

RAM SALOJEE



BIOGRAPHY
EDUCATION
LENASIA RATEPAYERS ASSOCIATION
PEOPLES CANDIDATES PARTY
SPORT
ISLAM
INDIAN SOUTH AFRICANS
YOUTH

LENASIA FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION - Presentation of Trophies. 29/11/74. 2p.

With the glittering array of trophies that are being presented this evening, there is a message of profound significance - and that is the message of non-racialism. It is a fact that after years of uncertainty and hesitancy the Lenasia Football Association joined the ranks of sportsmen, who were not prepared to barter their right to play with whom and against whom they wished. A determined stand that has forced history making concessions from the granite walls of apartheid. If overseas gate-crashers and multi-national opportunists, will only realise that by their actions they are putting back the cause of integrated sports and so delay the aspirations of our black sportsmen, we could have been celebrating our proud entrance into the arena of non-differentiation and non-discrimination. But patience has its virtues and determination its rewards. That the cause of non-racialism will triumph is indisputable. We as members of the Management Committee are grateful that the L.F.A. had confidence in our wisdom and trust in our assurances, as regards playing facilities, and so took the bold step of entering into the fold of the non-racial ranks. I am sure they do not regret their historic decision and to-day can stand proudly with the rest of black sportsmen. This change in attitude and affiliations was not only logical but necessary, if we are to extract the maximum benefit for the masses of discriminated sportsmen. In unity we will find strength and courage, especially in the prevailing climate of international pressures. I want you to be cogently clear that non-racialism is not merely a political slogan, nor is it a blasphemous ideal, as the state wishes us to believe. In simple and lucid terms, it means the acceptance of people as people. That we give gist to the ethical values which characterises man from the rest of the animal kingdom and pay homage to our unique position in the vast and varied creations of God. We must not despoil our ability to recognise the rights and equality of our fellow-beings. We must also, respond with determination, against those who deny us the right to our own worth and to share our humanity with others. Should we lose this fundamental purpose, then I am afraid we ourselves forfeit the right to enjoy the fruits of freedom and opportunities. It is unthinkable that any one group should use false arguments to entrench privileges at the expense of others. Thus by your affiliation to a non-racial organisation you are merely using your right to play freely and without restrictions, with and against whom you wish. This is your right and no just authority has the right to interfere in the practice of an aspect of basic humanity. By your actions you are rightfully translating that which is part of the known values of human association. Further, in the South African situation we are so fearfully manipulated that the meaning of non-racialism is lost on the masses; we ourselves become conditioned to look at life with racial blinkers on. Thus at sporting level, by participating in non-racial sport, we help to protect our youth and our society from becoming completely submerged into the unrealistic world of racial prejudice a valuable hedge against our total submission to the dangers of racism.

If you will now permit me the liberty of gazing into the crystal ball of the future developments for soccer in Lenasia, then I hold out the satisfying prospects of better and additional grounds, with this we have in mind the development of a complete soccer complex, separated from cricket, as distinct from the present undesirable position at the stadium. With a huge sporting complex in the offing in Extension 7, this is definitely a very real prospect. Presently, we have voted a sum of 10,000 rand for additional and improved seating.

at the soccer stadium; 4,000 Rand for the improvement of the Athletic Track around the soccer field ; 10,000 Rand for practice field and lighting for night practice facilities; 4,000 Rand for security lighting for changerooms and turnstiles; as soon as sewerage and water facilities are laid for housing in Extension 6, toilet facilities will be improved on the grounds - early part of next year; 11,500 rand for development of sportsfield and changerooms. All this is in addition to other sporting facilities - such as the recreation centre and lake area, swimming pool, tennis courts and other civic amenities. The backlog in Lenasia ^{is tremendous} and we aim to see that this is speedily eliminated. At the same time we are certain that the L.F.A. will play its part by promoting soccer, not only amongst its teams but also at school and youth level. Soccer can be a powerful force in the elimination and control of juvenile delinquency, youth frustration, drug abuse and other social evils. The incentive to improve our soccer standards and spread our organisational umbrella over wider fields should be encouraged, because with the changes to come black soccerites must not be left wanting when multiracial soccer teams, based on merit becomes a reality in South-Africa. We have the ability, we have the potential and with improving facilities we must not squander our chances. Soccer has an important role to play in the challenging times ahead and we must resolutely march forward towards the sunrise of a new dawn.

Thank You.

R.A.M. SALOJEE.