

THE ONE CRITERION

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I recently accepted an invitation to join the Committee of the Campaign Against Race Discrimination in Sport for two reasons:

As an ex-International and Olympic athlete, I know that international sport becomes a farce and mockery unless in the words of the Olympic Charter "no discrimination is permitted on grounds of race, religion or politics".

If a national team is not made up of the best possible sportsmen available it ceases to be a truly national team. The aim of every aspiring sportsman is to represent his country. That some people should be denied this honour simply on grounds of their colour is as unfair as it is nonsensical.

For years I ran fairly consistently second to one of the greatest sprinters in the world—Mr. Macdonald Bailey, a coloured man. Because of him I was denied almost every major athletic honour. But I would not have had it any other way. He was a better runner than I was.

If we had had race discrimination in sport in England, I should have won many titles, but they would have been hollow and valueless victories.

Race discrimination in sport is really a misnomer, because if there is race discrimination it ceases to be sport. In sport there should be only one criterion; that of ability.

As one who believes in the Christian Faith and feebly endeavours to live out its principles, race discrimination in sport runs clean contrary to my fundamental and deeply held beliefs.

I hope that the white South African national "sporting" bodies which at the moment admit only white South Africans will immediately make their organisations truly sporting by admitting all men on equal terms. If they refuse, I believe that international sporting bodies should refuse to recognise these unrepresentative South African bodies, and that 'white-only' South African teams should be barred from international sport.