

Reclaiming school athletics in Cape Town's underclass, 1933–1955

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Abstract

This article endeavours to make a significant contribution to the broadening of local school athletics history in Cape Town. By focusing on certain historical documents, the article explores the state and scope of athletics in black schools in Cape Town prior to 1956, a largely under-researched field in South African sport history. It does so by identifying prominent administrators, outstanding athletes, and participating schools. Many of these histories have disappeared or have been erased from public consciousness. The article shows how organised school athletics in Cape Town's oppressed communities have been shaped by a myriad of teachers, politicians, and sport administrators of varying political and social backgrounds. It also provides details of the Trafalgar High School's Wiener's Day competitions. Next, a history of the Central School Sports Union and its offshoots is unpacked. Finally, the early years of the Western Province School Sports Board are overviewed. The article concludes by suggesting why it is important to reclaim this particular history.

Keywords: Athletics; Cape Town; local school histories; Western Province School Sports Board.

Opsomming

Hierdie artikel wil 'n beduidende bydrae tot die verruiming van die plaaslike skole-atletiekgeskiedenis in Kaapstad lewer. Deur op sekere historiese dokumente te fokus, ondersoek die artikel die stand en omvang van swart skole-atletiek in Kaapstad voor 1956, 'n grootliks onontginde navorsingsveld in die Suid-Afrikaanse

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sportgeskiedenis. Vele prominente administrateurs, uitmuntende atlete en deelnemende skole wie se geskiedenis uit die openbare bewussyn verdwyn het of daaruit gewis is, word in die proses geïdentifiseer. Die artikel toon aan hoe georganiseerde skole-atletiek in Kaapstad se onderdrukte gemeenskappe deur 'n groot aantal onderwysers, politici en sportadministrateurs uit verskillende politieke en sosiale agtergronde gevorm is. Dit verstrekk verder besonderhede oor die Trafalgar High School se Wiener's Day-kompetisies. Vervolgens word 'n geskiedenis van die Sentrale Skolesportunie en die vertakkings daarvan uiteengesit. Laastens word die beginjare van die Westelike Provinsie Skolesportraad oorsigtelik bespreek. Die artikel sluit af deur uit te wys waarom dit belangrik is dat hierdie spesifieke geskiedenis herwin word.

Sleutelwoorde: Atletiek; Kaapstad; plaaslike skoolgeskiedenis; Western Province School Sports Board.

Introduction

History scholars have neglected the links between South African education systems and sport as themes within decolonisation discourses. This is regrettable because such themes are important for shaping positive identity, confirming and challenging 'tradition', promoting social cohesion, debunking gender stereotypes, and more. The neglect is also regrettable because there is profound disparity between histories that have been formally recorded by black¹ and white schools.² If the gaps in recorded histories of black schools are not addressed, the individuals and organisations in this study will remain invisible, as settler society intended them to be.³

As this article highlights, many Cape Town schools – formerly administered by national administrative departments – designed on segregated 'ethnic grounds', have a long history of athletics.⁴ However, only a few black schools are keeping their sporting traditions alive today.⁵ It is my contention that a recovery of school athletics

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1. The author distances himself from any social or biological markers related to ethnic labelling. The descriptors, black, coloured, Indian and white are used in this study to reflect historical categories of ascription and not as biological determinants.
 2. See P. Dobson, *Bishops Rugby: A History* (Cape Town: Don Nelson, 1990); P. Dobson, T. Hamilton and K. Matthew, *Derby Day: South African Schoolboy Rugby* (Cape Town: Laugh it Off, 2008); W. Wighard, *Rugby at SACS* (Cape Town: SACS, c. 1998).
 3. A. Downey, *The Creator's Game: Lacrosse, Identity and Indigenous Nationhood* (Toronto: University of British Columbia Press, 2018), 26.
 4. F.J. Cleophas, 'Running a History Programme outside the Classroom: A Case Study of Athletics at Zonnestoem College', *Yesterday & Today*, 8 (2012), 63–87.
 5. Cleophas, 'Running a History Programme', 63–87; F.J. Cleophas, 'Opening a Window on Early Twentieth Century School Sport in Cape Town Society', *The International Journal of the History of Sport*, 31, 15 (September 2014), 1868–1881.

histories can assist in understanding the social historical context of these traditions, in critical ways. This means that learners and teachers can also challenge notions that have led to an over-emphasis in such histories of competition in capitalist societies, gender privilege, masculinity, and win-at-all-cost attitudes of the past. To this end, the histories of Cape Town schools' flagship sport code, athletics, before 1956 are documented and discussed here.

School athletics offered some individuals opportunities to excel in environments that otherwise restricted their social mobility and economic chances. Thus, Ezekiel Mphahlele, the novelist, could say in his autobiography that the names of certain boys lingered in black schools for years after they had left, being remembered for their sporting prowess as 'the sprinter', 'miler' or 'high jumper'.⁶ Yet, because of barriers erected through colonialism and segregation, being a champion school athlete was often the pinnacle of a black athlete's sports career. Even so, there were many ways in which sports were important. For example, school administrators promoted athletics actively as a bridge between school and other sports events. This can be seen in the writing of columnist 'Uncle Jim' (George Manuel) who detailed in the *Cape Standard*, for example, how school sport administrators in Cape Town often promoted track and field events at club rugby and netball tournaments.⁷

A primary motivation for the present study is to place a sport code, athletics, on the 'centre-stage' of Cape Town schools' sport history. Athletics, as I shall show, was deeply rooted in black Cape Town school culture. This contrasts with elite white schools that had institutional cultures forged primarily around rugby, cricket and (in England) rowing.⁸ This article thus begins a conversation that brings South African black school athletics in line with Edward Henderson's foundational work on African-American sports history: *The Negro in Sports*.⁹ As Henderson did with African-Americans, this article lists individual participation of local black schools in sport, but goes further and details the political and social influences impacting the organisation of athletics in these schools.

6. E. Mphahlele, *Down Second Avenue* (London: Faber and Faber, 1959), 129.

7. George Manuel was a journalist, initially for *The Cape Standard* and later the *Cape Times*. He was the first to publish a biography of a coloured athlete, Archibald Richards. See G. Manuel, *Kampvegters* (Cape Town: Nasou, n.d.); and *The Cape Standard*, 4 October 1938, 4.

8. D. Turner, *The Old Boys: The Decline and Rise of the Public School* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2015), 99.

9. E.B. Henderson, *The Negro in Sports* (Washington: Associated Publishers, 1939).

These influences came mainly from teachers who were officials of the Teachers' League of South Africa (TLSA). The TLSA owes its existence to pioneers of the African Political (later People's) Organisation (APO).¹⁰ The APO became the overseer of cultural developments in the coloured community prior to the Second World War.¹¹ Its ideological orientation was towards gaining a 'civilised status ... [which] could be attained, by education, economic self-help and the adoption of white middle-class standards of behaviour'.¹² The TLSA was the intellectual arm of the APO and was instrumental in placing school athletics in Cape Town on an organised footing. A Central School Sports Union (CSSU) was established in 1928 by school teachers affiliated to the TLSA.¹³ It provided structured competitions in athletics, cricket, rugby, netball and soccer for pupils in Cape Town and surrounding areas.¹⁴ The CSSU administrators had much in common with white school-sport administrators of the time who saw the value of school sport in the 'character formation' of learners and shaping a race-based nation.¹⁵ After all, the TLSA declared, it was 'especially looking after the interests of coloured children ... [as opposed to those classified as "native"]'.¹⁶ Prior to 1941, the attitude of the TLSA was to keep African teachers at arm's length and to emphasise distinctions between coloureds and Africans.¹⁷ Therefore, the CSSU did not object to the establishment of the Langa Bantu School Athletics Association as an independent school sports organisation.¹⁸ That association was formed in 1938, and its teachers provided opportunities for children classified as African in the Cape Peninsula to participate in athletics, netball, rugby and soccer.¹⁹

10. *The Sun*, 6 July 1934, 3.

11. *The Sun*, 28 December 1934, 1.

12. G. Lewis, *Between the Wire and the Wall: A History of South African 'Coloured' Politics* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1987), 24.

13. The earliest known officials were Dan Abrahams, Ned Doman, Gilbert Little, Percy Biggs and Captain Mozley. See *Cape Standard*, 9 February 1943, 10. For a social history of the CSSU, see Cleophas, 'Opening a Window', 1868–1881.

14. *The Sun*, 26 August 1932, 7; *Cape Standard*, 3 April 1945, 3.

15. In 1941, an Afrikaans textbook for school athletics appeared. S.J. du Toit at the Hottentots-Holland High School, a whites' institution, stated that if the (Afrikaner) nation wished to take its place among the world's nations, it would have to excel in sport. See S.J. du Toit, *Atletiek op ons Skole* (Cape Town: Nasionale Pers, 1941), ii.

16. *The Cape Times*, 25 June 1913, 11.

17. M. Adhikari, *'Let Us Live for our Children': The Teachers' League of South Africa, 1913–1940* (Rondebosch: Buchu Books, 1993), 97.

18. Langa replaced Ndabeni township and was officially proclaimed in 1927 'in healthy ... idyllic surroundings next to Cape Town's sewage works', see V. Bickford-Smith, E. van Heyningen and N. Worden, *Cape Town in the Twentieth Century: An Illustrated Social History* (Cape Town: David Philip Publishers, 1999), 87.

19. *The Clarion*, 16 October 1948, 4.

In this study, administrators, outstanding athletes, and notable results are identified, often for the first time.²⁰ Even though the majority of black schools have left behind only small traces and few accounts in the media, these records are significant for social historians because school athletics mattered greatly to these schools in the past. Moreover, knowledge of the past matters in the present and has the potential to do so in the future. Indeed, this article argues that because black school athletics matters, the detailed recording of names of participants and officials are important in themselves as archival and political acts of recovery and reclamation. After all, male school sport histories in privileged white communities overflow with such data, largely in uncritical accounts which lack historical analysis.²¹ The historical records of black female sports are even more hidden. Recording and publishing results of black inter-school athletics meetings is therefore important because they have been ‘written out of history by the colonial ruling class media ... [and] these exclusions became natural because [of the myth that] statistics are “neutral” and “don’t lie”’.²² On the contrary, individually and cumulatively, the sport results that are presented in this article, speak loudly.²³ They prove unequivocally that school athletics was indeed important for many teachers, learners and parents from the underclasses.²⁴

School athletics in Cape Town’s black communities during the period under review was driven by a desire to acquire middle-class culture. This observation corresponds with findings on marginalised communities in the United States of America, which ‘acquired limited functional autonomy from conventional culture ... vis-à-vis the rest of society’.²⁵ The focus of this research is however on developments in Cape Town, South Africa. Cape Town has an extensive newspaper collection that can be found in the National Library of South Africa (Cape Town Division). These are useful sources for research and contribute to a wider social and political landscape for the period under review.

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20. These criteria are derived from André Odendaal’s notion of setting new ‘paradigms for understanding the [sporting] past’, see A. Odendaal, K. Reddy, C. Merrett and J. Winch, *Cricket and Conquest: The History of South African Cricket Retold, 1795–1914* (Cape Town: HSRC, 2016), 2–3.
 21. See Dobson, *Bishops Rugby*; Dobson, Hamilton and Matthew, *Derby Day*; and Wighard, *Rugby at SACS*.
 22. Odendaal et al., *Cricket and Conquest*, 6.
 23. Odendaal, et al., *Cricket and Conquest*, 8.
 24. The author acknowledges the sentiment expressed by a school principal from the 1950s (wishing to remain anonymous), that ‘some teachers were apathetic towards school athletic[s] meetings.’ Not all teachers at black schools were thus equally passionate about athletics participation.
 25. O. Patterson, ‘Taking Culture Seriously: A Framework and an Afro-American Illustration’, in *Culture Matters: How Values Shape Human Progress*, eds L.E. Harrison and S.P. Huntington (New York: Basic Books, 2000), 216.

The article begins its narrative in 1933 with the formation of the Trafalgar Weiner's Day Competition while the closing year, 1955, was chosen because in 1956 the Western Province Senior Schools Sports' Union (WPSSSU) was established. From then onwards, black high schools in Cape Town organised their sport separately from primary schools. However, the physical environments within which these schools operated were not conducive to high performance and successful participation in athletics.

School sport environments

After the First World War, sport administrators at schools for children classified as coloured operated in a system where pupils exited school after (or before) grade six, mainly at missionary schools and a handful of public schools. Furthermore, school fees were charged by school committees even in the poorest schools. The schools were insufficient in number, overcrowded, understaffed and badly equipped. There were few playgrounds for the learners, and teachers were underpaid and overworked. The only public high school in Cape Town that these children could attend, Trafalgar High, was in a parlous state.²⁶ Because there was no compulsory education for black learners from the age of six, selecting enough learners for age-group categories in athletics was problematic. Moreover, as the majority of black pupils had no option but to leave school at grade six, this meant that they could not attend institutions of higher learning to acquire skills which could be transferred to athletics coaching.

Newspaper reports of the time claimed that it was through the intervention of the only black city councillor, Dr Abdullah Abdurahman, that conditions for playgrounds and better classrooms gradually improved. Through Abdurahman's efforts, free education came into operation on 1 July 1920 and primary education was raised to grade eight in the same year.²⁷ By 1918, free medical inspection had been introduced at these schools and teachers' salaries were increased. In 1931 free education up to 15 years of age was extended to children who were classified as coloured, and the number of state schools for them gradually increased.

The APO steered its constituents politically and culturally towards compromise rather than agitating for radical societal change. It was in this atmosphere of political moderation that a number of teachers met at the Wesley School in Salt River in June 1928 and established the CSSU.²⁸ Moreover, self-conscious differences in social class amongst black South Africans existed: the CSSU officials, with its TLSA members for example, drew a distinction between themselves

26. *A.P.O. Official Organ of the African Political Organisation*, 4 November 1922, 7.

27. The Free Education Ordinance made education free for children, irrespective of 'race', between the ages of six and fifteen years of age. See *APO*, 29 May 1920, 5.

28. E. Moses, 'The Schools' Sports Union', *The Educational Journal*, 27 November 1929, 5.

and working-class people. At least one TLSA official, Ernest Moses, also chairman of the Coloured Welfare Association, the same person who reported on the founding of the CSSU in the *Educational Journal*, came to the following conclusion:

[T]he coloured people of South Africa have an aristocracy of their own but they also have a large mass of uneducated, undeveloped individuals ... who far outnumber the handful who have been blessed ... to develop a taste for the better and higher things of this life.²⁹

It is therefore not surprising that the committee of the Trafalgar High School, an affiliate of the CSSU, asked the Cape School Board in 1920 to keep the school as a fee-paying institution rather than making it a 'free' school. The majority of the Trafalgar School Committee were also APO members.³⁰

The lack of qualified and certified athletics coaches and administrators

The administration of school athletics in the communities under discussion in this article was carried out by unqualified physical education teachers. An October 1936 media article in the *Sun*,³¹ a newspaper aimed at a coloured and Indian readership (as opposed to African), highlighted that secondary schools and teacher training schools in the coloured community were important institutions for athletics development. The article went on to emphasise the negligible status of athletics in local communities and put this down to the fact that athletics was not an integral part of the physical education programme at school level. It made three suggestions for intervention. First, an effort had to be made to establish physical education specialist training at teacher training schools. Second, a conference of sports teachers from various educational institutions had to be convened. At such a conference delegates could consider the possibilities of regular training and decide upon the type and degree of training that should be given. Third, through the TLSA, official recognition for physical education had to be sought from the Cape Education Department.³²

29. E. Moses, 'A Coloured Welfare Organisation', *The Educational Journal*, 6 March 1929, 10–12. In 1941 the Uitenhage branch resolved to 'avoid the influx of Natives into the Dower Training College', *The Sun*, 23 May 1941, 4.

30. *S.A. Clarion*, 26 June 1920, 6.

31. This newspaper was founded by A.S. Hayes, a journalist, and C.L. Stewart, a printer. It was published in Cape Town to express conservative, coloured opinion. From 1936 Samuel Griffiths, a white businessman, controlled the newspaper, which supported the APO and the United Party in accepting the segregationist policies of succeeding white governments. See L. Switzer and D. Switzer, *The Black Press in South Africa and Lesotho: A Descriptive Bibliographic Guide to African, Coloured and Indian Newspapers, Newsletters and Magazines, 1836–1976* (Boston: G.K. Hall, 1979), 60.

32. *The Sun*, 23 October 1936, 2.

It could not be ascertained whether this conference did indeed take place. However, the Commission of Inquiry Regarding Cape Coloured Population of the Union did recommend in 1937 that the development of specialised courses for the training of coloured teachers in physical culture was a matter of urgency.³³ Subsequently, physical education specialist training for men classified as coloured was introduced at the Wesley Teachers' Training School in 1938.³⁴ A columnist in the *Cape Standard* made appreciative comments on the few track and field coaches who, through their genuine love of the sport, succeeded in establishing an athletics foundation for the coming generation. These coaches were Wesley physical education graduates who became central figures in school sport development.³⁵

School sport development

By 1940 the CSSU had expanded, and a number of schools committed themselves to participate in an athletics competition to be held on 31 May and organised by Percy Biggs.³⁶ These schools were Zonnebloem College, Wesley College, Trafalgar High, Athlone Institute (Paarl), Prestwich Street, Cecil Road Primary, St Paul's English Church School, Rhamadiyah Institute, Muir Street Moslem School and Chapel Street Primary.³⁷ Eventually, more than 400 competitors from thirteen schools participated 'at the Green Point Track, despite adverse weather conditions, in front of a fairly large crowd'.³⁸

Despite World War II, when living standards in the city were low and malnutrition, especially amongst children, was common, another athletics meeting was held on the same date the following year, on 30 May 1941 at the Green Point Track.³⁹ Here thirteen schools competed for the Coronation Cup in junior and senior divisions, and the Diamond House Trophy was awarded for the school with the most points scored. It was a competition contested closely between Zonnebloem College and Worcester Rhenish (later Söhnge) College; they overshadowed the remaining

33. Union of South Africa, *Report of Commission of Inquiry Regarding Cape Coloured Population of the Union* (Pretoria: Government Printer, 1937), 194.

34. Department of Public Education, *Report of Superintendent-General of Education*. Cape Town: Government Printer, 1938), 48. The Wesley Training School had a primary, secondary and teacher training division. It was officially designated as a coloured institution.

35. *The Cape Standard*, 26 September 1946, 8.

36. Percival R. Biggs was a chemistry teacher at Trafalgar High School. Biggs was widely known in the local science community for his experiments in hydroponics. See *Cape Herald*, 28 August 1965, 8.

37. *The Cape Standard*, 14 May 1940, 9; *The Cape Standard*, 11 June 1940, 2.

38. *The Cape Standard*, 4 June 1940, 11.

39. A.W. Stadler, 'Die Tydperk van 1939 tot 1948', in *Nuwe Geskiedenis van Suid-Afrika*, eds T. Cameron and S.B. Spies (Cape Town: Human and Rousseau, 1991), 265.

thirteen schools (see Appendix). The results are an indication of the strong presence of athletics in the larger learning institutions. It also reflects the unfairness of having primary and high schools participating in the same competition.

The CSSU also made use of patronage from local black councillors who served on segregated statutory councils. One such councillor was Sarleh Dollie who presented prizes at a competition in 1940.⁴⁰ In January 1943 Dollie, a registered pharmacist,⁴¹ was one of the first members of the Cape Coloured Permanent Commission (CCPC) – later called the Coloured Advisory Council (CAC), and even later the Coloured Affairs Department (CAD).⁴² These bodies were not viewed favourably by a large part of Cape black society, in particular the new radicalised TLSA after 1943.⁴³

By 1944, besides the CSSU, four additional school sport unions existed in the broader Cape Peninsula.⁴⁴ These five unions became founder organisations of the provincial Western Province School Sports Board in 1946. It is fitting to proceed now with an individual historical analysis of each of these sports unions. By identifying the people who helped to shape them, doors are opened for further studies, since many of these role-players have not yet been identified in accessible histories.

Athlone and the District School Sports Union

In the 1930s Athlone was a working-class residential area on the Cape Flats. Its northern boundary was the present M18 (Klipfontein Road) and it was bounded to the east by Alicedale.⁴⁵ In 1912, a number of African people had set up squatter settlements there and by the 1930s there was a 'mixture' of working-class Capetonians in the area.⁴⁶ As a working-class residential area on the Cape Flats, Athlone's 'inhabitants generally did not have much money... and the majority lived in rented accommodation'.⁴⁷

40. *The Cape Standard*, 11 June 1940, 2.

41. *The Cape Times*, 13 September 1911, 5.

42. Adhikari, 'Let Us Live', 78.

43. W.P. van Schoor, *The Origin and Development of Segregation in South Africa: A.J. Abrahamse Memorial Lecture, 1951* (Cumberwood: APDUSA, 1986), 29.

44. *The Cape Standard*, 12 September 1944, 9.

45. K. Dumbrell, 'Athlone in the Early Twentieth Century: A Precursor to Working Class Housing on the Cape Flats, 1900-1930' (BA Hons essay, University of Cape Town, 1998), 1.

46. Dumbrell, 'Athlone in the Early Twentieth Century', 3.

47. Dumbrell, 'Athlone in the Early Twentieth Century', 28, 30.

In 1939 an Athlone and District School Sports Union was established. Initially this union provided rugby, tenniquoits, soccer and cricket for boys, and netball and tenniquoits for girls in the Athlone area and the adjacent districts. Athletics was also introduced at a later stage. The founding executive of this union consisted of Ned Doman (chairman), a Miss Abercrombie (from St Raphael's School,⁴⁸ the secretary) and a Mr Lenders (from Central School, who was the treasurer).⁴⁹ No additional historical data could be found on Abercrombie and Lenders. However, Ned Doman was the principal of the Athlone Primary School and was also an early chairman of the CSSU. He left a footprint in the broader South African sport landscape.⁵⁰ His biography and those of other teachers he worked with in sport structures reveal much about the deep involvement they had in the development of sport and educational politics. Doman received his early education at Zonnebloem College at the turn of the twentieth century, where organised athletics was an important part of the curriculum.⁵¹

In the absence of a national tournament, the local media punted Doman as the 'national coloured men's singles tennis champion' in 1932.⁵² Four years later he was again in the news. A South African Tennis Board (Coloured) (SATB) was established by school teachers and Ned Doman was one of the founding members.⁵³ He went on to win the inaugural SATB men's singles championship title in 1937.⁵⁴ In 1934, he was a provincial soccer player who represented Western Province as a centre-half against the touring all-Indian team.⁵⁵ Furthermore, he was elected as the president of the TLSA in 1933.⁵⁶ In 1944, he was part of a breakaway group of TLSA teachers who formed the Teachers' Educational Professional Association (TEPA).⁵⁷

48. St Raphael's School was established in 1929 as a Roman Catholic mission school. It was commonly referred to in the local community as the 'Mission School for coloured children'. One of the founding pioneers, Father Marcellus, described the original building as 'a schoolroom – four walls and a roof – and precious little else', See 'St. Raphael's RC Primary School', Anon., accessed 11 December 2020, <https://www.catholicschoolsoffice-ct.com/st-raphael-s-rc-primary-school>.

49. *The Cape Standard*, 25 April 1939, 13; *The Sun*, 28 April 1939, 9.

50. *The Sun*, 16 August 1932, 7; *The Sun*, 29 June 1934, 1.

51. J. Hodgson and T. Edlmann, *Zonnebloem College and the Genesis of an African Intelligentsia, 1857–1933* (Cape Town: African Lives, 2018), 171.

52. *The Sun*, 9 December 1932, 7.

53. *The Sun*, 6 November 1936, 10.

54. *The Sun*, 8 January 1937, 12.

55. *The Sun*, 29 June 1934, 1.

56. Adhikari, 'Let us Live', 185.

57. Anon., Report of the Executive Meeting held at Battswood on Tuesday, December 12th 1944, *Official Circular of the Teachers' Educational and Professional Association*, 1, 1 (1945), 2.

The Claremont-Wynberg School Sports Union

Another sports union was based in Claremont and Wynberg, two suburbs with a cosmopolitan makeup in 'race' and class. They are both residential areas situated midway between Cape Town and the False Bay coastline. From their inception in the nineteenth century, many of the local mission schools, which had been provided specifically to serve these communities, had been run along 'racial' lines. By the 1940s these mission schools were classified as 'coloured' in the official segregated education system.⁵⁸

Initially, the Claremont-Wynberg Schools Sports Union (CWSSU) catered for primary schools in the area.⁵⁹ According to a report published in 1948 in the *Clarion*,⁶⁰ a weekly English magazine, described by writers Les and Donna Switzer as a coloured sports and 'society' magazine published in Cape Town, the CWSSU held its sixth annual meeting at the Rosebank Showgrounds. Approximately 1 200 parents and children attended.⁶¹ The organisation of the meeting was poor, however, and 'because of the late start and delays at the starting gates, the finals of the most important events could not take place'.⁶² Fourteen schools participated in this competition. They were: Rosmead, St Saviours, Arsenal Road, Battswood, Broad Road, All Saints, Heatherley, Livingstone, Methodist, Mohammedeyah, Palmerston, St Matthew's, Stephen Reagon and Talfalah.⁶³ Livingstone was a public high school, Talfalah was a Muslim missionary school, while Rosmead and Stephen Reagon were public primary schools and Battswood was a Dutch Reformed training institute, meaning it had a primary and junior secondary school with a teacher training college. The others were missionary (Christian and Muslim) schools. All these schools were located in the greater Claremont-Wynberg region, with the exception of Arsenal High School which was in Simonstown. In 1944 the CWSSU had won the Barron Trophy at a combined WPAA&CA and schools' championship.⁶⁴

The Maitland Northern School Sports Union and Salt River School Sports Union

The next school sports union that could be located in this research initiative is the Maitland Northern School Sports Union, which dates from 1933.⁶⁵ A newspaper account dated 1940 states that P. Petersen, the principal of the A.M.E. School in

58. H. Robinson, *Wynberg: A Special Place* (Wynberg: Houghton House, 2001), 63.

59. *The Sun*, 9 September 1949, 6.

60. *The Clarion*, 16 October 1948, 8; Switzer and Switzer, *The Black Press*, 101.

61. *The Clarion*, 16 October 1948, 8; Switzer and Switzer, *The Black Press*, 101.

62. *The Clarion*, 16 October 1948, 8.

63. *The Clarion*, 16 October 1948, 8.

64. *The Sun*, 6 October 1944, 5.

65. *The Sun*, 1 September 1933, 8.

Goodwood in 1933, was later the principal of St. Mary's Roman Catholic School in Woodstock and was a co-founder and first secretary of the Maitland-Northern School Sports Union (MNSSU).⁶⁶

The first inter-union school sports competition was held in Cape Town between the CSSU and the MNSSU at the City and Suburban Rugby Grounds in Mowbray in 1933.⁶⁷ This began a tradition of inter-union primary school sport competitions in the coloured community, something that was absent in other communities. A few of the MNSSU officials later became members of the CAC and the Coloured People's National Union (CPNU). The CPNU was a political party that was established in May 1944 under the direction of George Golding to lend support to the CAC.⁶⁸ Most of the CPNU members were dissatisfied with radical activists who made inroads into the APO.⁶⁹ It claimed a reasonable influence in the rural areas but was never strong in the urban areas. The CPNU did however have a reasonable presence in northern urban Cape Town schools, especially in the MNSSU.

Initially, school sport was provided for children from all the northern suburbs of Cape Town, but in 1935 these were divided into the Goodwood-Bellville and Maitland sections. In that year, seventeen schools, from both sections, were affiliated to the MNSU union.⁷⁰ The earliest-known MNSU officials were those elected for the 1935/1936 season. They were Dan Heuvel (chairman), Ms J. Wilson (vice-chairwoman), J.N. Brown (secretary), W.J. Beukman (assistant secretary), J.D. Ecksteen (assistant secretary), Ms A. Jacobs (netball convenor and a teacher at Goodwood A.M.E. School)⁷¹ and Isaac (Ike) Stober (soccer convenor).⁷² In 1940, A.A. Fester was the secretary.⁷³

Heuvel was a member of the CPNU and principle of the Bellville Methodist School.⁷⁴ J.D. Ecksteen is possibly J.B. Eksteen (spelt in this manner), chairman of the WPAA&CA in 1945.⁷⁵ He was also the first president of the South African Amateur Athletics and Cycling Board of Control (SAAA&CBOC).⁷⁶ Ike Stober, principal of

66. *The Sun*, 18 October 1940, 4.

67. *The Sun*, 15 September 1933, 8; *The Sun*, 27 September 1935, 7.

68. *Coloured Opinion*, 20 April 1944, 1.

69. *The Sun*, 16 April 1954, 1.

70. *The Sun*, 31 May 1935, 6.

71. *The Sun*, 18 October 1940, 4.

72. *The Sun*, 31 May 1935, 6.

73. *The Sun*, 18 October 1940, 4.

74. *The Sun*, 18 October 1940, 4.; *Coloured Opinion*, 20 April 1944, 1.

75. Western Province (C) Amateur Athletics and Cycling Association, *Rules and Constitution*, 1945, 1.

76. SAAA&CBOC Souvenir Programme, 1948, 1.

Kensington Primary School, was also the first secretary of the CPNU in 1944.⁷⁷ In 1939, he was a co-founder of the Wynberg Netball Union.⁷⁸ He remained active in community cultural activities, and in 1954 he was one of the first officials of the Peninsula Association Eisteddfod that was organised by a group of individuals known for their involvement in conservative political and cultural organisations.⁷⁹ Stober was also the vice-chairman of the Western Province Schools' Sports WPSSB that year.⁸⁰ The left-wing political movement, the Non-European Unity Movement (NEUM) launched scathing attacks on his collaborationist politics.⁸¹

Initially the athletics meetings had no field events, and usually only short sprints and fun races (three-legged, wheelbarrow, bun and treacle), and were shared with soccer and netball matches. These events were preceded by physical culture displays by community organisations and speeches by city councillors and 'prominent European and non-European leaders'.⁸² Such was the case during the Second World War in 1940 with the Coronation Shield competition at the Kensington Recreation Grounds, Maitland. Here the Eoan Group of the Maitland branch, under the direction of Jane Kronenberg, provided a dance display. The Eoan Group had been established in District Six, Cape Town in 1933 and organised classical music and movement activities for local communities in the Western Cape.⁸³ Jane Kronenberg and her sisters, Agnes, Bertha and Mathilda were active Eoan Group members and deeply involved with physical education and physical culture activities in Cape Town.⁸⁴

At this competition in 1940, the St. Augustine's school pupils under the supervision of C. Arendse and the Wesley College students provided physical culture displays, while the senior sport masters of the MNSSU played a soccer match against the Western Province Indian Football Association.⁸⁵ The proceeds were intended for the Cape Corps Welfare Fund.⁸⁶ In 1942, C. Arendse was elected MNSSU secretary

77. *Coloured Opinion*, 20 April 1944, 1.

78. A. Adams, 'W.J. Herbert: A Pen Picture', in Cape District Association 50th Anniversary Souvenir Programme, 1929-1979 (unpublished brochure), 52.

79. *The Sun*, 11 June 1954, 7

80. *The Sun*, 16 April 1954, 7.

81. *The Torch*, 11 May 1954, 8.

82. *The Sun*, 6 September 1940, 10; *The Sun*, 20 September 1940, 9.

83. *The Sun*, 4 October 1940, p.12.

84. F.J. Cleophas, 'Physical Education and Physical Culture in the Coloured Community of the Western Cape, 1837-1966' (PhD thesis, Stellenbosch University, 2009), 99-100, 146, 157.

85. *The Sun*, 4 October 1940, 12.

86. *The Sun*, 6 September 1940, 10. The Cape Corps was the coloured division of the South African Defence force. The Union handed an amount of £16 16s to the Cape Corps Welfare Fund, *The Sun*, 18 October 1940, 4.

while a Mr McGowan was the soccer convenor.⁸⁷ The well-known businessmen Ernest and Harry Oppenheimer were patrons of the MNSSU in 1956.⁸⁸ This was a tradition initiated by nineteenth and early twentieth-century capitalists such as Cecil John Rhodes, Barney Barnato and Jan Marais who gave patronage to black sport federations.

Unlike the three unions discussed thus far, very few traces of the Salt River School Sports Union (SRSSU) could be found. A Salt River and District section for under-13 soccer players was introduced by the CSSU in 1945. This meant that school soccer players living in Salt River no longer had to travel to Green Point Common, thus saving parents the cost of bus fares.⁸⁹ In 1953, the affiliated schools were St Mary's, St Peter's, Wesley Primary School, St Luke's, Salt River, Cecil Road, Salt River Methodist, St Francis, Aberdeen Street, Kipling Street, Mowbray and Volkskerk. By 1954 there was an athletics division catering for both boys and girls in the under 10, -12, -14 and -16 age groups.⁹⁰ In contrast to the sparse information available on the SRSSU, a considerable amount of data was available on the Trafalgar High School Wiener's Day (THWD) sports meeting.

Trafalgar High and the Wiener's Day Meeting

Trafalgar High School was established in 1911 as a public institution for children classified 'coloured'. The Trafalgar High Wiener's Day⁹¹ (THWD) sports meeting was inaugurated in 1933 and was organised by a committee under the guidance of sports master and chemistry teacher, Percival Biggs.⁹² Records show that in later years the senior schools' sport associations used Biggs' (a white man's) gun for starting races. According to a former official of this union, Cecil Blows, no black teacher had a licenced firearm.⁹³

During the twentieth century, schools interhouse programmes at the Cape included events such as tug-of-war and obstacle races, a legacy of seventeenth to nineteenth century 'rustic or rural' English sports days.⁹⁴ Initially, the THWD

87. *The Cape Standard*, 7 April 1942, 2. Arendse was a teacher at St Augustine's School, *The Sun*, 13 September 1940, 10.

88. *The Sun*, 23 March 1956, 8.

89. *The Cape Standard*, 1 May 1945, 9.

90. *The Sun*, 19 March 1954, 7.

91. This was a public holiday on the first Monday in October. It was initiated by Ludwig Wiener, who was a member of the Cape Legislative Assembly in 1889. In 1952 the public holiday fell away completely. See Anon. 'Kimberley City Info', Anon., accessed 25 January 2022, <https://www.kimberley.org.za>.

92. *The Sun*, 5 October 1934, 7; C. Greyvenstein, *The Bennie Osler Story* (Cape Town: Howard Timmins, 1970), 25.

93. C. Blows, Telephonic interview by the author, 19 December 2020.

94. F. van der Merwe, *Sport History: A Textbook for South African Students* (Stellenbosch: FJG Publikasies, 2007), 96.

character reflected these rustic sports days, such as seen at an event in 1934. Besides the running events (110, 220 and 880 yards, 1-mile flat and 4-miles handicap) and the field events (high jump, long jump and shot put), there were also the 110-yards 'old crocks' over-40 race, the tug-of-war and an obstacle race. Athletes and spectators from Kimberley were also invited to the athletics meeting and rugby and netball matches were held in the afternoon.⁹⁵ Ten schools, four athletics clubs and the Old Trafalgar Boys entered teams in the competition.⁹⁶

The WPAA&CA allowed Trafalgar High School to use its Alexander Shield at the competition and the profits from the gate entrance were used for the Trafalgar Bursary Fund. Other trophies were also presented at the Wiener's Day competition. Notably, athletes in the men's open 220 yards competed for the Fernandez Trophy, athletes in the men's open 880 yards competed for the Dr I Abdurahman Trophy, and various athletics clubs competed for the Suburban Harriers Relay Trophy.⁹⁷ The Suburban Harriers Club was a multi-coded physical culture club that had been in existence since 1904.⁹⁸ In 1936, this club was part of the initiative in establishing the Western Province Amateur Boxing and Physical Culture Union (coloured).⁹⁹

The Dr Ishmael Abdurahman Trophy was named after the brother of Dr Abdullah Abdurahman. He was a supporter of the Afrikaanse Nasionale Bond, a political party that supported segregation between coloured and African people. A past Bond president declared that it was the powerful coloured wing of the National Party.¹⁰⁰ Dr Ishmael Abdurahman was also the chairman of the Cape Peninsula Bridge Union.¹⁰¹ This was a union where the elite of the Cape coloured society socialised. The Suburban Harriers Club was a multi-coded physical culture club that was already in existence by 1904.¹⁰² In 1936, this club was part of the initiative in establishing the Western Province Amateur Boxing and Physical Culture Union (coloured).¹⁰³

The officials at the inaugural THWD meeting were listed as follows: D. Keet, Dr I. Abdurahman, and Benjamin Kies (who acted as judges); Sarleh Dollie (a referee); Percival R. Biggs (the clerk of the course); H. Connolly and E. Oberlander (who were

95. *The Sun*, 14 September 1934, 2.

96. *The Sun*, 6 October 1933, 1.

97. *The Sun*, 5 October 1934, 7; *The Sun*, 14 September 1934, 2.

98. *The Sun*, 15 June 1934, 8.

99. *The Sun*, 10 April 1936, 8.

100. R.E. van der Ross, *The Rise and Decline of Apartheid: A Study of Political Movements among the Coloured People of South Africa, 1880–1985* (Cape Town: Tafelberg Publishers, 1986), 77, 79, 80.

101. *The Cape Standard*, 29 March 1938, 6; *The Cape Standard*, 21 February 1939, 3; *The Sun*, 10 February 1939, 11.

102. *The Sun*, 15 June 1934, 8.

103. *The Sun*, 10 April 1936, 8.

timekeepers); John van Harte (the competitor steward); Justus Keur and O. Misbach (ground supervisors), and Gilbert Samuel Little (the starter).¹⁰⁴ Some of these individuals became politically prominent, albeit in the service of different orientations. Kies, for example, was a left-wing radical who, as Gavin Lewis has shown, shaped the views of young South African radical leaders well into the 1970s.¹⁰⁵ He became editor of the TLSA journal, the *Educational Journal*, and was an outspoken critic of the Cape Education Department, resulting in his dismissal from the teaching profession in February 1956.¹⁰⁶ Connolly was the Director of Sports at the inaugural senior SAAA&CBOC championship meeting in 1948.¹⁰⁷ In 1945, he was the life president of the WPAA&CA.¹⁰⁸ John van Harte became the first president of the Western Province Cricket Board (WPCB) in 1959.¹⁰⁹ Justus Keur was an executive official and life member of the WPAA&CA.¹¹⁰ He was also on the organising committee of the Emancipation Pageant in 1935, commonly known as the ‘Olympics of the Slaves’.¹¹¹ Gilbert Little later became principal of the Zonnebloem Primary School. He was also a founding member of the Central School Sports Union (CSSU) in 1928, and in 1944 he was the chairman of the newly established Achilles Athletics Club.¹¹² Clearly, school sport was integral to the professional lives of teachers and it provided networking opportunities for them, not found elsewhere.

The Trafalgar Past Students staged another meeting in 1934 for the Alexander Shield under the auspices of the WPAA&CA. According to *The Sun*, this time it was an ‘excellently managed programme with 53 events catering for 250 competitors and was completed strictly according to schedule’.¹¹³ Rugby and netball matches were also on the programme.¹¹⁴

As with schools overseas, it was conventional at important black school athletics competitions in South Africa to invite prominent public personalities to present the trophies. Such people were almost invariably white, lending prestige and social sanction to the occasion. In turn, such a personality brought social and material benefits. This was the case here too, and the Trafalgar High School principal, Roland Miller, on behalf of the Trafalgar Bursary Fund Committee, introduced Louis Bosman,

104. *The Cape Standard*, 14 March 1944, 8.

105. Lewis, *Between the Wire and the Wall*, 216.

106. *Rand Daily Mail*, 15 February 1956, 12.

107. SAAA & CBOC Souvenir Programme, 1948, 2.

108. Western Province (C) Amateur Athletics, 1.

109. M. Allie, *More than a Game: History of the Western Province Cricket Board, 1959–1991* (Cape Town: The Western Province Cricket Association, 2000), 21.

110. *S.A. Clarion*, 30 October 1920, 8; *S.A. Clarion*, 25 December 1920, 15.

111. *The Sun*, 18 January 1935, 1.

112. *The Cape Standard*, 14 March 1944, 8.

113. *The Sun*, 5 October 1934, 7.

114. *The Sun*, 14 September 1934, 2.

a Cape Town city councillor, to those attending the meeting.¹¹⁵ In turn, Bosman promised to use his influence to approach the committee of the City Council to facilitate the establishment of a sports ground for coloured people in the vicinity of Trafalgar Park.¹¹⁶

In 1935, the athletics day included a soccer match played between past and present students and was won 8-6 by the present students. In a corresponding netball match, the present students won 13-10. An 'old crocks' 100-yards race for over 40s was won by J. Taylor,¹¹⁷ second was Justus Keur and third was Benjamin Kies.¹¹⁸ That year, the organisers referred to the positive influence that the Oxford and Cambridge athletics teams, that were visiting the Western Cape, were having on the Trafalgar (Alexander Shield) meeting.¹¹⁹ Five senior schools participated in this meeting. According to *The Sun*, the management on the day was excellent and the 55 events followed each other in rapid succession, with no 'irksome' interruptions. Biggs presented the prizes and shared the platform with Paul Heneke, Carel J. Carelse and Gilbert Little.

Carelse was a senior APO representative, being its vice-president.¹²⁰ He was a member of the Cape Town branch and had also served on the Cape Peninsula Juvenile Advisory Board since its inception in 1920.¹²¹ Carelse also served on the Joint Council Movement.¹²² This was a movement under white liberal custodianship, with the aim of promoting white liberal ideas of advancement through cultural and leisure activities among African and coloured people, but on segregated terms.¹²³ Carelse's name also appears in the first executive committee of the Cape Corps Gifts and Comforts Committee.¹²⁴ The Cape Corps was the coloured military unit of the South African armed forces. Furthermore, Carelse also served on the Trafalgar High School Committee.¹²⁵ In 1920, alongside a prominent sport administrator and APO vice-

115. *The Sun*, 5 October 1934, 7.

116. *The Sun*, 5 October 1934, 7.

117. This was possibly J.C. Taylor, a runner in the 880 yards and mile in 1919. See *S.A. Clarion*, 10 January 1920, 15.

118. *The Sun*, 11 October 1935, 7.

119. *The Sun*, 13 September 1935, 7. The organisers did not specify in the media what this 'good influence' was.

120. *APO, Official Organ of the African Political Organisation*, 29 May 1920, 4.

121. *S.A. Clarion*, 31 January 1920, 15; *APO, Official Organ of the African People's Organisation*, 10 July 1920, 10.

122. *The Sun*, 18 August 1933, 7.

123. R. Archer and A. Bouillon, *The South African Game: Sport and Racism* (London: Zed Press, 1982), 118.

124. I. Difford, *The Story of the 1st Cape Corps, 1915-1919* (Cape Town: Hortors, 1920), 322; *S.A. Clarion*, 25 December 1920, 18.

125. *APO, Official Organ of the African Political Organisation*, 4 November 1922, 7.

president, Stephen Reagon, he addressed the newly-appointed governor-general of the Union of South Africa, Prince Arthur of Connaught, assuring him of 'loyalty from the coloured community'.¹²⁶ That same year Reagon was, with Carelse, a member of the Claremont branch of the APO, and was also an executive member of the WPAA&CA.¹²⁷ Previously, Reagon had been a delegate of the Suburban Harriers Athletics and Cycling Club at the re-launch of the WPAA&CA in 1913.¹²⁸ Reagon was also vice-president and secretary of the Western Province Football Association (coloured)¹²⁹ and chairman of the Cape District Cricket Union.¹³⁰ Another well-known Cape Town-based soccer administrator in the 1970s, William Herbert, referred to Reagon as 'the greatest and best [sports] administrator I have ever set eyes on'.¹³¹

Such was the involvement and commitment to these events by well-connected and experienced people that by 1936 athletes from other black schools in Cape Town looked on the THWD meeting as the major interschool athletics event. In the same year, however, for unknown reasons, the WPAA&CA – the provincial organising athletics organisation – declared that only affiliated club members could compete in this competition. In turn, Biggs informed the association that under those circumstances the meeting would have to be cancelled. A sports columnist in the *Cape Standard* aptly remarked that the THWD was flourishing, which was more than could be said of the 'moribund WPAA&CA'.¹³²

Post-Trafalgar High Wiener's Day

The WPAA&CA planned another athletics meeting in conjunction with the school sports unions for 2 October 1944, as discussed earlier.¹³³ A revised WPAA&CA constitution of 1945 stated that there were ten athletics clubs affiliated to the WPAA&CA.¹³⁴ However, newspaper reports show that the WPAA&CA remained

126. *S.A. Clarion*, 27 November 1920, 2.

127. *S.A. Clarion*, 30 October 1920, 8; *APO, Official Organ of the African Political Organisation*, 1 May 1920, 4.

128. *APO, Official Organ of the African Political Organisation*, 19 April 1913, 10.

129. *APO Official Organ of the African Political Organisation*, 23 April 1910, 10; and *APO, Official Organ of the African Political Organisation*, 11 March 1911, 10.

130. *The Sun*, 21 February 1936, 1; and *The Sun*, 24 October 1952, 2.

131. W.J. Herbert, 'Message from Mr W.J. Herbert', in Cape District Football Association Souvenir Programme, 1929-1979 (Unpublished brochure, 1979), 3.

132. *The Cape Standard*, 14 September 1936, 9-10.

133. *The Sun*, 25 August 1944, 8; *The Sun*, 8 September 1944, 8.

134. The 10 clubs were Achilles, Bellville, Cape Fortress Sports League, Crofton Harriers, Mercury, Olympia, Silver Leaf, Suburban Harriers, Wanderers and IXL, and Yorkshire, while the four school unions were Athlone and District, Central, Claremont and Wynberg, and Maitland Northern Suburbs. See Western Province (C) Amateur Athletics and Cycling Association, 'Rules and Constitution 1945', 1. In 1948, the

hamstrung by poor organisation. The inadequate organisation of the provincial athletics championship in 1954 was an example of this. The programme was lengthy, with the last event finishing at 18:45, in semi-darkness. The athletes had not been prompt at reporting for their events and athletes who had been disqualified in the sprint heats were allowed to participate in the finals.¹³⁵ In addition, the athletics club, Salfords, was accused by Rive of practising racial and class discrimination. In 1981 Rive, a past Salfords club member, reflected that ‘members, ... of this exclusive, upper-class coloured club, all fair-skinned, were worried about my dark complexion’.¹³⁶ Salfords had been established in 1911 by the former Battswood School student, S.F. (Pat) Davids, and a few other schoolteachers.¹³⁷

According to *The Sun*, school athletes provided most of the excitement at club athletics meetings. However, it was hardly surprising when the newspaper lashed out at the lack of opportunity for promising school athletes to develop their talent further at senior club level.¹³⁸ The names of these unknown athletes do not appear in any available historical records. They were however the foundation of a later provincial school sports organisation, the Western Province Schools Sports Board (WPSSB).

The Western Province School Sports Board and the South African School Sports Board

The Western Province School Sports Board (WPSSB) was formed by a group of Cape Town school teachers on 17 May 1946 to promote different school sports in the Western Cape. Black primary school sport organisations were administered locally as ‘unions’, provincially as ‘boards’ and nationally as an ‘association’.¹³⁹ In 1946, the WPSSB affiliates were Athlone and District School Sports Union, the Maitland–Northern School Sports Union, the Vredenburg School Sports Union and the South Peninsula branch of the CSSU.¹⁴⁰ The first officials were R.D. Schuller (vice-chairman and athletics convenor), D. Fester (treasurer), Ernest Clarke (assistant secretary), D.D. Hendricks (trustee and soccer convenor), W. Miller and P. Gorvalla (examiners),

following clubs participated in the Western Province championships: Achilles, Crofton Harriers, Excelsiors, Suburban Harriers, Avalon, Bellville South, Nil Desperandum, Yorkshire, Wanderers IXL and Trafalgar. See *S.A. Clarion*, 16 October 1948, 7.

135. *The Sun*, 16 April 1954, 7.

136. R. Rive, *Writing Black* (Cape Town: David Philip Publishers, 1981), 7.

137. *S.A. Clarion*, 10 July 1920, 14. Battswood School was a Dutch Reformed Mission School in Wynberg, Cape Town, established in 1891.

138. *The Sun*, 16 April 1954, 7.

139. Minutes of the Conference of Inter-Provincial Primary Schools Sports Associations (held under the auspices of the Western Province School Sports Board), held at William Herbert Sports Ground, Wynberg, 11 January 1965, 5.

140. *The Cape Standard*, 6 September 1946, 11.

and Ray Carlier (netball convenor).¹⁴¹ Very little is known about these officials, except that Ernest Clarke was associated with the South African Weightlifting and Bodybuilding Federation, established in 1950, of which he was the president in 1975.¹⁴² Another well-known name was that of the netball convenor, Ray Carlier, who was a public figure in Cape Town's education and sport circles, being active in tennis, table tennis and netball.

Carlier was a TLISA member and principal of Livingstone High School at some stage.¹⁴³ By 1946, the leadership of the TLISA had transformed itself from a moderate to a radical teachers' organisation. It is however doubtful whether Carlier's radical politics made any headway in the WPSSB. A synopsis of her involvement in various sporting codes nonetheless provides historians with insight into the types of networks that existed in school sport in the 1940s. In 1946, Carlier was a Western Province Tennis Board doubles champion.¹⁴⁴ Two years later, a media report stated that she and D. Luter had won the Western Province Table Tennis Board (WPTTB) women's doubles championship for the third consecutive year.¹⁴⁵ The following year she was the vice-chairperson of the WPTTB and was also ranked fourth in the Western Province rankings.¹⁴⁶ In 1950 she was a provincial table tennis selector.¹⁴⁷ According to a media report, she made her debut in championship tennis at a Western Province tournament in 1935.¹⁴⁸ In 1937, she partnered with a Miss Williams to win the South African Tennis Board's women's doubles championship title.¹⁴⁹ Three years later, in 1940, she was elected match and registration secretary of the Cape and District Tennis Union.¹⁵⁰ The following year she was the Western Province women's singles tennis champion.¹⁵¹ Carlier was also a member of the Salt River Tennis Club, which was affiliated to the Cape District Tennis Union based at the Princeton Grounds in Wynberg, Cape Town.¹⁵² She occupied various administrative roles during her tennis career, such as the financial auditor and assistant secretary of the WPTTB.¹⁵³ In 1947, Carlier became the convenor of the Wynberg Netball Union.¹⁵⁴ The following

141. *The Torch*, 10 June 1946, 6.

142. *Rand Daily Mail*, 26 March 1975, 3.

143. A. Wieder, *Teacher and Comrade: Richard Dudley and the Fight for Democracy in South Africa* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2008), 27, 36.

144. *The Cape Standard*, 24 December 1946, 10.

145. *The Sun*, 12 November 1948, 8.

146. *The Sun*, 24 February 1950, 8; *The Sun*, 18 March 1949, 8.

147. *The Sun*, 16 June 1950, 8.

148. *The Sun*, 18 June 1948, 8.

149. *The Sun*, 8 January 1937, 12.

150. *The Sun*, 4 October 1940, 10.

151. *The Sun*, 3 January 1941, 11.

152. *The Cape Standard*, 12 December 1944, 12.

153. *The Sun*, 2 November 1951, 8.

154. *The Cape Standard*, 11 March 1947, 8.

year she was elected convenor of the newly-established Western Province Netball Board and also occupied the vice-presidency of the South African Table Tennis Board.¹⁵⁵ Her legacy in Cape Town sport was manifested when, from the 1970s until the early 1990s, the best team in each of the unions affiliated to the Western Province Netball Union competed in a derby called the Ray Carlier Bowl Competition.¹⁵⁶

Initially, the WPSSB catered for three sporting codes – athletics (junior and senior section), netball and soccer (under-12, -14 and -16).¹⁵⁷ In 1948, an under-8 age group was added. The first athletics championship meeting was held in September that year at the Rosebank showgrounds in front of 500 scholars, teachers and parents, and ‘Dr J.M. Joshua took the salute’,¹⁵⁸ suggesting a lingering colonial military influence. Joshua was also the first secretary of SAAA&CBOC, established in 1946.¹⁵⁹

In 1954, under the direction of Norman Stoffberg and Ms J. Abrahamse, the WPSSB competed against school sport unions from the Northern Cape and Transvaal in Kimberley in the inaugural South African Schools Sports Board (SASSB) championship.¹⁶⁰ Stoffberg’s credentials included being a provincial organiser of boxing, soccer and athletics, chairman of the Western Province Football Board’s Referee Committee, match and registration secretary of the Alliance Football Association and club captain of his soccer club’s first XI.¹⁶¹ Later, he became a lecturer in physical education at the Hewat Teachers’ College. Abrahamse was a teacher at the Windermere Preparatory School and was also the first organising secretary of the Peninsula Association Eisteddfod.¹⁶²

In 1953, under the presidency of Isaac (Ike) Stober, the WPSSB was instrumental in establishing a South African Schools Sports Board (SASSB).¹⁶³ This Board held its first and only South African Schools Athletics Championship on 6 April

155. *The Sun*, 18 June 1948, 8; *The Sun*, 8 October 1948, 8.

156. G. Oaks, Telephonic Interview by Author, 6 January 2021.

157. *The Cape Standard*, 19 November 1946, 12.

158. *The Clarion*, 8 September 1948, 4.

159. South African Amateur Athletics & Cycling Board of Control Official Souvenir Programme, ‘South African Senior, Junior and Ladies Championships’, 1948, 1.

160. *The Sun*, 26 March 1954, 7; Anon. ‘School Notes’ in Wesley Training School Magazine, December 1955, 4.

161. *The Sun*, 21 May 1954, 1.

162. *The Sun*, 11 June 1954, 7.

163. This national organisation used the reference ‘Board’, because it was administered almost entirely by officials from the Western Province. Minutes of the Conference of Inter-Provincial Schools’ Sports Associations (held under the auspices of the Western Province Schools’ Sports Board), 11 January 1965, 2.

(Van Riebeeck Day) 1954 in Kimberley.¹⁶⁴ The other WPSSB office bearers for 1954 were J. Bruyns (Chairman), Isaac (Ike) J. Stober (vice chairman), Ernest Clarke (secretary), George S. Cloete (treasurer), A. Daniels (soccer convenor), J.S. Abrahamse (netball convenor) and Norman R. Stoffberg (athletics convenor).¹⁶⁵

Due to the efforts of Norman Stoffberg, this track and field meeting was partly sponsored by the Coloured Affairs Department (CAD).¹⁶⁶ Stoffberg associated himself with a physical education adventure camp, the Klaasjagersberg Scheme, organised by the CAD in 1952, and was in a favourable position to elicit state support. The NEUM, an effective anti-apartheid movement at the time, however, distanced themselves from the Klaasjagersberg Scheme and Stoffberg's personal relations with many teachers became strained.¹⁶⁷ In April 1954 the previously mentioned, Dr J.M. Joshua, declined a request to be patron of the SASSB because he refused to be associated with what he called 'stooges and Klaasjagerbergers'.¹⁶⁸

The day before the event, a general meeting was held where individuals with a variety of political, educational and sport affiliations were present. They included Ike Stober (president), E.A. Rhoda (senior vice-president), J. Bruyns (vice-president), E.A. Marthinus (secretary), N.H. Scheepers (assistant secretary), John D. Kester (treasurer), Norman Stoffberg, Ernest Clarke and J.S. Abrahamse (Western Province delegates), Reginald Feldman, C. September and Ms McKenzie (Transvaal delegates), C. Moses, H. Claasens and F. Jacobs (Northern Cape delegates), Norman Stoffberg (soccer convenor) and J.S. Abrahamse (netball convenor).¹⁶⁹ Marthinus was the secretary of the APO at the time.¹⁷⁰ Kester was the president of the South African Coloured Rugby Board in 1966 and the principal of the Perseverance Training College.¹⁷¹ Feldman was later involved in the South African Sports Association, the forerunner of the South African Non-Racial Olympic Committee.¹⁷² He was also a president of the socialist-orientated New Unity Movement in the 1990s.

164. *The Sun*, 12 March 1954, 3. According to this source, the age groups represented were boys and girls under 12, 14, 16, 18, and over 18.

165. *The Sun*, 16 April 1954, 7.

166. *The Torch*, 11 May 1954, 8.

167. R.O. Dudley, Interviewed by the author, 15 January 2008, Telephonic Interview.

168. *The Sun*, 30 April 1954, 1.

169. *The Sun*, 16 April 1954, 7.

170. Anon., 'School Sport', *TEPA Educational News*, October 1953, 8, 2, October 1953, 26.

171. *Rand Daily Mail*, 11 April 1966, 20; Anon., 'School Sport', *TEPA Educational News*, 8, 2 (October 1953), 26.

172. P.R. Hendricks, 'A Principled Engagement? Non-collaboration and the Teachers' League of South Africa in the Western Cape, 1990-2003' (PhD thesis, University of Cape Town, 2010), 76.

Only two provincial units competed in the senior section of the SASSB championship: Western Province (achieving 182 points) and Northern Cape (64 points). Participants in the junior section were Western Province (149 points), Transvaal (47 points) and Northern Cape (38 points). According to *The Sun*, the success of the Western Province team was due to its good performance at the provincial championship, the enthusiasm and ability of the athletes, and the management of the team under Norman Stoffberg, Richard Rive and a Mr Brown.¹⁷³ The SASSB was, however, a failure, and only two units remained affiliated to it until it was disbanded in 1964.¹⁷⁴ In 1954, the WPSSB ceased holding joint athletics meetings for primary, secondary and training schools.¹⁷⁵ However, it continued as a primary school sports organisation. Toby Dreyer, then a well-known cyclist in Cape Town cycling circles, addressed athletes at the inter-union athletics meeting for primary schools at the Green Point Track on 21 March 1956, where the following unions were represented: the Athlone School Sports Union, Central Schools Sports Union, Elsie River School Sports Union, False Bay School Sports Union, Maitland School Sports Union, Northern Schools Sports Union and Salt River School Sports Union.¹⁷⁶ That year, the Western Province Senior Schools Sports Union (WPSSSU) held its first track and field meeting separately from the WPSSB. This was an attempt to move away from the unwieldiness of having primary schools, secondary schools and teacher training colleges all competing in the same athletics meeting.

Conclusion

This article has presented a historical account of school athletics in Cape Town between 1933 and 1955 by placing black school sport narratives at the centre of Cape Town local school history. This was done by identifying administrators, athletes and schools that stood out in the athletics landscape in Cape Town. It also showed how school athletics was an important tool in extending the social and political networks of many individuals. A clear picture has emerged from documentary evidence that many of the people involved in civic affairs and recorded in this article also made school athletics part of their responsibility. Many of them had multiple connections with other prominent organisations and individuals.

173. *The Sun*, 9 April 1954, 5. According to Cecil Blows, in a telephonic interview on 19 December 2020, the following persons were part of management: Patricia Cecil (later Vore), Norman Stofberg, Harry Hendricks (manager), Richard Rive and a Mr Bruins.

174. Minutes of the Conference of Inter-Provincial Primary Schools' Sports Associations held at William Herbert Sports Grounds, Wynberg on 11-12 January 1965, 3.

175. C. Blows, Telephonic Interview by the author, 19 December 2020.

176. *The Sun*, 6 April 1956, 3.

This act of reclaiming histories can assist Cape Town schools recover and revive lost traditions. This in turn may contribute to the development of institutional histories. The article also serves as a foundation for exploring the differences in black schooling in terms of sports facilities, competent sports administrators and institutional cultures that could have led to some institutions out-performing others in school athletics competitions. Black school-athletics history in Cape Town, as this article has shown, was driven by teachers belonging to the TLSA. As such, it also adds to the corpus of TLSA literature. Scholars of the history of education could also gain from this research because it explores clear connections between schooling, sport, and society. Furthermore, this research has shown how school sports were important in creating social networks for teachers and politicians. School sports could also help to prop up the illusion of equality. As more research is undertaken, it will be possible to further the historiography of school athletics by the compilation of a statistical history of the major athletics events mentioned in this article. More research could also identify continuities and changes of gender privilege as well as an over-emphasis on competition and a win-at-all costs attitude that existed in black school sport structures. Finally, this article has shown that it is possible, with limited archives, to reclaim a forgotten history through a scholarly discourse about sport in Cape Town's underclass schools.

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APPENDIX

CSSU Results for 1941 Diamond House Trophy ¹⁷⁷	
	Points
Zonnebloem College	126
Worcester Rhenish College	102½
Livingstone High	86
Trafalgar High	55½
St Augustine's College	45½
Athlone Central (Primary)	27½
Cape Town Training College (later Hewat)	21
St. Mark's, Athlone (Primary)	21
Wesley College	16½
Prestwich Street (Primary)	1
St. Luke's (Primary)	1
St. Phillip's (Primary)	-
Rosmead Central (Primary)	-
St. Paul's (Primary)	-
Chapel Street (Primary)	-
Cecil Road (Primary)	-

177. *The Sun*, 6 June 1941, 10.