



# Women in Non Racial Sport



A project formed to recover uncovered histories of sportspeople who contributed to building non-racial sport in the Apartheid era and to support building of non-racialism in the present and future.

# Empowering Women and Girls through sport

Sport can be an important tool for social empowerment through the skills and values learned, such as teamwork, negotiation, leadership, communication and respect for others. The social benefits of participation in sport are thought to be especially important for girls, given that many girls, particularly in adolescence, have fewer opportunities than boys for social interaction outside the home and beyond family structures. Women and girls acquire new interpersonal networks, develop a sense of identity and access new opportunities, allowing them to become more engaged in school and community life. Participation in sport also enables women and girls to enjoy freedom of expression and movement and increase their self-esteem and self-confidence.

It has also been argued that sport and physical education can serve as the basis for a sense of “positive embodiment”. This concept goes beyond the idea of physical fitness and incorporates psychological benefits and the Women swimming into the future In the 2004 tsunami in Indonesia, many women and girls were not able to swim or were not capable of climbing onto the roofs, up trees or to other safe areas. Women Without Borders, together with the Austrian Swimming Association and the Austrian Life-Saving Federation, are therefore implementing a programme to offer swimming lessons for girls and women in the South Indian coastal regions. This is not only a valuable contribution to their future survival, but also strengthens self-confidence and develops group identity and solidarity among the women. In addition, this unique initiative will bring more respect and an elevated status for women within their rural societies. Source: Women Without Borders.

The psychological benefits of physical activity, essential for a sense of positive embodiment, can be acquired through the enjoyment of the physical activity, self-chosen levels of competition, and the provision of social support from the family and the community. The concept of positive embodiment implies that women and girls have the right and responsibility to create active, healthy lifestyles to sustain vitality in their lives. There are psychological, emotional and medical benefits to doing so, as well as significant broader economic and social gains. The concept starts with traditional fitness and adds psychosocial wellness strategies and the pursuit of active self-care for body, mind and spirit. Positive embodiment requires a lifestyle incorporating self-assertion and self-care which is the basis of a vigorous and satisfying sense of one’s own body.

Positive embodiment can be seen as a model of self-care that allows women to achieve a balance between caring for themselves and caring for others. Most women prioritize the needs of others before their own needs, a pattern that often leads to neglect of themselves. As a result, women deplete their resources of time and energy in the care of others. Self-care involves the creation of personal time and space for women and opportunities for positive interaction of the mind, body and spirit. Adoption of the physical embodiment approach, with its critical concept of active self-care, would require complex changes in lifestyle for many women.

Sport can serve as a vehicle to improve women’s and girls’ leadership roles and participation in decision making. The acquisition of valuable skills in management, negotiation and decision-making empowers women and girls to become leaders in all areas of community life, as well as in the household.

*(United Nations Women 2000 and beyond)*



# CHAIRPERSON'S MESSAGE

The **focus on women** stems from the overarching **imbalances around gender** in society, and in sport.

Dear Friends,

Greetings and welcome to the NRSHP!

The function this afternoon gives a particular expression to the work of the project that started just over two years ago i.e. a focus on the contributions of women in sport during the Apartheid period. This is within the broader context of the aim of the project to close gaps in the history of non-racial sport in the country, to provide support to sportspersons or their families who may be in need, and to contribute to the large gaps in our sporting and socio-economic dispensation.

The focus on women stems from the overarching imbalances around gender in society, and in sport. Today, we acknowledge 50 women who played a role as sportspersons, administrators or behind the scenes when their partners were playing or administering. We have completed 34 interviews in 10 codes covering, Johannesburg Central, Lenasia, Pretoria and Ekurhuleni and West Rand.

Our intention is to continue with more interviews for the women component as well as in all the sporting codes, as time, resources and information allows. In parallel, we are working on publications of the over 120 interviews that have been completed and doing advocacy in the form of book launches, distribution of the publications, and exhibitions.

We also intend to strengthen our partnerships with supporters such as you, with our existing partners such as Wits University, Foundation for Human Rights (FHR), Bosmont Local Football Association (BLFA) and the national South African Soccer Federation Legends Committee, the Department of Sport and Recreation, national and provincial and the provincial government Social Cohesion Project. In the case of Wits University, our programme on Archiving materials of clubs, players, administrators and sponsors is making progress and we are hoping to extend it. In the case of Foundation for Human Rights whose seed funding has enabled us to complete whatever we have, we aim to discuss further support. The BLFA has provides solid infrastructural support to the NRSHP and that is intended to continue with the possibility of joint workshops and conferences to support club development and coaching. The national Department of Sport has agreed to collaborate with us on the sports history programme and that will be accelerated in the future.

We are starting discussions with organisations whose work is similar to ours, like Sport for Social Change, Girls for Sport, and Stellenbosch University. We have also been in contact with individuals and structures in provinces like Western, Northern and Eastern Cape, and KZN and the time may be ripe for discussions about a national programme.

In the course of our work, the responses from inside and outside the committee has raised several interesting perspectives such as why is this work relevant, how can it do more and be more effective. An unpacking of the keywords in the name of the project provides a good platform for responding to the issues.

**“Non-racial”** - Apartheid has been dismantled since 1994 in

South Africa, and racial discrimination across the globe has been legislated out; however, the effects of centuries of race, gender, class, disability and religions discrimination in South Africa and the globe have left deep scars. In South Africa, poverty and inequality still run deep. Witness the frequency of social delivery protests, incidents of xenophobia, crime rates, education and now good governance protests. Programmes like the Truth and Reconciliation Commission have addressed partial aspects of the damage and trauma inflicted by the past.

**“Sports”** - South Africa is a sports mad country and the history of sport is punctuated with harsh discrimination and potential and excellence stifled by abnormal social and sports arrangements. Post 1994, the elite aspects of the bigger codes ( Rugby, Cricket and Soccer) have increased access to small band of talented players and administrators from historically disadvantaged backgrounds and has been accompanied by heavy commercialisation but benefits flowing to a small elite. Smaller codes like swimming, tennis, table tennis, and hockey have not received similar commercial backing and grassroots sports in almost all areas have encountered decline of previous levels or are falling far short of desired levels of participation and enabling resources for development.

**“History”** - Historical records of the highly profiled achievements of human civilization repeatedly refer to the lessons of history and the failure or setbacks experienced with great ideas due to not heeding the lessons of history. Historical debates are filled with the questions of historical bias based on race, gender, class, disability and religion. In the history of South African sport, there are clear instances of such biases and gaps which need to be closed.

The barometer of achievements and challenges in the key areas of work of the project, non-racialism, history and sport, shows that scope for making meaningful contributions is large. In the

context of limited resources, the focus may have to be on raising awareness and suggesting ideas in the initial stages.

In a climate of increasing activism about social issues in the country and the world, the conditions are good for doing research on possibilities for making progress on the objectives and targets contained in the key social justice charters such as the national constitution and the manifestos of all social justice institutions and organisations.

We look forward to your continued support and participation in this work.

We invite you to contribute to the work of the NRSHP in any form you are able to i.e joining up, contributing ideas, financial, referrals of individual and organisations who may be able to contribute.

The committee is made up of a dedicated band of volunteers and the fruits of its work are what you see today. The committee has established a presence in Laudium, Benoni, Lenasia, Bosmont and Azaadville.

Thank you.

**Historical debates** are filled with the questions of **historical bias based on race, gender, class, disability** and religion.

## Reducing stress conditions through physical activity among women in Bosnia Herzegovina

Dr. Fadila Ibrahimbegovic-Gafic from the University of Sarajevo assessed the initial physical and mental conditions of 70 women and conducted a physical activity programme that aimed to reduce stress conditions in women aged 40-55 in war-stricken areas of Bosnia-Herzegovina. The programme succeeded not only in reducing stress but also in changing attitudes towards physical exercise and its effects on physical recovery. Source: Oglesby, Carole A., in collaboration with the International Working Group on Women and Sport, Women Sport International, the International Association of Physical Education for Women and Girls, and the International Council of Sport Science and Physical Education (2006). Positive Embodiment: Contributions of Sport, Exercise and Physical Recreation to the Life-long Development of Girls and Women. (Brief prepared for the Division for the Advancement of Women.) The promotion of education can also be facilitated by sport. Sports teams and organizations, as well as local, national and international competitions, provide an excellent opportunity to provide information and knowledge on the importance of girls' education. In particular, sport can be a useful tool to expand educational opportunities for children who are not able to go to

school or who only attend on an irregular basis. Research on the impact of physical education on academic performance is also emerging. The inter linkages between perceptual, cognitive and motor development are such that many argue that physical activity such as physical education and sport is critical for optimal learning. Research findings indicate that:

- Physical activity has positive effects on the ability to concentrate;
- An increase in physical activity can lead to improvements in problem solving skills and improved academic results; and
- There is a high correlation between high standardized test scores and high fitness scores.<sup>52</sup> Studies in the United States, for example, have also pointed to a positive relationship between girls' participation in sport, positive attitudes towards education and higher academic achievements.<sup>53</sup> Gender sensitive programmes that successfully increase girls' participation in sport therefore have the potential to positively influence girls' academic performance.

*(United Nations Women 2000 and beyond)*

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF WOMEN SPORTSPERSONS

## WOMEN INTERVIEWED

Carman Bennett – Softball  
 Carol Brookestein – Athletics  
 Claudette Stephne Mclean – Netball, Tennis & Hockey  
 Dawn Naidoo – Basketball & Netball  
 Debbie Prim – Athletics  
 Delphine Rachel Feldman – Netball  
 Denise Mooloo – Netball, Gymnastics, Body Building  
 Dhanaletchme Naidoo Wife(Pillay) – Soccer  
 Elaine Van Zeeberg – Primary Schools Sport  
 Elizabeth Block – High Schools Sport  
 Elvina (Tromp) Munni – Netball  
 Farieda Allie – Softball  
 Felicity Anne Rose Fraser – High Schools Sport  
 Gabrielle Jacobs-Tucker – Volleyball  
 Glynnis Peters – Hockey & Softball  
 Gwendoline Bennett – Softball  
 Halima Khan – Swimming  
 Heather Carolus – Athletics  
 Heather Kock – Hockey  
 Ingrid Bosch – Hockey  
 Jacquoline Cloudine van Staade – Tennis  
 Joan Edwards – Athletics & Hockey & Softball  
 June Metherell – Hockey & Softball  
 Karen (Jacobs) Stein – Swimming  
 Liesel (Jacobs) Rose – Swimming

Margeret Lackay – Table Tennis  
 Marissa Rose – Hockey & Softball  
 Martha Block  
 Merle Myra Mathews  
 Michelle (Jacobs) Davids – Hockey & Athletics  
 Mrs Ranganaygie Pillay – Woman in Sport  
 Mrs Sinthamonie Naidoo – Woman in Sport  
 Mrs Vasugee Moodley – Woman in Sport  
 Naeema Moosa – Netball, Hockey, Athletics, Softball  
 Nicolette Wright – Athletics & Volleyball  
 Nirmala (Moodley) Jivan – Athletics & Netball  
 Olga Hilton – Hockey  
 Razelle De Jongh – Wife of Pro Player  
 Rosalie Manning – Hockey  
 Silvi Moody – Wife of Soccer Player  
 Ursula Soombur – Soccer & Volleyball  
 Veronica Barron – High Schools Sport  
 Zenobia Salama Dupree – Primary Schools Sport  
 Zohrea Mayet – Netball  
 Zohra (Daniels) Asvat – Wife of Cricketer  
 Mrs Ali – Softball  
 Latifa Ali – Softball  
 Aysha Bham – Tennis  
 Zohra Asvat – Wife of Cricketer  
 Serina Salie Waja – Wife of Tennis Player, administrator



Elvina Munni



Ingrid Bosch



Zoreia Mayet

### The Executive Committee of the NRSHP


Chairperson – Haroon Mohamed  
 General Secretary – Michael Kahn  
 Communications Secretary – Rosalie Manning  
 Administration Secretary – Ajitkumar Gandabhai  
 Treasurer – Dereck Eastwood

Vice Chairperson – Younaid Waja  
 Finance Secretary - Fatima Jadean  
 Data Base Co-Ordinator – Corin Mathews  
 Special Advisor - Noor Nieftagodien  
 Special Projects Director - Fatima Jadean

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 non racial sport history project

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Glynis Peters



Razell De Jongh



Liesel (Jacobs) Rose



Halima Khan



Veronica Barron



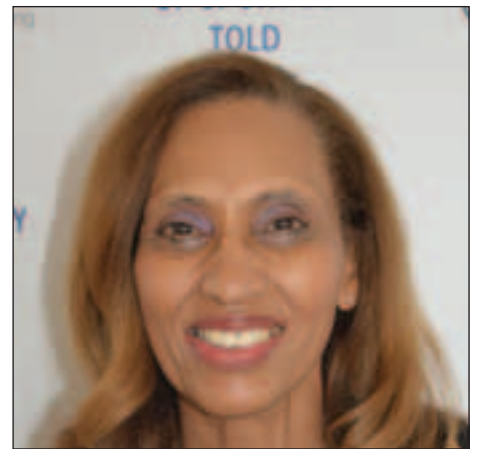
Elizabeth Block



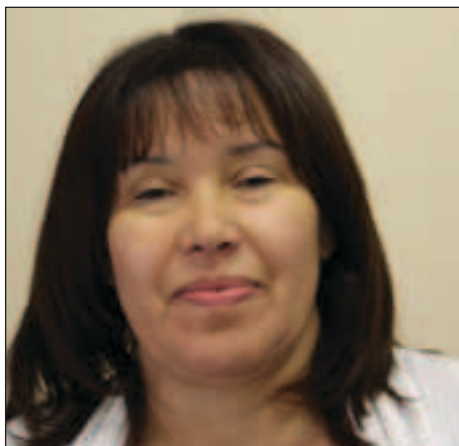
Mrs Farieda Ali



Delphine Feldman



Felicity Frazer



Heather Carolus



Latifa Allie



Carman Bennett



Rosalie Manning



Gwendoline Bennett



Nicolette Meyer (Wright)



Ursula Soombur



Jacqueline Van Staade



Nirmala Jivan



Marissa Rose



Silvy Moodley.

## Challenging stereotypes and reducing discrimination

Given that sport was traditionally a male domain, the participation of women and girls in sport challenges a multitude of gender stereotypes, not only those related to physical ability but also those regarding women's role in local communities and society at large. By directly challenging and dispelling misconceptions about women's capabilities, integrated sport programmes help to reduce discrimination and broaden the role prescribed to women.<sup>54</sup> An increase of women in leadership positions in sport can also have a significant influence on social attitudes towards women's capabilities as leaders and decision makers.

(United Nations Women 2000 and beyond)

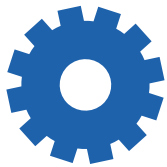
Ajit Gandabhai

# Non-Racialism IN ACTION

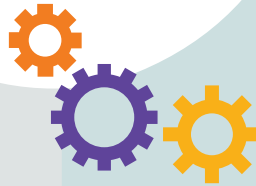
The non-racial sports administrators, clubs, and players fought racial laws and galvanized support from political, trade union, youth, civic and international anti-apartheid organisations to isolate racist sport internationally and provided players with structures to play sports.

Many players had to turn down lucrative offers from those promoting racial sports and play on sub-standard facilities.

Many people opened their homes open for meetings, stay-overs, sponsored meals and dug into their pockets financially to make the structures function.



## Hallmarks of **NON-RACIALISM**



• **NO COMPROMISES**  
on equal  
opportunities to play  
sport

**SHARE VICTORY  
AND DEFEAT**  
with a balanced  
state of mind

**NO RACE,**  
only the  
human race

**ACCOUNT**  
financially  
and  
otherwise

**LEAD BY EXAMPLE**  
on and off the field

**INSPIRE**  
to great  
heights

**N O N R A C I A L I S M**

**OVERCOME FEAR**  
of failure and  
persecution

**COMMITMENT,**  
care and  
empathy

**INVITE AND INTERACT**  
with new ideas

**ADAPT**  
to changing  
circumstances

**RESPECT ALL**  
regardless of  
class

**MANAGE THE EGO**  
and expect nothing in  
return for sacrifices made





# WOMEN IN NON-RACIAL SPORT

## PRELIMINARY THOUGHTS FROM THE ORAL HISTORY PROJECT



┌ A few dozen **women have been interviewed** and their life stories have **unlocked a treasure trove** of individual, family and community histories, which have already **enriched our understanding** of non-racial sport as a complex and **multi-faceted movement**. ┐

It is indisputable and unfortunate that women remain peripheral actors in the histories of sport. This reality reflects both the continued marginalization of women in history in general and the predominance of men in sport. Despite proving their excellence, women internationally continue to struggle for equality because sport has traditionally been associated with male prowess and masculinity. Commercial dominance of sport has reinforced this fundamental tendency by heavily promoting those codes that reap huge profits such as football, cricket and rugby, which are male dominated. Since the early 1990s, South Africa rapidly fell in line with these international trends, which has had the effect of seriously undercutting community-based sport and further undermining women's sport. In the recent past there has been a proliferation of sport histories internationally, but these have been dominated by male celebrity biographies. With some exceptions, such as the writing by Ashwin Desai, Andre Odendaal, Peter Alegi and Cheryl Roberts the histories of black sport in South Africa remain under-researched and unknown beyond the circles of people who directly involved. This problem is compounded in relation to SACOS and even worse when it comes to the role of women in non-racial sport.

As with other facets of black history, uncovering the multi-layered roles and contributions of women in the making of non-racial sport is an urgent task. These histories mainly reside in the memories of participants, some of who began their involvement in the antecedents of formal non-racial sport, in the streets and dusty fields of inner-city locations and schools.

Since the launch of our history project, concerted efforts have been made to redress the gender imbalance in recording and writing the histories of non-racial sport. This has been done mainly by interviewing sportswomen from various codes, as well as women who contributed to non-racial sport as supporters, administrators, coaches and in many other, often unacknowledged, roles. In this endeavor, we have received enthusiastic endorsement from sportswomen who recognize that their stories are in danger of being lost forever. A few dozen women have been interviewed and their life stories have unlocked a treasure trove of individual, family and community histories, which have already enriched our understanding of non-racial sport as a complex and multi-faceted movement. We are beginning to piece together the histories of clubs formed by women, particularly hockey, netball, softball and volleyball. At the same time, we have also encountered some reluctance by women to speak about their own roles because

they perceive themselves as having been less important than their male counterparts. This view has been expressed by players, administrators and supporters. Because men were generally the well-known sport stars and invariably occupied prominent positions in the administration of clubs and national structures, women often defer to them as the authorities on the history of non-racial sport. This echoes the approach of many anti-apartheid women activists who also tend to view their role as secondary to male activists, despite having been central actors in the struggle for freedom.

A prominent and enduring image of women in non-racial sport is of them literally sitting on the sidelines of games involving men. Sometimes they would be more animated, shouting encouragements to a son or husband, or berating an opponent or a referee, but still from the sidelines. In these images, women appear principally in supporting roles, as mothers, wives and girlfriends. This is not only a partial portrayal of women, but it also fundamentally underestimates the central role played by women in the movement of non-racial sports.

In order better to understand the histories of women in non-racial sport, it is important to remember that SACOS was more than an assemblage of sporting codes and activities. It was a movement, based in communities and schools that sought to challenge apartheid through sport, under the emblematic banner of 'no normal sport in an abnormal society'. At its height in the 1980s the non-racial sport movement had hundreds of thousands of participants and supporters, in schools and clubs and in urban and rural communities across the country. It is clear from our experiences and the interviews that women were instrumental in the success of this movement, as players, supporters, administrators, political activists and officials. In fact, they were the glue that kept the non-racial sport movement together.

Young women participated in large numbers in primary and high school athletics, which were the main space of sporting activities. This was especially true at high schools where inter-school competitions were highlights and achieving provincial or national colours was regarded as the pinnacle of a young black athlete's career. The vast majority of women interviewed have spoken enthusiastically about their school athletics achievements: setting records, training several times a week on poor fields and travelling to other parts of the country to participate in national competitions. These were serious events and athletes trained hard. Equally important are their memories of enjoyment, meeting athletes from different provinces and being hosted by families.

One of our interviewees recalled her participation in high-jump, long-jump, 100m and 200m events. She and other athletes trained three times per week, from 14h00 to 17h00, on fields that were poorly maintained. She was one of the top sportswomen at her school, and won several awards for her athletic abilities. Inter-high and inter-provincial competitions were highlights of her sporting career. She was enormously proud to represent her school and province, and looked forward to challenging similarly gifted athletes from across the country. Material rewards for excelling in sport were unimportant and, in any event, unavailable in the non-racial sport community.

Participation in non-racial sports was limited at tertiary education level, especially in the former Transvaal due to the absence of 'bush universities'. Those who went to study at institutions such

as the Universities of the Western Cape, Durban-Westville, Fort Hare or Turfloop were able in varying degrees to continue their involvement in non-racial sport. In Johannesburg, the Rand College of Education was an important centre of activism and non-racial sport. Several of the women who were interviewed further developed their sporting interests at the College and from there became instrumental in the promotion of non-racial sport in the schools. It was also at the College where the political principles and objectives of SACOS were imbibed and carried into schools. Women, according to one of interviews, were actively involved in the overtly political work of the movement, attending political education seminars and spreading the idea of non-racialism.

Female teachers who participated in school sports usually became enthusiastic organisers and coaches. One respondent said that she was passionate about physical education and pushed her students to excel in their sporting codes. Another coached netball and athletics for many years at different schools and was most satisfied when her students made the provincial athletics team. The interviews confirm that female teachers were pivotal in organizing sport at schools, which were arguably the foundation on which the non-racial sport movements was built. Coaching and organizing sporting events, including regional and national inter-school competitions, took up considerable time and with limited resources depended on the voluntary labour of ordinary people, especially women. Furthermore, the weekly sporting activities, which included coaching, dressing, driving, feeding and providing emotional support, constituted the life-blood of non-racial sport at school. Much of this is unknown and depended heavily on female teachers and members of the community.

In a world of mega sponsorships, it is difficult to imagine how non-racial sport survived and even thrived. An interviewee, whose husband played cricket, remembers that wives provided food for the cricket team and were active in fundraising events, such as dinners and performances. She and her family, like many others across the country provided accommodation, meals and transport for visiting teams. Without this kind of support, non-racial sport would have been confined to particular localities and schools, and not have become an important national movement that challenged a crucial part of apartheid ideology, while simultaneously building an alternative vision and practice of non-racial and community-based sport.

As we proceed with the research on women in non-racial sport it is hoped we can better highlight the role of sportswomen from primary school to national competitions. Simultaneously, it is crucial to extend our focus on the multiple roles played by women in the development of the non-racial sport movement. But we intend going beyond uncovering these hidden histories. It is equally important to produce these histories from the perspectives of women and to foreground the many challenges faced by women as they struggled to carve out spaces for themselves in a movement – of sport and politics - dominated by men.

### **Professor Noor Niefertgodien**

South African Research Chair(SARCHi): Local Histories, Present Realities  
Head of History Workshop  
University of the Witwatersrand

# WOMEN and Sport

*(Abridged version of a talk on Sexism in Sport delivered at the 1987 SACOS Biennial General Meeting. Reprinted from Solidarity Volume 5 August 1988)*

In spite of research proving that women have the same levels of skill and competence as men, they are still as inferior beings. In some countries, after women have protested, laws have been passed against blatant sexual discrimination. But laws are not enough. The consciousness of both men and women has to be raised, so that people reject sexual exploitation.

In the world of sport, sexist discrimination against women takes on two definite forms: women as 'sex' objects, and the lack of women's participation in decision making.

## WOMEN AS SEX OBJECTS

Have you noticed troops of women as drum majorettes, or dressed in scanty swimming suits to announce the next round in a boxing match? It is rarely the precision of their actions that causes admiring comment, but the shape of their legs revealed by the ridiculous costumes modeled on men's army uniforms (in itself a questionable model for progressive organisations to choose)!

So at the boxing match, the concept of women as 'sex objects' is contrasted with the power and aggression of the male boxers!

At major functions associated with sports (dinner, prize givings, etc, beauty contests are part the proceedings. It is widely felt that this degrades women, even though those who participate may not be conscious of this.

In keeping with the 'sex object' image, women are socialized into playing those sports which do not "spoil the figure" or develop "big muscles" – muscular bodies are seen as being good only for males. So ,at school girls receive no encouragement to do things like javelin, shotput, etc.

## TRIVIALISING OF WOMEN'S SPORT

Where women wish to play sports traditionally associated with men, their efforts are constantly ridiculed. For example, there is a women's soccer club in the Eastern Cape. They cant



The **consciousness** of both **men and women** has to be raised, so that people reject **sexual exploitation**.



get access to the fields only when there happens to be an opening in the bookings, not as a right.

And have you noticed that women's trophies are always smaller than those of men, even when they play the same sport?

This is just another way of showing that women are regarded as less important than men.

### WOMEN IN SPORTS ADMINISTRATION

The representation of women on controlling bodies entirely confined to the women's sports. A national schools sport organization with only three women representatives out of thirty – three is typical. This needs not surprise us, since social practices in sport are a reflection of prejudices in society at large. Because women have to carry the task of domestic work and childcare, they have little time to participate in other activities outside the home. As a result, women find it difficult to attend meetings or take on the tasks involved in the running of sports organisations.

### WIDER ISSUES

There are other important issues to bear in mind when dealing with sexism in sport.

Firstly, we must the class bias in sport. Middle class people tend to play more sport, have better access to fields through fee-paying clubs, and to the necessary equipment which is costly. This means that working class people have very little opportunity to play many of the sports. Imagine how much more difficult working class women find it to get involved in sport.

Secondly, religious beliefs sometimes against women. Venues which they may not enter, and clothing they must wear mean that they cannot take part in most sports.

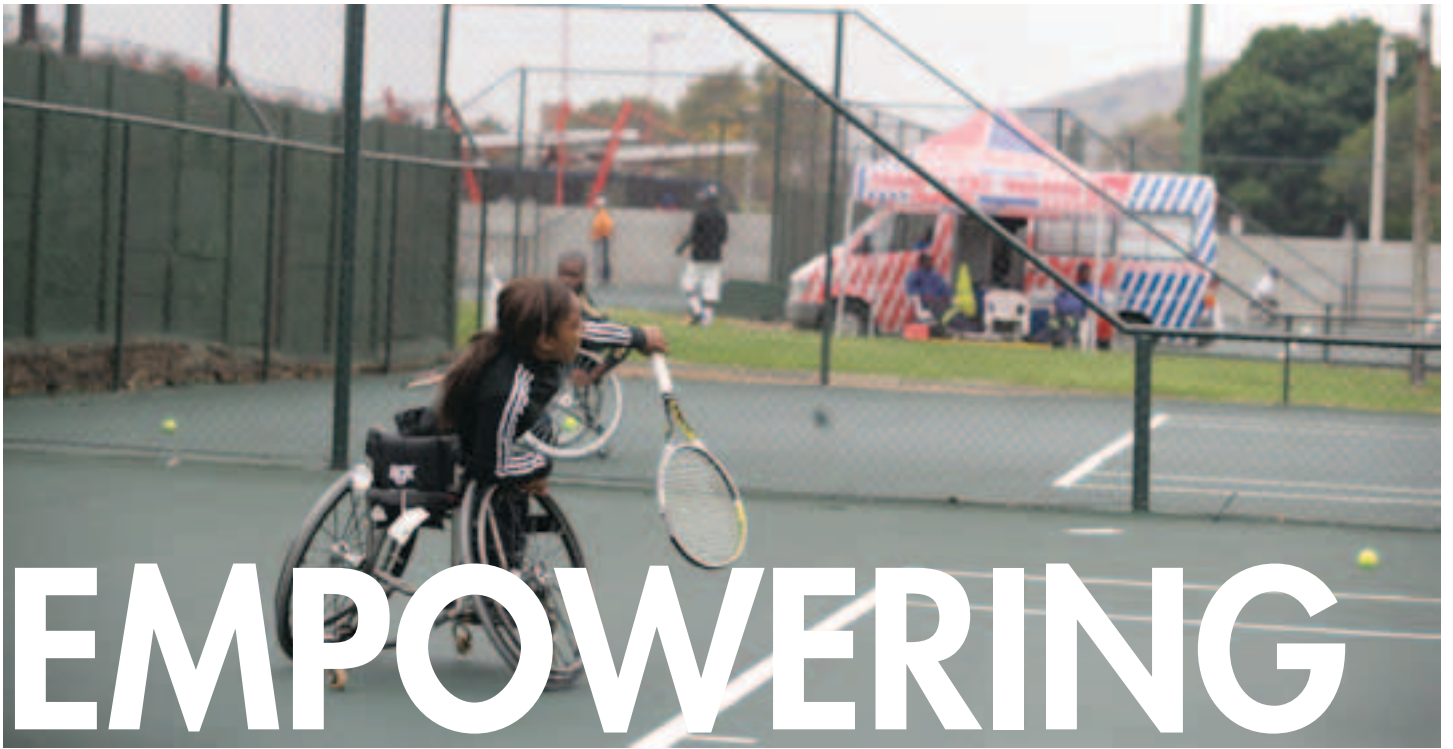
Thirdly, because beliefs sometimes cause discrimination against women, women and men rarely together or against each other. This competitive ethic is nowhere being challenged, and so women are not allowed the opportunity of increasing their prowess by playing with men.

## RECOMMENDATION

- **Drum majorettes and beauty contest are unacceptable.** They have no place in SACOS activities and must be replaced with gymnastade, displays of skill, precision and alternative art and cultural programmes.
- SACOS should be **encouraging tournaments like tennis, hockey, soccer, cricket and volleyball** where men and women can play together in mixed teams. In this way both sexism and competitiveness could be discouraged in favour of an emphasis on physical exercise and pleasure. This would constitute a real change to the racist, capitalist values of multi-national sport in South Africa.
- SACOS should **promote the revision of the school sports syllabus** and start the move towards the abolition of gender – divided sports curriculum in schools.
- SACOS should **run a public campaign aimed at transforming the image of women and attitudes towards them.** SACOS enjoys the wide respect in the community, and could contribute a great deal to the women's cause.
- SACOS should link with the wider demand from women's organisations to **relieve women from the drudgery of housework that keeps them away from outside activities, including sport.**
- Sports centers with proper facilities for women, **full provision of childcare, the employment of women motivators,** could increase the level of women's participation.
- SACOS should encourage, where possible, that **men and women have equal representation** on all decision-making committees
- Sportswomen should **liberate themselves mentally and physically.**







# EMPOWERING

## GIRLS as LEADERS

Girls' participation in sport can **generate a greater awareness and understanding of their bodies** and its functions, as well as a **greater sense of self-ownership and respect.**

As more and more women and girls serve in leadership and decision making positions, their influence as role models and mentors encourages more women and girls to participate at all levels of sport. Promoting and documenting the successes of women and girl leaders in the world of sport is an important step in raising awareness and providing encouragement and support to other aspiring leaders.

Sporting activities can be an important forum for providing information to women and girls on sexuality and health, including reproductive health. Girls' participation in sport can generate a greater awareness and understanding of their bodies and its functions, as well as a greater sense of self-ownership and respect. A study by the Women's Sports Foundation on sport and teen pregnancy in the United States found that the sense of ownership and respect for their bodies developed by adolescent girls who participate in sport encourages them to delay sexual activity, thereby reducing the levels of teen pregnancy. Research on links between sport and girls' sexual behaviour has also been conducted by the Wellesley Centres for Women. The study showed that the decrease in risky sexual behaviour among girls who participate in sport is partly due to a delay in sexual initiation

and partly due to social-psychological dynamics, such as enhanced self-confidence, a less stereotypical gender identity and/or a stronger desire to avoid teenage pregnancy.

The United Nations Inter-Agency Task Force on Sport for Development and Peace found that the groups most at risk of contracting HIV/AIDS—women and young people, especially girls— (United Nations Women 2000 and beyond)

# BLACK SPORTSWOMEN MADE UNSELFISH CONTRIBUTION

## To Non-Racial, Anti-Apartheid Sport

### Cheryl Roberts

It has become very easy to forget the contributions of those in non-racial, anti-apartheid sport who got us into the era of our non-racial, democratic sports dispensation. Whilst some tributes have taken place around South Africa for those who reached the sports pyramid under harsh apartheid conditions, they have been largely focused on the sports prowess of sportsmen. The women pioneers of non-racial sport, who contributed immensely to the opposition of apartheid sport, have not appeared on the radar of tributes, honour and recognition.

Women pioneers of non-racial sport who participated in all levels of sport should be applauded and acknowledged for their contribution in travelling a very difficult journey that would eventually open more opportunities for girls and women in sport.

It was a committed journey which saw the sportswomen give their heart and soul, with no financial gain or assistance and no material rewards, to the consolidation of non-racial sport and the creation of opportunities for disadvantaged, oppressed girls and women and men. For every woman who participated in some level of sport, whether as a spectator, tea-maker, club player, wife or girlfriend many more girls and women were attracted to sport because of the other women who were already there.

Whilst much more opportunities have today been opened and created, because of our non-racial, democratic South Africa, for millions of girls and women to participate in sport, the thousands who participated in non-racial, anti-apartheid sport have not been accorded the recognition and honour which they deserve and which is justifiably owed to them in lieu of their contribution to a free, non-racial democratic South African society.

Black women played league tennis in Langa in the 1940's, coloured women played basketball, table tennis, tennis, badminton, hockey, softball from the 1940's. Coloured and black women have been involved in rugby from the turn of the 20th century. Yet, the outstanding talents of South Africa's elite black sportswomen, as well as the dedication of women officials, coaches, volunteers in sport, for most of the time has gone unnoticed.

If the majority of South Africans did not have adequate sports amenities and facilities, government funding or sponsorship from business, imagine what meagre and little resources were hanging around for black girls and women? Yet they organised and developed sport in the disadvantaged, oppressed and severely deprived communities. Talented sportswomen emerged from these communities but they received very little financial or infrastructural support. The women who chose non-racial sport put principles above money and chose to advance a non-racial, democratic society where all South Africans are one nation, living in one country and are treated equally.

Blacks got very few facilities at school and in communities under the apartheid regime but we played non-racial sport and contributed to the creation of our non-racial, democratic society. Millions of people fought for non-racial sport and for the liberation of South Africa. Today, when we enjoy international sport we must not forget those who made it possible for us to achieve international legitimacy and play international sport.

Women who were involved in sport from way back in the 1940s are still involved in sport today, still giving their time to sport and still loving sport. Post-apartheid SA has gone on to record international sport victories and the sport prowess of our sports has surfaced with the eradication of apartheid. Elite and professional sports stars abound in all sports and SA derives much joy and pride from international sport. And through all of this our women are still involved in sport, still organizing and still loving sport but never forgetting where we came from and what got us to where we are today. Millions of girls and women enjoy sport with the elite going on to participate internationally. We must not forget those who fought apartheid in sport and made it possible for the creation of a new sports era.

Recognition and honour should be bestowed upon our sportswomen and women in sport, including the spectators, kitchen assistants, tea and coffee makers, players, officials, wives, girlfriends, mothers, coaches who chose to play and support non-racial, anti-apartheid sport and who struggled to reach the top of the sports pyramid because of all the obstacles they encountered. But demonstrate their talent they surely did! The non-racial sportswomen of the 50's, 60's, 70's, 80's, contributed greatly to the creation of non-racial sports structures and to the eradication of apartheid in South African society.

And we should honour and pay tribute to our anti-apartheid sports struggle and remember the sacrifices and principles of our leaders, officials, heroines and heroes who chose a difficult journey and sacrificed a lifetime for an equitable, non-racial sports dispensation in South Africa. We should not allow our struggle stalwarts to be easily erased or omitted from celebration and commemorations.

We should also create much more space and engage those who have the financial and media power about the development of women in all levels of sport. We must also take our opportunities to applaud our girls and women in sport, particularly with the advent of the 2010 men's Football World Cup Finals and men's cricket and rugby World Cups because the focus is all on the men with the sportswomen struggling for financial assistance, spectator support, media recognition and overall national support.

# WOMEN'S SPORT MUST BE SUPPORTED, ESPECIALLY BY WOMEN!



## Cheryl Roberts

Sponsors are often guilty of saying that women's sports events do not attract as much viewers as sportsmen or is not as attractive, crowd pleasing and crowd pulling as the men in sport. Why must women continue to struggle on their sports journey? Who is responsible for controlling women's participation in sport and what allocation of resources goes to women in sport?

Future success for women in sport can be achieved on massive levels, but it must not be determined by the opinions and decisions of male decision-makers in sport who decide on an ad hoc basis who, when and what to allocate to women's sport. The voices required to give attention to women's sport must be stronger and more challenging, and these voices must come from the women themselves, who must take the reins and give leadership to the organization and development of women in sport.

Along the route of a woman in sport are several injustices, repression and inequalities that must be challenged and offloaded, particularly homophobia and the sexualisation of sports girls and sportswomen.

Men don't mind having women in sport, so long as the women are there on their terms. For instance, they want the women to play in skirts and dresses, the 'dress code' socialization of their gender. The governing body of badminton wants to introduce a law whereby women badminton players play only in skirts, not in shorts. Beach volleyball insisted that women volleyball would play in shorts shorter than shorts, actually in underwear, to make it more attractive. FIFA President Sepp Blatter wants women footballers to be 'more feminine'. These are all standards set by men, for the interests of men, so that women's sport is boxed, according to sexism and men's standards. And then, there is also the struggle amongst women themselves of how they see and describe what is 'feminine' and heterosexism as being the only accepted sexuality.

We know that society's gender inequalities in society are very much present in sport, and that several conferences, workshops, talk sessions have been held by government, sports federations and gender activists to discuss the positioning of women in sport. Now it's time we move forward, knowing that we don't want our women to be given a raw deal, nor treated as a not

so significant entity in sport because much, too much money is spent on men's sport at the cost of the under development of women.

Who is going to take up this challenge to radically transform the social positioning of women in sport in a capitalist society, where participation in sport depends largely on a few government hand outs here and there, especially if you are black and working class.

The challenge is at the door of women themselves, who really cannot, and should not, allow women's sport to be dictated by the discourse of patriarchy and male domination, because when given power, men protect the interests of men and not women and sportswomen will always get the crumbs and handouts on a piece meal basis.

Women in sport, the challenges accompanying this gender in sports involvement, is an all year affair, lifelong challenge and should never be let off any agenda of transformation.

Who is responsible for controlling women's participation in sport and what allocation of resources goes to women in sport?

