

the MEDALIST

sport, science, knowledge

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from the CEO'S OFFICE

It seems like only yesterday that we were all glued to our TV sets watching the pinnacle of all sporting events from the XXXth Olympiad in London and what a Games it was for the country and more importantly in the life of the hpc.

In late February 2009 Mr. Gideon Sam announced SASCOC's strategy towards London 2012. "SASCOC's goal is to select a team capable of winning 12 medals by 2012! Gideon made it clear that SASCOC will be demanding potential medal winning performances come Olympic selection time."

"It is proposed that high performance sport will revert back to SASCOC while funds will be prioritized for the codes that traditionally have been successful namely; Athletics, Swimming, Boxing, Rowing, Canoeing, Cycling, Judo, Shooting and Weightlifting." He said that this strategy would rely heavily on the sport scientific support and expertise as well as the facilities of the universities around South Africa.

I was one of the invited guests that listened to Gideon's plea for the sports fraternity to take up the challenge and step up in preparation for 2012. I subsequently directed my staff to prioritize the annual hpc sportscience support sponsorships to current and potential Olympians. Twelve Olympians and six young promising athletes covering Swimming, Athletics, Rowing, Canoeing, Judo and Triathlon were presented to me and also to the then high performance manager of TuksSport, Mrs. Xilia Dreyer for consideration. The high performance centre in conjunction with TuksSport

and the Institute for Sports Research then committed our sportscience and sports medical services, sports facilities and coaches to these athletes with the belief that it will significantly enhance their performances.

I wish to congratulate our Olympians whose performances have catapulted them into the limelight and South African History books as they are members of a very small number of Olympic medal winners in South African history.

South Africa first took part in the Olympic Games in St Louis in 1904 and we won our first medal in the London Olympics of 1908 with a gold medal in the 100 meters from Reggie Walker and a silver medal from Charles Hefferon in the Marathon. Swimming only won its first medal in the Amsterdam Olympics in 1928 with the Womens 4 x 100 m freestyle relay team of Rhoda Rennie, Rederica van der Goes, Maria Redford and Kathleen Russell winning a Bronze medal. As most of you know, Rowing first medalled at the 2004 Athens Olympics in the men's coxless pairs.

We are therefore extremely proud of our unique group of Olympians who are all the first Olympians to medal for South Africa in their respective events. Our Gold winning "Oarsome Foursome" of James Thompson, Matthew Brittain, Lawrence Ndlovu and John Beanie Smith, our silver medal winner in the Women's 800m, Caster Semenya and our Bronze medal winner in the Women's K1 500m Canoeing, Bridgitte Hartley, a huge congratulations for your outstanding achievements. You now bring the medal tally for South Africa's



participation in the Olympic Games up to 76 medals, so you are a very select band of sportsmen and women.

To add to these medals we are also proud of the performances of our International athletes/friends who honed and polished their performances here at the hpc in preparation for the Olympics. We were party to 12 medals won by athletes of other countries who used the hpc as one of their training bases for London.

For many years now I have been standing on a very lonesome podium shouting from the hilltops on just what we can do and want to do for South African Sport, but have never been given the recognition or opportunity to do so and I trust that our showing at this years' Olympics will go a long way in hopefully seeing that the hpc at the University of Pretoria receive its rightfull place in the sun at last.

One of the mottos for the London 2012 Olympics was "Inspire a Nation" and I can certainly say that our Olympic medal winners certainly did this and it is now up to the powers that be in sport in South Africa to ensure that the performances in London are now built upon and more structured and well funded programmes put in place.

Toby Sutcliffe

HISTORY OF THE OLYMPICS

Text and images: Johann Russouw

SOUTH AFRICA'S PARTICIPATION AT THE OLYMPIC GAMES = Part 2

South Africa's official entry into the Olympic Games began at the session International Olympic Committee in The Hague in 1907. The British Olympic Committee, influenced by the Premier of the Cape Colony, Dr Leander Jameson, recommended to the IOC that a South African team (and not separate teams from the 4 colonies) be invited to the 1908 Games in London and this motion was passed unanimously. Sir Abe Bailey and Mr Henry Nourse, who was the president of the South African Amateur Athletics Union, joined forces to establish the South African Olympic Committee with Nourse as the first president. The decision to send a team to the Olympics was not welcomed generally. The Cape Colony considered it a waste of money. The Orange River Colony and the Transvaal were recovering from the ravages of the Anglo Boer War and the abject poverty of the displaced rural people. Natal supported the project only when Reginald ('Reggie') Walker was included in the team, after having been dropped initially. The 15-man team to London consisted of 7 athletes, 4 cyclists, 1 fencer and 3 tennis players. Walker became South Africa's first Olympic Champion and he was the

sensation of the Games when he set a new Olympic record in the 100m. Charles Hefferon took silver in the marathon.

At the 1912 Games in Stockholm, Kenneth McArthur (marathon), Rudolph ('Okey') Lewis (cycling), Harold Kitson (tennis doubles) and Charles Winslow (tennis singles & doubles) won gold medals. **Winslow is South Africa's first double gold medal winner** and McArthur and Chris Gitsham made history by being the only athletes from one country to place 1st and 2nd in the marathon event. Kitson also took silver after being beaten in the tennis singles final by Winslow. At the following Games of 1920 in Antwerp, Bevil Rudd (athletics), Clarence Walker (boxing) and Louis Raymond (tennis) took gold, with Rudd becoming the **first South African to win a full set of medals at a single Olympic Games**: gold in the 400m, silver in the 4x400m relay & bronze in the 800m. South Africans also won a further 2 silver and 2 bronze medals. Willie Smith, the boxer, was the only South African to win gold in the 1924 Olympics, with the athletes Sydney Atkinson and Cecil McMaster adding a silver and a bronze to South Africa's medal tally. In 1928 Sydney Atkinson exchanged his silver medal in the 110m hurdles at

the previous Games for gold. A further 2 bronze medals were won in boxing and swimming. At the Los Angeles Games in 1932 it was the boxers, Dave Carstens and Laurie Stevens, who were gold medalists but other team members won a further 3 bronze medals. Only one athlete, the boxer Charles Catterall, managed to win a medal (silver) at the 1936 Games in Berlin.

South Africa had to wait until the London Games in 1948 for the boxers, Gerald Dreyer and George Hunter, to win gold medals again. South Africans also won a further 2 silver and 2 bronze medals. South Africa's last gold medals in its first period of participation in the Olympics were significantly won at the Games of 1952 in Helsinki by women: Esther Brand (athletics) and Joan Harrison (swimming). Other team mates won a further 4 silver and 4 bronze medals to make it the most successful Olympic Games ever for South Africa. In 1956 South Africans could only win 4 bronze medals in Melbourne and at the Games of Rome in 1960 the South African team was good enough for only 1 silver and 3 bronze medals. By 1960 South Africa had won 16 gold, 16 silver and 21 bronze medals. The greatest achievements had been in the boxing, where South Africans won 6

gold, 4 silver and 9 bronze medals. The athletes had taken the second most medals, 14 in all (5 gold, 5 silver & 4 bronze) and the cyclists had done the third best with 8 (1 gold, 4 silver & 3 bronze).

From 1908 to 1960 South Africa's participation in the Olympic Games had been confined to teams consisting exclusively of white athletes, who were selected at trials to which only whites had access. Increasing pressure from non-white quarters, within as well as from beyond South Africa's borders, for a non-discriminatory sports policy in South Africa led to the suspension of South Africa's participation in the Olympic Games from 1964 to 1988. Eventually it also led to the total international ban on South African sport, which was to last until the ninth decade of the 20th century.

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SOUTH AFRICA'S EXPULSION FROM THE OLYMPIC GAMES

South Africa's controversial practice of playing racially segregated sport was a legacy of the way sport was played by the British aristocracy. This practice ingrained itself in competitions against non-white inhabitants of the British Dominions and was well established when the National Party came to power in 1948. However, the institutionalising of racism in all facets of South African life by writing it into the law*, was the direct cause of South Africa's suspension from the International Olympic Movement in 1970.

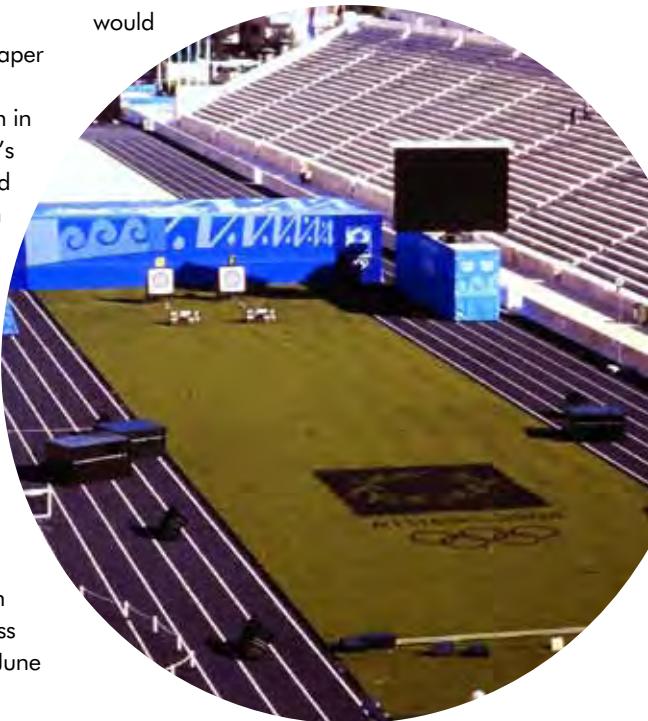
From the earliest beginnings of sport in South Africa it was organized and controlled by the white settlers and competitions between the white and black population were extremely rare. Affiliation to international sports federations at the beginning of the 20th century was also granted to whites-only controlled sports bodies; a situation which was widely accepted by most of

the international sports bodies of that period. The process of urbanization, education and the development of a middle class (albeit on a very small scale) led to the rapid development of non-white sport in all South Africa's major centres from ± 1920 to 1948 and boxing, weightlifting, football, rugby, cricket and cycling were among the favourites. Unfortunately non-white sport was organized separately from the white sports bodies with no international affiliation. The first documented reaction to racial segregation in South African sport was the application from the non-white weightlifters for affiliation to the British Weightlifting Association in 1946. Similar attempts from various non-white sports associations (boxing, football, table tennis, e.a.) to acquire affiliation to international sports federations were unsuccessful, since the white-controlled sports bodies already enjoyed recognition by the international bodies and there was no room for affiliation for more than one body from a single country.

The first official government interference in South African sport occurred in 1951 when the Minister of the Interior, Dr TE Dönges, refused entry of black boxers from Europe into South Africa to fight against local black boxers. An important catalyst in South Africa's eventual expulsion from the IOC was a letter by Rev Trevor Huddlestone to the London newspaper The Times in which he highlighted the practice of racial discrimination in South African sport. In 1955 Chile's Dr Herman Santa Cruz led a United Nations committee of investigation into the racial issue, which found that by implementing Apartheid in sport, South Africa was contravening the Olympic Charter. In the same year the Committee for International Recognition with Mr Dennis Brutus as chairman was formed in Durban, which would support the co-ordinated effort to get international recognition and participation in sport for South Africa's non-whites. The first success for non-white sport came early in June

1956 when the International Table Tennis Association revoked the white controlled SA Table Tennis Union's membership and recognised the SA Table Tennis Board as the official controlling body for table tennis in South Africa.

When the Minister of Internal Affairs, Dr TE Dönges, explained the government's first sports policy later in June 1956, he declared that ***no racially mixed sport would be permitted in South Africa and also that whites and non-whites would have to organise their sport separately***. The result was that resistance movements whole-heartedly supported Dennis Brutus's campaign against Apartheid in sport. In 1958 the IOC sent a letter to SANOC (South African National Olympic Committee) requesting its public statement on Apartheid in sport, but Mr Reg Honey rather defiantly replied: "It is a tragedy for us that a few political instigators in two non-white sports codes, weightlifting and football, of all the sports codes on the Olympic programme can put the whole white population of this country [South Africa] in such an impossible position that it might have to withdraw from the Olympic Games". This view was regarded as a challenge from SANOC rather than admitting to South Africa's sports policy being wrong and that SANOC would



attempt to abolish racial discrimination in its ranks. Matters gained new momentum at the IOC's session in München in May 1959 when the Soviet delegate, Aleksei Romanov, requested the IOC to suspend South Africa's membership. Due to assurances from Mr Reg Honey, the South African member of the IOC, that **non-whites would be included in the team if they met the required standard**, South Africa was not suspended.

Unfortunately South Africa trod the familiar path and the hypocrisy of SANOC was well illustrated when an all-white team was sent to the Olympic Games of 1960. At the South African (Coloured) and the Western Province (Coloured) weightlifting championships as well as the (Coloured) Olympic trials, Precious McKenzie (bantam-weight) and Johnny Geduld (middle-weight) set new records that exceeded those of their white contemporaries. SANOC's decision to exclude these two outstanding athletes and to send an all-white team, including the weightlifter, Eddie Gafney who failed his snatch and not posting a total at the official Olympic trials, to Rome was a decision that was to prove fatal. SANOC's president Frank Braun claimed that McKenzie could not be chosen for the South African team to Rome because he was not affiliated to the controlling body.

In 1962 the Minister of the Interior, Senator Jan De Klerk again confirmed the South African government's policy that **no inter-racial competition within the borders of South Africa will be allowed** and also that the **government cannot approve of teams from the Republic being composed of whites and blacks and conversely foreign teams so composed be permitted to enter the Republic**. He further proclaimed that white South African citizens were not even allowed to compete against black (non-white) South Africans outside the country's borders. The South African Sports Association, which was formed in January 1959 to bring about international recognition for non-white sports federations, was disbanded and replaced in 1963 by the South

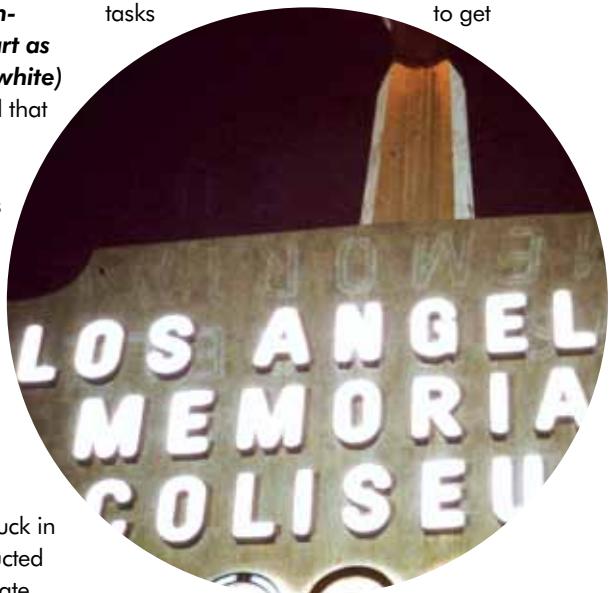
African Non Racial Olympic Committee (SANROC) with its main aim to replace SANOC as the only representative body for all sportspeople in South Africa. Mr Dennis Brutus was the president and Rev Bernard Sigamoney was appointed as chairman. When SANROC was banned by the South African government, many of its leading figures left the country and pursued their cause overseas with great success.

Despite the international pressure mounting against South Africa's racial discriminatory sports policy, the government chose not to relent and in 1963 Sen Jan de Klerk reaffirmed the government's sports policy and went further by stating that **white sportsmen represented the white population only and black (non-white) sportsmen must take part as representatives of black (non-white) South Africans**. He even warned that legislation might be introduced to enforce this policy. At the IOC's important Baden Baden congress of October 1963 motions to suspend as well as expel South Africa from the International Movement were narrowly defeated after SANOC's president Mr Frank Braun stated that a truly representative South African team would be selected for the 1964 Olympic Games. At the IOC's 61st congress in Innsbruck in January 1964 SANOC was instructed to publicly and officially disassociate itself from the government's discriminatory sports policy dictating that, although a contingent of athletes could be chosen for the Olympics, it could not be a single team since the whites represented only the white population and blacks represented the non-whites. Such a contingent would also not be permitted to wear the same uniform or emblem, would not be allowed to travel together and also not be allowed to stay together or even compete against one another! Although SANOC undertook to adhere to the IOC's principles and that all South Africa's citizens would be afforded an equal opportunity to be included in the team to Tokyo, the executive board of the IOC concluded at its Executive

Board meeting in Lausane (June 1964) that SANOC failed in meeting its obligations to the IOC's demands resulting in South Africa's invitation to the Tokyo Games being cancelled.

Although Dr HF Verwoerd's successor as Prime Minister Mr BJ Vorster entertained a far more moderate and pragmatic attitude with regard to sports participation in South Africa, SANROC's efforts in increasing the pressure to isolate South Africa from international sports competition were proving to be very successful. Contributing to this was the formation of the Supreme Council for Sport in Africa (SCSA) by 32 African states in Mali's capital, Bamako, in December 1966 which had as one of its prime tasks

to get



South Africa expelled from all international sports federations. In 1967 the IOC sent a fact finding mission under Lord Killanin to South Africa, but during the course of the commission's visit, the Minister of Sport Mr Frank Waring, in a public speech declared that South Africa was not prepared to allow "mixed" sport in the country. Presenting SANROC's case to the Commission Mr Dennis Brutus stated that SANOC did not conform to the principles of the Olympic Charter and that his organisation offered equal opportunities to all South Africans to international sports participation. Surprisingly the Killanin Commission released a favourable report to South

Africa and at the IOC Congress during the Grenoble Winter Games in February 1968, proposed that South Africa be allowed to take part in the Olympic Games of 1968. This proposal was met with strong opposition from various members and when Mr Jean-Claude Ganga threatened that all the members of the Supreme Council of Sport in Africa, joined by members in the Caribbean and the Communist Block led by the Soviet Union, would boycott the Games should South Africa take part, the IOC executive decided in April to withdraw its invitation to South Africa to participate in the Mexico City Games. In May 1970 the process of South Africa's exclusion from participating in the Olympic Games was completed when the **International Olympic Committee** decided at its 69th Session in Amsterdam, by 35 votes to 28, to expel South Africa as member of the IOC; a decision that was to be revoked only 22 years later.

(* Population Registration Act No 30 of 1950; Group Areas Act No 41 of 1950 & Separate Amenities Act of 1953)

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SOUTH AFRICA'S OLYMPIC EXILES = Part 2

Another of South Africa's Olympic exiles is **Sydney Maree** who was raised in the dusty streets of the Pretoria townships, Atteridgeville and Mamelodi. To pay for his school uniform and books, he took Saturday gardening jobs for white home owners in Voortrekkerhoogte (currently known as Thaba Tswane). When he was at Vlakfontein Technical High School, his day began at 4 o'clock in the morning so that he could get some running in, but during the

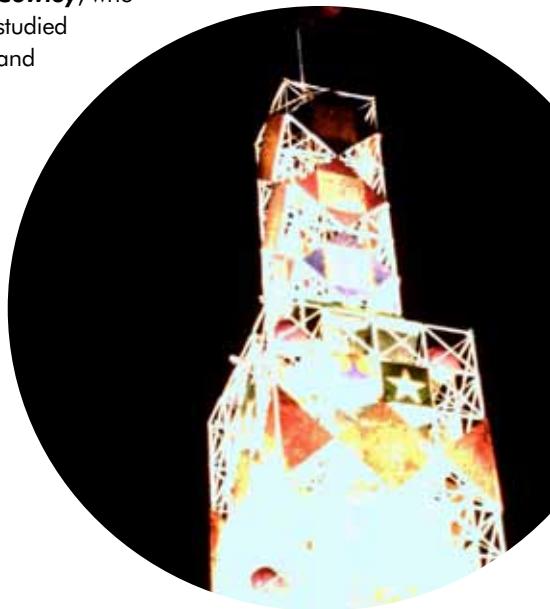
student uprising of 1976 it became so dangerous that he could no longer go jogging in the morning before school. He had to take two trains from Atteridgeville to Mamelodi, and wear two sets of clothes: a set of ordinary clothes, which he needed to wear on the train to elude troublemakers, and his school uniform. As a schoolboy he was already attracting attention with his exceptional achievements on the athletics track and in the second half of 1976, during an athletics tour of the USA, he was spotted by the University of Villanova and offered a bursary. He passed the university's entrance exam in 1977 and later graduated in economics. While he was at university in the USA he was awarded Springbok colours for athletics and was also the first black athlete to be chosen as South Africa's Athlete of the Year (1981). During the winter of 1980/81 he married an American citizen (Lisa Rhoden) and was allowed by the IAAF to represent the USA in international athletics. In 1983 he broke the world record in the 1500m (3:31.24s) and since he was forbidden, as a South African, to take part internationally, he became an American citizen on May 1st 1984; an event which, in his own words, was: "The most painful decision I had ever taken". Although he made the American team to the Los Angeles Games in 1984, a hamstring injury sustained 2 weeks prior to the Games prevented him from running the 1500m. In 1988 he again made the American team to the Olympics in Seoul and placed 5th in 5000m final. Sydney Maree returned to his native country in 1995 and regained his South African citizenship.

Mariette van Heerden was born in Zimbabwe but grew up in South Africa and was not only the holder of the SA records in shotput and discuss throw, she was also a multiple SA champion in both these events (1980 & 1981) and was awarded Springbok colours during the years of the international sports boycott of South Africa. After the democratisation of Zimbabwe she returned to her land of birth in an attempt to qualify for the Olympic Games of 1980 in Moscow. Despite

winning the shotput and discuss throw at the Zimbabwe athletics championships, the Zimbabwe sports administrators refused to include her in their Olympic team because of her stay in the "racist" South Africa. A year after returning to Harare permanently she was included in the Zimbabwe team to the 1982 Commonwealth Games in Brisbane as well as the team to the 1984 Olympic Games in Los Angeles. She later married James Meaklim and they moved back to South Africa after 1987. Their second daughter Kathryn, who was born in South Africa in 1989, represented South Africa at the 2008 Olympic Games in Beijing in swimming. The South African 800m champion of 1981 **Mark Handelsman** was another athlete who gave up his South African citizenship. He exchanged it for an Israeli passport in order to have access to participation in the Olympic Games of 1984 in Los Angeles.

South Africa's best showjumper, **Anneli Wucherpfennig**, who was born in Britain, declined an invitation to represent her country of birth at the Olympic Games of 1984. She received an invitation from the British Equestrian Association to take part in the Olympic trials, but she decided against it as she was of the opinion that it would have been unfair to the established competitors in Great Britain. The mother of the brilliant South African swimmer **Annette Cowley**,

who studied and



trained in Austin (USA), was a British citizen and as such Annette could also qualify for a British passport. Unfortunately for her the unprecedented sensationalist and negative publicity of the Zola Budd saga, resulted in the British Olympic Association deciding not to select Annette for their teams to the Commonwealth Games of 1986 as well as the Olympic Games of 1988 in order to avoid further negative media coverage. Another South African swimmer **Gary Brinkman**, who was living in Australia and training at the Australian Sports Institute, married an Australian girl in an effort to take part in the Olympic Games of 1988. Unfortunately for him this desperate step was not enough to acquire Australian citizenship and all his efforts were in vain. The South African Junior Springbok cyclist **Colin Sturges** had far more luck than Cowley and Brinkman. He managed to avoid any publicity and slipped into the British team for the 4000m individual pursuit to compete in the Seoul Olympics in 1988 where he finished in 4th place. **Freddie Williams** was the South African 800m champion of 1982 and 1983 and he exchanged his South African citizenship for that of Canada in order to go to the 1992 Olympics in Barcelona. When he decided to get a Canadian passport to international competition there was no suggestion yet that

South Africa would also be one the countries taking part in Barcelona.

Apart from the sportsmen and – women above, a number of South African athletes gave up their South African citizenship for that of another country in order to gain a passport to international sports competition during the years of the international sports boycott of South Africa. These include Andrew Jephta (British Welterweight boxing title, 1907); Mark Plaatjies (USA – world marathon champion, 1983); Jake N'tuli (GBR – Commonwealth professional bantamweight boxing champion, 1952); Marcello Fiasconaro (ITA – 2nd in 400m at European Athletics Championships, 1974); David Julius ("Juliao") (POR – Sporting Lisbon Soccer Club, 1957-64 & Portugal national team, 1960-61).

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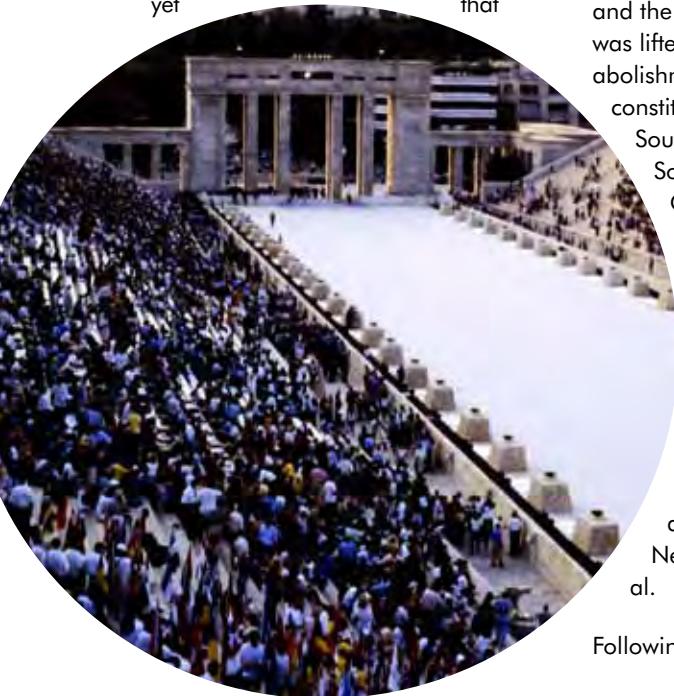
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SOUTH AFRICA'S RETURN TO THE OLIMPIC FAMILY

Pres FW De Klerk's dramatic announcement during his speech at the opening of the South African Parliament on February 2nd, 1990 in which the ban of the African National Congress, the SA Communist Party and the Pan Africanist Congress was lifted, paved the way for the abolishment of Apartheid and the constitution of a truly non-racial South African society. However, South Africa's return to the Olympic family started long before this historic event as senior ANC leaders including Mr Thabo Mbeki, Mr Steve Tswete and others attended clandestine meetings with prominent Afrikaners such as Dr Van Zyl Slabbert, Dr Louis Luyt, Dr Danie Craven and others at various locations such as New York, Dakar, Frankfurt, et al.

Following the "Lausanne 'states

general' Conference against Apartheid in Sport" on June 21st 1988, the president of the IOC Mr Juan Antonio Samaranch created the Apartheid and Olympism Commission after which followed a number of crucial and sensitive meetings that would eventually lead to South Africa's readmission to the Olympic fold in 1991. This commission was chaired by the Senegalese judge Keba Mbaye and comprised several prominent sports leaders such as Mr Jean-Claude Ganga (Pres of ANOCA* & IOC member in the Congo), Mr Kevan Gosper (IOC member in Australia) & Mr Primo Nebiolo (Pres of the IAAF) with Mr Sam Ramsamy (Pres og SANROC) as one of its advisors. The triumph for everyone who dreamt about the return of South Africa to international sports arena was essentially made possible through the leadership of President FW de Klerk and Mr Nelson Mandela as well as a number of sports leaders, who initiated various sensitive meetings in Dakar, Vienna, Prague, Lausanne, Harare, Paris, Kuwait, Johannesburg, Botswana, et al. Eventually, when Mr Johan du Plessis took over as president of the white-controlled South African National Olympic Committee (SANOK) in 1989, he managed to arrange a secret meeting with Mr Samaranch on September 11th, 1989 in what Judge Keba Mbaye called "The real initiation process which would end with the recognition of the South African Olympic Committee by the IOC". It was followed up by a meeting on October 11th with the chairman of the Apartheid and Olympism Commission and IOC Vice-President, Judge Keba Mbaye. With their assistance a meeting was held on January 9th, 1990 in Paris with the chairman of the South African Non-Racial Organizing Committee (SANROC), Mr Sam Ramsamy and another member of the Apartheid and Olympic Commission, Mr Fekrou Kidane (Ethiopia). The success of this meeting was confirmed by Mr Ramsamy when he declared: "Conditions are changing in South Africa. If a mild relaxation of the sports boycott could help to eradicate



Apartheid, we could consider it", despite him being branded a 'traitor' by SACOS who remained adamant that there should be no contact with the white sports establishments until Apartheid had been erased..

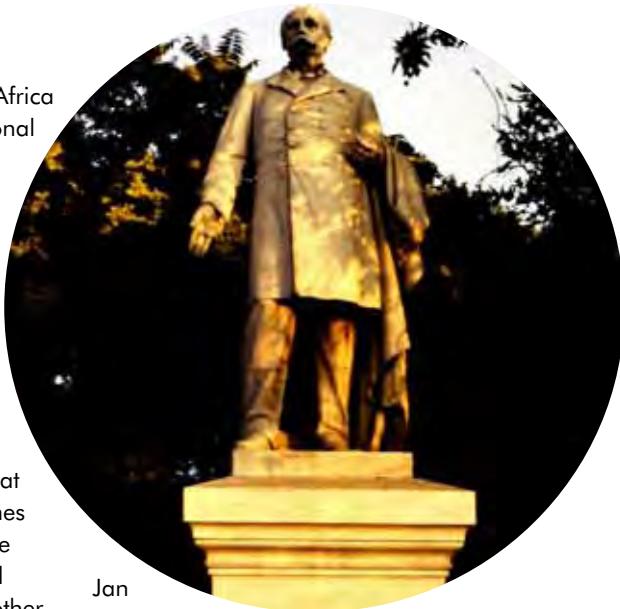
This meaningful change of attitude, contrary to the view of Mr Peter Hain, chairman of Halt all Racist Tours (HART), that the sports boycott of South Africa should be intensified, was followed up by a decisive meeting on November 3rd & 4th, 1990 in Harare between 14 representatives from Africa and 43 from South Africa under chairmanship of Mr Jean-Claude Ganga, chairman of the ANOCA. The most important resolution of this meeting was that a **Committee of Eight** (later **Ten**) would be formed to constitute a single management body for South African sport. On March 9th, 1991 the **Committee of Ten** met with the Africa monitor group in Gaborone where it was decided that this South African Committee of Ten, made up of two representatives each from SANOC, SANROC, SACOS*, COSAS* and the NOSC*, would be converted to an **Interim National Olympic Committee of South Africa** (INOCSA)

of which Mr Sam Ramsamy would be the chairman. On March 28th, 1991 a 5-day fact finding commission of the IOC, led by Judge Keba Mbaye, left South Africa after a most important announcement that INOCSA "is provisionally recognised by the IOC" and that full membership would be granted once the following conditions have been met: # Apartheid had to be completely abolished; # INOCSA must move on to a permanent South African Olympic Committee of which the structure and actions must conform to the Olympic Charter; # Unity in South African sport must be normalised on a non-racial basis and # INOCSA must normalise the relations with sports organizations in

Africa, and in particular ANOCA.

This announcement led to South Africa being readmitted to the International Olympic Committee on July 9th, 1991 and on July 25th a formal invitation was extended to South Africa to join 166 other countries and attend the Games of the 25th Olympiad in Barcelona in 1992. The following months leading up to the Games were fraught with difficulties, mostly because of opposition from some quarters that participation in the Olympic Games would be inappropriate before the democratic elections of 1994 and also political unrest including another massacre (in the Boipatong Township). The South African team also found itself without a national anthem as well as no flag uniting all the citizens of the country. However, the desire to go to Barcelona prevailed and eventually a team of 96 competitors of which 3 were non-white (94 eventually took part), was chosen to represent South Africa in 17 sports codes. These codes were Archery; Athletics; Badminton; Boxing; Canoeing; Cycling; Equestrian; Fencing; Modern Pentathlon; Rowing; Sailing; Shooting; Swimming; Table Tennis; Tennis; Weightlifting & Wrestling. Unfortunately

the team selection was marred by a number of unpopular inclusions of which the political activist and tennis player Cheryl Roberts and especially the omission of the American born javelin thrower Tom Petranof were the most controversial. An agreement was also reached between NOCSA and the IOC that the team would march under the NOCSA flag and that the Olympic Hymn would be played if a South African athlete should win a gold medal. History was made when the athlete



Jan

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became the first South African non-white to carry the country's flag during the opening ceremony of the Olympic Games. Although South Africa's only success during the Games was the athlete Elana Meyer's silver medal in the 10 000m as well as the silver medal of Pietie Norval & Wayne Ferreira in the doubles of the men's tennis competition and the swimmer Peter Williams who placed 4th in 50m, Mr Sam Ramsamy declared: "We showed the world that we have arrived and participated as a non-racial unit. The white athletes were overwhelmed by the absence of any hostility from the other countries athletes. They came here with the perception that they were the outcasts of the world, but they realised that they are not and what we achieved for sport in South Africa is the principal that Sport for All must be pursued".

* SACOS = South African Council on Sport

COSAS = Confederation of South African Sport

NOSC = National Olympic Sports Council

ANOCA = Association of National Olympic Committees of Africa

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The 10 Habits of Highly Effective Coaches

Text: Wayne Goldsmith

The great philosopher (and possibly football coach) Aristotle once said, "We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, therefore, is not an act, but a habit."

That being the case, (and with apologies to Stephen Covey – what are The Ten Habits of Highly Effective Coaches

What are the things that great coaches do every day that makes them great?

1 Make training more challenging and more demanding than the competition your athletes are targeting;

Great coaches realise that competition is not the time to find out where your athletes' physical and mental limits are. Training needs to be more challenging and more demanding – physically, mentally, technically, tactically, emotionally – than the competition your athletes are preparing for.

Example:

A few weeks before a major international professional Tennis Championship I observed a leading professional player play 6 sets of 9 games (i.e. first player to 9 games with a 2 game lead, e.g. 9-7) and against 4 different training opponents (one left handed and three right handed), i.e. as opposed to a standard competition match of 5 sets of 6 games against 1 opponent. His coach made the training practice

tougher, more challenging, more demanding and more difficult than any tournament match could ever be.

Result...he won!

2 Learn and develop as a coach at a faster rate than your athletes;

Great coaches realise that success is a moving target and to stay relevant they must be committed to life-long learning, honest personal and professional evaluation and continuous improvement

Example:

A swimming coach realised that two of the athletes in his team had the potential to be world record holders but that he had not coached world record holders previously. He raised some money and invited two world class coaches from other nations to come and honestly review his coaching and his programme regularly to ensure his knowledge and skills were also world class.

Result: One world record.

3 Accelerate your rate of learning faster than your opposition;

The Internet has insured that there are no secrets in sport. Everyone knows what you know. Anyone can get anything, anytime, anywhere and for free. Everyone is learning something everyday. Great coaches understand this and strive to accelerate their rate

of learning faster than their opposing coaches.

Example:

A high performance rugby coach with an outstanding success rate at the highest level spent one month each year, immediately following the end of the competitive season travelling the world learning from other coaches in other sports in other nations to ensure his rate of learning and development was superior to other coaches in his sport.

Result...the most outstanding coaching record in professional rugby.

4 Enhance your creative thinking skills

Creativity is the defining difference between good coaches and great coaches.

Good coaches can follow programmes: great ones invent winning programmes and in doing so create new directions and new ideas which in turn change the sport. Copying kills. Following others and trying to duplicate their success is a recipe for failure.

Example:

One leading track and field coach I know enrolled in a creative class of some kind every off season. One year it was "Improv" comedy classes. The next year it was "Creative Writing". The following year he took up piano. He realised that his capacity to create and to understand creativity was the key to his future success.

Result: Some of most innovative and creative training programmes the sport has ever seen.

5 Coach individuals – even in team sports;

There are no true team sports left. Every significant moment in every sport is “person on person” and with performance analysis now at the level of millimetres and fractions of seconds, every athlete’s strengths and weaknesses are well known by their opposition. Great coaches engage with athletes and inspire them: they inspire them to consistently prepare with passion and to realise their full potential.

Example:

A national football coach invited two world class triathlon coaches to attend his pre-season training camp. His thinking was that triathlon was all about individuals being pushed to their physical and mental limits in training and competition and that for his team to become the best in the world, each individual within that team must also be the best in the world.

Result: World Champions.

6 Ensure that every athlete that you work with prepares (in every aspect) their opposition;

The days of winning by having the “fittest” athletes are over. Sport is so multi-dimensional that winning comes from being the best in every

aspect: training, preparation, skills, attitude, recovery, gym-training, sleep, travel management, nutrition etc etc. Great coaches know this and strive to create winning environments where a culture of excellence underpins everything and everybody.

Example: An international level swimming coach arranged for every swimmer in his team to learn how to shop for the right foods, how to cook, how get better quality sleep, how to meditate and how to manage their time, so that their non-training activities were at the same high standard as their training and preparation.

Result: 3 swimmers in the Olympic team.

7 Adapt your training plans and programmes to optimise their impact on each individual athlete at every training session;

The best coaches plan: they plan meticulously and with great attention to detail but, ultimately they also understand that the core goal of every training session is to ensure it provides the optimal environment and opportunity for their athletes to prepare.

Example:

A track and field coach, preparing a middle distance running included an even paced 1000 metre run at a relatively easy pace in every warm up. He would assess how the athlete completed the “test” run: measuring heart rate, stride rate and

RPE for the run and comparing them to the results of previous workouts. He would then change the workout based on the knowledge of the athlete’s capacity to complete the workout.

Result: National Champion at 800 and 1500 metres.

8 Performance practice – not practice makes perfect;

Everyone practices and lots of coaches believe in the “practice makes perfect” approach. But great coaches take this a step further: performance practice makes for perfect performance. Want to master a skill? Adopt the “practice makes perfect” approach. Want to master a skill so that it can be executed the right way at the right time in a competition? Then follow the “performance practice” philosophy.

Example:

A successful college basketball coach has three rules.

Rule 1:

Teach the basics of the skill in under 2 minutes.

Rule 2. Allow each

player to learn the skill by doing it.

Rule 3. Make the skills practice as close as possible to game speed, pressure and intensity as soon as possible.

Result: 5 State College Basketball titles in 11 years.



9

Adopt an integrated multi-disciplinary approach to talent development and performance enhancement;

Athletes are only athletes for an hour or two at most each day. For the other 22-23 hours each day they are human beings. Many coaches concentrate on preparing the athlete to perform: the great ones prepare the human being to be all they can be, then, as a result, the athlete will perform.

Example:

A high school hockey coach had a philosophy about people: "Treat people the way I would want to be treated". She made the commitment to arrive at training 10 minutes early each day and spend ten minutes one on one with a player to talk about their school, their pets, their family, their hobbies – anything except hockey. She also stayed back every training session to spend ten minutes with another player. As a result, every two weeks, she had got to know every player in her team as a human being which completely changed her perspective and approach to preparing them.

Result: Undefeated Champions in their League.

10

Lead.

The great coaches are leaders. They dare to be different. They do things that others are not prepared to do. They drive change. They thrive in creative conflict situations and fight hard for what and who they believe in. They take risks. They are comfortable talking about winning: it is, after all, what they were born to do. They are individuals. They are unique. They are the best because they are prepared to lead and with it accept the responsibilities that come with leadership.

Example:

A swimming coach believed his sport needed to change. He felt that traditionally there had been too much focus on endurance and threshold training and not enough focus on speed: he would dare to be different. He introduced speed training in every training cycle all year round. He broke the mould of the traditional approach to periodisation i.e. one week microcycles and developed training cycles focused on each individual's adaptation capacity. He challenged his athletes to race more than any athletes in the history of swimming at international level.

Result: 4 Olympic Gold Medals.

These are The Ten Habits of Highly Effective Coaches.....so what did you do today?

Our Oarsome Foursome



SA rowers wins gold through scientific approach and lots of dedication

Text: Wilhelm de Swardt Image: Back Page Images and Reg Caldecott

"Go to the ant, thou sluggard; consider her ways and be wise."

The question may well be asked what the relevance is between this text from Proverbs and the South African Olympic sports.

The answer is actually quite obvious.

The decision makers of all the other South African Olympic sporting codes can certainly learn from the way in which South African Rowing, with the help of the High Performance Centre (hpc) of the University of Pretoria, prepared the rowers for the Olympic Games in London.

One of the main problems of South African sports is that words like 'long-term strategy' and 'planning' hardly exist in many of the sporting codes.

Instead a 'shotgun approach' is followed. Athletes are selected in the vain hope that they just might achieve a good result. If this does not happen, there will always be another year with new opportunities.

Not so in SA rowing.

Ever since Ramon di Clementi and Donovan Cech caused a major surprise by winning a bronze medal in the Coxless Pairs Division at the 2004 Games in Athens, a definite plan has been in place for SA rowing teams to ensure that they would never merely give once-off performances.

The fact that South Africa's four-men team, consisting of Sizwe Ndlovu, John Smith, Matthew Brittain and James Thompson, won a gold medal in London, is a classic example of the success that can be achieved if

athletes and coaches are prepared to work along with sport scientists to ensure success.

This is textbook stuff that can be compared with the success that has been achieved in cycling by Britain since 2008. In both cases nothing was left to chance. It was a total team effort.

The main difference between the South African rowers and the British cyclists is the fact that, during the build-up to the Games, the British team was backed by the National Lottery with millions of pounds, while the only thing that kept the South African rowers going was their passion and pride.

Roger Barrow, national rowing coach, makes it clear that nobody anywhere in the world rows because he wants to enrich himself.

When asked what prize money a rower can expect to win at a World Cup Event, Barrow's emphatic answer was "None".

And at a World Championship?

"Also none."

It seems, therefore, that rowers just want to prove to themselves that they can be the best.

"That is correct."

During the past eight years the South African rowers, as well as the scientists at the hpc, had just one goal and that was to win at least one medal at the Games.

Lindsey Parry, a qualified biokineticist

at the hpc Sport Science & Medical Unit, and Jimmy Clark, a sport physiologist and lecturer at UP Institute for Sports Research, were just two of the scientists who went out of their way to assist the rowers.

When asked whether he was surprised that the four-men team won a gold medal in London, Clark's emphatic answer was "no".

"I was definitely not surprised. It was just a huge delight. We knew that they were in great form and the earlier rounds suggested that they had as much of a chance as anyone else at that level.

"I must admit that we did not dare to expect them to win gold."

According to Clark he feels proud and grateful that he was able to work with athletes, coaches and other support staff in the build-up to the Games.

"So many aspects contributed to the success."

It was a definite highlight for Clark to be in London when the team won the gold medal.

"I will admit that I was in tears afterwards. The victory meant so much to so many people and I knew what it had taken. So it was very emotional."

About his role in the team's success, Clark said that, put in the simplest terms, it boiled down to finding ways of making the athletes row faster.

"All the factors that could have an impact on their rowing performance had to be considered, for example training methods and recovery



strategies.

"Science in sport does not mean knowing all the answers and telling people what to do. Science means questioning, and generating ideas through observation, that could lead to solving problems."

"It is not all white lab-coat stuff. One needs to consider the stage of the sporting programme and provide support appropriate to that stage."

"In other words, it requires finding the holes in the system, that could be potential threats to the performance, and systematically filling them in order of priority."

What do you think can be done to ensure that the team will be able to defend their title successfully at the 2016 Games in Brazil?

"There can be no way of ensuring something like that. The outcome at the Games depends on many factors, which are not all controllable."

"Passion, very hard work and ongoing drive have to remain. Continuing our investment in great people will be vital. It is the people that cause the 'magic'."

"As far as the athletes are concerned, they will have to continue refining their craft and we will increasingly need to manage them as they mature."

"Individually they are quite different, but they are sharp men who know now what it takes to win gold at the Games."

"In short, we must be stronger and smarter by 2016."

As the national coach, Barrow is already planning for Brazil.

"I have learned the hard way that to be successful at the Games you cannot afford to leave anything to chance, no matter how insignificant it might seem."

Barrow is quietly confident that he will be able to keep the team together for the next four years.

"One of the main challenges will be to see if I can find a sponsor who will enable the rowers to do some part-time work in order to earn some extra income."

"It is important to realize that the rowers are not getting younger and that important changes can occur in their private lives. They now have

more responsibilities than they had four years ago."

"Unfortunately, to be competitive at the Games, no rower can afford to work full-time."

Barrow is actually quite optimistic about the future of SA rowing.

"This year, for the first time, we managed to win a medal at every major championship."

"Jenniene Curr won silver at the Junior World Championship and David Hunt and Vincent Breet also won silver at the u.23 World Championship."

"What makes this exciting is that all three of them will be contending for a place in the 2016 Olympic team. We might even be able to qualify for an extra boat."

"I firmly believe that good competition is the only way for any rower to improve. So nobody is at this stage guaranteed of a place in any team."

"In South African rowing you are, at any given time, only as good as your last race."

From a South African perspective one of the most endearing moments at the Olympic Games in London was surely when Bridgitte Hartley received her bronze medal in the sprint canoeing.

Pictures that were taken during the medal ceremony, clearly show the tears rolling down Hartley's cheeks when she received her medal.

Those tears were certainly justified. It took nearly eight years of hard work, accompanied by many sacrifices and disappointments for Hartley, to at long last, earn her place on the Olympic podium.

"I have to admit that I still find it difficult to explain my feelings and at times everything still feels somewhat unreal.

"What I can honestly say, is that it was the best day of my life. I was at the same time happy, sad, joyful, excited and speechless. I experienced every possible emotion while I was standing on the podium, watching the South African flag being hoisted next to the flag of Hungary, the top nation in sprint canoeing", is how Hartley remembers her moment on the podium.

Hartley, who finished in a time of 1:52.923 seconds in the women's kayak single (K1) 500m race, won the bronze medal.

The gold medal went to Danuta Kozak of Hungary, who finished in 1:51.456. She was followed, a second later, by the Ukrainian Inna Osypenko-Radomska in 1:52.685.

When did you realize that you had won a medal?

"I only realized that I had won a medal after I had crossed the line at the end of the race. It was definitely the hardest race of my life.

"I can honestly say that I have never suffered so much pain as during the Olympic final. The pain began from the moment the race started. I had to keep telling myself not to worry about what the other girls were doing, but just to keep on racing my own race."

Hartley actually made South African Olympic history, because she was the first canoeist to win a medal for South Africa. Athletics, swimming, tennis, shooting, rowing, boxing and cycling are the only other sports in which South Africa ever won medals.

What was the hardest practice

sessions you had to do in the build-up to London?

"It was when we had to do two hard interval sessions, adding up to 12-14km, of sprint running (5x500m) as well as pull-ups and push-ups.

"We also did 2km time trials in the morning, followed by sprint running in the afternoon, as well as pull-ups, and push-ups.

"I also did yoga or pilates as an extra session every other day."

The million dollar question is whether she is prepared to sacrifice another four years of her life to see whether she can represent South Africa at the 2016 Games in Brazil.

Hartley said, without hesitation, that she accepts the challenge.

"After receiving my medal, I am definitely motivated to go on for another four years.

"I basically need to sit down with my coach, Nandor Almasi, and regroup. Hopefully he will continue to coach me, because he is the only person who has ever coached me."

Although Almasi is Hungarian, he is one of the legends of South African canoeing.

A look at the news archives shows that he has always been prepared to help South African canoeists to prepare for the Games, even at times when he was also involved in coaching in other countries.

What makes him such a good coach?

"Nandor believed in me as an athlete ever since I started paddling for sprints in the 2004 season. His amazing eye for technique has helped tremendously to make me a better paddler.

"What makes him even more special, is that he did not act only as my coach, but he was also a father figure for me who took care of my needs in Hungary and Austria when I was there on my own, without a team, to prepare for the Games.

"He even invited me to spend weekends at his house in Hungary on my free days."

About her plans for the build-up to the next Games, Hartley says she always becomes motivated by small

challenges that she runs into along the way.

"For example, I have not won a medal at a world championship yet. So my next important goal will be to try to do something about that.

"During the past four years I have met many people from other countries who have motivated me and also made me realize how much more fun training can be."

How would you describe yourself?

"I am an optimistic blonde with a flair for sport. I have always been involved in different types of sports at school as well as university."

Believe it or not, but canoeing has not always been Hartley's sporting passion.

Netball, hockey, gymnastics and surfing.... Hartley has done them all with various degrees of success. At school she has achieved provincial colours in gymnastics as well as surfing.

It was her dad, James, who persuaded her to start canoeing.

"He kept nagging me to row with him, but I never had time to do so.

"In 2000 I relented and went with my dad. At first I did not enjoy it at all because I was unable to get going, but once I began to master the different techniques I was hooked."

At first she only competed in the river marathons (Dusi, Fish, etc.).

"The deciding moment occurred while I was studying at Tukkies and Hein van Rooyen persuaded me to do some training for sprint canoeing with them.

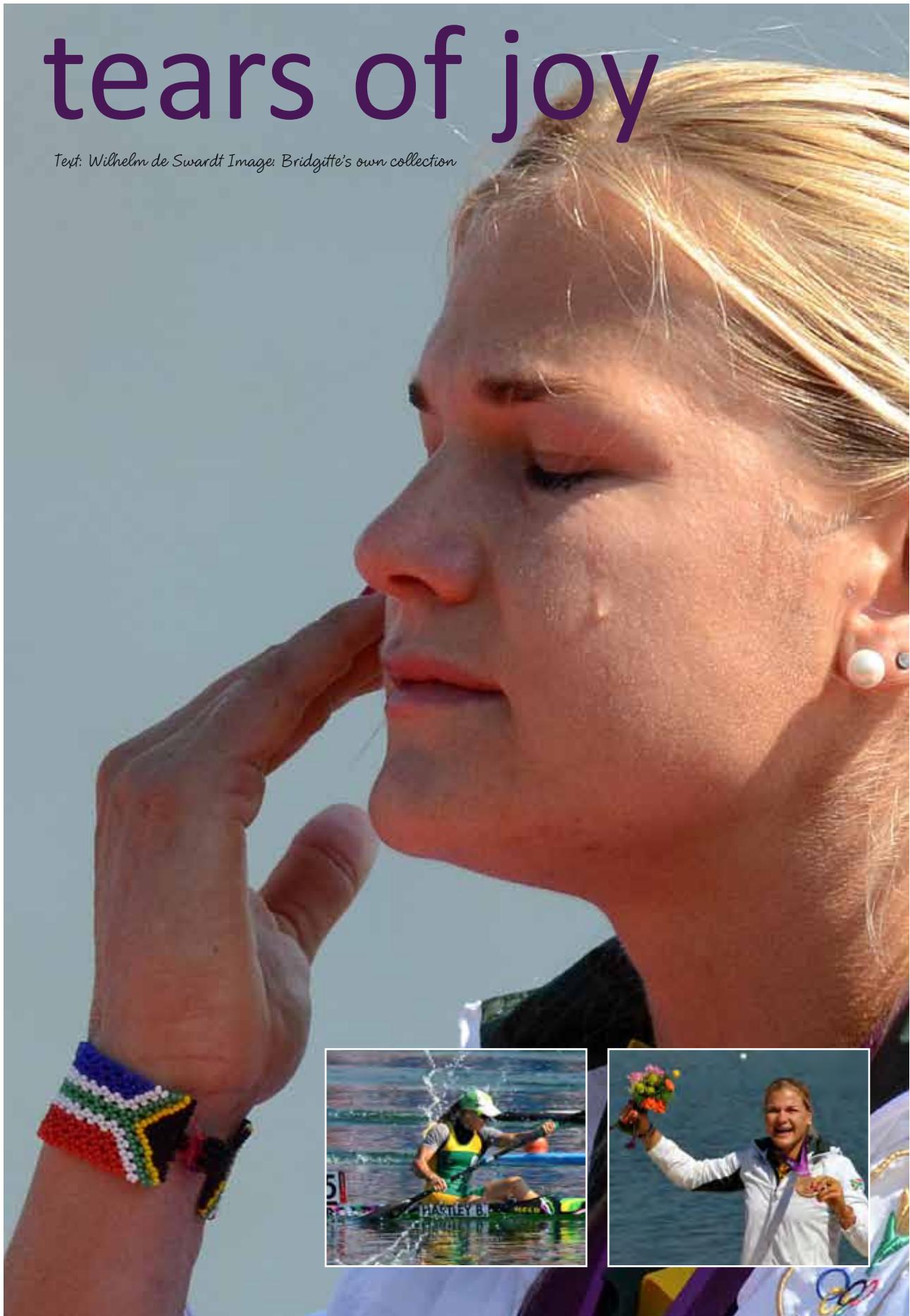
"I immediately loved the challenge, because in sprint canoeing there are no short cuts to success. If you are not prepared to put in the hours and sacrifices, you will never succeed."

When asked if she would compete in the Dusi or Fish marathons again, Hartley replied by saying that the rivers will never go away.

"In fact, I have been asked to do the Fish marathon this year in a charity drive to save the rhino. I am quite excited about this opportunity to do a race with a cause."

tears of joy

Text: Wilhelm de Swardt Image: Bridgitte's own collection



hpc Sponsored Athletes at the Olympics

Text: Vata Ngobeni, Chief sport writer for the Pretoria News

The London Olympics are gone and only memories are left but it is the lessons learnt that will put Team South Africa in a better place to attain more medals at the next Olympic Games in Rio de Janeiro in 2016.

Nobody will be craving for gold more than former 800metres women's world champion and Tuks athlete Caster Semenya after the drama of the past four years ended with something of a silver lining when she became the first black South African female to win a medal at the Olympics.

Semenya has a knack of leaving things until late from her qualification for the Olympics which was ironically attained at the Tuks Athletics Stadium earlier this year to the finals race inside the majestic Olympic Stadium in London.

If things had gone differently Semenya could have arrived back home with a gold medal around her neck but it seems for now the silver medal will do for the Limpopo-born lass who was undoubtedly one of the crowd favourites in London.

Her time of 1:57.23 was the fourth fastest time run this year and put her just over a second behind World and now Olympic Champion Mariya Savinova and ahead of another Russian, Ekaterina Poistogova.

Semenya started the race slowly and took the bell at the halfway mark behind the frontrunner, American Alyia Montano, and was struggling as she ran in last place of the eight finalists.

On the back straight though Semenya surged to forward showing great speed and had there been an extra 10metres, Semenya could have crossed the line ahead of Savinova.

Semenya's silver medal is still a major accomplishment for an athlete that was humiliated, mistreated and almost had her career ended prematurely when she was unjustifiably subjected to gender tests after being crowned world champion three years ago.

In retrospect the 21 year-old Semenya still has plenty of time ahead of her and while she has often been criticized for her late surge in races there is

almost no doubt that she will be a factor in Rio.

"I've been waiting all year for this. The last four years have not been easy. I'm already thinking about Rio and I hope I'll be there. That final race at the Olympics was very fast but I was not worried. It doesn't matter if you are at the back or the front, it matters how you finish the race," Semenya said.

While Semenya believes that she has learnt valuable lessons that will arm her well for Rio, she does concede that her coach former world 800metres champion Maria Mutola was not happy that she could not get gold.

"My coach was not happy, but you learn from your mistakes. I tried hard to go with them but the body was not really on fire and I had to fight to the end," Semenya said about her race to silver.

It is not just Semenya who has learnt valuable lessons from London in the hope of achieving the golden dream for Rio.

Swimmer Darren Murray may have failed to make the semi-finals of the 200metres backstroke as he



crashed out in the heats but Murray is determined to follow in the wake of star swimmers Chad Le Clos and Cameron van den Burgh.

Murray clocked a time of 2:00.01 in his heat finishing in a credible 25th place overall in the heats, failing to qualify for the semifinals.

"Being at the Olympics was a fantastic experience for me and it made me believe that I can do even better going forward. I can't say I am disappointed in my performances but it was the perfect opportunity for me to make a name for myself. I am more determined than ever to do well at the next Olympics and follow in the footsteps of Chad. Chad is younger than me by a year and look what he did on the biggest stage in the world. It is not that I am comparing myself to Chad but he has inspired me to do well and actually fight to be the best in the backstroke," said Murray who won gold in the 200metres and silver in the 100metres backstroke events at the All Africa Games in Maputo last year.

Murray moved up from Cape Town to Pretoria to help accelerate his swimming career and besides making history as the first swimmer of colour to participate at the Olympics, it is now a goal of Murray's to become the first swimmer of colour to win a medal in the pool for South Africa at an Olympic Games.

"I have to put pressure on myself

because it is the only way I can swim faster. I want to win an Olympic medal, Chad's success has made me hungrier to do so. I want to do it for myself, my country and many of those young kids of colour out there who don't believe that a young black kid can swim. I'm targeting Rio but before that it is important for me to do well at the world championships and other major swimming events in the years leading to 2016," Murray said.

Another Tuks swimmer based at the High Performance Centre Karin Prinsloo will only get better and after the disappointment of London will be one of the favourites to medal in Rio.

Prinsloo failed to make the cut in the women's 200m freestyle heats after registering a time of 1:59.24 which meant that Prinsloo finished 20th overall.

The often emotional Prinsloo is destined to come good in Rio and while the semi-finals eluded her in London, she too has plenty of years ahead of her to make waves on the international swimming scene.

"It was a dream come true for me. I really wanted to qualify for the Olympics in Beijing, but I do not think I was ready for it mentally and physically. I was very disappointed, and had to wait for another four years to give it a try, that is why all the tears flowed when I finally achieved this at nationals. I thought qualifying for the Olympics I put myself under a lot of

pressure, but nothing prepared me for the Olympics. I just wanted to swim my best times and go through to the next round but could not achieve that in the 200 freestyle."

"I was very upset with myself. But one thing I decided is that I am ready for the next Olympics. I was really hoping to be a little better this time, but I am young enough to make it to Rio," she said.

For Suzaan van Biljon, the 2012 Olympics was a vindication of her return to international sport.

Van Biljon had retired from swimming two years ago after losing her will to compete and even though her return back to competitive swimming didn't end in a medal it was enough for the 24-year-old to break Penny Heyns' South African record which has stood since 1999 in qualifying for the final which Van Biljon eventually finished in seventh place in the 200m breaststroke.

"I exceeded my expectation with my time. It's really put the desire and motivation back to work hard and achieve something in my swimming again. Watching Cameron and Chad win medals has made me want to keep on getting better. It's really put the desire and motivation back to work hard and achieve something in my swimming again," Van Biljon had said afterwards.

Olympic gold, silver and bronze



medalist Roland Schoeman may have returned from London empty handed but the former Willowridge High School scholar continued to prove that he is still competitive even though he is at the twilight of his career and was one of the few athletes who did much of his preparations for the London Olympics away from South Africa.

Roland came close to picking up a medal in a fast 50metres freestyle final finishing in sixth place.

Talking about records, Tuks walker Marc Mundell set a new African record in the 50km race walk that saw Russian Sergey Kirdyapkin take the gold in an Olympic record time of 3:35:59.

Mundell was the first South African male to walk in the 50km event since the country's return to the Olympics at Barcelona in 1992.

Ever gracious Mundell's delight at breaking the African record was made sweeter by the fact that it was an even better time to that which he had gained Olympic qualification with of 3:57:57 earlier in the year.

"It was a fantastic opportunity to be at the Olympic games. I gave it everything possible to walk a new African record."

"To take almost two and a half minutes off my previous best is testimony to how hard we have had to work," Mundell said.

It is painful when talking about the early exit of 400metre hurdler LJ van Zyl who failed to get beyond the heats.

Unfortunately for Van Zyl, who had been a certain medal hopeful, the London Olympics will be another major competition not worth remembering as he had arrived in London suffering from an injury picked up in the build-up to the Olympics.

Things got worse for Van Zyl and his teammates Willie de Beer, Ofentse Mogawane, Shaun de Jager and Oscar Pistorius as they made it into the 4x400metres relay final through a technicality after being tripped in the semi-final but finished in a disappointing last position.

Back in the water, Lee-Ann Persse and Naydene Smith left London with their heads held high after finishing in second place in the B-final of the women's coxless pair crossing the line in 7:55.18 which was the 8th fastest time overall.

It was in the water that South African triathlete Richard Murray, who trains at the hpc for three months a year, lost ground on the leading bunch in the men's elite race and eventually finished in a credible 17th place in a time of 01:49:15.

In judo, Gideon van Zyl failed to advance beyond his first bout when he was beaten by an ippon (match

winning throw) just 30 seconds from the end of the fight while he was ahead.

Lastly on the football pitch, it may not have been a great tournament for Banyana Banyana as they failed to win a single match but the South Africans proved worthy of being counted amongst some of the best teams in the world and showed the potential of beating the best when they managed to hold reigning world champions Japan to a goalless draw in their last game.

Having lost their opening two matches to Sweden (1-4) and Canada (0-3), the South Africans draw with Japan would have been a major boost for them ahead of the 2012 African Women's Championship to be played in Equatorial Guinea and Gabon in November.

The hpc played a role in Banyana Banyana's road to the Olympics with Robyn Moodaly currently studying at the TuksSport High School while Kylie-Ann Louw, Marry Ntsweng, Nompumelelo Nyandeni, Janine van Wyk and Nothando Vilakazi are ex-hpc Soccer Academy players.



from
NFD to



Text: Vata Ngobeni, Chief sport writer for the Pretoria News

The name Tuks is easily recognisable when talking about the higher echelons of rugby, athletics, swimming and hockey and it does take two glances and some rubbing of the eyes to believe that they also appear on the Absa Premier League table.

Yes, the PSL log has the infamous name of Tuks amongst the 16 teams that fight it out to be crowned champions of Africa's most lucrative football league and while it might come as a surprise to many it doesn't to those that dared to dream of making Tuks a formidable force in domestic football.

It is by no stroke of luck that the University of Pretoria's football team are now rubbing shoulders with the best football clubs in the country and after years of blood, sweat and tears they are reaping the rewards of a dream that began in 2002.

It has been a meteoric rise for the Tuks Football Academy from their humble beginning plying their trade in the SAFA Gauteng South Division to now becoming Tshwane's third PSL team alongside glamour clubs Mamelodi Sundowns and SuperSport United.

The Tuks Football Academy made a wise move in 2003 to buy the second division status of Pretoria City FC and they went on to win the Vodacom League play-offs and were promoted to the national First Division the following year.

While their decade long journey to the top was easier than most clubs blueprint into the PSL, there was also the disappointment of stumbling at the end to qualify for the PSL earlier when they failed to progress beyond

the Mvela Golden League play-offs in the past three seasons.

But the dream edged ever so closer to reality when Tuks were the surprise package of the 2009 Nedbank Cup, South Africa's version of England's FA Cup, as their fairytale took them all the way to the final where they lost 1-0 to Moroka Swallows but not after claiming the prized scalp of the most decorated cup team in South Africa Kaizer Chiefs.

It was their success and rise that almost threatened their demise in the last few years as many of their star players were poached by the big spending PSL clubs and some abroad with the likes of Andile Jali (Orlando Pirates), Robyn Johannes (Mamelodi Sundowns, Orlando Pirates and Golden Arrows), Bongani Khumalo (SuperSport United, Tottenham Hotspurs, PAOK), George Maluleka (SuperSport United, Ajax Cape Town) and Lungisani Ndlela (Moroka Swallows, SuperSport United, Mamelodi Sundowns) leaving before the dream was realized.

However, under the guidance of head coach Steve Barker and assistant coach Sammy Troughton Tuks finally managed to gain promotion into the PSL after being crowned champions of the NFD last year.

The question beckons though if Tuks' dream will end in a nightmare with them being relegated back to the NFD or will they continue to live the dream beyond the 10 years of their existence?

Tuks Football Academy manager Steve Coetze believes that Tuks can and will stay at the top as long as their youth system and academy continues to produce players for the senior

team.

"Attaining the PSL status has been a tremendous boost to the club and the junior teams are part of this incredible feeling. The promotion affects everything and it will help us attract more youngsters and players for the future," Coetze told the Medalist. With over 1500 players in the academy, youth development programme and various teams from under 6 to under -19 including the hostel league for both boys and girls, Tuks can easily boast of being one of the biggest clubs in the country.

It is this endless stream of talent that will ensure that Tuks doesn't only grow into a formidable force in South African football but will continue to develop and produce world class players that will ply their trade in overseas leagues according to Coetze.

"We have no choice but to up our game. the big thing in football is the ever increasing price one has to pay for players. Therefore the future of a club like ours will have to be in our youth programmes which will have a huge part to play in producing future players. We have been fortunate that we are able to bring players through at national age group level and it will be important going forward that we continue to draw from the resources of all our teams in the various local leagues we play in," Coetze said.



The best of batting partners

*After nine years,
the hpc and CSA are
cashing in on an
unbeaten innings.*

Text: Rick de Villiers Images: Gallo Images

Between May and September each year there's a distinctly soothing sound that reverberates over the sports fields of L.C. de Villiers. It's the dull, lulling thud of leather on willow, which is only occasionally interrupted by the sickening tumble of stumps.

This sonic motif is a regular feature of the hpc's surroundings, where Cricket South Africa's (CSA) National Academy Programme has had its home for the past nine years. In this time there have been eight National Academy intakes, which have produced eleven full (Test / ODI) Proteas and dozens of quality first-class cricketers. According to CSA Manager of Coaching Anton (Yogi) Ferreira, the partnership between CSA and the hpc is a blissful one.

"The first contract was signed in 2003, and we've recently renewed it for another 10 years," Ferreira explains. "While the Academy serves the broader needs of South African cricket, the hpc serves the very specific needs of the programme. In those four months during which the National Academy Squad is in training, the hpc is our one-stop shop. There's the accommodation, the medical facilities, psychological skills training, visual skills training, and much more. All of our needs are catered for, and we can be sure that the promising young players who come through the programme each year are getting the very best."

The aim of the programme is to prepare outstanding young cricketers for the highest levels of competition. Given that players like J.P. Duminy, Faf du Plessis, Marchant de Lange and Vernon Philander are some of the programme's prime exports, CSA's goals are being realised.

"The 20-odd players that are selected each year are given the greatest attention," says Ferreira. "We help them make the leap from amateur to professional, from competent athlete to consummate cricketer. This means

not only working on aspects of the actual game, like technique and fitness, but also on rounding the individual. The players do courses in time management, media relations, cultural differences, conflict management and even HIV awareness.

"This in no way replaces proper tertiary study, and we've made it our personal duty to accommodate those students who are enrolled at universities or colleges. If they study close by, we plan our schedules around their lectures. If they have exams to write, we either courier the tests up here or fly the players down to their respective institutions. We do this because we believe in developing these young men holistically.

"When it comes to the game itself, we try and give the lads as much exposure as possible. After three months of intensive training, the players are given the chance to prove themselves on the field. This involves either travelling abroad and

playing other national academies (like Australia or Ireland), or hosting national academies here (Bangladesh have been regular visitors and strong opponents). This month-long tour normally includes two Four-Day games, three One-Days, and three T20s. In the past, our focus was on the longer format. But since the advent of T20, we've had to divide our focus, which is a difficult but worthwhile balancing act."

Ferreira believes that adaptability is the cornerstone of the programme. Its reach extends beyond the National Academy Squad, and includes the training of coaches, umpires, and specialist physiotherapists, and also the rehabilitation of injured players. Then there's the interest from the outside. Locker 2, the building that bears CSA's stamp for 365 days a year, hosts numbers of teams each year.

Soon the demand will be even higher, since CSA, the hpc and the University of Pretoria are joining forces to construct a state-of-art indoor cricket centre. The double storey facility will boast four dedicated bowling lanes, high speed cameras for analysis, cutting-edge bowling machines and offices for members of CSA. Though it's still early days, CSA hopes to establish the facility as an ICC accredited centre where suspect bowling actions will be analysed and rehabilitated.

So after an unbeaten innings of nine years, the National Academy Programme at the hpc is as strong as ever. Despite South Africa's recent disappointment at the ICC T20 World Cup, there is reason to feel optimistic about the future.





Tylah Lotter,
future star and anti-gravity
expert, shares her secrets.

Something Sprightly

Text: Rick de Villiers Images: Reg Caldecott



They say you know that you're a gymnast when you spend as much time on your hands as on your feet. But Tylah Lotter obviously doesn't follow the tweets of the anonymous "they", since the bulk of her day is spent in the air.

It's an hour into the October school break, and for the purposes of our chat she temporarily quits the stratosphere. As the word "sprightly" only half-conceals the word "sprite", sitting only half-conceals her buoyancy. The 15 year-old gymnast has fiery red hair, a shy sparkle in her eyes, and a gentle, giggly way of speaking.

But watch one of her recorded competition performances on YouTube and you'll notice a difference. She still has the same unmistakable red hair, but the gentleness gives way to graceful attack, the shyness to surety.

As one of the top u/16 South African gymnasts, Tylah has reason enough to be confident. In her short life she has travelled to four continents, competing at international level. At the start of the year she was part of an elite training camp at the Western Australian Institute of Sport where she

got to see Olympic athletes preparing for London. In April she showed her mettle at the African Championships in Tunisia, snatching an individual bronze on beam and a silver as part of the junior team. Later in the year she will be representing South Africa at the Voronin Cup in Moscow.

It's one thing being a professional athlete and jet-setting across the world to compete at the highest level. But to train for six hours each day, squeeze in eight periods of school and sharpen your own pencil is another matter entirely. And yet, Tylah pulls it off: if there is one thing the Grade 10 student will boast about, it's her diligence.

"It's not too hard," she explains. "We have regular study time in the evenings, so it helps you get through your work. I came to TuksSport High School exactly because they understand what you need, and that's why I was so happy when I finally got here in Grade 8."

Though Tylah's parents live in Pretoria, she stays at the HPC during the week. From the moment she wakes up, her day follows a seamless circle: training, school, training, homework, sleep.

Over weekends she goes home and spends time with her family and, in particular, her twin sister Ashlee, who is older and wiser by a whole minute. "I love having a twin sister," Tylah beams. "She knows what I'm going to say even before I say it." During these getaways Tylah shops, runs and sometimes gives into her greatest weakness, Milkybar.

But this surrender occurs very seldom, because Tylah has one goal in mind: Brazil 2016. She admits that there are days when she feels demotivated, days when a big "Why?" clings to every effort.

"It's a difficult sport. There are huge mental blocks, and sometimes they're difficult to overcome. But I always realise, even when I fall, that this is what I love doing. And when you eventually get a difficult skill perfectly right, something that you've been struggling with, there is no better feeling. It's also a pretty good feeling being interviewed for The Medalist – I've dreamt about being in the magazine since Grade 8!"

Riders on the storm; Into this house we are born; Into this world we are thrown; Like a dog without a bone; An actor out alone; Riders on the storm.

Nikola Filipov, Tukkies's Olympic judo coach, will certainly be able to relate to these lyrics sung by 'The Doors' on a 1971 Album.

For the past 8 years he has been fighting a lone battle in his effort to obtain proper support for his players so that they will be truly competitive if they should, for example, participate in a World Championship or the Olympic Games.

"Being the national judo coach in South Africa, it feels as if I am battling against a strong head wind all the time. In judo nothing is ever a simple matter."

What Filipov is hinting at is that his players have remained: "like a dog without a bone; an actor out alone, riders on a storm."

The former Bulgarian Olympian admits that he has seriously contemplated to quit coaching in South Africa.

"I had offers to coach elsewhere. Bulgaria, my home country, approached me to coach the national team and I would have accepted if it had not been for Tuks Sport and the High Performance Centre (hpc)."

"Their support and vision are the only reasons why I am still involved with South African judo."

"I am certainly no longer interested in being involved with Judo South Africa's national teams. I will only be coaching at the TuksJudo Academy."

Filipov does not hesitate to say outright that the decision makers in SA Judo lack vision.

"South Africa has really good players, but they will never succeed because of the lack of international participation and competition."

"I have argued about this with

decision makers of Judo South Africa (JSA) on countless occasions, but nothing has changed."

"JSA need to go to SASCOC and explain exactly why certain players need financial support, but this is not happening."

"To be competitive in judo at an Olympic Games takes eight years of preparation."

"During the first four years you basically just work on the player's technique."

"During the second four years money is needed. Because judo is 80% a mind game, there comes a stage when a coach can really no longer do much to help a player."

"You can still help them to stay fit and hone their technical skills, but that is about it."

"The only way they can improve further is by competing internationally and also by training with better players."

"If I have to prepare a player properly during the four years leading up to the Games, I should like him or her to compete in at least three to four international tournaments during the first year and attend one training camp as well."

"During the second year they should compete in four or five tournaments and attend two training camps, followed by nine or ten tournaments and five training camps the next year. In the Olympics year they will need to compete in 12 tournaments."

"I did some research after the London Olympic Games and learned that the players who won medals had all competed in 12 to 17 tournaments."

"Taking this into account, Jacques van Zyl, who had only competed in three tournaments, never stood a chance in London."

"But he still impressed me. He was leading up to the last 26 seconds of

his fight. It can be compared with a soccer match in which a team leads 2-0 and is then beaten in the last minute by one goal."

The sad thing is that Van Zyl will probably never compete at a Games again because he cannot afford to sacrifice another four years of his life for nothing.

"I spoke to Jacques' dad and he told me that he had to use R280 000 of his own money to help his son to fulfil his Olympic dream."

"It is simply not fair, but it does not seem to bother JSA."

"If it had not been for the High Performance Centre's support, Jacques would not have had the opportunity to train and compete in Korea and Japan."

"I spoke to Russia's national coach and asked him what his budget for the Olympic Games was. He told me that it was limitless."

"Compare this to Jacques who basically received R300 000 over four years to prepare for the Games. He could not even use the total budget that was allocated to him this year. Because of the incompetence of the JSA administration, he was unable to compete and train in Spain."

Filipov is worried about the future of judo, not only in South Africa.

"More and more players quit the sport when they are in their early twenties to compete in cage fighting in which they can earn good money. This is beginning to happen in South Africa as well."

"Fighters with a judo or wrestling background are usually the most successful cage fighters."

"How does a coach keep players excited about, and motivated in, judo if they will never have a realistic chance of success."

"JSA has to give serious consideration to this question."

As a player Filipov won countless medals in international competitions. The definite highlights of his career were winning two silver medals at World Championships (1992 and 1995).

He represented Bulgaria at the 1992 Games in Barcelona.

"After winning silver at the World Championship everybody expected me to win a medal at the Games."

"I was not at my best and could only finish 7th. When we got back to Bulgaria I was fired from the Army because of my bad result."

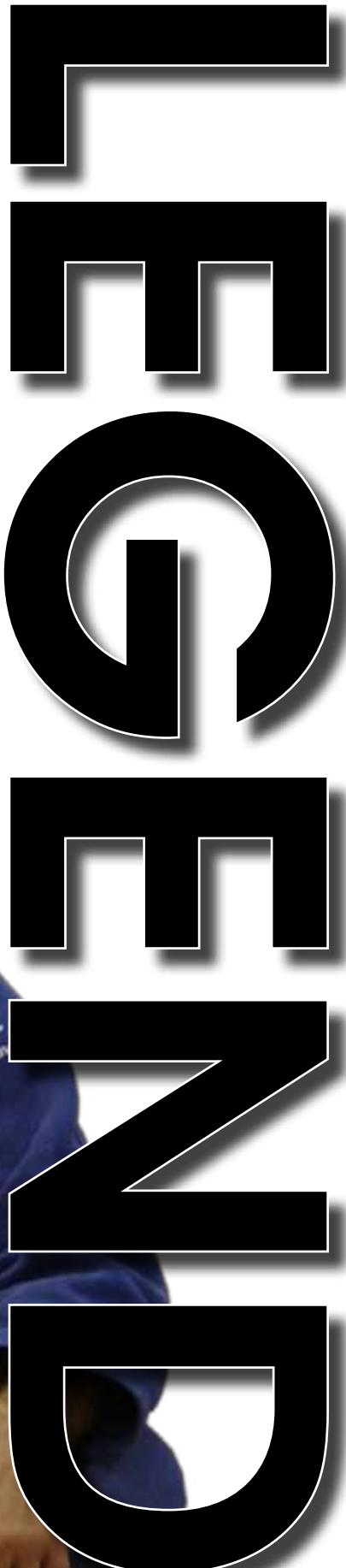
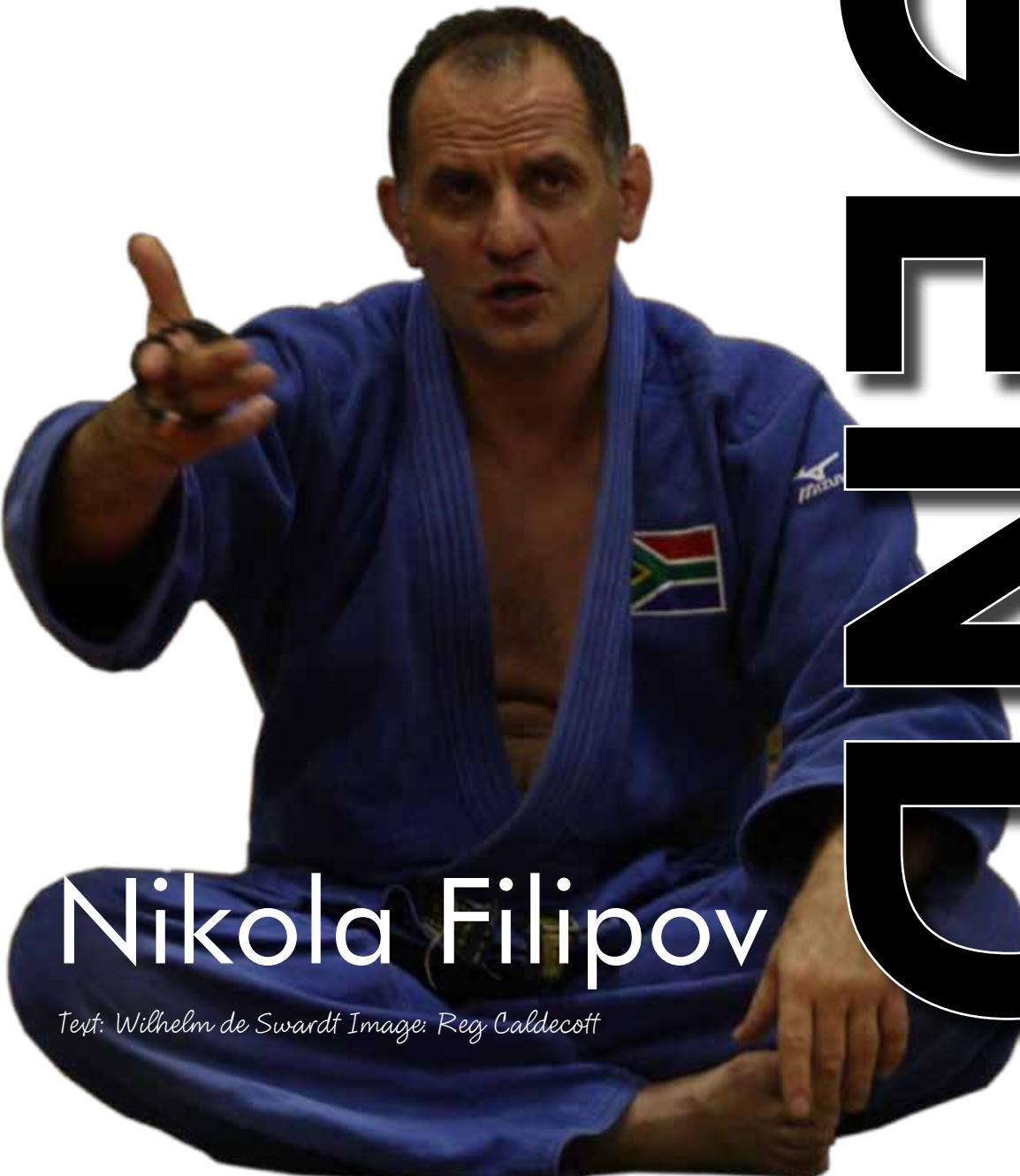
"In those days we were paid by the army or police just to train and

compete in judo."

According to Filipov, contact sports like judo are very popular in Eastern Europe.

"Judo is as popular in Bulgaria as rugby is in South Africa. In Russia alone there are more than 3 million registered judo players."

"Judo is also very popular in France. In France there are a million active players, compared to five million in Japan."



Where to after an unsuccessful Olympic Games?

Text: Monja Human and Maurice Aronstam

You devoted the last four years of your life to your Olympic dream. Everything you did was guided by your Olympic dream. You sacrificed everything, your time, energy, financial status, social life, relationships, emotional energy and likely even more. Then the unexpected happened! You did not perform like you expected or the way you know you can. You feel you let yourself, your teammates, coach, parents and your country down. It is hard to look others in the eyes, but worst of all, how do you answer to the man or women in the mirror?

Participation in the Olympic Games is most probably any sports person's dream. From a very young age any sports person will share that they would like to go to the Olympic Games one day. Then it happens that you do get your opportunity but you don't grab your opportunity. You don't perform. Where to now? Are the retirement cards on the table? Do you persevere for another 4 years and another Olympic cycle?

When sports people describe their experience after a disappointing Olympic performance one can almost compare it with a grieving process. They experience loss and that almost puts them into a process of grieving.

One of the biggest losses they refer to is loss of identity. For 4 years they have been known as "an Olympian".

If you ask them before the Olympic Games: "Who are you", they will answer with no hesitation: "I am Jackie, an athlete who is going to London in 2012". Then after the games if you ask them again: "Who are you", this question becomes so much harder, and then the common reply is "I don't know".

For a lot of elite sports people this is quite a frightening thought if all of a sudden they don't know who they are if their identity of "Olympian or elite sports person" is challenged. It further influences all the other aspects of their lives such as their personal relationships, studies, work and so on.

When these sports people share their stories and experiences of Olympic losses it can often be understood according to the Five Stages of Grief by Kubler-Ross. The reason for that is that when they talk there are often similarities and language that is linked to the grieving process.

Here are the Stages:

Stage 1: Denial

The first stage helps athletes to survive the loss. You did not even make it to the second round. There are 13 days of the Olympics left and you had your chance. Your role now is to be a spectator like millions of other people around the world. The world and your sporting career become

meaningless and overwhelming. You feel numb and wonder; "how can I go on?" Denial and shock are ways to cope and attempts to make things bearable. As you start accepting that you did not do well and start asking questions to yourself on why, you are beginning the healing process. Denial will start to subside and all the feelings that you were denying will start to surface.

Stage 2: Anger

Anger is a necessary stage of the healing process. You are angry with yourself because you know you were well prepared. You are also angry with your coach and perhaps teammates as well. Underneath anger is pain because you feel let down, disappointed and hurt. Everything you worked for as well as all the sacrifices you made in the last 4 years went up in dust and you can't do anything about that. There is no second chance. The anger is often an indication of how much your sporting career means to you and how desperate you felt in performing well.

Stage 3: Bargaining

The bargaining stage involves a lot of "what if or if only..." type questions. What if I had a better start? What if I slept more the night before? What if it wasn't so rainy and cold? These questions often lead you to find fault

in yourself and also let you think what you could have done differently. You often tend to bargain with your pain. You remain in the past and keep on negotiating your way out of the hurt and disappointment.

Stage 4: Depression

After bargaining your attention moves back to the present and you want to withdraw from the world. You don't want to do anything and feel down and depressed. Everything feels like effort especially talking to people who wants to know how the Olympic Games were. You don't want to see a boat, hockey stick, ball, spike or javelin ever again let alone getting out of bed early to train. This depressive

state is part of the healing process and can take from days to weeks depending on the person.

Stage 5: Acceptance

This stage is about accepting and acknowledging the reality that you did not do well and you failed. You learn to live with it. In this stage you are starting to review your options again. You are more ready to decide whether you want to try for another 4 years or do you want to consider retirement. Your decision is now not purely based on emotions but more on accepting the reality of your sporting career. In this stage you go back to the drawing board and revisit your goals and dreams. You also feel more ready to

share this process with your coach or other significant people in your life. You start to engage in sporting career again and also find some enjoyment. You reflect on what you have learned from your Olympic experience and how you would like to use that in your life going forward.

Although these are responses to loss, there is not a typical response as there is not typical loss. This is also not a linear process but more circular in nature as sports people can move back and forth between stages and also sometimes skip certain stages. Some sports people will also report more stages. Remember your experience is as unique as you are.

Conclusion

The aim of sharing these Stages of Grief is an attempt to understand or make sense of the Olympic losses that sports people experience especially after not performing well or failing. It aims to help us understand, frame and identify what they might be feeling which hopefully can give us guidance on how we can help these sports people to deal with their loss.



An Olympic Inside story of the Village

Text: Ryan Hodierne Images: Ryan's own collection

Being selected as a member of the South African Olympic delegation for the London 2012 Olympics was to be even better experience than I could possibly have imagined. The opportunity of being surrounded by the world's best sportsmen and women...this was a dream come true. I am one of those who has always felt that "sport makes the world go around"; and now, after living the Olympic experience, this saying has even more relevance as I have seen firsthand, how The Games can bring the world together in celebration of super human talent and ability.

To give you the low down on my lucky break; I was selected as a member of the South African Olympic Team as the technical / performance analyst to assist the SA Swimming team. I have been working with the National Swim team for the past 3 or so years and all this hard work was now to culminate in the big show... the London 2012 Olympic Games.

Jetting off to London in Team SA's custom painted Boeing; we all knew the time had come, the Olympics was in our grasp. Touching ground at Heathrow airport, it was evident right from the start that Olympic fever was all around, the Olympic rings were everywhere as we entered the terminal building to be met by the smiling volunteers, known as the Games Makers, all dressed in matching kit, making us feel like VIP's as they

ushered the team members through a special customs check-in. The organization was flawless.

The bus trip to the Olympic village took us past all of the famous sights London has to offer including going past the huge set of the Olympic rings strung under Tower Bridge. However it suddenly got serious as we entered the Olympic Village and were stopped at the security check point where British Army troops search in and around the bus before sending us safely on our way to the Welcome Center.

Getting the formalities of checking in and registering out of the way, we entered what can only be described as every sporting person's dream world, the Olympic Village.

At first site it seemed as if you were in a normal residential area with high rise apartment buildings all around, however on closer inspection, you begin to notice the unique little touches each nation had made to their respective buildings to distinguish them from the rest. An Emu stood guard in front of the Australian's home away from home; a big red Canadian Moose welcomed the Canadians and a seriously oversized banner which I am sure could be seen from the moon, made it clear to the world where the Koreans were staying.

Enter the dining hall, one is

confronted with "The Best of Britain" section, with offerings of Britain's best cuisine, yes, the British do have their own cuisine. Then along the sides are the cuisine offerings from the America's, the Mediterranean and Italian region, then toward the back, you'd find Asian and Indian cuisine. Being one of the major sponsors of the Olympics, the big "M" of MacDonald's took center stage to the right of the Hall, and always had the longest queues at every meal time... I must mention that the McFlurry's were a real hit! However, if the cravings got out of control, there were nutritionists at hand to structure out an eating plan for you.

There was a socialization area called "The Zone" that would stay open till late where they had a cover band every evening to add to the endless entertainment of X Box's, Playstation's, Nintendo Wii stations, pool tables, arcade games and Jenga blocks. There were some athletes who literally did nothing all day except play videogames, sometimes all night too, some got to the point of almost missing their competitions. During the day there are Sports Scientist's available there to answer athlete's questions on hydration and nutrition.

The reality of the Village that few are aware of is that not many of the top athletes actually stay in the village. This is partly due to the fact that they are continuously mobbed by fans

and autograph hunters whilst walking around the village. As a result, they cannot keep normal meal times and things are so busy in the Village at night that it can sometimes be difficult to get a good nights sleep. Strangely enough, in the case of the US basketball team, they didn't stay in the village because the beds were too small...

Having seen a few reports on TV and read some of the articles, I must say that there didn't appear to be quite as much sex in the Village as those headline-grabbing statements would have us believe. Admittedly, condoms were freely available everywhere, so much so that it was rumored that there were some teams packing hundreds of them in their kit bags so that they could sell them back home.

No one was looking forward to going home; the idea of having to settle back into the humdrum of normal life was a reality that few athletes are really prepared for. The "post-Olympic blues" is a depressed state of mind many an Olympian has to deal with on their return. I too am having to struggling through it as my fridge at home just doesn't have the selection I had there!

England, in particular London, put on one absolutely amazing spectacle of athletic ability at its highest level. The organization was faultless, the volunteers friendly and helpful as ever, the usually dismal English weather remained at bay with glorious sunny days for most of the time. Even the English press, normally critical of pretty much everything, were, throughout the games, surprisingly complimentary of everything that went on.

I know it is, or should be, the ambition of every young athlete to one day represent their country at the Olympics and I cannot think of anything more inspiring than having the opportunity and privilege, as I have now had, to experience the amazing spectacle that is the Olympics Games.



A few days after the lightweight men's rowers won a Gold medal at the Olympics, someone said to me, "They must be on something", I was a little bit irritated and curtly replied "Yes, an Olympic training programme".

As soon as a squad, team or individual becomes successful, lay people start to doubt the hard work and effort that goes into this type of achievement. They start sniffing around for a rogue secret to that success, looking for the products or supplements that delivered the result, so that they too may buy these products and become successful. I was asked to write about the developments in Physiotherapy products and reveal some of the secrets that helped get our rowers to the Olympics.

If you looking for secrets its' going to be a short article, if you are looking for some possible explanations, I might have a few credible ones.

If you came to the hpc on a Monday morning at 7am, you had just missed the rowing "Anthrop" at the ISR with Jimmy. The rowing week started before most of us had eaten breakfast.

On a Friday afternoon at 5pm if you were in the vicinity of the hpc parking lot you would see the rowers completing a 10km running time trial, very few non rowers saw this.

On a Saturday morning when most of us were watching Jake White's Brumbies play in the Super15, the rowers were completing another rowing session at Roodeplaat. Some rowers still think Jake is coaching the BOKS, that is how many rugby seasons they are behind.

There is nothing holy about Sunday if you row. You row on Sunday too.

A few months ago a rower asked me if he can book a session on Friday.



Row Perfect

Text: Gareth Bruni hpc, Images: Gareth's own collection





I told him it was Good Friday the coming Friday, but he didn't seem to understand. I explained the concept of Easter and long weekends and public holidays. That I was part of the public and that he too, being a member of the public was entitled to a break. I was told promptly that the Swiss and the Danes would probably be training and that the Egyptians and Moroccans don't celebrate these holidays and would be training too. If the competition is training, then we should train too, if they not, then we can get one session ahead of them I was told. Imagine me explaining that the coming Monday was also a public holiday.

Most training days had three sessions consisting of rowing, gym and ergo or an alternate like a run. Sunday being the Sabbath usually only had a rowing session, I think because the gym was closed.

So they trained hard every session, looking to improve, to better their times, better their performance and to better the overall result. If you train three times a day at a high intensity, you will be sore. You will be tired. The physio sessions were applicable here. They came for regular massages and dry needling sessions during the hectic training schedule. Regular specific stretches and exercises were the norm. We tried to stop pain from becoming an injury. If you train with pain, your technique suffers are your injury risk is elevated. I think this was the biggest contribution physiotherapy made towards their success, preventing pain from becoming an injury.

We didn't screen for injuries using a fancy 3D injury screening tool, rather we evaluated the individual and the reason for their pain and treated it

accordingly. Their training was sometimes modified accordingly and alternative sessions implemented until they were able to train pain free.

This is not to say that they were completely injury free. The volume and load they were doing coupled to the intensity and the competition for selection meant that sometimes they rowed through pain and into injury. Sometimes freak accidents did occur which caused injuries. Once again there were no secrets in the treatment of their injuries, simple manual hands on physiotherapy techniques like massage, stretching, cryotherapy, myofascial release; spinal mobilisations, joint mobilisations, dry needling and ultrasound were used. We didn't use any magic physio tape or soothing heal all plasters. They

didn't wear a bracelet to accelerate healing or to improve balance. There were no expensive heal all machines the sales representatives wanted us to purchase. We didn't have the tools or cutting edge equipment of the Australians or British. We didn't need them. We don't need them. On a rowing tour to Italy this year, Lufthansa chose to send my bag on a solo trip around the world. This meant I didn't have a change of clothes or our physio bag. The Italian village we were stationed in didn't have a chemist. We couldn't buy anything that was in the physio bag. I was stuck wearing the same clothes I had left South Africa in. But we made a plan.

Four days later when the bags arrived, the only thing that changed was the massage oil and the distinctive odour in the room. I stopped using the extra virgin olive oil to massage and got a change of clothes. If we had been the Australians with their reliance on Hi-Tech machines, nifty recovery products, gimmicky tapes and aircraft aluminium plinth, our tour would have been in shambles, instead it carried on unaffected.

For me, the success came from the athletes seeing the value of all that was being done around them. They saw the value of their training programme, the coaches input,

the gym work, the core exercises, the sport science, the stretching, the good nutrition, the physio. All these things added value to their training. But I think TRAINING is the SECRET that everybody is after. The training is hard to do and most easily overlooked. Companies can't sell you hard training, they can only sell you products and that is why they market products as if they will make you successful. If you train like a schoolboy, you will perform like a schoolboy. If you train like an Olympian, you will perform like an Olympian.

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- Correction of the above and injury prevention
- Stretching programmes
- Strengthening programmes
- Identification of incorrect muscle recruitment patterns with correction

Massage

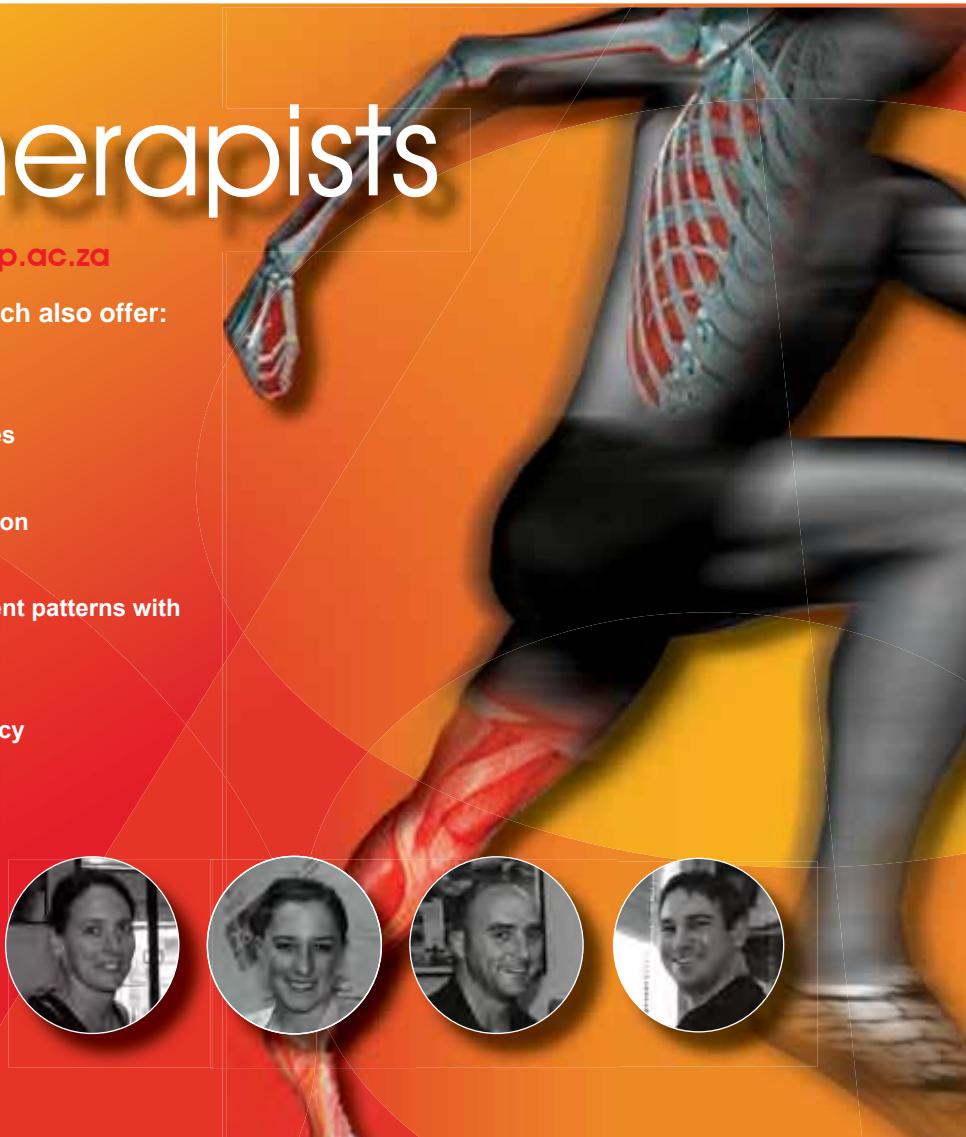
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Massage therapist also available

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- Strengthens stabilisers
- Flexibility
- Circulation
- Skill-based conditioning

Spinal alignment and postural correction



Strength Training Guidelines for Children

Text: Licinda Liebenberg & Dr. Kim Nolte (Biokineticists - Institute for Sport Research, Department of Biokinetics, Sport & Leisure Sciences)

Can children participate in strength training programmes?

Strength training can be defined as a method of improving muscular strength by gradually increasing the ability to resist force through the use of free weights, machines, or the person's own body weight. Strength training sessions are designed to impose increasingly greater resistance, which in turn stimulates the development of muscle strength to meet the added demand (Baechle et al 2000).

The American Academy of Pediatrics and the National Strength and Conditioning Association (NSCA) have proposed that children can safely perform strength training provided the programme is adequately planned and supervised. Furthermore, the Surgeon General's report on physical activity and health also encourages children aged six and older to develop and maintain muscular strength and endurance.

Despite the known benefits of strength training for children - teachers, fitness instructors, and youth coaches are often not sure how to proceed, and they end up watering down adult versions of strength training programmes. Ideally, children should be properly evaluated by a health care professional that can prescribe a training programme that is in accordance with the needs and abilities of the child.



Considerations when prescribing strength training programmes for children:

Important aspects to bear in mind when prescribing strength training programmes for children include:

- **Training age**

Training age refers to the length of time a child has had any form of strength or resistance training. If a child has not done any form of strength training it is important not to start off with heavy weights but rather to use resistance bands or own body weight exercises.

- **Two or more years**

A child needs to be physically active for 2 or more years before adapting or increasing work load.

- **Emphasize flexibility**

During periods of rapid growth the muscles around the joints and growth plates are very sensitive and often tight. Therefore proper stretching and flexibility exercises should be included in a child's training programme.

- **Developed nervous system**

The reactions and movement skill of a child must be taken into consideration when prescribing strength training exercises. Not all children develop their motor skills equally.

- **Body type**

The body type of a child also needs to be taken into account when prescribing strength training exercises for children. For example, mesomorphic children generally have more developed musculature and broader shoulders. Endomorphic children have rounder and broader hips. While children who mature late tend to be ectomorphic, slender and tall.

Guidelines for prescribing strength training programmes for children

The following guidelines should be adhered to when prescribing a strength training for children in order to ensure the programme will be both safe and effective in bringing about the desired changes.

- The very first approach to creating an exercise routine is always to begin with a range of **8 – 15 repetitions**. The resistance should be selected such that the child can complete the set amount of repetitions.
- A frequency of **two times per week** for duration of eight weeks (Baechle & Earle, 2000; Malina, 2006). You need to make sure that workouts are spread out enough to get no less than **one to two full days** of relaxation between routines.
- The target whenever working out should be on **correct form / technique** of each exercise carried out, rather than on the amount of weight being lifted.
- **Increase resistance gradually** and only when the child can perform the specified number of repetitions with good form.
- Use **equipment** that is appropriate for the size, strength and maturity of the child.
- Prior to exercising, **warm up and stretching** should be carried out.
- Start your children with gentle loads and then make adjustments accordingly.
- No more than three consecutive exercise sessions carried out per week.
- You must also make sure that they **drink plenty of water** just before, during and right after exercise.
- Teach your child what their true capabilities are and stay **safe and positive** with them. Emphasis should be placed on fun and enjoyment.
- Set **goals** that are realistic and appropriate.



ISR & SSM News

Twice the same input at the ISR

Danielle and Tracey Steenkamp are biokineticists at UP's Institute for Sport Research (ISR) and work with special population clients suffering from chronic diseases such as Diabetes, Parkinsons, Pulmonary diseases, Multiple sclerosis, and stroke patients. They also specialize in working with those suffering from cardiac conditions (including heart attacks, bypass surgery, pacemakers, etc) and those who are at risk for developing cardiovascular diseases (High Blood Pressure, Dyslipidemia, and Obesity).

Danielle and Tracey are identical twins. They grew up in Pretoria and from the age of 12 have been coming to Tukkies. They were actively involved in gymnastics at Tuks and competed in the South African championships for 10 years. Today they still enjoy living a healthy active lifestyle and count exercising as their favourite hobby. They did equally well at school. "Even our final averages for first, second and third year combined for our UP degree differed by only 0.3%, and we did equally well in the same subjects." Danielle and Tracey enrolled for Human Movement Sciences in 1999 and both completed their Honours degree in Biokinetics in 2003. They did a one-year internship at the CSIR, and started working at UP within six months of each other in 2005. They plan to enrol for their respective master's degrees next year.

There are various clinics (Cardiac, hydrotherapy, arthritic clinic) at the ISR practice which is situated at the University of Pretoria Sports Centre. Tracey and Danielle co-ordinate the Cardiac/Diabetes clinic and Hydrotherapy clinic and work mostly with medium to high risk clients.

"We spend a lot of our time in the rehabilitation gymnasium and our passion is helping people improve their quality of life," say the twins. "Many of our patients are in the plus 50 age group, the majority being in their 70's. The oldest gym member is 90 years old, so hence you are never too old to exercise."

"We evaluate each patient and work out an individual exercise plan. We monitor their blood pressure and heart rate and supervise their exercise technique. Socially it is a very nice environment to work in, as there are always times for a chat and a joke while exercising." They say it is very satisfactory working with the older patients and that they love their work.



Dr Christa "bags" another Degree!

Dr Christa Janse van Rensburg - Head of the Section Sports Medicine at the University of Pretoria - obtained her MD (Doctor in Medicine) on 7 September 2012.

Title of her Script/thesis "**The effect of exercise and training on the autonomic function, disease activity and functional capacity in females suffering from Rheumatoid Arthritis (RA)**"

RA is a chronic disease and one of the more common auto-immune diseases. It generally occurs more amongst females than males. Patients with RA rely almost solely on pharmaceutical intervention to manage the disease.

This study firstly compared the autonomic function of RA females to that of healthy females, whereupon the emphasis shifted to the effect of exercise intervention aspects on the following three aspects relating to the effects of RA:

- Autonomic function (as measured by heart rate variability)
- Disease activity (as measured by Disease Activity Score, Visual Scale and Health Activity Questionnaire)
- After a 3 month period it was found that exposing Rheumatoid Arthritis patients to exercise had a meaningful effect on their autonomic function, disease activity and functional capacity.



Closer Scrutiny by Doping Detectives: Passport

Summary Points on
the Athlete Biological
Passport

Text: Jimmy Clark, Institute for Sport Research, Department Biokinetics, Sport & Leisure Sciences University of Pretoria

While enjoying the plethora of top-class sporting events and broadcasts nowadays and admiring the phenomenal lengths to which athletes stretch human performance in such a variety of activities, one unfortunately still cannot escape the odd half-whispered comment or vociferous accusation of doping by some athletes. The arms race between dopers and doping control occasionally enjoys publicity rivalling that of events themselves, certainly amongst the sport science and medicine community, and notably in some sports.

In 2008 the Athlete Biological Passport (ABP) was introduced amidst claims ranging from it being prohibitively costly and overly invasive to a promising development and even a breakthrough process to end doping in sport. In some sports, the impact was clear almost immediately, with significant drops in the number of abnormal test results in cycling, for example. This short summary of points hopes to provide an overview of the fundamental aspects of the ABP – what it is, its benefits and its limitations. Feel free to consult the referenced reading or contact me for more detailed debate.

1. The ABP attempts to identify suspicious results in biological

markers that cannot be caused or explained by means other than doping. These markers are most commonly constituents of the haematological (blood) system but may also include the endocrine (hormone) and other body systems.

2. When the focus is on anti-doping procedures to tackle ways of improving endurance capacity through changing the oxygen carrying capacity of the blood, the main blood parameters measured in the ABP are reticulocytes and haemoglobin.

3. Manipulating the oxygen carrying capacity of the blood (commonly known as blood doping or blood boosting) is done through two main methods, either removing and re-infusing red blood cells (RBC's) or using EPO to stimulate greater rates of RBC production.

4. Reticulocytes are immature RBC's, the ones that have most recently been produced by our body and have entered the circulation, but don't yet have the same characteristics as the mature RBC's. Since we make (and break) RBC's continuously, we always have some reticulocytes in our blood (around 1%). Being the precursors to mature RBC's you will appreciate that as RBC production is speeded up, the reticulocyte numbers increase first.

5. Haemoglobin (Hb) is a protein molecule inside RBC's and is the main transporter of oxygen in the blood. Since the vast majority of Hb is found in the billions of mature RBC's we have in our blood, any changes to the number of RBC's is reflected as a change in the concentration of Hb.

6. Reticulocytes usually make up between 0.5% and 1.5% of the RBC population, but the concentration can lie outside this range. Likewise, Hb concentration (in males, for example) is typically 140-160 g per litre of whole blood but may be higher or lower in some individuals. Because of these normal individual variations, rather than measuring the absolute concentration at any point in time, regular measurement of any changes in the concentration over periods of time is the premise on which the ABP works.

7. For example, when whole blood is withdrawn the concentration (%) of reticulocytes generally rises since the vast majority of cells removed are mature RBC's, and because the production of new RBC's continues and is stimulated by the removal, but there are fewer RBC's in total. Conversely, the re-infusion of stored blood causes a drop in reticulocyte concentration (%) because almost all of the newly infused cells are mature

RBC's, so one's own immature RBC's represent a smaller percentage of the new, larger RBC population.

8. The opposite is true for Hb. The withdrawal of whole blood is characterized by a fall in Hb concentration while the re-infusion of blood increases Hb levels owing to mature RBC's being the major site of Hb in the blood.

9. These two variables provide the convenient flags to measure. They are used to calculate an Off-Score or Stimulation Index, a ratio of Hb to reticulocytes. The Off-Score is able to detect withdrawal of blood (characterized by a rise in reticulocytes and a fall in Hb) and the re-infusion of blood (reticulocytes fall and Hb concentration rises). EPO use (stimulated RBC production and thus increased reticulocyte concentration) can also be detected by monitoring these two variables.

10. As is the case with reticulocytes and Hb, there is a 'normal' range in Off-Scores, but because of differences between individuals, natural variation and probabilities, it's not good enough just to set an upper limit and use it to ban athletes. If the ABP results are designed to ban dopers, one needs to be very sure that those measured values and Off-Scores do not occur in an un-doped athlete. The result of this is that anti-doping authorities put stringent scientific standards in place to deal with athletes whose Off-Scores may be outside of the normal range.

11. These include establishing statistical confidence limits for the test parameters that are very difficult to fall above/below in the absence of any doping, and continuing to research and monitor these and other parameters in athletes to better learn about what normal variations are, or said differently, what changes are truly reflective of doping behaviour. Several studies have already been completed in which important blood, hormone and other biological markers are tracked in un-doped and doped athletes over periods of normal training, diet, travel and health fluctuations.

12. When an athlete is identified as having test results that have changed in a manner suggesting doping, a

panel of scientists considers the data and explanations before deciding on procedures against the athlete. This allows protection of innocent athletes in the small but possible scenarios of pathologies causing abnormal conditions or random false positives.

13. One disadvantage of the ABP is that setting very high confidence levels means that there will always be the risk of not identifying some athletes who have doped but don't reach the flagging criteria. However, this is not the same as saying that doping behaviour is not be curbed.

14. One advantage of the ABP is that the physiological changes associated with doping can be detected without needing to identify a drug. After all, if doping is effective in enhancing performance then some biological parameter(s) must be altered over their normal, un-doped values. It may well be simpler to monitor these for unusual fluctuations than to test for the host of pharmaceutical agents being developed.

As with all anti-doping test procedures, absence of positive test results does not prove the absence of doping practices. As long as winning at the highest level in sport remains highly valued, very difficult and distinguished by incredibly small values, the intentional and systematic attempt to use prohibited substances or methods will be around, and some athletes will make use of them.

However, the ABP represents a significant change in anti-doping mindset towards using longitudinal, individual monitoring of practical biological markers against a background of physiological understanding to detect planned doping in the absence of drug or equipment evidence. The data to date suggest that a measurable impact on behaviour has already

taken place, and if the real goal of anti-doping policy is to discourage doping, then the ABP must be seen as effective in the fight.

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NUTRIENT RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ATHLETES

are low
carbohydrate diets
preferred?

*Text: Riëtte Steinberg Registered Dietitian (SA) PVM Nutritional Sciences
(Proteins. Vitamins. Minerals)*

Low-carbohydrate diets have been a subject of discussion for over two decades. They have attracted attention as a means of losing weight and optimising blood glucose control, particularly in people with Type 2 diabetes. However, this approach is not safe or effective in sports and exercise.

IMPORTANCE OF OPTIMAL NUTRITION:

Optimal nutrition is vital for performance of physical activity, athletic performance and recovery from exercise. Special consideration should be given to choice of fuel, timing of nutrient intake and amount that is consumed, because training efforts and adaptations may be amplified by diet modifications.

Optimal nutrition is important to meet energy requirements, keep immunity intact, build and repair muscle, stabilize blood sugar levels, shorten recovery time and enhance adaptation following exercise. With optimal training methods, sensible nutrition and maximal physical adaptations, athletes would be able to perform to the best of their abilities.

As different fuel sources are preferred by the different energy systems (phosphagen, glycolytic and aerobic) intake of all 3 macronutrients (protein carbohydrate and fat) are essential to ensure optimal energy and fuel delivery during exercise.

Carbohydrates:

The major role of carbohydrate in human nutrition and exercise is the provision of energy. Carbohydrates are the main energy source for the glycolytic energy systems and are an important fuel source for the aerobic system as well. Adequate carbohydrates prevents muscle breakdown for energy. Carbohydrates are the main energy source for the brain and are required for the metabolism of vitamins and minerals. Carbohydrates are further needed to maintain blood glucose levels and replace muscle glycogen. Athletes need to consume adequate amounts to maintain body weight, health and maximize training effects.



Carbohydrate intake is influenced by age, gender, level of physical activity, sport-specific nutritional goals and environmental conditions. General carbohydrate recommendations for athletes range from 6-10 g/kg body weight per day and can even be as high as 8-12g/kg/d for ultra-endurance athletes. Athletes involved in moderate amounts of high intensity training typically need to consume a diet consisting of 55-65% carbohydrates (6-8g/kg/d) in order to maintain liver and muscle glycogen stores.

Protein:

Protein is required for muscle synthesis and repair, forms part of hormones & enzymes, is required for muscle contraction, acts as a lactic acid buffer, and is required for the transport of nutrients & oxygen.

Sufficient energy intake (carbohydrates) is needed for optimal protein and amino acid usage. If sufficient carbohydrates are not ingested, protein will be utilized to meet energy needs and protein thus becomes a very expensive source of energy. Protein recommendations for endurance, high intensity and strength training range from at least 1.2-1.7g/kg/d and can be as high as 2.2g/kg/d for certain strength training athletes.

Fat:

Fat forms an essential part of a healthy diet. Fat is an important energy source, forms part of enzymes, hormones & cell membranes, is associated with vitamin A, D & E absorption, is the primary fuel source for the heart, protects vital organs and suppresses appetite.

Fat intake should range from 20% to 30% of total energy intake. Fat is a source of energy that should form an essential part of the diets of athletes. Fat intake should not be neglected, but high-fat diets are not recommended for athletes either.

LOW CARBOHYDRATE DIETS IN SPORT:

Inadequate energy and carbohydrate intake relative to energy expenditure, compromises performance and negates the benefits of training. Low energy and carbohydrate intake will not sustain athletic training and has several detrimental effects:

1 Low carbohydrate diets are associated with decreases in resting metabolic rate.

It has been known for quite some time that the low calorie aerobic exercise model creates a much less efficient metabolism in the long run. Dietary restriction decreases basal metabolic rate (BMR) by 10-20% and a slowed BMR is a predictor of fat gain. When attempting to lose weight, it is rather recommended to combine an aerobic exercise regime with resistance training and moderate energy restriction. Resistance training increases lean muscle mass, that increases metabolic rate and contribute to weight/fat loss. The most reliable way to enhance BMR is through the development or maintenance of muscle tissue.

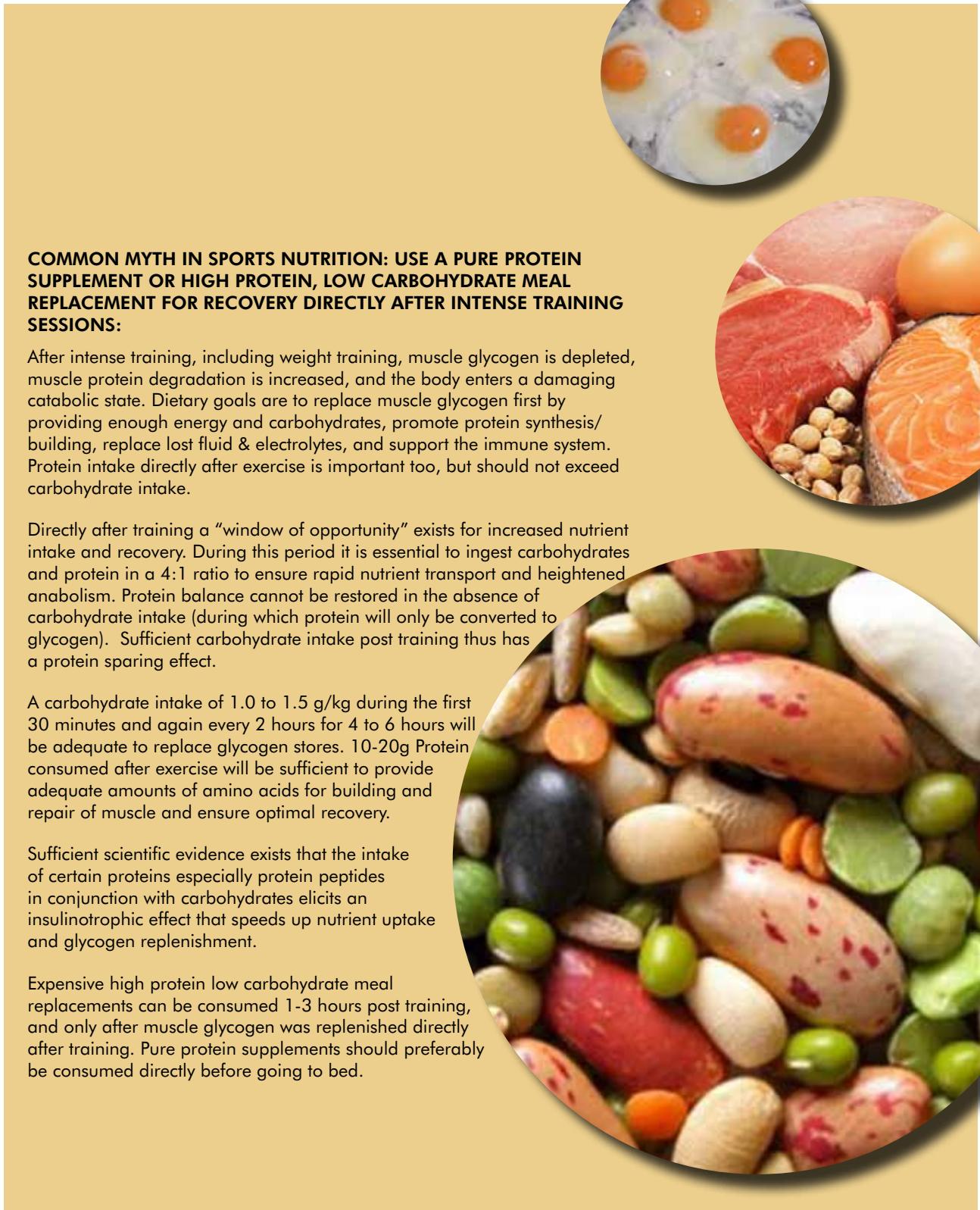
2 Chronic low energy intake results in poor nutrient intake, especially of micronutrients, which might lead to metabolic dysfunction. Poor nutrient intake leads to compromised immunity and affects overall health.

3 With limited energy intake, fat and lean muscle tissue will be utilized to fuel bodily processes, leading to loss of lean muscle mass. Decreased lean muscle mass leads to a loss of strength & endurance, compromised immunity, endocrine and decreased musculoskeletal function.

4 Decreased energy intake of 10%-20% will lead to weight loss without the athlete feeling deprived or overly hungry.

5 Failure to replenish glycogen stores regularly will result in fatigue, impairment of performance at training or during competitions, injury, illness, prolonged recovery processes, loss of muscle mass, and menstrual dysfunction.

Due to these important functions of carbohydrates in sports, extreme limitations of carbohydrate are not recommended. Diets should rather be high in carbohydrates, moderate in protein and fat.



COMMON MYTH IN SPORTS NUTRITION: USE A PURE PROTEIN SUPPLEMENT OR HIGH PROTEIN, LOW CARBOHYDRATE MEAL REPLACEMENT FOR RECOVERY DIRECTLY AFTER INTENSE TRAINING SESSIONS:

After intense training, including weight training, muscle glycogen is depleted, muscle protein degradation is increased, and the body enters a damaging catabolic state. Dietary goals are to replace muscle glycogen first by providing enough energy and carbohydrates, promote protein synthesis/building, replace lost fluid & electrolytes, and support the immune system. Protein intake directly after exercise is important too, but should not exceed carbohydrate intake.

Directly after training a “window of opportunity” exists for increased nutrient intake and recovery. During this period it is essential to ingest carbohydrates and protein in a 4:1 ratio to ensure rapid nutrient transport and heightened anabolism. Protein balance cannot be restored in the absence of carbohydrate intake (during which protein will only be converted to glycogen). Sufficient carbohydrate intake post training thus has a protein sparing effect.

A carbohydrate intake of 1.0 to 1.5 g/kg during the first 30 minutes and again every 2 hours for 4 to 6 hours will be adequate to replace glycogen stores. 10-20g Protein consumed after exercise will be sufficient to provide adequate amounts of amino acids for building and repair of muscle and ensure optimal recovery.

Sufficient scientific evidence exists that the intake of certain proteins especially protein peptides in conjunction with carbohydrates elicits an insulinotropic effect that speeds up nutrient uptake and glycogen replenishment.

Expensive high protein low carbohydrate meal replacements can be consumed 1-3 hours post training, and only after muscle glycogen was replenished directly after training. Pure protein supplements should preferably be consumed directly before going to bed.

Alfred Rheeder - PVM Nutritional Sciences. Should you require nutritional assistance contact PVM at (012) 804 7676 or visit www.pvm.co.za

PVM Nutritional Sciences offers superior nutrition through applied science. Since 1968 PVM, the producer of the worlds original energy bar, has remained dedicated to a cutting edge understanding of the biology of energy exchanges between humans and their environment. PVM is involved with numerous top athletes and sport teams and is also subcontracted to condition the Free State Cheetahs.





Tapering in Sport

Text: Wayne Coldman, hpc

One of the most fascinating art forms in elite sport coaching is the subtly of the competition taper.

However, it is also one of the most misunderstood parts of the season. Tapering is receiving a lot of attention in the youth market at the moment and parents are constantly looking for ways to help provide their child with the competitive edge in today's crazy world of school sport. Understanding the taper and the effects of the taper will help parents make a better, more educated decision as to when to plan rest phases in the yearly plan. The term taper is widely used around in the world of sport these days to prepare athletes to their major competitions but is everyone talking about the same thing?

Scientific literature would suggest we are NOT. Houmard (1991) clearly differentiated between the concepts of reduced training and tapering. Houmard said that reduced training occurs when the frequency, intensity, load, duration or combination of these elements are reduced in the constant degree. In a taper however, these elements are manipulated in a systematic, progressive fashion.

Mujika identified four types of tapering:

1. Linear Taper
2. Exponential Taper (Fast decay)
3. Exponential Taper (Slow decay – My recommendation with female athletes)
4. Step Taper

No matter taper model you choose to adopt, the key aspects to consider are:

- Reduction of the training load
- Management of fatigue and physiological adaptations
- Type of taper (Model)
- Taper duration
- Performance goals

What is the aim of tapering?

The aim of the taper is simple - Peaking.

"The performance enhancement that usually takes place with the taper is related to recovery of physiological capacities that were impaired by past training and to restoration of the tolerance to training, resulting in further adaptations during the taper (Mujika)." Or, to put it another way, the key objectives for an effective taper are to :

- Maximally reduce accumulated physiological and psychological

stress of daily training and

- Restore training tolerance and further enhance training-induced adaptations

Tapering can be incredibly effective when used correctly. It is very important to note that every discipline within the sport science support base will have their model for the taper and peaking. It is important the team of coaches and scientists sit down together to plan each aspect of the taper and the time allocation to each. Everything helps and everything is effective. A good coach monitors every aspect, listens to his athletes and tries many different interventions to improve the Peaking process.

How does the taper effect performance?

The taper has many aspects that helps improve performance. We can see the effects of the taper by monitoring our athletes in different situations to make sure we are getting the correct physiological and psychological adaptations. The best tool in have work with in terms of predicting the peak is the Testosterone/Cortisol ratio. Some of the adaptations cause by the taper.

Psychological

- Reduces the perception of effort
- Reduced global mood disturbance
- Reduced perception of fatigue
- Increased vigor

Hormonal

- Increased Testosterone
- Decreased cortisol

Hematological

- Increased Red cell volume
- Increased hematocrit
- Increased hemoglobin
- Increases reticulocytes

Biochemical

- Decreased blood creatine kinase

How many times a year can I peak?

Peaking is an incredible art form that takes most coaches a lifetime to master. Unfortunately, the saying "Even a broken watch is right twice a day" applies here. Sometimes coaches feel they got it right once or twice with one or two athletes, and now they understand and know the process. Nothing could be further from the truth. The taper is one aspect that allows the athlete to get the opportunity to get bearings. It gives his systems a chance to recover and is simply there to get them to Peak. Peaking is an effective and important part of elite level sport but it is very difficult. Athletes can only peak a few times in a yearly cycle. It is important that all the sciences communicate on the timeline and that the coach dictate clearly where they would like their athletes at their best. Due to the nature of the taper and the systematic load reduction, the taper comes with a degree of physiological detraining, leaving the athlete in the worse conditioning post major competition. Due to the detraining process, planning too many peaks in a year means your athletes will not have enough time to build up enough training stress and get enough practice to keep improving performance. Maintaining performance is easy but steadily

improving the athletes PB over 4-8 years takes patience. Slow gains are better and improve retention. Planning too many peaks shows an impatience for progression and tends to lead to stress injuries.

Does tapering have a place in Youth Sport?

This is the part of the conversation that I would like to spend most of my time. When we look at tapering and peaking and all the benefits it has, it is difficult to find reasons as to why it shouldn't be a part of school sport. Especially to parents when the child's financial future is on the line. I believe that there is a time and place for everything. Parents need to distinguish between two aspects of the child's development. Learning and competing. The more time the young athletes spend learning, the better off they will be for the future. Every time we try taper and look to peak, we need to decrease practice load, this means that we are depriving the young athlete the opportunity to practice and improve their skills they will need to benefit them in the future.

The Ipad theory

I like to think of us as massive ipads, when we start out, we are an incredible device ready to be used in any fashion needed by the user. As we use the device, we load on different apps (skills) to help us operate the device more efficiently. Soon we learn that if we load more apps onto the device, we can use the device for more than we expected. We start becoming more productive with this tool. And it is at this point that all ipad users realize why they should have bought the 64gig storage space as this is the limitation on how many apps I can run and store, similarly to human cognitive intelligence. The problem is not all apps are the same size and therefore do not take the same amount of time to download onto the device for use.

Another problem is, just because we have the app, does not mean we are skilled at using the app. In the same way, just because I can throw a tennis ball to someone, does not mean I can

go pitch in the Majors. It is not until we use the app and play around, try new things and orientated ourselves within the app that we know whether or not we enjoy the app. Once we have decided we enjoy it, we use it every day and become proficient. This is called practice. Another issue is that there are many apps that take care of the same task, in the same way, we have many techniques to achieve the same skill. Which app works for you? With these questions in mind, it leads us to believe that the more time we spend playing and utilizing the device, the more we increase our chances of becoming proficient. We allow ourselves the opportunity to make an informed decision on which app the download and use (which technique), allows us not to waste time learning to use an app that might not be beneficial later on (productivity). But this means we need to be patient in our planning and our interventions.

If we are constantly looking to peak and taper our athletes, we are depriving them of the opportunity to learn and master skills necessary for athletic success. The bigger the learning base, the stronger the foundation! In modern society, we are constantly looking for the quick fix and instant gratification but this is not possible in nature. Nature will follow its course, we can try imposing interventions to cause adaptation that may be beneficial to the athlete but unfortunately, we do NOT get to decide when the athlete will reach each developmental point. We are currently destroying our young athletes due to an uneducated approach to growth and puberty. Another topic for a different day. I believe that we will be much better off following a well-planned periodization setup by the coach and trainer to optimize learning.

By constantly setting outcome based goals for our athletes and within our sporting structures, it increases the importance of peaking and tapering in youth sport. This increases the need for results in the short term which is detrimental to long term learning.

Change lies in the conscious; Success lies in the unconscious!!!



Are our children specializing in a specific sport (s) too early?

Text: Mary Ann Dove - Performance Coach and Co-founder of Positive Sport Parent

We are seeing more and more children specialize in one or more sport at earlier and earlier ages. The myth is that to become a successful sportsman or woman you need to specialize at an early age. The professionalism of sport over the past few decades has resulted in many parents believing that their child can earn millions of rands from sport if they invest in the development of their child's talent at an early age. The reality is that a very small percentage of individuals are able to earn a decent living from professional sport. There are only 15 Springboks on the field at any one time compared to the number of schoolboy players. Despite all its advantages, Michaelhouse School in KZN took over 100 years to produce its first Springbok player in 2010.

Yes, it is not only about the money involved with being a successful sports person. Many individuals derive their sense of achievement from merely representing their school, club, province or country, but to get there takes many hours and years of hard work, sacrifice and dedication. In fact as Malcolm Gladwell in Outliers and Daniel Coyle in the Talent Code suggest it is 10,000 hours or 10

years. That would indicate that if your child specialises at the age of 10 they will reach their peak at 20 years of age and from a physiological, mental, cognitive and emotional perspective that is not their peak performance time. In the majority of sports, mid to late twenties is considered the peak performance period.

There has been much debate recently around the "10,000 hour rule". I think what is important to remember is not whether it is 8,000 hours or 12,000 hours, but the concept of deliberate practice. In addition, it should never be forgotten that sporting talent, performance and achievement is a complex interaction between genetic endowment, experiences, opportunities, environment, parental influence, coaching, physical conditional, technical skills, hard work, dedicated practice and mental ability.

So what is the best age to specialize in a specific sport? It is a difficult question, but let's consider some of the issues.

Children need to develop as athletes before they become specialized as players. This can be achieved by

teaching children the fundamental skills required as a foundation for more complex physical activities and sports. These basic skills form the basis of "physical literacy" - fundamental movement and fundamental sport skills which permit a child to move confidently and with control in a wide range of physical activities and sports. This will allow children to partake in sport without fear of failure and therefore increase the likelihood of them beginning a new sport or continuing with one, leading to an active healthy life. In addition, having good fundamental skills provides the basis from which sporting excellence can grow. Only once the basic athletic skills have been mastered, can an athlete begin to specialize in sport specific techniques and skills.

Physical literacy should be developed prior to the onset of the adolescent growth spurt.

These fundamental skills include the ABCs of athleticism, (agility, balance, co-ordination and speed), the ABCs of athletics, (running, jumping, wheeling/rotation and throwing) as well as swimming, sliding/skating, sending and receiving an object, dribbling,

striking and rhythmic skills. Different sports and activities are better at developing one or more of the ABCs than others.

"Learning fundamental sports skills before mastering related fundamental movement skills reduces performance ability later on"(Canadian Sport for Life)

Sports can be classified as either early or late specialization sports. Early specialization sports include gymnastics, diving and figure skating, whilst late specialization sports are sports such as soccer, rugby, basketball, hockey and cricket. The reason for these sports being early specialization is that the complex skills required for them need to be mastered before puberty otherwise they are difficult to learn after physical maturation. One of the reasons being that the rate of increasing flexibility decreases after puberty. In late specialization sports the levels required for international competition can still be achieved if specialisation takes place between 12 and 15 years of age as long as physical literacy has been achieved before adolescence. As a parent it is important to make sure that your child is not being pushed too hard too early to specialise by a coach. Another factor to consider is whether or not your child is an early or late developer. Each sporting code also needs to determine the best time of specialization for optimal success.

Different studies conducted around the world report that the more successful Olympic sportsmen and women tended to specialize after the age of 15.

"Participating in a variety of sports will help a child develop other athletic skills that they would not develop if they specialised in one sport too early. Athletic skills such as speed, balance, mental focus, jumping and reacting are all stressed differently in different sports. These skills will later transfer to the child's primary activity, so everything a child does to become a better all-round athlete will make the child a better soccer player, for instance." (Jennifer VanSickle, assistant professor of Sport Management, University of Indianapolis)



Some guidelines for parents to follow

- Boys, aged 6-9 and girls, aged 6-8 should participate in a wide variety of activities to develop the basic skills of agility, balance, co-ordination and rhythmic movement. The activities should be land and water based and where possible include ice/snow. There should be no specialisation in a single sport.
- From ages 8-11 in girls and 9-12 in boys (i.e. the approximate onset of the growth spurt) is the important stage for developing sport specific skills, but by playing at least 2-3 sports in different seasons. Parents should discourage focusing on only one sport throughout the year. Children should also not specialize in one specific position, stroke or technique for example batting or bowling in cricket.
- Between ages 11 and 15 in girls and 12 and 16 in boys (i.e. the onset and end of the growth spurt) adolescents are ready to consolidate their sport-specific skills and begin to specialize in a single sport should they wish.

GUIDELINES

There are a number of challenges that parents and athletes face should specialisation in late specialisation sports commence prior to age 10.

- Physical and psychological burn-out
- One-sided, sport specific preparation
- Loss of diverse social contacts
- Loss of transferable athletic skills
- Greater risk of overuse and repetitive stress injuries
- Higher levels of pre-competition anxiety which can lead to emotional trauma
- Difficulty coping with athletic failure later if they experience success at too early an age

CHALLENGES

Should your child insist on specialising early or for those early specialisation sports here are some tips for reducing injury or burnout:

- Focus on improving overall performance and developing new skills, not on winning
- Make sure your child uses proper training techniques and qualified coaches
- Avoid overtraining
- Watch for overuse injuries, schedule regular doctor's appointments
- Never tell your child to "play/work through the pain"
- Let your child choose the sports and level of participation
- Make sure your child has an off season to avoid burnout

TIPS

Let your child explore a variety of different physical activities and sports so that he/she can develop the necessary skills to sustain a long-term sporting life either as a participant or a competitive athlete. By doing this your child will make the decisions that are right for him/her at the right time. Support them in their development and ultimate choice of a sport.

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Lessons from Experiences with Rowing

Text: Jimmy Clark, Institute for Sport Research, Department Biokinetics, Sport & Leisure Sciences University of Pretoria

To put it mildly, the recent London 2012 Olympic Games represent one of the standout spectacles I've witnessed. Experiencing first-hand the sheer scale of this showpiece phenomenon in one of the world's great capitals was more than a little memorable having grown up obsessing over this celebration of sporting achievement and human performance. Widely acclaimed as the best-run Games to date, the ten days I spent there were everything I expected and more – like getting intoxicated on a new ensemble of sporting cocktail daily, each mixed with ripe, full-throttle competition, shaken with a cacophony of colour, noise and passion, served with several shots of grit, all laced with no-nonsense British know-how and thirstily downed in the cultural melting pot that is London.

Cast all this aside though because personally, everything paled in comparison to the sight of South Africa's lightweight men's coxless four (LM4-) rowing their bow-ball ahead in that last few-hundred metres of pure ecstasy. Sizwe Ndlovu, John Smith, Matthew Brittain and James Thompson became South Africa's (and Africa's) first rowing Olympic gold medallists as they surged to out-sprint crews from Great Britain, Denmark and Australia in the closing

stages of a tightly contested A-final. Their six minutes of precision and pain saw raw emotion swell and then explode amongst the small South African contingent at the Eton-Dorney rowing course and many, many more supporters back home. Hoarse throats and wet eyes were companions on an adrenalin-filled day that would take weeks to sink in. Knowing the effort and desire which fed these guys through the unglamorous toil of preparation long before that lung-busting exhibition of exactness suddenly made it all seem more than worth it. If ever I had questioned what high performance sport could offer above all else, here was the answer.

From the incredulous roller-coaster peaks of euphoric celebration and troughs of dazed amazement immediately after the race, to the purposeful reflection over these two months or so since then, I've been peppered with questions about the result and the processes leading up to it from colleagues to columnists. Naturally, many of these turned to the concept of sport science. Readers of prior posts may recall my comments on the many myths and misconceptions which pervade and persist in the exercise sciences. Well, it seems the same can be said about the application of science in sport, with administrators, managers, coaches, athletes and scientists often stumbling to find a position in which to place it and use it as we all clamber to bridge the science-practice chasm in sport. So I thought I'd illuminate a few key thoughts that have surfaced and share some of the lessons I've learnt about science in sport, not from formal study or scientific papers, but from my hands-on involvement with the national rowing squad during this last Olympic cycle, and before.

To be clear – I won't suggest that having a sport science input into the rowing programme made the difference between the title of Olympic champions or also-rans. There are many factors that culminate in the final outcome of a complex task like rowing and a massive event like an Olympic Games regatta, and deliberating on how much performance is won or lost by each factor is a futile exercise when margins are exceeding small and multiple factors overlap. Figure 1 highlights a few of these factors. But science can assist in systematically organizing those aspects which can contribute to improving performance and then suggesting and initiating ways of addressing each of them given the current state of affairs.

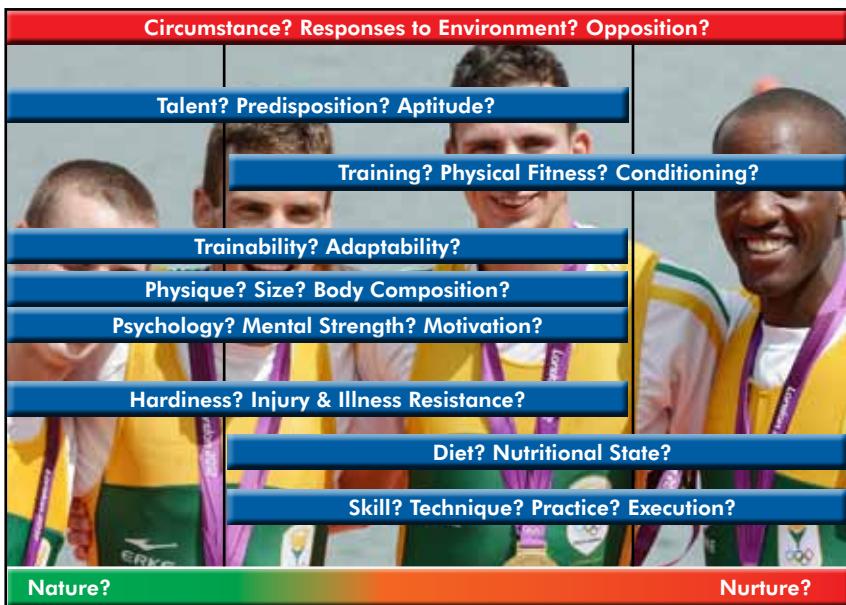


Figure 1. Selected factors impacting on sports performance and competitive outcome

In the rowing program, this required researching and considering the myriad factors impacting on rowing performance. Some factors are modifiable, others are not. Identifying and prioritizing those controllable factors assisted in directing valuable effort and scarce resources – at each point it's important to assess which factors will yield the greatest gains for a given input. For example, training load was identified early on as a major area linked to improved performance, was very much modifiable, and was therefore a big piece of the puzzle needing attention. Ultimately, everything can affect everything – maintaining increased training loads demands improved recovery for adaptation and sustained progression, a greater need to address injury and illness risk or maximize treatment outcomes, and a closer scrutiny of individual relative work load. So with time, these also became large items needing to be addressed. In this way, effort and resources were continually evaluated to ensure their direction toward the best sum-total given the situation.

Without a focused and planned support plan, especially in the face of limited resources, efforts in scientific support can oftentimes be misplaced. One needs to consider the stage of the sporting programme and provide support appropriate for that stage of the programme. It requires finding the holes in the

system which are threats to current performance and systematically plugging the biggest holes first while plotting a plan for potential threats in the future. For example, there is ample scientific evidence supporting the use of various ergogenic (performance enhancing) methods in sport in general and rowing in particular. But one must consider the resource outlay v performance benefit, or else the 'science' effect risks being obscured by frankly more fundamental holes in the system. There must be some sporting sense before sporting science.

There seems to be a general misconception over what constitutes a scientific input. Definitively, science (from the Latin *scientia*, meaning 'knowledge') is considered an enterprise that builds and organizes knowledge to form testable explanations and predictions about the world. Fundamentally, science is about asking questions and solving problems. By its nature then, science does not hold all the answers. It's not simply a black box of secrets we open in order to tell people what to do. Rather, it is a mindset, a way of working towards answers, one which relies on formulating appropriate questions, generating and synthesizing ideas, and careful observation and assessment. White lab coats, clipboards and expensive equipment don't guarantee scientific input any more than the latest racing shell guarantees winning rowing races. They may be part of the



science, but they are not essential to it – what is essential is appreciation for a scientific method. Sport science has been marketed as a multi-disciplinary field concerned with the understanding and enhancement of sporting performance with the principle aims of ensuring athletes can undertake the rigorous training that is a prerequisite for success and that they are prepared for the demands of competition. Many of the traditional avenues for investigating and improving sporting performance are illustrated in Figure 2. Simply put, sport science can be thought of as using a scientific process to guide the practice of sport with the aim of improving performance. In such a setup, many of the boundaries in Figure 2 blur as overlaps and complements evolve.



Figure 2. Traditional categories of sport science service provision

Coaches (good ones) engage in scientific method themselves if they carefully plan, record, interpret and modify their practices. Scientific thinking is neither conferred by a degree nor dependant on one. Failure to appreciate science as a method rather than a commodity will perpetuate its sale as a service outsourced to those supposedly ‘in-the-know’ and do nothing to merge the current silos of research knowledge with scientists and practical sports performance knowledge with coaches. Mixing the expertise seems like a sensible way of pursuing meaningful scientific contribution to a sporting programme.

To borrow a colleague’s frequent analogy, if you want to teach Johnny Greek, you must know Johnny, and you must know Greek. In short, there are two major facets to master when attempting to make significant interventions. On the one side, a thorough understanding of the individuals in the sporting setup (i.e. Johnny) helps tremendously. The bulk of the effort in this category involves getting to know the strengths and weaknesses (the profiles) of individual athletes with any number of available investigations (Figure 2). But crucially, these should be planned, purposeful, and ongoing. Health, fitness, technical and performance elements are commonly monitored. On the other side, understanding the activity in which the individuals need to function (i.e. Greek) is vital in creating a context around the individual profiles. Studying, analyzing and researching the sport are parts of this, but understanding the system, the bigger picture, is equally important. This may include the administrative structure, available resources, coaching methods and styles and history of scientific

support. Many of the real sporting performance problems needing solving, or the questions science can help address, stem from getting to grips with this element. For a thorough understanding, science should ideally be part of that system.

Part-time involvement produces part-time results. Since profiling expertise tends to reside mostly in trained graduates and performance expertise mostly in experienced coaches, it makes sense that teams of individuals, immersed in the programme objectives will show the greatest development. Immersion of science within the programme requires constant availability, dialogue and contemplation. Fortunately this was possible in the rowing programme due to our home base at the High Performance Centre, University of Pretoria. Immersion and team work are crucial because the turnaround times needed are far shorter in high performance sport than in academia or research settings.

I’ve been asked by coaches why some form of scientific support should be incorporated into sporting programmes. Three reasons come to mind. First, winning is valued very highly. It’s the ultimate purpose of competitive sport – determining a victor. From the athletes themselves to the nations they represent, winning



means a lot. I doubt the resources thrown into the science of athletic performance across the world would ever have materialized if first and last enjoyed the same status, same reward. Second, winning margins are very small. A single percentage point difference in performance these days is an eternity - international competitions are more frequently decided by fractions of percentages. Finally, winning is very difficult. Many aspects related to preparation and execution need to be honed simply to attain a competitive level, never mind win. Elite-level competition is brutal, ruthless, and the benchmarks are continually being set higher. There is no user manual for preparing medal winners as opposed to finalists or qualifiers, so clearly it is not easy.

Improving performance from scientific input is often the sum-total of many small inputs on a variety

of fronts which together represent a significant contribution by a great many individuals. It remains people that make things happen, and so securing the best people to fill the right holes in an effective and trusted network which works closely together on a daily basis represents one way of accelerating development. The quality of the scientific input will largely be a function of the questions asked and the capacity and immersion of the people involved in answering them. Where tougher problems are faced, or where margins of victory and defeat become increasingly small, continuity of involvement helps secure an institutional memory, a working experience of success and failure which cannot be bought as a service or taught as a degree.

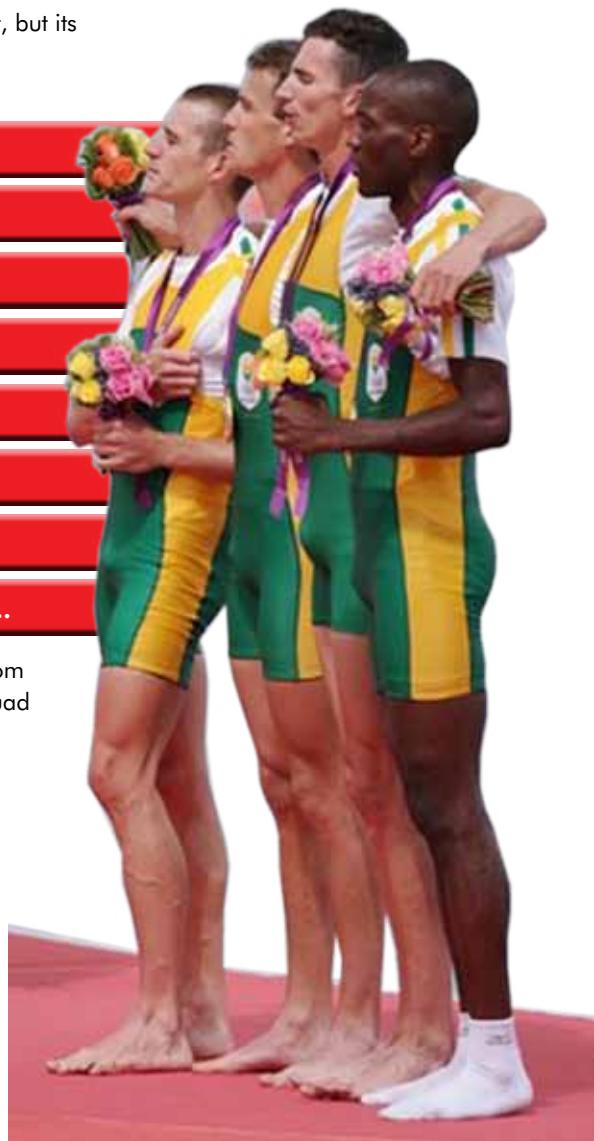
I don't doubt that a science has a role in competitive sport, but its nature, its extent and its

contribution may well vary based on the maturity of the sporting programme. It would be senseless to demand its inclusion in the absence of sport performance fundamentals, like athletes with the capacity and desire to adapt, who work hard, compete to win, and who hate losing, or lack of prolonged, planned and deliberate preparation with excellent coaching and infrastructure to support this. As our programme matures and grows, so will the nature of the scientific support in an attempt to balance critique, continuity and progression.

- 1 Have a plan...**
- 2 Establish an effective & trusted network...**
- 3 Appreciate the scientific method...**
- 4 Distinguish between FAD & SCI...**
- 5 Evaluate Leverage v Feasibility...**
- 6 Keep detailed & effective records...**
- 7 Understand the place science has...**
- 8 Find creative ways to get the job done...**

Figure 3. Eight summary points on the use of scientific support from the 2009-2012 period with the South African national rowing squad

Jimmy Clark teaches exercise science & exercise physiology at the University of Pretoria and serves as sport science consultant to Rowing South Africa. Feel free to contact him at: jimmy.clark@up.ac.za.



Get serious about judo

Text: Wilhelm de Swardt Image: Reg Caldecott

If you are serious about judo, then the TuksJudo Academy is where you should be.

"The moment one of the Tuks students steps onto a mat during a tournament, the players from the other teams are worried because they realize that they will be up against a tough opponent.

"What is really exciting about the Academy is its holistic approach. The changes they bring about in their young players extend way beyond mastering the art of judo.

"Most of the youngsters started with nothing. They were actually nobodies, but after a year's coaching and training they are winners on and off the mat." This is the honest opinion of Zack Piontek, one of older players at the TuksJudo Academy.

Once he begins to talk about judo at Tuks, there is actually no way of stopping him.

"At the recent South African championship we won an incredible number of medals. It was really exciting because we all won medals. We won mostly gold and silver, with only one bronze," Piontek said boastfully.

Hardly allowing himself time to catch a breath, he began to sing the praises of the 16-year-old Michaela Whitebooi.

"Remember what I am telling you now. She has what it takes to become one of the world's best. I think once she is 20 she will be almost unbeatable.

"At a tournament in Potchefstroom, her rival started crying the moment she realized that she had to fight Michaela."

Whitebooi is one of a squad of youngsters who get their schooling at the

TuksSport High School. The school enables them to train at least three times a day.

What is the key to the success of the TuksJudo Academy?

"It is Nikola Filopov, our head coach. He is getting older and at times he tends to moan a lot, but there is no better coach than he, especially while you are fighting.

"He sees instantly what you are doing wrong and gives you the right advice to rectify the mistake.

"Therefore, he is a real asset to have next to the mat when you are fighting. He also knows how to boost you mentally before a fight."

The 21-year-old Piontek is one of the rising stars of South African judo.

Up to now Patrick Treziser, a former Olympian, was the only judoka who had been able to beat him in local tournaments.

But, as Piontek rightly points out, Treziser, is eight years his senior and he is, therefore, much more experienced.



"I do not feel ashamed when I lose to Patrick."

A definite highlight for Piontek was the 2010 Commonwealth Games in Singapore where he won a gold medal in the junior category, as well as two bronze medals in the senior categories.

What made his performance even more special, was that he broke the scaphoid bone in his wrist on the first day, but even that could not prevent him from fighting on for two more days.

"I will be honest, I was in a lot of pain and I had to change my fighting style completely because I was only able to get a good grip with one hand."

"But there was no way that I was going to quit. The cost of getting to the tournament was just so high that I had to make the most of the opportunity to compete against the world's best."

That brings Piontek to a sensitive issue.

"I would have quitted judo a long time ago if it had not been for the support we are getting from the High Performance Centre."

"Judo South Africa (JSA) is doing basically nothing to help us. It does not seem to bother them that they are sending teams to compete at big tournaments with no hope of winning medals"

"I, for one, definitely don't just want to compete for the sake of competing. I want to become one of the world's best and, with proper support, I know I can."

"Life is too short and too precious to be wasted on judo if you are never given a fair chance to succeed."

"Thanks to the High Performance Centre I am able to train three times a day and get one decent meal a day. I also have access to good

physiotherapists, sports scientists and even a sports psychologist, should the need arise."

"They even sponsor our accommodation in one of Tuks' Sports Houses."

Piontek's main frustration is the lack of international exposure.

"There is only so much that we can learn at the TuksJudo Academy. If we want to proceed to the next level, we need to be able to compete and train internationally on a regular basis."

"If you train with the same guys every day, you eventually become just as good as they are, but no better."

"Different countries have different fighting styles to which we need to be exposed so that we will know what to expect if we should be lucky enough to go to the Games."

The Medalist caught up with Robyn Moodaly in the wake of her Olympic experience and asked her about London, the future of women's soccer, and homework.

Text: Rick de Villiers Images: Reg Caldecott and Robyn's own collection

Back to school, back to reality: a familiar refrain that holds a deep dread for children. It means stowing away the Xbox, buying new stationary, and returning to the Sisyphean horrors of school life. Luckily, for most kids, this only happens once a year (only the December holiday is substantial enough to engrain an almost-indelible lethargy in the soul). But for Robyn Moodaly, it's a different story.

Training camps, international friendlies, and a little thing called the Olympics have meant that the baby of the Banyana Banyana side has missed 41 days of school this year. For lesser mortals, this duality would be too much. But Robyn has struck a compromise between the ideal world of soccer stardom and the reality of the everyday.

"It's stressful missing so much school, but I've managed to cope," she says. "The teachers at the school and my friends – we're a close-knit group – did their best to make sure I didn't fall behind too much, and I did my bit by always taking work with me wherever we went."

Even on the flight to London, surrounded by the Oscars, Camerons and Chads of Team SA, the studious 18 year-old plugged away at her homework. But soon enough, she admits, the distractions multiplied.

"We stayed in a hotel near the soccer stadium, and it was amazing. We got to meet and mix with the other teams in the recreation room, played pool and even spent some time playing a new TV game that was released specially for the London 2012 Olympics."

But nothing, she explains, compared with the stadium. "Everything was so professional, and the atmosphere was incredible. In the locker room each player had her own little station where you'd find everything perfectly laid out. The biggest surprise was the support from the crowd. They went mad for us, even during warm-up!"

Once the carnivalesque sights and sounds had been absorbed, it was down to business. Ranked 61st in the world, the Banyana Banyana were always going to have a tough fight on their hands. Though they failed to win a single game, they held world champions Japan to a goalless draw. And despite her team's early exit, Robyn feels they have good deal to be proud of.

"I think we're all happy with the way we played, but more than that we're happy with the way we prepared for the tournament. We put in a lot of time and effort, and felt good going in. Unfortunately, the other teams have much more experience, and the players are also much bigger. But in

terms of skill we matched them all the way, and we should be proud of our performance."

She explains that the real challenge for women's soccer in South Africa is nurturing a highly competitive local league. Even in the Sasol League, which is the highest women's league in the country, there is an uneven spread of talent. According to Robyn, the women's game needs more structure and tougher competition.

But all isn't doom and gloom, and things have improved vastly over the last 18 months. "Up to 2011 there wasn't much support for the women's game. But Banyana Banyana have had a string of successes, and this has sparked interest almost overnight. Our send-off to London was fantastic! There were so many people at the airport with posters and vuvuzelas, and such great support during our matches.

"The national team is definitely going on to bigger things. Our team spirit is great, and we function like a family. I've often felt homesick, but my teammates are always there to pick me up. We are in a good place, and we've got big dreams for the future."

The Stuff of Dreams



TuksSport News

TuksRowing dominates USSA Boat Race 2012

After months of intensive preparation the time finally arrived for TuksRowing to put themselves to the test at the Mutual and Federal USSA Boat Race. Boat Race is an annual event that is held on the Kowie River in Port Alfred and Universities from across South Africa compete against each other for top position.

For the second year in a row TuksRowing sent four full crews (Men's A & B and Women's A & B), and for the first time sent Novice Rowers to compete in a composite crew with UJ and UKZN.

All crews race in heats to get into the finals which are based on the best times achieved in the heats. The Tuks B Men's crew affectionately known as the Beast Crew made it through to the third and fourth place final (B Finals) of the B Section. The crew comfortably took third place winning Bronze. The rest of the Tuks Crews made it through to the A finals which took place on Saturday 15 September 2012. TuksSport Director, Mr Kobus van der Walt, and the TuksSport Deputy Director, Dr Rendani Mulaudzi, attended the A finals in support of the Tuks Crews.

The Tuks B Women's Crew made it through to the first and second place final (A Final) of the B Section. They were up against Rhodes B, a historically strong crew, and in tough conditions finished second to take the Silver.

The Tuks A Women's Crew found themselves up against a strong Rhodes A crew in their A final. The women completed their race in fine style taking first place and the Gold with a time of 16:54.74, this is the

first time in the history of the Tuks Rowing Club that the Women have taken Gold in the A final of the A Section.

For the fourth year in a row the Tuks Men's A Crew arrived at Boat Race as the favourites to win the A Section A Final, and they did not disappoint. Up against UCT Tuks A Men powered to a 18:26.91 victory.

Tuks A Men – GOLD
Tuks A Women – GOLD
Tuks B Men – BRONZE
Tuks B Women – SILVER
Tuks Novice Composite – SILVER

Men's A Crew	Women's A Crew
Stroke: Lawrence Brittain	Stroke: Leighann Norton
7: John Smith	7: Kate Johnstone
6: Gareth Maybery (Captain)	6: Lee-Ann Persse
5: David Hunt	5: Amy Johnson
4: Mike Voerman	4: Imogen Mackie
3: Stuart Chamberlain	3: Megan Rosslyn-Smith (Captain)
2: Scott Donaldson	2: Krizia Giammartini
Bow: James Brittain	Bow: Lindsey Davis
Cox: Jason Hunter	Cox: Jason Hunter
Crew Manager: Coreen Walstra	Crew Manager: Coreen Walstra
Coach: James Thompson and Nick Panza	Coach: Coreen Walstra



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TuksSport

2012 USSA Student Cycling Championships

This year's edition of the national student cycling championship was hosted by the Cape Peninsula University of Technology in the vicinity of Wellington, Western Cape. The championship was contested in the format of a three day, 5 stage competition from the 4th to 6th July 2012.

Every year cycling teams from universities and other tertiary education institutions across the country come to take part in the championship, and this year was no exception with the University of Stellenbosch, University of Cape Town, University of the Free State, University of Pretoria, North West University, Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University, Tshwane University of Technology among others all fielding strong teams.

The team from Tuks comprised: Henning Jooste, Willie Smit, Kevin Patten, Adriaan Dreyer, Lionel Moolman, Henro van Rooyen, Viehann du Plessis and Ruan Botes. With manager: Wimpie Gouws

Stage 1 - 80km Road Race:
The men's team had a successful stage with Henning Jooste spending a large part of the stage in a break, which was eventually caught with about 8km to go, but soon after that Kevin Patten escaped the field with a rider from Maties in the last 3km. In the end Kevin managed to fend off the chasing group by a mere 2 seconds, winning the stage and taking the first Yellow jersey as leader

Stage 2 - 7km Individual Time Trial:
The Tuks men's team had very good results in the time trial, with Willie Smit and Kevin Patten posting the fastest times of the day. However, this stage was cancelled by the race director. Following a dispute that the times were not correct and that there were influence from official vehicles that influenced the race in a negative manner.

Stage 3 - 120km Road Race:
A small breakaway group of 4 riders, including 3 Tuks riders (Jooste, du Plessis and Van Rooyen), escaped the Peotone in the early parts of the

race. Jooste in the King of mountain jersey won 2 hotspots which led to him securing the Green jersey (Points/Sprinters jersey). The break was caught and a few attacks followed. Another break went clear with approximately 15km to go.

This group consisted of 3 riders (Charles Keey – CPUT, a rider from Maties and Adriaan Dreyer- Tuks). Keey secured the victory with 10 seconds over his 2 fellow breakaway companions.

Stage 4 – 1.5km Individual Hill Climb Time Trial:

The Hill climb was held on a cold and cloudy morning in Paarl on the road up to the Afrikaans Taal Monument. In the men's race Willie Smit and Kevin Patten showed their form once again and came 1st and 2nd respectively with Charles Keey in third position.

Stage 5: 45 Minute Criterium Race
The criterium was held over a flat and fast circuit inside the town of Wellington. Throughout the race team Tuks dominated the race once again and maintained a very high pace. Kevin Patten and Viehann du Plessis made the racing very hard on the front so that no riders could get away. Willie Smit once again won the stage with Tuks securing the team competition on this last stage by having 3 riders in the leading group.

TuksCycling team Achievements:

Stage 1:

1st Kevin Patten, 3rd Willie Smit

Stage 2 (voided by Race Director):

1st Willie Smit, 2nd Kevin Patten, 4th Viehann du Plessis

Stage 3:

3rd Adriaan Dreyer,

Stage 4:

1st Willie Smit, 2nd Kevin Patten

Stage 5:

1st Willie Smit

Overall General Classification (Yellow Jersey):

3rd Willie Smit

Points Competition (Green Jersey):

1st Henning Jooste, 2nd Willie Smit

King of the Mountain (Red Jersey):

1st Willie Smit, 2nd Viehann du Plessis
3rd Henning Jooste

Team Competition:

1st Team Tuks

All in all a very successful tour for the small team from Tuks, with the team securing both the Green and King of the Mountain Jerseys as well as the Team Classification and Willie Smit finishing 3rd in the General Classification. Members of the team also won 3 of the 4 eligible stages. (The time trial stage having been cancelled by the race director).



INSIDE NEWS



Swimming: Gold 4 x 100m freestyle (France)



Nijel Amos: Silver 800m track (Botswana)



Betty Heidler: Bronze Hammer (Germany)



Swimming: Silver 4 x 200m Freestyle (France)



Robert Harting: Gold Discus (Germany)



Gerd Kanter: Bronze Discus (Estonia)



Swimming: Bronze 4 x 100m Relay (France)

**Friends of the hpc
perform at the
2012 Olympics**



Yannick Agnel: Gold 200m freestyle (France)



Camille Muffat: Gold 400 Freestyle
Silver 200m Freestyle (France)



Gerasimena Aleksandra: 2 silver
50 & 100m Freestyle (Belarus)

The Tuks/hpc 10th anniversary Night Race took place on 19 September and was in honour of Lester Mills



TuksSport High School Learners at the Night Race



The **hpc internal function** to congratulate the 2012 Olympic Medalists was held on 21 August 2012



The Sports Science and Medical Unit (SSMU) of the hpc and University of Pretoria held a discussion on how dedication and innovation contributed to Olympic glory - gold, silver and bronze medals. They took a look at roles and practices that influenced the coach, scientist and athletes. Presentations were Karen Prinsloo (athlete), Roger Barrow (coach), and Jimmy Clark (Sports Scientist).



TuksGolf Academy



Hpc sponsored Golfer, Zander Lombard came second in the NKANGALA MINING MGU STROKEPLAY 2012 at Graceland Country Club: 7-9 September 2012



Stephen Allen, grade 11 learner at the TuksSport High School won the James Kingston Junior Tournament at Rustenburg Golf Club



TuksSport High School successfully defended their title" at the St John's College Annual international golf tournament.



TuksSport High finished 5th in the Retief Goosen National High Schools Championship, that took place from 23 – 24 September 2012 at the Country Club Johannesburg Rocklands Course.

Tribute to:

Lester Mills



Springboks

and how juvenile

they would act on tour while he was never really able to compete with the likes of Rudolph Lake and Louis de Villiers when it came to pulling all nighters and closing down pubs.

That was Lester hard and real with you when he needed to as Brenden Nel would remember the "You don't work for the Brenden Nel Times, you work for the Pretoria News and I'm the boss here" to the kind and gentle soul that stood by his staff through the good and bad times in their lives.

I was reminded by a former colleague at the Pretoria News Lee Warren of how Lester insisted that the press box at Loftus Versfeld be named after Beeld rugby writer Quintus van Rooyen even though they were adversaries in work.

Lester always put others before him and even during his long battle with cancer he would often come to the office because he didn't want us to be overworked while he was away on treatment.

Often we had to tell him to go home and he would often say "just after I've subbed this story and finished that page", a more loyal and dedicated servant the Pretoria News will struggle to find.

Life at the Pretoria News will never be the same again especially in the sport department where Lester was the head, our neck, our body and soul.

Everything that has been said about him since his passing has been the embodiment of what I would call almost the perfect human being.

Lester was kind, loving, generous, helpful and of all the virtues we humans strive for, he was patient.

Lester never saw himself as above his staff but we all knew that he was the boss.

He led from the front but at the same time believed in collective leadership handing all of us in the sport department an opportunity to be our own bosses and taking pride in our work and the product we produced daily.

However, under that soft exterior there was a side to Lester that still haunts me today, the writing of intros, commas and making sure that we were always a step ahead of our local opposition be it the Beeld, Sowetan, the Citizen and our sister paper the Star.

Often the likes of Brenden Nel, Mahlatse Mphahlele, Timothy Sibande, Tshifiwa Luvhengo, Matthews Mpete, Kgomo Setusha, Hosea Ramphekwa, Manyehlisa Lehohla, Charles Baloyi, Neville Khoza and to

a lesser extent Gomolemo Motshwane were made to stay late into the night rewriting our intros, checking facts and chasing stories that had not even happened yet.

Mahlatse and I feared 3 o'clock in the afternoon because that is when Lester would stroll into the office all smiles but whispering "tick tock deadline is looming".

And when the little blue man alarm clock on top of his computer went off at 4pm he would shout "where are my stories" "what have you been doing the whole day" "why did you come to work if you aren't going to write anything" "do we pay you for sitting around and doing nothing"!!!!!!

As soon as your story was in then he would move from being the "Robert Mugabe" of sport editors to being your best friend as he would tell us stories about his days as a journalist at the Springs Advertiser, The Citizen and at the Pretoria News.

He would justify his earlier screams by telling us about his previous bosses from Chris Schoeman to Gerhard Erasmus and how they were hard, cold newspaper man who would have ended any aspirant journalist dreams with their abrasive words on how useless sport journalists they were.

Lester would also tell us about his days touring with the Bulls and



Lester's family, Daniel, Lesley, Michelle, and Matthews participated in the Tuks hpc Night Race.

Our soccer writer Hosea Ramphekwa said of Lester that he was a man that saw no colour, class, religious persuasion or age and instead looked at the human being.

I will attest to that because it was Lester who gave me my first break in journalism as a young and naïve intern in 2002 and went on to offer me employment the following year.

In 2005 when I lost my mother it was Lester who comforted me telling me of how he lost his mother when he was still a teenager.

I left the Pretoria News that year for Sapa and Lester and I still stayed in touch and two years later in true Lester style, he took me out for coffee and convinced me to come back to the Pretoria News.

It is the best decision I've ever made in my professional career and one that changed my life forever.

Again with those soft blue eyes and fatherly tone he persistently asked me when I was going to do away with my bachelor days and be serious with life?

Well I got married in 2010, not under duress but because Lester had guided me into finding the true meaning of loving someone.

It was again Lester who convinced me to start walking and eventually

running and yes Lester I swore at you all the way up Southern Cross Drive when I ran the Two Oceans half marathon with my cousin Tabby Tsengiwe.

Lester's heart knew no bounds and Tabby made it a point this year when she received her medal after finishing the Two Oceans to call Lester and thank him for his words of encouragement during our runs on Saturdays.

And it was Lester again who told me of the unconditional love and change to one's life that children bring.

I'm glad to say that three weeks ago while visiting Lester in hospital I asked him not to do anything funny as my daughter was scheduled to be born on his birthday.

Lester waited for my daughter to be born and even though it was the day before his birthday told me of how proud he was of me and will forgive my daughter for not sharing a birthday with him because "Madiba is not a bad substitute".

That is Lester Mills, a true gentleman, a loyal servant of the Pretoria News and journalism, a tough but loving boss, a mentor, a friend and to me the perfect human being.

While the Bulls might continue to win trophies and so to the Titans, Mamelodi Sundowns and Supersport

United.

While the days, months and years will roll on and sports pages change on a daily basis at the Pretoria News, we shall never forget Lester Mills because there will none like him.

The 49 years you had on this earth was your best Comrades ever and you ran it with distinction and dignity even in the most difficult time and that was because you had your God with you all the way.

To Lesley, Michelle, Daniel and Matthews, thank you. Thank you for sharing Lester with us, I know the Pretoria News is a better place because of him and I'm a better husband, father, brother and friend as well.

Lala ngoxolo, ulifezile uqatso lako!

Rest in Peace, you have run your race!

Text: Vata Ngobeni, Chief sport writer for the Pretoria News



From a sport fan's perspective

Nothing beats being a sports fan in South Africa

In a matter of hours, one can be singing away on Cloud nine and a few moments later be found clutching onto the last sips of an intoxicating beverage drowning one's sorrows.

It has been an emotional rollercoaster the past few months in our sporting world as the Springboks gave us hope for the future with their "run over them series" win over England in June before being run over by Argentina in their drawn Castle Rugby Championship match in Mendoza at the end of August.

Along with so many other South Africans, we thought our prayers were being answered when Heyneke Meyer's Springboks beat the English in the first two of three Tests and we were well on our way to world domination again.

I didn't really care whether we were playing running rugby, bash 'em to the ground rugby or skop, skiet and donner, as long as we were winning.

In fact, I was liking Meyer by the try and thinking to myself that this "great

white hope" was indeed the saviour of South African rugby.

Not that we needed much saving but Meyer was quickly becoming the man to take us back to the top.

Fast forward to three Tests later, one at home against Argentina, another at a hostile Estadio Malvinas Argentinas and then a disappointing Test against the Wallabies in an equally boring village called Perth.

Meyer may have saved us from the being regarded as the joke of the rugby world with our court jester coach Peter de Villiers who had our faces covered with our hands while the rest of the world laughed away in tears but all Meyer has managed to do is convince many of his detractors that the only top we will be sitting on is that of the worst team in the world.

Yes, some of the criticism that has come Meyer's way is unjustified and yes it is still early days in his tenure as Bok coach but it is him and his team that took us to Cloud Nine and have unceremoniously pulled the carpet from under our feet to leave us trembling from fear of yet another defeat to Scotland at the end of the year.

While on the doom and gloom of what might be in Edinburgh, one did feel engulfed by more misery and a need for even a boiling beer to chase away the darkness after Bafana Bafana saw some light at the end of the tunnel after their 1-0 defeat to Brazil in Sao Paulo.

New Bafana coach Gordon Igesund believes his team are on the upward curve but I wonder if he has considered that the light might be that of an oncoming train!

Enough of the misery but more of the beer, a cold one this time to our Olympians from our swimmers Cameron van der Burgh and Chad Le Clos to our oarsome foursome rowers and Bridgitte Hartley.

How can I forget our Paralympians with their 29 medals who made us believe that the only disability we have is from within.

Those performances were as golden as the brew that was consumed and just as intoxicating but will linger long in the memory because that was better than being on Cloud Nine.

I wouldn't change nothing about being a happy and sometimes sad South African fan.