



# Where Prestige cricketers are groomed

**P**RESTIGE College in Hammanskraal has become the centre of cricket development in its area, and it is producing quality black cricketers to go into Cricket South Africa's talented players pipeline.

It's been quite a journey for coach Thabiso Makwela, who started coaching after hours at the school in 2010 when there was only one cricket field, in poor condition, with a synthetic pitch and two run-down nets.

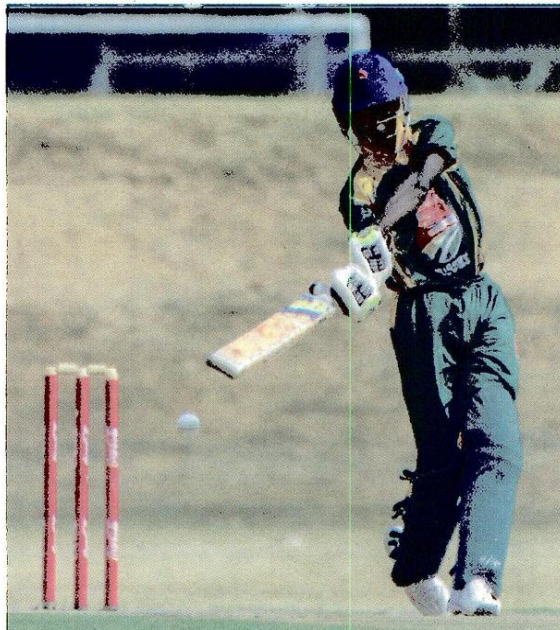
Thabiso is now employed full time, has an assistant coach, Sidney Maluleke, and they have two cricket fields and eight practice nets. The main field has a seven-wicket turf strip.

When Cricket South Africa and Northern's Cricket saw the amount of work that the school did to grow their programme, they decided to assist them in building their facilities. Prestige College is now a Cricket South Africa Focus School.

When he arrived there, Thabiso could see that the kids were keen to play cricket and there was too much work to do for only one part-time coach. So he convinced the headmistress to employ him full-time and he got his friend, Sidney Maluleke, to help him.

The school is impressed with what Thabiso has done at the school and the headmistress, Mrs Pienaar, continues to encourage the programme and to look for funding to get more cricket players into the school.

They don't just help their own pupils, they also coach at the local hubs in Hammanskraal, Soshanguve, Atteridgeville and Mamelodi, and if they see talented players there, they try to get them into their school.



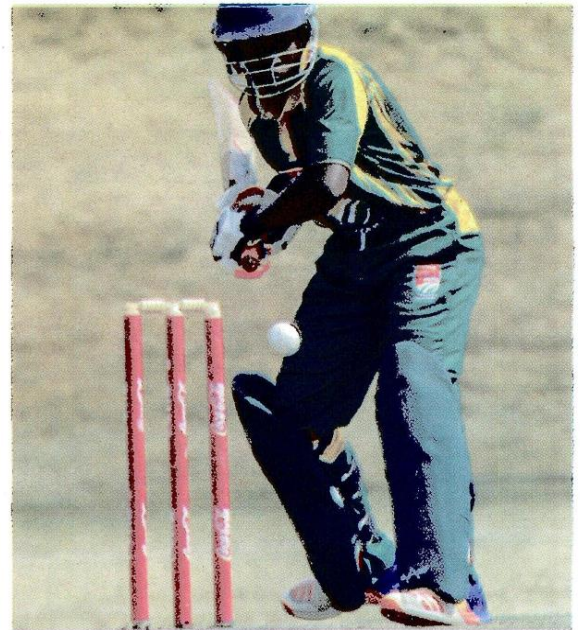
Koos Motubates.

At the moment, there are nine players that have been picked up through the hubs and six of them stay in the school hostel. Practices finish late and as some of the areas around the school are not safe, the school provides transport home for the kids that are not in the hostel.

The policy is to look for players who cannot afford to go to the traditional cricket schools and get them into Prestige, where they will be able to get the same coaching they get at a traditional cricket school.

And the focus is not only on cricket. The player's academic development is stressed and if a pupil is struggling, the school will provide assistance and they will stop them from playing sport until their marks are up to an acceptable level.

There have been a number of success stories. Apart from Prestige College qualifying twice as the Inland Focus School to play in the Coca-Cola Schools T20 Challenge national finals, a number of players have received provincial recog-



Tumelo Banda.

ognition. Tumelo Banda, the school's Northern's under-17 all-rounder, is an example. He plays provincial cricket but also has an academic average in the 80s.

Thabo Motaung, last year's captain, did so well at school that he got a bursary to go to Tuks and is playing cricket for the university.

"We did not have a great tournament at the Coca-Cola Schools T20 finals, from a cricket perspective," Thabiso said, "but the boys learned so much from the experience and

have grown as a team since then.

"The growth of the team is psychological, they are more experienced, they have learned to focus on the game and not the opposition, and they have learned that their behaviour on and off the field is very important.

"They also learned that positive body language leads to a positive game and that they must be prepared to compete as equals."

This attitude could be seen even though Prestige did not win.

