

Sport and Racial Discrimination in Colonial Zimbabwe: A Reanalysis

Reassessing the Myth of Multiracial Sport in Rhodesia

Following the exclusion of South Africa from international sporting events because of strict racial segregation on the playing field in the late 1960s, the anti-apartheid movement focused on Rhodesia, a white minority-ruled country in south-central Africa that also had a tradition of racial discrimination. Sport in Rhodesia was never sharply segregated by law as in apartheid South Africa, and a strong narrative developed both in Rhodesia and in the international press that Rhodesian sport was multiracial and should not be punished as South African sport had been.¹ The minority white settler population fervently believed segregation in Rhodesia was never as insidious or complete as segregation in South Africa.² However, racial discrimination in sport still did take place in Rhodesian sport in less overt ways, as sport was a sphere of contested control for much of the colonial period of Southern Rhodesia and then the period of unilateral independence after the white settler minority seceded from the British Empire in 1965. The development of sport in majority-ruled Zimbabwe after 1980 bore a strong imprint of the racialization of sport in colonial Rhodesia.

Sporting life in Rhodesia was especially vibrant as the white settler community fully participated in a sporting culture that could rival Britain itself. Sport was an important tool of social acculturation and identity-formation among white settlers themselves, but it also proved to be a tool of social control over the black African population. British colonizers viewed sport as a 'civilizing' device to teach important lessons of hygiene and fitness in a manner strictly controlled by the white state.³ However, because of the importance sport held to the white settler minority, it remained a site of social protest and incomplete domination, and some black African autonomy survived in association football, athletics, and other sports. Racial segregation in sport increased as time went on, even as some sports, such as athletics, weightlifting, and boxing, grew more multiracial in the early to mid-1970s. Perhaps one of the most striking ironies of racial integration in Rhodesian sport was that Rhodesia was excluded from international competition most rapidly from those sports that tended to be most racially integrated domestically. These tended to be the sports in which Sub-Saharan African countries and the developing world more generally played a disproportionately larger role, such as association football and athletics. African countries could use their collective weight in these sports to deny Rhodesian participation in world competition, lest the isolated Rhodesian Front regime of Prime Minister Ian Smith secure political legitimacy in international sporting competition. On the other hand, African countries were less effective at protesting Rhodesian participation in sports that had longer traditions of racial discrimination, not only in Rhodesia but throughout the African continent, such as cricket and rugby.

This paper attempts to draw several generalizations about the boundaries of racial discrimination in Rhodesian sport. First, racial discrimination was related to economic class distinctions; sports that did not require specialized equipment or training tended more frequently to be realms of interracial competition than others. Second, sports closely integrated into South African sport governance tended to be segregated. Third, secondary discrimination existed in much of the sporting sphere, even in sports that tended to produce multiracial athletic

competition. Fourth, where sporting venues were segregated by other law, competition tended to be segregated accordingly, especially in public swimming pools and on school grounds. Fifth, sport tended to be integrated at more elite levels than at lower levels, except in cricket and rugby. Like all generalizations, these are pockmarked with exceptions. However, by understanding the limitations imposed by racial segregation in Rhodesian sport, it may be possible to explain the uneven trends of sport development in independent Zimbabwe.

A Theory of Sport in White Settler Societies: Social Control and Social Protest

For the white community, sport was a means of social acculturation, allowing contact among relatively remote settlements and contributing to the creation of a unified white culture. The formation of an exclusionary white settler identity was essential to maintaining dominance and control over a much larger population. Kennedy, in his comparative study of white settlers in Kenya and Rhodesia, writes that the power to shape social identity so as to define distinctions between the settler population and the subject population was crucial to their status.⁴ ‘Settler culture’ was characterized by a refusal to adapt to the host environment and an avoidance of contact and interchange with the indigenous population. While white settler populations in general had enormous power relative to their size, bordering on monopoly control, ‘settler culture’ was often more insecure than it was confident and more anxious than arrogant.⁵ The diverse origins and class status of white settlers were deemphasized in favor of a mythical, hegemonic, unitary white community. Rhodesian society was also very transient; the yearly turnover of the white population was among the highest in Western societies.⁶ The transience and underlying heterogeneity of the white population provided strong motive for the manufacture of a Rhodesian identity.

The social distance between white and black Rhodesians insulated the white community from the realities of the black African existence. Sport became part of the white ‘myth,’ one tied to the pioneers and heroes of Rhodesian history and to Cecil Rhodes himself, the godfather of the country, who bequeathed much of the country’s symbolism and self-identity. Sport was both an opportunity for often rural and isolated white settlers to engage in a social activity, and a means by which white settlers could begin to form their own communal identities and allegiances. A sports jersey tagged ‘Southern Rhodesia’ helped to give some content to a Southern Rhodesian identity separate from British and South African identities. Like ‘other colonial societies, which used sporting achievements to define and enhance their national self-esteem, the Rhodesians deified their heroes and relied upon their national teams to restore or sustain national morale’.⁷ This was particularly true of rugby and cricket in the 1970s given their overwhelming popularity and the isolation of Rhodesia in other sports. In 1972, cricket star Mike Proctor outpolled Prime Minister Ian Smith for ‘Rhodesian of the Year’.⁸

Sport figured prominently in the white settler history of Southern Rhodesia. The personality of Cecil Rhodes was central to the history of white sports in the territory; Rhodes himself was an avid sportsman and several of the earliest pioneers took part in the organization of early Rhodesian sport.⁹ Sir William Milton, the South African cricket player and sponsor, accompanied Rhodes to Rhodesia and became administrator of Southern Rhodesia.¹⁰ Tanser recalls that the first ‘pioneers’ from South Africa set up sporting facilities very shortly upon their arrival.¹¹ Soon after the Pioneer Column reached Fort Salisbury, they erected a race course and played cricket in what would later become Cecil Square (today, African Unity Square). By 1909,

Hone could describe the numerous sports facilities in Salisbury and Bulawayo and write, 'Sport in all its varied forms fills a very important part in the life of the people, and perhaps in no other country is so much enthusiasm shown for it.'¹² As Hodder-Williams describes of Marandellas, Rhodesia (now Marondera, Zimbabwe), sport increased in popularity after the Second World War as the rationing of gasoline no longer constrained travel.¹³ Sport was inseparable from white settler identity and contributed to and reflected the social separation of white rulers from black subjects.

In early Rhodesia, as in early white settler societies elsewhere in Africa, the first networks of sporting contacts among white settlers developed through 'premodern' leisure sports such as hunting, riding, horse and dog racing, and shooting. These sports reflected a sense of class consciousness that developed in Britain. Describing white settlers in Kenya, Nicholls writes, '[t]he cheapness of servants opened to [settlers] many aristocratic pursuits such as polo, racing and hunting,' and indeed the prospect of a kind of social mobility unavailable to working and middle classes in Britain spurred white settlement to the colonies.¹⁴ Steinhart, writing of early colonial Kenya, notes that big game hunting by sportsmen was a popular leisure activity until about the First World War, connoting images of wealth and high class standing, a 'sport of gentlemen who obeyed a civilized and humane set of rules of the game'.¹⁵ Following the war, hunting in Kenya became a tourist industry run by professional white settler hunters rather than a leisure activity for the aristocratic classes.¹⁶ Even hunting was a racialized sport. Strict game and gun laws in Kenya and Rhodesia denied black Africans the same hunting privileges, and consequently the same access to dietary sources and wildlife trade, that white settlers had.¹⁷ White settlers could be 'hunters' while black Africans were 'poachers'.¹⁸ These forms of leisure activities were agrarian in origin, strongly parochial, and exclusionary, and thus did not easily adjust to increasing urbanization and heavy industrialization, and the consequent breakdown of traditional class barriers.¹⁹ As in Europe half a century prior, modern sport in white settler societies began taking on modern characteristics of capitalist development, competition, team identity, and spectacle by the first two decades of the twentieth century.

This strong sporting culture of settlers in British Africa may have been unique in part because Britain had such an advanced sporting ethic by the turn of the twentieth century and in part because Britain, uniquely among colonizing powers, first saw the 'civilizing' value of the diffusion of sport among her colonial subjects.²⁰ The British settlers in colonies such as Kenya built up sport cultures that were virtually carbon copies of the sport culture of Britain, with pools, golf courses, tennis courts, and club houses common. While, at first, this sport culture was open only to white settlers themselves, African soldiers and policemen were introduced to British sports as part of their fitness programs, and children at missionary schools were taught to play cricket, rugby, and soccer (association football).²¹ In this way, sport began to diffuse to the colonial subject populations in the Empire, but it did not diffuse evenly and constantly; at least some of the diffusion was shaped by the deliberate actions of colonial authorities.

The diffusion of modern sport in Rhodesia was part of a process of sport globalization more generally, and tended to follow existing imperial networks such as missionary education, military conquest, trade, the activities of medical personnel, railroads, and, perhaps most importantly, European settlement. Reflecting on why football became the sport of the masses throughout the British Empire while cricket (and derivatively rugby) had more limited appeal, Guttmann argues that football peaked in conjunction with the height of the British Empire and thus was diffused most rapidly.²² Cricket had peaked too early. In South Africa, rugby was closely allied to Afrikaner domination, and it was consequently discouraged among black South

Africans.²³ Cricket in particular tended to be class-stratified, the sport of the colonial service, their collaborators and allies, and small pockets of well-connected colonial subjects.²⁴ ‘The old boys from the public schools and Oxbridge who went out to the Empire took not only the games they played in school and college but also their obsession with the distinction between the gentleman amateur and the mercenary professional’, Perkin writes.²⁵ Football, on the other hand, allowed professional athletes to play and quickly absorbed the working classes in Britain; those working classes became merchants and functionaries throughout the world. The divide between cricket and rugby as elite sports on the one hand and football, the sport of the masses, on the other, diffused from metropolitan Britain to the Empire.

Cricket and rugby were the most central components of white settler sport culture.²⁶ As Winch writes, cricket and rugby drew the small and scattered white population of Southern Rhodesia together and provided a link with home.²⁷ More importantly, the two sports ‘promoted imperial ideologies of the power of the British race and of masculinity expressed through sporting prowess’.²⁸ Through the political efforts of Sir William Minton and other early Rhodesian administrators, cricket and rugby governance became highly structured and closely aligned to the settler state. Even by 1900, white dominance of the two sports was complete, and mixed race athletes who had participated on white teams in Cape Town were excluded from competition in Rhodesia and ignored by the white press.²⁹ White cricket and rugby organizations would be absorbed into South African structures after World War One.³⁰ The South African cricket and rugby associations governed their Rhodesian counterparts, and Rhodesian cricket and rugby teams became dependent on the Currie Cup competition annually in South Africa, especially during its period of international isolation.³¹ Perhaps the most famous Rhodesian sportsman was Colin Bland, who played cricket internationally for South Africa. While less prestigious, the domestic Logan Cup competition in cricket was instrumental in conditioning Rhodesian cricketers.³² While cricket and rugby remained important in wartime Rhodesia, the sports suffered as universal white male conscription depleted sporting ranks in the 1970s.³³ This is not to say that Rhodesia has no tradition of black African cricket or rugby at all: the flamboyant future head of the Zimbabwe Cricket Union, Peter Chingoka, played cricket for St. George’s Boy’s School in 1972, the first black African to compete.³⁴ This exception notwithstanding, the decline of Zimbabwean cricket has continued to the present, in part because of economic decline and political turmoil, and in part because colonial Zimbabwe’s historically black African cricket and rugby culture was much weaker than, for instance, South Africa’s.³⁵

Modern sport in Rhodesia was about more than just play; it was also about power. Just as sport in white settler societies helped foster a sense of social belonging among whites by instilling a sense of common identity and friendship in an often lonely rural lifestyle, so too did it help to define a social distance between white Rhodesians and the black population. ‘Sport for whites—especially cricket—had been a symbol of racial and national qualities; a ritual of affirmation at which Africans were mere spectators or adjuncts’, Ranger writes.³⁶ Sport imported from Europe helped define the social boundary between white settlers and black populations. When black Africans began learning European sports and becoming quite good at them, more overt and stricter control was required to maintain racial distance through sport. The phenomenon of unemployment and urbanization during the Great Depression in particular, and the consequent leisure and idleness of a large number of black African working class persons, produced significant apprehension among white settlers.³⁷ State intervention in the development of sporting opportunities solved part of the problem. Boxing, for instance, had originally spread organically through black urban populations in Southern Rhodesia and became enormously

popular without direct European influence.³⁸ Fearing that boxing was an aggressive and dirty sport, dangerously subversive of the colonial regime, municipal and provincial governments began taking over boxing leagues and competitions and rigorously enforcing rules of combat.³⁹ By structuring forms of African sport, white settlers could maintain control over urban gatherings and, they believed, avoid riots, clan disputes, and political protest.

Unlike boxing, the white government never completely captured the field of association football, long a sphere of autonomous black African control.⁴⁰ As Giulianotti writes, legal restrictions on public meetings involving large groups of black Africans ‘had turned football into one of the few arenas in which Africans could gather legally in large numbers’, resulting inevitably in political dialogue.⁴¹ However, reflecting the incompleteness of white control, some African sports clubs accepted and recruited white players and officials. Football ‘provided a rare leisure space in which whites were permitted by an increasingly repressive security system to interact with Africans’.⁴² Stuart explains the unique historical reasons for the football anomaly.⁴³ In 1948, when the Bulawayo City Council attempted to assert control over urban football leagues and competition, just as the Salisbury City Council had done ten years earlier with boxing, the black African population in the city boycotted municipality-organized football for two years. Eventually, the Council backed down. African-organized football developed a sophisticated structure and made important moves toward racial integration before and during the country’s brief entry into and exit from FIFA, the international federation of association football, between 1965 and 1971.⁴⁴ By 1979 black African-organized football leagues had quit the white-run Football Association of Rhodesia and applied successfully to FIFA as the Zimbabwe Football Association. Just as sport could be a tool of social control by the white settlers over black urban-based populations, so too could it be turned around and used as a means of social protest.

Racial Discrimination in Rhodesian Sport: A Working Hypothesis

Black Rhodesian athletes made tremendous progress in sport throughout the 1960s and 1970s in at least some contexts, notwithstanding the persistence of racial discrimination in sport. Track and field athletics in particular held promise for black athletes. But discrimination did exist. Badenhorst’s observation about sport for black Africans in Johannesburg applies equally well to Rhodesia: ‘like all attempts at domination, coercive or non-coercive, the process was never complete and never completely dualistic’.⁴⁵ Racial discrimination existed in Rhodesian sport, just as it existed in Rhodesian life more generally, but it was never total and sport remained a site of contested control until Zimbabwe’s independence. Some observers have claimed racial discrimination did not exist at all in sport. According to Strack, sports were ‘a major example of multiracial cooperation in Rhodesia’, and different communities simply had different preferences as to which sports they would play.⁴⁶ This understates the extent to which race did play a role. On the other hand, it is also not true that sport was rigidly segregated along South African lines, in which white athletes were forbidden by law from competing with or against black athletes.⁴⁷ The sporting sphere in Rhodesia was a patchwork quilt. Some sports had always been and largely remained sites of black African autonomy; other sports were almost completely reserved for whites; and still other sports had parallel, segregated regimes, both in law and in practice. This section is an attempt to theorize these distinctions.

During the first third of the twentieth century, sporting activities for black Rhodesians tended to be restricted to leisure activities where they existed at all, often organized by white

institutions, such as mining interests for employees, missionaries at schools for students, or public officials through permits and other authorization. The clearest progress was in track and field sports. According to Kennedy, the first recorded integrated athletics meet was in 1958 in Salisbury, where Yotham Muleya set a national record in the three mile race, coming in second to a Kenyan runner and defeating a white English runner.⁴⁸ In 1959, Cyprian Tseriwa was one of the first two black Rhodesian athletes to represent Matabeleland in an event against Mashonaland; the following year he became the first non-white Rhodesian to win the Rhodesian National Championship, placing first in the three and six mile races in record times.⁴⁹ In 1960, Tseriwa was the only black Rhodesian on the Olympic team of the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland (designation RHO) at the Rome Olympics, where he finished twenty-eighth and set a new Rhodesian national record.⁵⁰ Lote Ndlovu became the first black Rhodesian to win an international event for Rhodesia when he won the 10,000 meter in a competition in Mozambique.⁵¹ Throughout the 1960s, black Rhodesian athletes won the six mile and three mile national championships almost every year. According to Kennedy's calculations, black Rhodesian athletes defeated their white counterparts in nearly half of all national championships from 1959 to 1970.⁵² Rhodesian national athletics teams chosen to tour Malawi and South Africa in the late 1960s were divided equally among black athletes and white athletes, although men did outnumber women.⁵³ While these achievements began as exceptions to the rule, a pattern had emerged by the end of the 1960s that was in stark contrast to the rigid segregation in apartheid South African competition.

By the 1970s, black Rhodesian athletes had become world-class competitors. Track and field star Artwell Mandaza held the unofficial world record for the 100 meter race at 9.9 seconds and became the Rhodesian Athlete of the Year for 1970.⁵⁴ Mandaza's fastest official time, 10.2 seconds, was the fastest time ever run by a Rhodesian athlete and eleventh in the world in 1970. He toured West Germany in 1971, the first Rhodesian athlete to tour Continental Europe, and was the only Rhodesian athlete to reach the qualifying mark for the Munich Olympics in the 100 meter.⁵⁵ Bernard Dzoma, selected for Rhodesia's ill-fated Olympic teams to Mexico City and Munich, was well-decorated, setting Rhodesian records in the 5,000 and 10,000 meter races, and winning Rhodesian championships in the 3 and 6 mile races in 1967 and 1968.⁵⁶ The two black Rhodesian track and field stars chosen for the 1964 Tokyo Olympic team, Robson Mrombe and Mathias Kanda, also held Rhodesian national records; Mrombe held the record in the six miler and Kanda in the marathon.⁵⁷ The International Amateur Athletic Federation found that Rhodesian track and field was multiracial and did not include racially exclusive clubs or competitions; in addition, the administration of the Rhodesian Amateur Athletic Union was multiracial.⁵⁸ Rhodesian track and field stars had also won impressive victories in the South African Games and other international competitions. Athletics was not the only sport in which black Rhodesian athletes had achieved renown throughout Southern Africa. Association football champion George Shaya became a finalist for Rhodesian Sportsman of the Year in 1976 and became Rhodesian Soccer Star of the Year five times. In 1969, at age 21, Shaya was selected as a member of the Rhodesian World Cup team.⁵⁹ Despite the obstacles, this was significant progress indeed.

An Economic Divide in Sports

The first observation is that sports requiring specialized equipment, facilities, coaching, or training tended to be dominated by the white settler community and had less black Rhodesian participation. Although black African-controlled clubs did exist in golf, courses were not seen as

priorities given the soft interest in the sport among the black African community generally and leading black African players often were unable to compete in major events.⁶⁰ Non-white athletes also faced overt racial discrimination in field hockey. No integrated teams existed anywhere in the country in 1974 except at the University of Rhodesia.⁶¹ Two women's field hockey players of mixed-race descent were denied a chance to compete for the national team because they were not white.⁶² Like golf and field hockey, tennis allowed some multi-racial competition, unlike South Africa, but this competition appears to have been rare.⁶³ Disability and wheelchair sport was also generally reserved for white Rhodesians due to the charity-driven nature of disability services in Rhodesia, and Rhodesia's renowned Paralympic teams had always been composed only of white athletes.⁶⁴ According to the International Olympic Committee's investigative report prior to Rhodesia's expulsion from the Olympics, shooting, badminton, and yachting were also generally restricted to white athletes.⁶⁵ These sports required economic means to participate. Indeed, a lack of resources for African sporting opportunities in general hampered the progress of racially integrated sport. Even where facilities existed for non-white athletes, proper training, coaching, or organization were often not forthcoming, and the facilities often sat unused.⁶⁶

Rhodesian Dependence on South African Sport

The Rhodesian government generally did not have the resources or the motivation to mimic South Africa's strict segregationist sporting policies. Unlike South Africa, the Rhodesian government did not have an active Ministry of Sport to monitor racial segregation on the playing field.⁶⁷ However, by either political expediency or cultural tradition, certain sports in Rhodesia tended to be heavily intertwined with, or even governed by, South African sporting organizations. Most Rhodesian sport federations originally began as part of South African federations, given close geographical proximity and improved opportunities for higher-caliber competition.⁶⁸ Given South Africa's racial controls on the playing field, however, the close alliance between Rhodesian and South African sport was open to criticism by Rhodesian observers who felt that international public opinion failed to adequately distinguish between the two countries' sport policies.⁶⁹

Where a Rhodesian sport was heavily intertwined with its South African partner, the sport's leagues, competitions, and teams tended to be racially segregated. Cricket and rugby were the paradigmatic examples. While multiracial competition apparently did exist in cricket, at least against foreign teams, only two clubs admitted black African members in 1963.⁷⁰ Field hockey was another such sport, tending to follow South African rules for racial segregation on the playing field, especially when competition took place inside South Africa.⁷¹ For sports in which Rhodesia was excluded from international competition for either the illegality of its regime or for racial discrimination, these sports tended to become more dependent on South Africa for competition. This probably increased the pressure on Rhodesian sports federations to comply with South African racial controls. 'Well into the 1970s', Little writes, 'Rhodesian teams competing in South Africa always deferred to 'local custom' by not including non-European players'.⁷² This was apparently true in reverse as well. Some evidence suggests that Rhodesia would send only non-white athletes to compete in South African-organized sport competition reserved for black Africans.⁷³

The Existence of Secondary Discrimination

The third observation is that even where competition and organization of sports were

multiracial, secondary discrimination still existed in robust form. Illustrative of the secondary levels of racial discrimination in sport is the famous anecdote of South African golfer Papwa Sewgolum, of South Asian descent, who had to stand outside in the rain while his teammates were served drinks in the clubhouse by Indian staff, even though Sewgolum had just won the Natal Open that day. He paid his check through the clubhouse window.⁷⁴ The same problem plagued Rhodesian sport. As one official noted, 'The world knows our soccer on the field is multi-racial', but 'off the field there is a colour-bar for players and officials in clubhouses, changing rooms, and hotels on the road'.⁷⁵ Stands in sporting venues, for instance, were often segregated. One spectator of a multiracial tennis match noted that he had to sit in the 'Non-European' section; organizers also moved white spectators out of the section.⁷⁶ The Bulawayo City Council refused to permit a proposed boxing tournament in City Hall because of the participation of black African athletes in violation of the racial restrictions in the Hall's lease.⁷⁷ Some sports were segregated between players and assistants; for instance, a black Rhodesian golf caddy or golf cart driver might assist a white Rhodesian golfer.⁷⁸ Sport competition on the playing field may well have been racially integrated, but whether venues, changing rooms, exercise facilities, and other ancillaries to sport competition were also racially integrated is harder to glean from the evidence.

Another source of secondary discrimination was in the makeup of the membership of private clubs. Because of the importance of private clubs in organizing sport in Rhodesia, the decision of whether to permit multiracial membership was left to the club itself to determine; no accommodation laws imposed racial restrictions on the clubs. One sports club that permitted multiracial tennis on its courts did not allow non-white participants to become club members or to be guests at the club house.⁷⁹ Another all-white football club even banned from the clubhouse the black president of the Rhodesian Football Association and the mixed-race wife of its own goalkeeper.⁸⁰ Over time, some clubs did begin to integrate, especially in the field of athletics; one exclusively white club did open its doors to mixed-race and black athletes in the early 1970s.⁸¹ The government, for its part, refused to intervene in the rules of private sports clubs, and many remained exclusively white.⁸² One byproduct of racially segregated clubs is that it may have hindered sport opportunities for Rhodesians of mixed-race and South Asian descent the most, since these communities faced sporting isolation.⁸³ When the International Olympic Committee investigated racial discrimination in Rhodesian sport in 1974, they noted that observers, especially those who were not white settlers, perceived the existence of racially-segregated clubs to be a major barrier to racially integrated sport.⁸⁴

However, where sports were not organized around private clubs, but by business interests in mining towns and among railroad employees, or by the University of Rhodesia and other integrated educational institutions, multiracial sport was more common.⁸⁵ As Kennedy writes, advancement by black Rhodesian athletes was 'largely due to the efforts of the Chamber of Mines of Rhodesia and the various mining companies which have not only encouraged their employees to compete but have provided some of the best facilities in the country,' including seven cinder tracks.⁸⁶ Major stars, such as football star George Shaya, first developed their sporting skills in private missionary schools; athlete Bernard Dzoma, excluded from competing in the local whites-only athletic clubs, formed his own at Rio Tinto Mine.⁸⁷ Likewise, Artwell Mandaza was first discovered in competition organized by his employer, Mangula Mine, leading to his nickname 'Mangula Meteor'.⁸⁸ The annual Chamber of Mines championships led to the discovery of other black African athletes as well.⁸⁹ Mine-organized athletic competitions were generally racially integrated.⁹⁰ The University of Rhodesia, one of the most starkly racially

integrated institutions in the country and a bastion of political opposition, had mixed-race sporting competition in nearly all sports.⁹¹ By the 1970s, however, reports showed that informal racial segregation was increasing on the University's campus.⁹² Nonetheless, sport organized by elite educational and business interests probably presented more opportunities for the advancement of integrated sport than competition organized by private clubs.

Segregation in Public Sporting Venues

The fourth observation is that where sporting venues were segregated by other law, competition was segregated accordingly. This was true especially of swimming, where public pools were sharply segregated by the Land Tenure Act.⁹³ The international swimming federation, FINA, expelled Rhodesia in 1973 because black Africans did not have the same opportunities as whites in competition, training, or facilities.⁹⁴ Some evidence indicated that swimming had become more multiracial by the early 1970s, and the first integrated swimming competition to receive a permit under the Land Tenure Act was held in March 1973.⁹⁵ The IOC's investigating report detailed another specific instance, however, where the Salisbury City Council refused to permit a multiracial swim competition.⁹⁶ Outside of the school context, however, black Rhodesian participation was rare in competitive swimming events.⁹⁷

The segregation of sports on public elementary school property was the most comprehensive government intervention on the playing field, announced by the Ministry of Education in 1968. This policy was apparently quite controversial when first implemented, and remained a frequent target of the political opposition.⁹⁸ Cheffers notes that parent associations and civic groups continually protested the policy as short-sighted, and parents would have to provide written consent to allow their schoolchildren to compete against athletes of other races.⁹⁹ One opponent of the policy noted that an inter-school athletic event even excluded a young female athlete who held the high jump record in the district because of her race.¹⁰⁰ A group of citizens wrote letters to the Minister of Education and about 200 schools pleading for the reinstatement of multi-racial school sport.¹⁰¹ On the other side of the debate, parents argued that multiracial school sport lent itself to Communist subversion.¹⁰² The government argued that since schooling was compulsory for white and mixed-race students and those of South Asian descent, though not for black Africans, allowing multi-racial school sport would amount to 'enforced integration'.¹⁰³ Multiracial sport among school children could and did take place off school property, such as at police or other government-run fields or on the grounds of private schools.¹⁰⁴ In 1968, when the policy was first implemented, opponents of the separation even appealed to the International Olympic Committee to bring pressure to bear on the Ministry of Education.¹⁰⁵ The ban on racially integrated school sport became an increasingly prominent hook on which to base Rhodesia's exclusion from the Olympics. Once the Rhodesian Olympic team was excluded from competition in Munich, the ban on multiracial school sport was singled out for another round of criticism in the national press.¹⁰⁶

The Elite Sport / Leisure Sport Divide

The fifth and final observation is that multiracial teams from outside the country were often treated differently than multiracial teams from inside the country. As Godwin and Hancock write, Rhodesians distinguished between local and overseas black athletes.¹⁰⁷ The visit of Caribbean cricketer Gary Sobers to Rhodesia received wide praise among white cricket fans; Sobers, a black athlete, even had his photo taken with Prime Minister Ian Smith.¹⁰⁸ In 1971, Rhodesia hosted the first international athletics event in which black and white South Africans

competed against each other.¹⁰⁹ Ten white athletes and ten black athletes were chosen in separate tryouts, as per South African rules, but once in Rhodesia they could compete together. In 1972, black Rhodesian boxers defeated four white South African boxers in a multiracial competition in Salisbury.¹¹⁰ As Little notes, in 1975 Rhodesia chose a black Caribbean cricketer John Shepherd to compete in the South African Currie Cup competition, becoming the first black cricketer to compete in the Cup during the apartheid era.¹¹¹ Rhodesian sports organizers offered to host racially integrated qualifying heats among South African athletes so that South African teams could comply with the mandate of international sports federations without running afoul of apartheid law.

As a corollary, Rhodesian teams were probably more likely to select non-white athletes for competition abroad than they were for domestic competition. A Rhodesian school hockey team chose an athlete of South Asian descent to tour South Africa, prompting worries that the team would run afoul of South African law.¹¹² A Rhodesian weightlifting team even boycotted a South African event when its multiracial team was denied entry.¹¹³ In 1971, a multiracial athletics team was selected to tour West Germany, the first Rhodesian team to visit Continental Europe.¹¹⁴ While the team failed to enter the country due to passport controls, Artwell Mandaza did enter on a British visa and remained for six weeks, during which time he set an unofficial world record in the 100 meter race.¹¹⁵ As noted above, when Rhodesia sent teams to compete in the South African Games, the Currie Cup, or other major sporting competitions hosted by South Africa, its teams generally complied with the regulations for those sports. However, unlike South African athletic teams, Rhodesian track and field teams were chosen in integrated heats, wore the same uniform, travelled together, and shared accommodation when touring South Africa.¹¹⁶ In general, the evidence suggests Rhodesian national teams competing outside the country were more likely to be integrated than sub-national teams in domestic competition, at least in sports other than cricket and rugby. It is possible to overgeneralize about this, however, especially where other factors such as gender and age cut across racial lines. According to press reports, a 14-year-old female athlete who held Rhodesian records for the 400 and 800 meter races, was excluded from the 1972 Rhodesian Olympic team because she would have been the only black Rhodesian female athlete on the team and would have been 'out of her depth'.¹¹⁷

Conclusion

Sport in Rhodesian society was not segregated along South African lines, but by the mid-1970s, a new push to exclude Rhodesia from international sport because of racial discrimination was successful in many fields. Pockets of racial integration in a society that had practiced strict, if incomplete and contested, racial segregation in other spheres proved to be insufficient to critics, especially Sub-Saharan African nations threatening to boycott sporting events. In 1975, Rhodesia was expelled from the Olympic Movement because it practiced racial discrimination in sport.¹¹⁸ The International Olympic Committee's investigating committee had interviewed key observers and witnessed competition. The commission found 'complete contradictions,' as reports surfaced of both true multiracial competition and, simultaneously, sharp racial discrimination.¹¹⁹ Outside of athletics and a few other sports such as cycling, integrative trends were not unidirectional. After the ban on multiracial school sport, local governments attempted to enforce racial segregation in their local sports facilities and parks; multiracial events in public swimming pools still required a permit.¹²⁰ The IOC found that the combination of the Land

Tenure Act, segregated school sports, and racially segregated private sports clubs were the major obstacles to truly multiracial sports opportunities.¹²¹ Like South Africa, racial discrimination in domestic sport prevented Rhodesia from complying with the Olympic Charter. Racial discrimination in Rhodesian sport appears to have been less extensive and complete than in South African sport, but this was not enough to save the Rhodesian participation in the Olympic Movement.

In the short term, the exclusion of Rhodesian teams from international sporting events probably did not help advocates of racially integrated sport in Rhodesia. Several of the most prominent black African athletes lost chances to compete in international competition, although this generation of athletes would play important coaching roles to younger athletes in independent Zimbabwe.¹²² As Strack writes, many white Rhodesians were confounded by the expulsion of Rhodesia from the Olympics, FIFA, and other sporting organizations because it essentially punished them for racial discrimination in one of the most multiracial spheres of Rhodesian social life.¹²³ The isolation efforts struck many as ironic, even perverse. In the longer term, however, the existence of racial discrimination in Rhodesian sport, even on secondary levels such as training facilities and venues, probably hampered sport competition in independent Zimbabwe more than isolation of Rhodesia in the 1970s did. At independence, Zimbabwe was still dependent on white players in cricket and rugby given the lack of a strong tradition of these sports among black African athletes.¹²⁴ While white Zimbabweans have won Olympic medals, no black Zimbabweans yet have, although they have won medals in the All-Africa Games. Despite strong medal tallies at the Paralympics in 1980 and 1984, continuing Rhodesia's successful streak, no black Zimbabwean had won a Paralympic medal until 2000.¹²⁵ Zimbabwe has been more successful in the realm of association football, and has even hosted several prominent competitions. The country's advancement in those sports that were most segregated during the colonial era, however, appears to have been hampered after independence by lack of interest, lack of funding, or an athletic 'brain drain' to South Africa, Europe, Australia, or other countries. The legacy of racial discrimination may well have played some role.

¹ Strack, *Sanctions*, 216; Novak, 'Rhodesian Olympic Team', 1373.

² Godwin and Hancock, *'Rhodesians Never Die'*, 307.

³ Ranger, 'Pugilism and Pathology', 196.

⁴ Kennedy, *Islands of White*, 189.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 187-89.

⁶ Godwin and Hancock, *'Rhodesians Never Die'*, 17.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 38.

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ Thompson, *Story of Rhodesian Sport*, 8; Winch, *Cricket's Rich Heritage*, 1.

¹⁰ Winch, *Cricket's Rich Heritage*, 583 *et seq.*

¹¹ Tanser, *Guide to Rhodesia*, 313.

¹² Hone, *Southern Rhodesia*, 21

¹³ Hodder-Williams, *White Farmers in Rhodesia*, 177.

¹⁴ Nicholls, *Red Strangers*, 161.

¹⁵ Steinhart, *Hunters, Poachers, and Gamekeepers*, 253.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 254.

¹⁷ Mackenzie, *Hunting in East and Central Africa*, 172.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 189.

¹⁹ Malcolmson, *Popular Recreations in Rhodesian Society*, 170-71.

²⁰ Alegi, *African Soccerescapes*, 4.

²¹ Guttmann, *Games and Empires*, 64.

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- ²² Ibid, 40.
- ²³ Black and Nauright, *Rugby and the South African Nation*, 60 *et seq.*
- ²⁴ Perkin, 'Teaching the Nations How to Play', 217-18.
- ²⁵ Ibid, 216.
- ²⁶ My sources were limited in explaining the progress of Rhodesians of South Asian descent in cricket and rugby. Although cricket and rugby were essential elements of white settler identity in Rhodesia, Rhodesians of Indian or Pakistani descent seem to have played relatively often as well, depending on the rules of the sport club. This would require a more in-depth analysis to determine just how frequently this occurred.
- ²⁷ Winch, 'There Were a Fine Manly Lot of Fellows', 583-84.
- ²⁸ Ibid, 583.
- ²⁹ Ibid, 589.
- ³⁰ One of my anonymous reviewers suggested that the integration of Rhodesian sport may have proceeded much more rapidly during the era of the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland (1953-1963) and digressed in the years following UDI in 1965. This may well be true. The integration of sport in Rhodesia was likely nonlinear. This is a point of departure for future research.
- ³¹ Winch, *Cricket's Rich Heritage*, ii.
- ³² Ibid.
- ³³ Godwin and Hancock, '*Rhodesians Never Die*', 296 n. 77.
- ³⁴ Winch, *Cricket's Rich Heritage*, 193.
- ³⁵ Winch, 'There Were a Fine Manly Lot of Fellows', 601-02.
- ³⁶ Ranger, 'Pugilism and Pathology', 196-97.
- ³⁷ Summers, *From Civilization to Segregation*, 243.
- ³⁸ Ranger, 'Pugilism and Pathology', 199.
- ³⁹ Ibid, 204-06.
- ⁴⁰ Kaarsholm, Si Ye Pambili, *Which Way Forward?*, *passim*.
- ⁴¹ Giulianotti, 'Football in Zimbabwe', 86.
- ⁴² Ibid, 87.
- ⁴³ Stuart, 'Social Change and Soccer in Colonial Zimbabwe', 172.
- ⁴⁴ Giulianotti, 'Football in Zimbabwe', 85.
- ⁴⁵ Badenhorst, 'Organized Sport for Johannesburg's Africans', 139.
- ⁴⁶ Strack, *Sanctions*, 216.
- ⁴⁷ Little, 'Rebellion, Race and Rhodesia', 532.
- ⁴⁸ Kennedy, 'Rhodesian Track and Field 1970', Avery Brundage Papers.
- ⁴⁹ Ibid.
- ⁵⁰ 'Tseriwa Plods in at No. 28', *Bulawayo Chronicle*, Sept. 10, 1960.
- ⁵¹ Kennedy, 'Rhodesian Track and Field 1970', Avery Brundage Papers.
- ⁵² Ibid.
- ⁵³ Ibid.
- ⁵⁴ Byrom, et al., *Rhodesian Sport Profiles*, 196.
- ⁵⁵ Ibid, 198.
- ⁵⁶ Ibid, 193-94.
- ⁵⁷ Ibid, 192; Cheffers, *Wilderness of Spite*, 65.
- ⁵⁸ Statement by Frederick Holder, April 5, 1971, Avery Brundage Papers.
- ⁵⁹ Byrom, et al., *Rhodesian Sport Profiles*, 168.
- ⁶⁰ Davies, *Race Relations in Rhodesia*, 342-43.
- ⁶¹ IOC Investigating Report, Oct. 23, 1974, IOC Archives.
- ⁶² Davies, *Race Relations in Rhodesia*, 343.
- ⁶³ Strack, *Sanctions*, 223.
- ⁶⁴ Novak, 'Politics and the Paralympic Games', 47 *et seq.*
- ⁶⁵ IOC Investigating Report, Oct. 23, 1974, IOC Archives.
- ⁶⁶ Cheffers, *Wilderness of Spite*, 50-52.
- ⁶⁷ Strack, *Sanctions*, 217.
- ⁶⁸ Thompson, *Story of Rhodesian Sport*, 10.
- ⁶⁹ Strack, *Sanctions*, 217.
- ⁷⁰ Little, 'Rebellion, Race and Rhodesia', 532.

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- ⁷¹ Davies, *Race Relations in Rhodesia*, 343.
- ⁷² Little, 'Rebellion, Race and Rhodesia', 532.
- ⁷³ Cheffers, *A Wilderness of Spite*, 95-96.
- ⁷⁴ Tatz, 'Race, Politics, and Sport', 22.
- ⁷⁵ Davies, *Race Relations in Rhodesia*, 335.
- ⁷⁶ Letter to the Editor, 'Colour Bar in Sports', *Moto*, May 1971.
- ⁷⁷ Davies, *Race Relations in Rhodesia*, 339.
- ⁷⁸ Matibe, *Madhinga Bucket Boy*, 166-70.
- ⁷⁹ Godwin and Hancock, '*Rhodesians Never Die*', 128.
- ⁸⁰ Ibid.
- ⁸¹ 'Unfriendly Act', *Der Spiegel*, 1971, clipping in FCO 7/627.
- ⁸² IOC Investigating Report, Oct. 23, 1974, IOC Archives.
- ⁸³ Cheffers, *A Wilderness of Spite*, 61; IOC Investigating Report, Oct. 23, 1974, IOC Archives.
- ⁸⁴ IOC Investigating Report, Oct. 23, 1974, IOC Archives.
- ⁸⁵ 'Unfriendly Act', *Der Spiegel*, No. 28, 1971, clipping in FCO 7/627; Thompson, *The Story of Rhodesian Sport*, 7.
- ⁸⁶ Kennedy, 'Rhodesian Track and Field 1970,' Avery Brundage Papers.
- ⁸⁷ Byrom, *Rhodesian Sports Profiles*, 166, 193.
- ⁸⁸ Ibid, 195.
- ⁸⁹ Kennedy, 'Rhodesian Track and Field 1970,' Avery Brundage Papers.
- ⁹⁰ Cheffers, *A Wilderness of Spite*, 113.
- ⁹¹ IOC Investigating Report, Oct. 23, 1974, IOC Archives
- ⁹² Cefkin, 'Rhodesian University Students in National Politics', 144.
- ⁹³ Godwin and Hancock, '*Rhodesians Never Die*', 83.
- ⁹⁴ FINA Report, Oct. 22, 1973, IOC Archives.
- ⁹⁵ Davies, *Race Relations in Rhodesia*, 344-45.
- ⁹⁶ IOC Investigating Report, Oct. 23, 1974, IOC Archives.
- ⁹⁷ Davies, *Race Relations in Rhodesia*, 343.
- ⁹⁸ Rhodesian Parliamentary Debates, Aug. 9, 1968: 1253-54; Apr. 25, 1969: 1504; Nov. 9, 1972: 418.
- ⁹⁹ Cheffers, *A Wilderness of Spite*, 30.
- ¹⁰⁰ Letter to the Editor, "'Double Standard" in Rhodesian Athletics', *Rhodesia Herald*, Apr. 16, 1971.
- ¹⁰¹ Davies, *Race Relations in Rhodesia*, 346.
- ¹⁰² Godwin and Hancock, '*Rhodesians Never Die*', 47.
- ¹⁰³ Davies, *Race Relations in Rhodesia*, 346.
- ¹⁰⁴ Editor's Note to "'Double Standard" in Rhodesian Athletics", *Rhodesia Herald*, Apr. 16, 1971.
- ¹⁰⁵ 'We'll Protest to Olympic Body—Angry Coloureds', *Sunday Mail*, Feb. 25, 1968.
- ¹⁰⁶ 'Comment: No Setback for the Appeasers', *Bulawayo Chronicle*, Aug. 24, 1972, 10.
- ¹⁰⁷ Godwin and Hancock, '*Rhodesians Never Die*', 47.
- ¹⁰⁸ Ibid; Manley, *A History of West Indies Cricket*, 194-95.
- ¹⁰⁹ Salisbury Radio, 17:45 GMT, May 26, 1972, British National Archives, PREM 15/1220.
- ¹¹⁰ Davies, *Race Relations in Rhodesia*, 339.
- ¹¹¹ Little, 'Rebellion, Race and Rhodesia', 532.
- ¹¹² 'S. Afr. Tour—Asian Selected', *Rhodesia Herald*, June 18, 1971.
- ¹¹³ Untitled clipping, Oct. 1971, British National Archives, FCO 7/672.
- ¹¹⁴ Salisbury Radio, 5:00 GMT, May 24, 1971, British National Archives, PREM 15/1220.
- ¹¹⁵ Letter, Campbell to Goring-Morris, July 5, 1971, British National Archives, FCO 36/982.
- ¹¹⁶ IOC Investigating Report, Oct. 23, 1974, IOC Archives.
- ¹¹⁷ 'Kwabisa Should be on Olympic List—Claim', *Rhodesia Herald*, May 25, 1972.
- ¹¹⁸ IOC Minutes, May 22, 1975, IOC Archives.
- ¹¹⁹ IOC Minutes, June 1-3, 1974, IOC Archives.
- ¹²⁰ Godwin and Hancock, '*Rhodesians Never Die*', 83, 127.
- ¹²¹ IOC Investigating Report, Oct. 23, 1974, IOC Archives.
- ¹²² Byrom, *Rhodesian Sports Profiles*, 198.
- ¹²³ Strack, *Sanctions*, 229.
- ¹²⁴ Winch, 'There Were a Fine Manly Lot of Fellows', 602.
- ¹²⁵ Novak, 'Politics and the Paralympic Games', 54.