

MITIGATING AND ADAPTING TO UNPRECEDENTED MISMANAGEMENT OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN EQUESTRIAN FEDERATION

Eric J. Stoch

African Centre for Disaster Studies
Unit for Environmental Science and Management
Faculty of Natural Sciences
North West University
E-mail: 10490442@nwu.ac.za

Alleged fraud, corruption, nepotism, maladministration and repeated mismanagement within the South African Equestrian Sports fraternity, led the South African Sports Confederation and Olympic Committee (SASCOC) to take drastic measures to regulate the administration of the sport. SASCOC appointed a Board Member, Mubarak Mahomed, to act as *ex officio* administrator of the South African Equestrian Federation (SAEF) and was mandated to restructure equestrian sport to ensure conformance with the SASCOC Constitution, the National Sport and Recreation Act 110 of 1998 (NSRA) and the final draft of the National Sport and Recreation Plan (NSRP).

“The strategic focus of the NSRP is to reconstruct and revitalise the delivery of sport and recreation towards building an active and winning nation that equitably improves the lives of all South Africans.” The NSRP is the implementation plan of the policy framework for sport and recreation. The NSRA determines the “what” and the NSRP the “how”. At the Inaugural meeting of the National Sports Indaba on 15th May 2011, Mahomed said, on the subject of transformation, the policy document was the responsibility of the Sports Minister. It is SASCOC’s responsibility however, to administer it and act as the custodians of the policy down through the nine geographic regions, the municipalities, local associations and clubs. This is throughout more than 350 organisations countrywide. The question of gender equity would be addressed aggressively as well.

Lack of transparency, decent governance, accountability, repeated breaches of the constitution and repeated misguided interference from SASCOC, has led to the total deterioration and regression of a once proud sport. The sport is now worse off than it was before Mahomed intervened. During 2015, Mohamed chaired a meeting where the constitution of the SAEF was unconstitutionally and illegally replaced with a constitution that does not comply with the NSRA. Properly elected geopolitical structures were unceremoniously removed from power and replaced by a number of Discipline Associations, some of which, to date, are not properly constituted and their elections are even considered invalid and unconstitutional.

Research indicates that some of these actions are as a result of arrangements, unsanctioned by SASCOC, of Mohamed and a number of rogue Disciplines that are members of the SAEF. Any hope of true transformation and development has been indisputably and utterly destroyed and will now take years to salvage. These activities have undeniably damaged the reputations of both SASCOC and the SAEF.

The managing of a National Sports Federation in resource restricted times is, at the best of times, difficult. The mismanagement of its limited resources and structures creates issues and exacerbates problems that will now require a lot more time, effort, resources and funds to repair the damage done. Twenty-one years ago we blamed Apartheid. Who do we blame today?