transvaal won six of the first ten tournaments and Bo'or and Western Province twice each.

Natal improved in the 1950s due largely to the arrival of students from the Eastern Cape to study in the 'Non-European' division of the University of Natal, the emergence of Japtha 'Super' Mahanjana as an accomplished all-rounder and a short stay by Ben Malamba, who spent a year at Ohlange in Inanda. Japtha 'Super' Mahanjana grew up in Modderbee in Benoni where his family had moved from the Eastern Cape. Modderbee was a hive of sporting activity in the late 1930s. Japtha played for the local soccer team, but cricket was his first love. He attended a Swedish mission school, St. Ansgras, and Adams College from 1947 to commence high school. Here he excelled at football, tennis, boxing and athletics. Japtha was a competent medium pace bowler with a nagging length, and a batsman with nimble footwork.

In Cape Town where the tournament was won by Natal 20 to 29 December 1952, Natal performed very well. They qualified to meet Western Province, but unfortunately lost by 117. This was however a major improvement on the previous dismal showings. Natal's excellent showing was no coincidence. While 'Super' was an outstanding player, Natal fielded a true superstar in the tall and powerfully built all-rounder Ben Malamba, who was arguably the finest African cricketer of the 1950s. Bowling or batting, he was not content to defend or contain. According to Krish Reddy, Malamba was a natural cricketer, a strong man who found expression for his boundless energy on the cricket field. He was a versatile bowler who delivered off and leg spinners at a lively pace. His huge frame enabling him to extract disconcerting bounce on even the most placid pitches. When bowling, he resembled the dauntless cavalry: the ball was there to be hit; he didn't bother about the crease and prod and poke. On his day you were guaranteed to see some rip-mooring and bowling axes. His catching at slip was quite remarkable for very little escaped those cajolatory hands. Cricket was never a dull moment when Malamba was in action. There was a natural flair and exuberance about the man whose enjoyment for the game communicated itself to the spectators.

Natal hosted the national tournament for the second time from 22 December 1954 to 1 January 1955. Natal again finished as runners-up, this time to North Eastern Transvaal. Unfortunately, it was not possible to trace any scores. Ben Malamba was outstanding. According to *Vanga*, he impressed throughout with "perfect timing and masterly drives". At the conclusion of the tournament, I.M.B. Thoba, general secretary of the South African Bantu Cricket Board, offered thanks to the City Council of Durban for the fine arrangements for our tournament, and I would like to say the people of Durban are blessed to have such a Council, that goes to assist our people. We have been deeply impressed by what is done in Durban. I would like to thank them for having attended our functions and inspired our youths with the potentialities that we have as Africans in Sport?

Natal also participated in Port Elizabeth from 22 December 1956 to 5 January 1957. They won only two of the five matches, beating the Orange Free State and Transvaal. Natal played poorly, though there were consistent all-round performances from 'Super' Mahanjana and T. Zinti. Natal finished seventh of eight teams in the final national tournament in Johannesburg from 22 December 1958 to 4 January 1959. Eastern Province won this tournament for the second successive time.
Conclusion

The development of cricket in Durban was very different from the Cape, where from the mid-nineteenth century the presence of missionaries and elite institutions of education to a long history and deep tradition. Cricket was introduced to Durban's African by the local government as part of a larger project to change African leisure-time activities, with the collaboration of capital, white liberals and African middle classes. New leisure forms such as cricket and tennis reflected the ideas of a local state dominated by a white, male, capitalist society of what constituted acceptable behaviour. The construction of separate cricket structures for Africans meant that sport reinforced segregation rather than fostered assimilation during these decades. Political and economic factors resulted in cricket not spreading among Africans. Sports like soccer and leisure activities like dancehalls and music, which required less investment of finance and time, were more practical for a migrant population employed primarily in low-paying jobs as dockworkers and domestics. Cricket was confined to African elites at Christian missions and schools where it was part of a wider transmission of European norms and values, as well as among clerical workers in Durban and Pietermaritzburg. Cricket failed to achieve widespread popular interest in Durban.

Changing social, economic and political conditions made it difficult to nurture and expand cricket's tenuous presence among local Africans. Durban's economy grew dramatically from the late 1930s as a result of the growth of manufacturing, boosted by war-time demands. Large numbers of Africans were now permanently settled in Durban. The African male to female ratio dropped from 5.6 to 1 in 1921 to 3.6 to 1 in 1956. Massive urban migration resulted in rapid growth of shack settlements. For example, the squatter population at Mkhumbane (Cato Manor) increased from 2,500 in 1939 to 50,000 in 1949. Population growth and changes at national level, with the National Party coming to power in 1948, changed the relationship between the state and Africans. In the context of a struggle for scarce resources, the state relied increasingly on coercion to control Africans. From the 1950s, Africans were relocated to townships like KwaMashu where no facilities were available for cricket. The closure of Adams College in 1956 was a massive blow for the fledgling game.

Under these circumstances the popularity of soccer increased while cricket ceased to be played altogether from the 1960s. The consequences of this legacy are evident in post-apartheid South Africa, where 'black African' cricketers have been mainly from the Cape, for example Makhaya Ntini, Mondi Zondeki and Mfundeko Ngam. To address this dearth of African cricketers in Natal, innovative policies such as placing African learners at former white schools, and with white club teams, have been introduced. We should see more African players emerge as part of the process of indigenising cricket in the coming decade. A comparison of the history of African cricket in Natal and the Eastern Cape, coupled with lessons from contemporary attempts to spread cricket, show that the game remains very elitist in South Africa. Both historically and in the current era among blacks and whites, it is largely through established and elitist schools that international cricketers have been, and are being, produced. When the game is eventually indigenised, we might witness the emergence of a uniquely South African cricketing culture and tradition. If this call for aggressive and flamboyant cricket by Rugby World Cup does anything to go by, we might break the shackles that have resulted in the South African international team adopting a very conservative, safety-first approach.

There is something wrong with the way Cricket is played by some clubs. Firstly, some batsmen are afraid of taking risks with the ball. They are content to remain glued to the creases, knocking the ball listlessly. This makes the game harrowing to watch. Secondly, our fielders are far from being spectacular in their play. An inoffensive ball is allowed to slip pass a man whose duty was to stop it and return it without scrambling about. This faulty fielding gives a listless batsman a further chance to dig himself into his crease without being called upon to bat aggressively and solidly. Captains must save the game before it dies a slow, gurgling death.