

SARU and NUM have plans to start up rugby on mines next year

PLANS by the non-racial South African Rugby Union (Saru) to enter the mines with the aim of joining forces with the rugby playing membership of the National Union of Mineworkers could become possible next year.

This emerged at Saru's council meeting in Port Elizabeth during which the anti-apartheid rugby body effectively placed the ball back into the South African Rugby Board's (SARB) court regarding unity talks.

There has been ongoing talks last year between the NUM, the biggest affiliate of the giant Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) and the South African Council of Sport (Sacos) unit, Saru.

"This is not something new," said Saru president Ebrahim Patel.

"It is an on-going process which started last year between Saru and the NUM.

"We want to put into effect what we discussed with the NUM next year. Where possible, the project will include holding coaching courses on mines to be conducted by Saru.

"We will also look at the possibility of bringing NUM members to watch some of our games," Patel said.

Saru may not achieve its primary aim of embracing all mine rugby players in just a year, but next year will certainly form a base on which Saru could gradually assess progress in as far as taking rugby to the people is concerned.

The move by Saru to include the NUM rugby players is likely to boost the number of players of the non-racial body because the NUM has hundreds of rugby playing members at almost every mine in the country.

But, it has been difficult for NUM members to play non-racial rugby because mine bosses threatened them with dismissals

and deprived them the use of mine facilities.

Meanwhile, Saru's council this week among other issues discussed whether to meet SARB with a view to forming one body.

A few weeks ago, after SARB president, Dannie Craven's controversial "African initiative," which involved talks with the outlawed African National Congress and a subsequent SARB executive committee meeting that followed, it was decided to extend an invitation to Saru to discuss the future of both organisations.

"We discussed the SARB's invitation and have written to them," said Saru president Ebrahim Patel.

"However, we will not reveal the contents of the letter at this stage. We will issue a public statement only when the SARB has replied," Patel said.

The full Saru statement released by Patel is as follows:

- The Saru council met to formulate its programme for coming season;
- The highlight of the season will centre around the centenary celebrations of the Eastern Province and Transvaal rugby unions.
- Saru formally accepted invitations extended to it by certain African-playing countries and will pursue these invitations with a view to creating permanent membership.
- In respect of the invitation extended to Saru by the SARB, Saru has formulated its response thereto, and a letter in this regard will reach the SARB;
- Saru formally accepted invitations extended to it by certain African-playing countries and will pursue these invitations with a view to creating permanent membership.

Patel did not give any hint whether his union would meet the SARB, but it is common knowledge that the Saru is not entirely happy with Craven's board.



COSATU's Mi Hlatshwayo: soccer can be a vehicle for change

Cosatu scores its first soccer team

THE 750 000 member Congress of South African Trade Unions (Cosatu) has announced the formation of its first official soccer team.

The soccer team is based in southern Natal and called Cosatu Sports Workshop. It was organised by the Natal Regional Cultural Co-ordinating Committee (NRCCC).

The formation of the team, made up of players from different local units, and other worker teams in the factories, is a move to popularise "people's culture", which includes sport.

Cosatu's Sport Workshop was follow-up to a seminar held in mid-August where people's culture was discussed and members were urged to make its advancement a reality.

The only sporting body represented at the meeting was the Natal Council on Sport (Nacos), an affiliate of the South African Council on Sport (Sacos), which pledged its support for Cosatu cultural units and pledged to continue working with them.

Cosatu's vice-chairperson, Chris Dlamini, said the aim of sport for liberation was to build solidarity.

"By building solidarity we are

building a nation", he said.

"We are picking up the pieces to advance our struggle. To achieve this, we need people to assist us.

"The sport of the ruling class always advances their interest by using people," he said.

He stated that some of the country's well-known soccerites did not earn decent wages because the capitalists were out to make money and did not have their welfare at heart.

Commenting on the issue of sport on the mines, he said it was an instrument to blunt people's militancy, to entertain and to make money for the bosses and to make people forget their problems.

Mi Hlatshwayo, Cosatu's national cultural co-ordinator said: "whatever the struggle, we can make soccer or any other sport a vehicle for change because it is our task to organise these areas and make people aware of the situation in sport".

The teams first match was a draw. There was a heart throbbing 90 minutes of entertaining soccer when the newly-formed Cosatu soccer squad was held to a 2-2 draw by Pinetown's CI Caravans team at the Alan Taylor residence in Wentworth.

Congress formed to promote non-racial sport

THE aims of the new National Sports Congress (NSC) are to promote mass-based sport in a non-racial, progressive and democratic South Africa.

The newly formed organisation has held a meeting to formulate its "statement of intent" and proposed constitution.

The meeting in Durban in November was attended by some of the top sports administrators involved in the non-racial movement.

Abolish Apartheid

The NSC said: "In an apartheid society the distribution of resources and the system of education is grossly distorted on ethnic grounds and children and youth are effectively denied equality of facilities and opportunities on ethnic and racial grounds."

The NSC recognised Sacos "as the authentic anti-apartheid sports body in South Africa and is prepared to join hands with Sacos to achieve a truly mass-based democratic sports movement."

The NSC said it would:

- Encourage the creation of non-racial sports structures acceptable to the national democratic movement in areas where they did not exist.
- Work with communities in their struggle to obtain sporting facilities in areas where they did not exist.
- Work with the national democratic movement to call upon big businesses to sponsor non-racial sport bodies and to ensure that existing sponsorship was distributed equitably.
- Encourage the development of non-racial sport at primary, secondary and tertiary educational institutions.
- Counteract the initiatives of multinational and racist sports administrators.
- Work closely with the progressive trade union movement.

As far as international links were concerned, the NSC said it recognised the vital role played by the S A Non-racial Olympic committee (Sanroc) in its campaigns to isolate South Africa and would fully support and complement Sanroc's role.

Union sports survey

COSATU is to survey unions to find out what sports activities are going in the union and what sports codes exist.

It plans to hold a national sports workshop next year.

Interested sportspeople should contact Comrade Kgalema of NUM head office, or Mi Hlatshwayo of COSATU.

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