

The ANC's policy on the sports boycott is no longer a comprehensive blanket ban. What is the rationale behind this? MAYIBUYE spoke to Steve Tshwete, the ANC's Sports Liaison Officer.

Preliminaries to this position go as far back as 1987 when the ANC recognised the existence in the country of a powerful, alternative, non-racial and democratic culture in sport, said Steve Tshwete, the Sports Liaison Officer.

"The phenomenal growth of democratic and non-racial culture was an important development which reinforced the overall objective: the creation of a non-racial democracy.

"This struggle is not the exclusive responsibility of political organisations. All sectors of the community, including the sports community, have to play a role in the transformation process.

"It is important that the international community must be in touch with this non-racial ethic. It must do everything within its reach to encourage the process of deracialisation of sport in the country – provide equipment and funds where they are lacking, and even compete with South Africans who have accepted and espoused the principle of non-racialism.

"This principle should find expression in the development programmes that address the imbalances in the allocation of resources and facilities. Without a concrete development plan, the whole concept of non-racial unity is bound to flounder because there is the real possibility of a huge number of black athletes being left out, re-

sulting in the domination of sport and recreation by white sportspersons.

"Unity shall not have achieved anything if it is just a marriage at the top without any programmes that take the whole process to the ordinary athletes in the townships.

"So those codes that espouse non-racial unity and have evolved a development programme aimed at addressing the imbalances of apartheid must be given a chance to grow and consolidate. One way is to allow them to compete internationally."

Asked if there are any mechanisms in place to monitor the implementation of the development programmes, Tshwete believes the mechanisms

are the very sports organisations themselves. Committees meant to be addressing development are located in each code. The committees are not handpicked from the top. All people involved in a particular code should actively participate in the formulation of the development programme so that the views and opinions of ordinary athletes at grass-roots level are enshrined in it.

But he hastens to add that the picture is not all rosy. "There is nothing perfect about them right now because this is a new phenomenon.

But there is a deliberate attempt by all those codes that have united to seri-



The final hurdle?

Who foots the development bill?

Sports bodies have raised the question of funds as a major hurdle in implementing some of the programmes. They themselves have to engage in fundraising to ensure growth and development within their specific codes.

But outside their own endeavours it is the responsibility of the government to assist. "It is not a favour that is demanded of the state," says Steve Tshwete. "It is its obligation. The government has provided finances and facilities to apartheid sport. Sport in South Africa has been very much politicised. It has been ordered to follow the dictates of apartheid tyranny. Apartheid is wholly to blame for the fact that out of four million people involved in sports in the country, less than a million are black.

"Sympathetic countries and sports organisations across the globe are quite eager to help in the development of non-racial sport. The local business community is beginning to realise that they too have a role to play. Unlike in the past, they are sponsoring a number of codes in the country, and helping in the realisation of the development programmes." ♦

ously address the whole issue of development."

But, given that all the codes on whom the sports moratorium has been lifted thus far are white-dominated, are we not going to end up with teams that do not reflect the composition of the population? Tshwete thinks in the near future it is going to be difficult to see a national team reflecting the complexion of society as a whole.

"There is going to be a buildup towards a truly non-racial national side. It is the heritage of apartheid that only white athletes are competent enough to represent the country in cricket and rugby, for instance. They have the facilities and are well equipped. So for some time we are still going to contend with a situation that most, if not all national sides will reflect the imbalance resulting from apartheid."

What about national symbols? "The flag and the anthem are constitutional matters" he says. They are going to be determined by the outcome of constitutional negotia-

tions. However, we expect them to begin discussing this matter and to put forward ideas as South Africans in the first place and as sportspeople in the second place.

"The emblem is a matter that will have to be decided, finally, by the sports organisations themselves. After all the springbok was not debated in parliament or in any constitution-making body. It was agreed upon by white sports bodies.

"But this does not mean that codes that have complied with the preconditions for participating in international competition should not do so because they have not reached consensus on the matter. They can evolve something of their own. They can raise a neutral flag, eg a white flag.

"They can't sing *Die Stem*. That would be outrageous because *Die Stem* is not representative of the people of this country. They can sing whatever they like, even a hymn, if they have to sing. And that will be a strong signal that South Africa is still a divided country." ♦



A soft sp

International sports can be very profitable, particularly if it is seen purely as a means to self-enrichment. Many leading sportspeople in the country see this as the reason why many old friends of the South African regime are fighting to bring South Africa back into world sports whether unity on the ground exists or not.

Does Primo Nebiolo, an Italian, president of the International Amateur Athletics Federation, fall into this category? This question has been posed after his recent utterances and actions. Beginning with the Tokyo games in July, he has been at pains to



Bacher on cricket's future

MAYIBUYE: What practical steps have been taken to develop the game in the townships?

Ali Bacher: It started in 1986. I can recall calling together a few of my friends and saying: "Look, in some small way, can't cricket play its role in bringing people together?" And we went into Soweto on October 20 1986. We advertised for children to come to the cricket, and we couldn't believe more than a thousand kids came.

After that I realised that black kids have a feel for cricket, rhythm, coordination, and that the viewpoint that blacks cannot or do not want to play cricket was nonsense when they are given the opportunities.

Whereas cricket was very much a white game, it is going to change. The potential is huge.

We have entered the most exciting era in the history of South African cricket.

Our biggest problem is the finance to put together adequate sporting facilities. One of the tragedies of the apartheid system I see whenever I go into townships is the fact that one can hardly find a field with any grass on it. That is going to require billions of rands.

There is a euphoria that we will soon be playing international cricket but at the same time we must never take our eye off the fact that there are no facilities in the townships and do everything possible over a period of time to redress these imbalances. Money can only come from central government when we talk about billions of rands. But we will play our part because when we have

t for apartheid sport

clear the ground for South Africa's entry into international sports. He even tried to stage the second leg of the Africa Games in Germiston.

He totally refused to leave the matter to the South Africans to resolve. He dangled before the athletes promises of bright careers if they made it to Tokyo. It is reliably learnt that failure to bring South Africa to Tokyo meant that his body lost R30 million rands in potential revenue from the publicity it would have got if South Africa had participated.

Who knows what the South

African boycott-busters promised behind the scenes? Remember Inkathagate and the state's public motivation behind the slush funds?

It is an open secret that the government had set aside R20 million for a special jet and much more for the ill-fated Tokyo adventure. Yet Louis Pienaar, the Minister of Education, refuses to fund non-racial sports bodies in the country and encourages individuals to "go it on their own". He knows that there are sports administrators up there who have a soft spot for apartheid and its slush funds. ♦



Ali Bacher

tours we believe we will make substantial profits and a significant percentage of them will go into the disadvantaged areas.

MAYIBUYE: How do you see the future of the game?

AB: It is fantastic. You know if you have a look at those photographs there (decorating the walls of his office), those are white South African teams from 1889 to 1970. Although we only played against Australia, New Zealand and England, we were a force in world cricket. Now you can imagine when we utilise all the people, all the resources, what the potential is for South African cricket.

We are unique. We play cricket 12 months a year, particularly in the townships because we are catching up for lost time. We have a massive programme to coach teachers how to coach cricket. The majority of teachers in the townships are women and since 1986 we have trained 5 000. We have black women teachers coaching cricket. I think these factors make me certain that in the second half of this decade we will dominate world cricket. ♦

The soccer saga

Most sports lovers in South Africa are dying to see our soccer back on the international scene. However, their hopes continue being dashed as one hopeful statement by a football official is followed by a disappointing one from another.

MAYIBUYE spoke to Mluleki George, the president of the South African Football Association about the problems facing South African soccer in its bid to be accepted back into world soccer.

George felt that the answer was to be found in the history of the soccer unity talks which date two years back. His feeling was that the unilateral withdrawal from the unity talks by the South African National Football Association then dealt a damaging blow to the progress that was being made towards unity. This year, however, there have been some meetings where Sanfa decided to stick it out and eventually joined Safa, the uniting body.

According to George, after it had joined, Sanfa apparently wrote some letters requesting a meeting with Safa but got no response. Since there had been no other meeting since they had joined, they decided to write a letter to the Confederation of African Football saying that unity in South African soccer did not exist except on paper. The effect of this was that the Safa delegation that went to Egypt in August to plead South Africa's acceptance into CAF was rejected.

After the delegation returned to South Africa there was a major meeting in September where many problems were thrashed out and appropriate structures created. It was agreed that from that day on, only the two top executive officers of Safa would make statements to the media. This was accepted by Safa. That meeting, George feels, represented a step forward and prospects that we could soon be in the international soccer circuit.

A letter had been received from the Executive Committee of CAF inviting Safa to their meeting in Cairo. This stems from a request by Safa. This response is a good signal to us but has come at very short notice and it is not certain if Safa could make it.

Asked about the source of the whole conflict between the soccer bodies, George said that the problem had nothing to do with principles but personal differences that could be ironed out. He stressed that as far as CAF and Fifa were concerned, they could accept South African football back, provided it had put its house in order. He felt that one thing stood to the advantage of our soccer — especially at the professional level — and that is that it is truly reflective of our society and therefore would be immediately acceptable. The same could not be said of rugby which would be all white, reflecting its apartheid outlook over the years. ♦

Back to international sport

On August 25 1991 the National Olympic Sports Congress of South Africa (NOSC) lifted the moratorium on the following codes: professional golf, amateur boxing, cricket, taekwondo martial arts, road running

On October 25 a meeting of NOSC and the Sout African Non-Racial Olympic Committee (Sanroc) lifted the moratorium, on an event by event basis, on:

tennis, badminton, canoeing, cycling, equestrian sport, ice skating, triathlon, yachting. ♦