

CAPE AT 6 SPORT

TOP CAPE TOWN AMATEUR ATHLETES MAGAZINE

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HARD BY
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KEEP THAT FIRE
BURNING

Babalwa Latsha Turns
Negativity Into Fuel

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OLYMPIC
DREAM PUT
ON HOLD

For South African sprinter
Petunia Obisi



JULY 2020

HOCKEY STAR
TURNS SPORT INTO BUSINESS



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COACH COMBATS-
COVID WITH APP

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editor.

One of humanity's greatest gifts is the ability to adapt. Come what may, we can rethink and redesign ways to negotiate and survive the most difficult changes in life, be they physical, financial, emotional or otherwise.

The COVID-19 global pandemic has put that adaptability to the test - and it's been intriguing to see the different ways in which different people in different sectors reacted to the pandemic. And that's particularly true for sport.

Some organisations cancelled sporting events completely for the remainder of the year. Some decided to wait and see how the situation would develop as the virus progresses. And some tapped into the benefits that technology brings, hosting virtual events, sharing training tips. Time will tell which decision was right.

Consider one much-monitored scenario: that of the European football leagues. While the likes of the French and Dutch football leagues cancelled their competitions way back in April, the Italian, Spanish, German and English leagues resumed their competitions after almost three months. It will be interesting to see which teams will be at an advantage when the Champions League resumes in August. Will it be those that have rested (and been out of action) for almost six months, or those from the



league that were not cancelled? Time will tell.

On the local amateur sporting front, reaction to COVID-19 has been as interesting as ever. In this issue we take a look at that, highlighting the impact of the virus in many sporting codes, the response from the different relevant stakeholders, and more.

From training at home to hosting virtual competitions, local sports people have really upped the ante to adapt to the abnormal situation brought by the coronavirus, and shown their "Jack-of-many-trades" skills. Toni Marks, for example, who's turned sport to business (page 22). Or basketball coach Relton Booysen, whose COVID-19 dashboard invention has really come in handy (page 28).

But as much as COVID-19 was unavoidable as our main

focus, other mind-blowing developments and achievements could not be ignored. Like the amazing story of stock car racing champion Richardo Davey (page 14), the halted Olympic dreams of athlete Petunia Obisi (page 18), and the inspiring words of Springbok Women Captain Babalwa Latsha (page 9).

Yes, there's still a lot of sport to talk about.

And I'm proud to be able to do so, thanks to the tireless efforts of the editorial team and contributors, who sacrificed their time and skills to produce another interesting and entertaining edition, free of charge – for the benefit of the amateur sporting community in Cape Town.

I take my hat off to you. You guys rock!!!

AMATEUR SPORT HIT HARD BY CORONAVIRUS

AUTHOR: STAFF WRITERS

AS COVID-19 pandemic strengthens its grip on the Cape Town region, many sectors have been severely impacted – and amateur sports have not been spared.

From abruptly cancelling competition programmes and slashing finances, to limiting physical activities and disrupting long term plans, the grassroots sports sector has been significantly affected by the coronavirus. But different codes have responded to the challenge in a variety of different ways.

For instance, the Western Province Cricket Association declared null and void all second round fixtures of its Premier League and First Division, and based the champions for the 2019/2020 season on the results of the first round. The announcement of the champions was delayed, though, due to arbitration issues. The two competitions were left with a game or two from completion and other leagues had already been rounded up.

In football, while the grassroots football at Local Football Association (LFA) was about to kick off – the season at 35 LFAs around the Cape Metropole normal runs from March/April to September/October – the Safa Third Division, which is a level higher, was



13 games before completion, with no less than six clubs vying for honours. The ABC Motsepe League, a semi-professional league which is South Africa's third tier football league, was also two-third complete with 11 or 12 games remaining. Zizwe United was on top of the log with a four point lead over second-placed FN Rangers with a game in hand.

When the games were halted in March, SAFA Third Division, for instance, was left with 13 to 15 games, and SAFA Cape Town president, Bennett Bailey, said they had

proposed to SAFA National that all games be declared null and void, and that there should be no promotion or relegation. "We cannot determine which team will be winners. Last year teams that were leading did not win the league. So we can't say the team that is leading now must be winners and the bottom two must be relegated.

We are putting strongly to SAFA that if games are not going to be played further (this season) there should be no promotion or relegation. And now we await the guidance from SAFA National."

While all Western Province Athletics events had been cancelled until the end of August, the Sanlam Cape Town tapped into the benefits of the Fourth Industrial Revolution. The event will introduce the Virtual Marathon - an interactive and immersive race experience for athletes across the globe - by superimposing the race route on top of streets, open spaces and gardens, complete with live tracking, distance markers, and push messages with information about key landmarks as they are passed. The physical marathon is scheduled for October, and the decision is yet to be made on whether it will go ahead or not.

The rugby season runs more like football, and Western Province Rugby had not commenced with its programmes when sports activities were halted due to the coronavirus. But the South African Rugby cancelled a number of competitions while it continued with contingency planning for others in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The competitions that will no longer take place in 2020 include the SA Rugby Youth Weeks, the provincial U13 and U17 Sevens, the Schools U18, the Provincial U19 Week, as well as the provincial U20 and provincial Sevens.



WINNERS AND LOSERS

AS VARSITY SPORTS SUSPENDED

AUTHOR: MYOLISI GOPHE



“IT IS UNLIKELY THAT ANY NORMAL SPORTS TOURNAMENTS WILL TAKE PLACE WITHIN THE NEXT 10 MONTHS,

- ASEM CHIEF EXECUTIVE
AND FORMER SPRINGBOK
CAPTAIN FRANCOIS PIENAAR



It is a mix of relief and heartache for Cape Town universities after Varsity Sports organisers decided to suspend all rugby competitions – as well as all other sporting codes – for the remainder of the year amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

The decision to suspend all sport tournaments, including those of other codes, was taken on in May, after a meeting between university representatives and the Varsity Sports executive committee – which consists of multimedia rights holder Advent Sport Entertainment and Media (ASEM), University Sports Company (USC) and University Sports South Africa (USSA).

“It is unlikely that any normal sports tournaments will take place within the next 10 months,” ASEM chief executive and former Springbok captain Francois Pienaar was quoted in the official statement. “We have, therefore, taken a principled decision to suspend all our sporting activities across universities until 2021.

“Our priority is to ensure the safety of our athletes and spectators, while also allowing universities and schools to return to the academic year. We

will, however, remain ready to host certain tournaments should government regulations change regarding the hosting of sport events and academic calendars allow for tournaments to take place.”

Like most sectors, higher education institutions have had to suspend contact operations for the foreseeable future as an attempt to stop the spread of the coronavirus, opting instead for

remote or flexible learning. All four Cape Town universities were deeply involved in the Varsity Cup – South Africa’s premier university rugby tournament – as well as in the Varsity Shield, a lower division.

Before the tournament was halted in March, the Maties from Stellenbosch University were cruising on top of the Cup, demonstrating all the signs that they would retain the trophy,

while the Ikey Tigers of the University of Cape Town were challenging for a semi-final spot. The University of the Western Cape were on the wrong side of the log standing, fighting tooth and nail to avoid relegation.

In the Shield, the Cape Peninsula University of Technology were sitting in fourth position, and were in good stead to reach the semi-finals as they battled to



SPEAKUP FOR MENTAL HEALTH

While Varsity Sports may have been suspended, the established SpeakUp campaign will continue to raise awareness of the importance of mental health, especially during times of crisis. The message of the SpeakUp campaign is clear – there is no health, without mental health. Varsity Sports appreciates the efforts made by healthcare professionals in the fight against Covid-19.

But all that has disappeared into the thin air: suspension of the rugby tournaments means there will be no team relegated from the Varsity Cup competition and no promotion/relegation match between the Varsity Cup and Varsity Shield competitions.

Instead, Madibaz from the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University in Port Elizabeth will be promoted from the Shield to the Cup next year, as they had

already achieved an unassailable log-points tally on the combined Varsity Shield 2019/2020 log.

Therefore, there will be 10 teams in the Varsity Cup for 2021. In short, this means UWC will live to fight in the Cup for another season, while CPUT will battle for promotion in the Shield again next year.

ASEM will continue to monitor government regulations and is committed to ongoing

communications to all stakeholders.

“Our focus now is to work with our commercial partners, USSA and the USC to develop the best possible calendar for 2021 and reintroduce a fresh, new sporting landscape for youth sport,” Pienaar added. “People remain our main priority and the health of our staff, the well-being and academic success of our athletes and supporters will always be placed first.”

WESTERN CAPE

COVID-19 SPORT RELIEF FUND SET

AUTHOR: STAFF WRITERS

“We have a responsibility to protect the well-being of sport federations and recreation entities,

”



The Western Cape Department of Cultural Affairs and Sport (DCAS) has invited provincial federations and athletes who may have been negatively impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic to apply for financial assistance.

According to a statement released by DCAS in May, the sector has suffered economically, with many events having been cancelled (including the Two Oceans Marathon and the Knysna Oyster Festival), and Provincial Trials for the Winter Games, Indigenous Games, Golden Games and leagues & festival support for Club Development have been adversely impacted.

DCAS Minister Anroux

Marais said: “We have a responsibility to protect the well-being of sport federations and recreation entities, and will not hesitate to take a safety-first approach to our operations over the coming months. We will continue monitoring the situation, and we are committed to work with our partners in ensuring the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on sport federations, recreation entities, affected events and programmes will be minimized to ensure sustainability of the Sector.

We are therefore grateful that R1 million was made available from the National Conditional Grant to minimize the negative impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.”

PROVINCIAL SPORT RELIEF FUND CRITERIA

An important aspect of providing financial assistance, the statement continues, is ensuring that there are objective criteria in place to evaluate application.

The following criteria were, therefore, confirmed:

- Confirmation of the financial impact per sport federation, structure, recreation entity;
- Validation of any loss that is being claimed;
- Use of previous events to quantify loss of income;
- Proof that sport federations and recreation entities were earning an income and are now out-of-pocket;
- All sport federations are to be in good standing with the Western Cape Provincial Sport Confederation.
- Evidence that athletes were confirmed to participate at events that have now been cancelled or postponed due to COVID-19, and whose income is generated solely by participation in that event. These events may include major road races and events where the athlete may be eligible for an appearance fee;
- Evidence of earnings must be provided for coaches and technical support personnel who work with athletes whose sporting events have been cancelled or postponed due to COVID-19, and make their earnings solely from these events;
- Athletes on the Department's High Performance Programme and/or who are preparing for the 2021 Olympics & Paralympics and are hopefuls for team South Africa selection for those and other major International Championships and events. These athletes must not be on SASCOC's OPEX Programme as specific criteria will be set here.

THE APPLICATION PROCESS

The criteria for accessing this support, the identification of beneficiaries and the mechanism through which the relief fund will be managed and finalised in consultation with the Western Cape Provincial Sport Confederation. Stringent criteria and audit/checking processes will be put in place taking the above factors into consideration. A committee comprising officials from the Department, Western Cape Provincial Sport Confederation and independent entities will be put into place to manage the applications and the allocation of funding from the Western Cape Provincial Relief Fund

Turn Negativity into Fuel to Keep

THAT FIRE BURNING

WRITES BABALWA LATSHA

THE SPRINGBOK WOMEN'S CAPTAIN AND THE FIRST AFRICAN WOMAN RUGBY
PLAYER TO TURN PRO DIGS DEEP INTO HER OWN EXPERIENCE AND DEVELOPMENTS
ELSEWHERE AROUND THE CONTINENT TO GIVE MUCH-NEEDED MOTIVATION.



The 2019/20 season saw some extraordinary moments in the history of world sports. The world witnessed amazing sports men and women of colour demolish boundaries, breaking records and re-write the sporting history books.

Eliud Kipchoge of Kenya became the first person to complete a timed marathon in under two hours. Saray Khumalo became the first African woman to successfully summit the world's highest mountain, Mount Everest. And who could ever forget the incredible moment when Siya Kolisi lifted the Webb Ellis Cup as the first black Springbok captain? And my own humble historic moment: when I became the very first African professional women's fifteens rugby player by signing a pro deal with a Spanish club.

These are just a few of our sporting feats in our beloved continent. Time and again African sportspeople have shown their resilience and prowess in their respective sporting codes - in the process shining a light of hope where there was once a dark cloud of hopelessness.

Some of the stories told by African sportspeople start from a poverty-stricken village or a township, notorious for high crime rates and other socioeconomic ills. One such township is mine: Khayelitsha. In 2019, 186 sexual offences and 1294 armed robberies were reported in Khayelitsha alone. But out of these townships and villages come phenomenal athletes who are now beacons of hope in their communities. It is through their extreme dedication, discipline and hard work that we have good stories to tell, stories of overcoming adversity, defying the odds, triumph and empowerment. The common moral of these stories is this: where you are from does not necessarily determine where you are going.

I have witnessed this to be true. We are all born with greatness inside of us regardless of where we are born. It is like a fire that burns softly in our hearts. Only when we realize and tap into that greatness does that little fire burn ever so brightly, igniting a fire in the hearts of others, inspiring them to do and be better.

Sometimes it may be difficult to dream beyond one's current circumstance. Oftentimes our surroundings may not even stimulate a sporting dream so big that it sees the dreamer on a world stage. Unfortunately, some of the biggest naysayers can come from those loved, trusted and respected such as family. Non-believers will not hesitate to highlight your shortcomings. They will tell you all the reasons why you will never achieve anything in your sports career- even making reference to your upbringing and background. "What good could ever come from Khayelitsha?" as they often say.



But I like to think of sports as a calling. No matter where you are it will find you. When it finds you it ignites that flame. It is that flame that makes the wildest of dreams seem possible to the dreamer. That calling finds you in Khayelitsha, Tsholomqqa, Qobo-Qobo, Mount Frere, New Brighton- anywhere! That calling takes all the negativity and turns into fuel to keep that fire burning brightly, so bright that it shines the world over. We never would have had sporting greats such as Caster Semenya or Serena Williams had they listened to the first person who did not believe in their dreams and abilities.

The most important thing, therefore, is to dream beyond the physical; beyond that one-room shack. Visualise and understand how great you can be. And don't be afraid to ask for help in that process. Allow your fire to burn!

KARATE CLUB YOWS TO BOUNCE BACK FROM COVID 19 CRISIS

AUTHOR: KHANYISILE BRUKWE

Sensei Monwabisi Spogter has managed to open five karate schools in Khayelitsha, sharing skills and teaching discipline to appreciative youngsters in his community – until the COVID-19 pandemic struck.

The national lockdown is keeping a lot of children off the streets – but it's also keeping them out of the dojo. Unfortunately, that's meant Sensei Monwabisi has had to put his classes on pause – like many other sports clubs around the globe.

Consequently they have not been able to train or to raise funds, and their future plans seem almost impossible to achieve.

"We used to do fundraising at least once every two months for us to have funds in our bank account," Sensei Monwabisi says. "But just before lockdown, it was closed, and we couldn't raise funds to reopen it."

His clubs were going to be registered with the Karate Association of Cape Town Unicity and Karate Association of South Africa this year, so that they could take part in their competitions.

Sensei Monwabisi's reality is that of many other small business owners in the country. Thus far his business has faced a loss of a lot of money - and he's had trouble paying his staff.

Despite this unforeseen setback, Sensei Monwabisi is still hopeful that his business will get back on its feet and thrive after the lockdown, and he's currently looking into the Covid-19 Sport Relief Fund and how it can help his business.

It's not the first challenge he's faced in his long experience with the sport.

Sensei Monwabisi started karate at the Samurai school



“KARATE IS ONE OF THE SPORTING CODES THAT IS BASED STRONGLY ON TEACHING DISCIPLINE AND RESPECT,”



of Karate in Kirkwood in the Eastern Cape, under the leadership of Sensei Siyabonga Whitey Tambo, 25 years ago. He's been a lover of the martial arts ever since.

He went on to be graded his 1st Dan Black Belt in Port Elizabeth in 2000, and he has represented the Eastern Province Ryushinkan team against Botswana in the All Africa Games where he won the Bronze Medal in 2011. He then moved to Cape Town in 2012, where he started his own karate dojo in Khayelitsha.

“I opened my first karate dojo in Sphamandla High School in 2014 because I wanted to share my knowledge and skills with the young kids in the community,” he says.

Sensei Monwabisi faced financial constraints in the beginning that forced him to move to spaces where he would not pay rent. This helped him draw in enough students to keep him going - and build a thriving practice, operating in schools, centres and churches, with a total of 105 active members.

In 2018, 17 of his students participated at a Ryushinkan National event - and took home 30 medals, 14 gold, 8 silver and 8 bronze; they had a 100% win.

In 2019 he was graded his 5th Dan Black Belt in Luderitz Namibia by the Grandmaster of Ryushinkan, Soke Musayama from



Japan. There he was also named chief instructor of Ryushinkan Western Cape...

“Karate is one of the sporting codes that is based strongly on teaching discipline and respect,” he shares. “This, I believe, can keep a lot of children out of the streets - and that can be very useful in a province with such a high crime rate.”

If history is any guide, it's that discipline and optimism that will allow Sensei Monwabisi to rise up and continue to spread the codes of discipline and honour in his community.



FAST & FURIOUS

FATHER & SON STOCK CAR RACING CHAMPIONS

AUTHOR: NICKLAUS KRUGER



Stock car racing, like life, is all about going around in circles (or ovals, actually, which is why it's also called oval racing). For Richardo Davey, those circles are one and the same: the son of a stock car racing champion, he's become one himself as well, earning Western Province and Protea colours in the sport.

"My father excelled in oval racing and won numerous club, regional and national races between 1990 and 2008," Richardo recalls. "At a National Championship race held in Bloemfontein in 2008, after the final race,

PHOTO CREDIT: CLOUDNR9

he got out of the car and said he was done racing and handed me his helmet and gloves, basically handing the car over to me. And that's how my career started."

Stock car racing has a long history in South Africa, where a passionate "petrolhead" culture has nurtured a large number of club and regional racing competitors. What distinguishes stock car from, say, Formula 1, is that cars are built of parts that are available to the general public, rather than being dreamed up by a team of

engineers and financiers.

That's not to say there's no engineering involved. Richardo earned his degree in electrical engineering from Stellenbosch University while serving as pitmech (pit mechanic) for his father, a qualified mechanic who owned a successful mechanical workshop in Paarl (where they both live) until his retirement (his father was, among other things, a carpenter, so it's no mystery where their hands-on approach comes from).



"He did most of the work on the oval racing cars he owned and was always very proud of the performance engines that he built and tuned," Richardo says. "I grew up watching him, and learned a lot when I started helping out as a pitmech."

Racing has been a rewarding experience.

"I've definitely enjoyed racing against some of the best drivers in the country - and winning a few championships, including the Western Province regional championship and the Womza National Championship."

It's not easy working full-time as an engineer, husband and father (to twin girls, no less) while racing - but the family that races together...

**"I GREW UP
WATCHING
HIM, AND
LEARNED A
LOT WHEN
I STARTED
HELPING OUT
AS A PITMECH."**



"I've been very fortunate to have my father involved with my racing. He really does most of the work on the car - without him, I really don't think I would have had the time to race. My pitmechs also help a lot, and my mother has a long history of helping out drivers. I am also very thankful for my wife, who allows me the time, sometimes very late in the night, to go work on my car while she looks after the kids. Without this support structure I would not have been racing."

Of course, it's a little easier now - as with nearly all sports, there are no stock car races during the national lockdown. But that doesn't mean Richardo isn't keeping himself race-ready.

"One of the most interesting things about racing for me is reading up on the handling and suspension setups, thinking up ways to make everything work better, applying it to my car, testing it on the track. Even if I can't do the

testing right now, I can still do the thinking."

In other words, there's more to racing than just racing.

"The rewarding part for me has been meeting a lot of people who share my interests, and who go through the same problems on and off the track," Richardo notes. "It is also very rewarding that my entire family is involved, and have been supporting me since I started."

So where to from here?

"I'm still enjoying oval racing and the competition is tougher than ever at the moment with a lot of new and younger drivers joining," Richardo says. "To be honest, I don't see myself doing any other form of racing - and if I ever do stop, I would like to continue helping other drivers."

And so the circle continues...or oval, anyway...

STOCK CAR RACING: FROM PROHIBITION TO PANDEMIC

The origins of stock car racing lie almost a century in the past, when moonshine runners needed to outrun the authorities without attracting too much attention. So they had to upgrade their vehicles, but keep them looking normal. Eventually, they started getting competitive about it, getting together to race against each other instead of the police. In the 1930s, these events started to get more organized and less illegal - and so drag racing, stock car racing, and more was born.



WHAT'S UP, DOC?

WHAT'S NEW IN SPORT SCIENCE

True sports fans know that it isn't just about the brawn - it's about the brains as well. And we don't just mean the players and the coaches, either: all over the world, thousands of brains are working on sport- and exercise-related research, uncovering new wisdom, confirming old truths, and letting us know that things aren't quite as simple as we always thought. Here's a bit of what these sporty scientists have found out recently...



AUTHOR: NICKLAUS KRUGER

Jump Around: *Physical Activity Can Help You Not Die*

Look, we all know it's important to stay active if we want to be healthy. And we all know that becomes even more important as we get older. But how important is it, exactly?

A team of researchers looked more carefully at the relationship between death and physical exercise among older adults in Brazil (where the number of older adults grew 40 percent between 2002 and 2012).

Their study, published in the Journal of the American Geriatrics Society, drew on information from the "COMO VAI?" study. Which saw researchers conduct home interviews with 1,451 adults older than 60. Of these, 971 participants were given wrist monitors to measure their physical activity. Researchers also asked participants about their smoking habits and how they would rate their health and their ability to perform

daily activities, and learned about their chronic health conditions.

Not surprisingly, the researchers learned that people who had the lowest levels of physical activity had higher rates of death compared to people who had higher levels of activity, no matter what a person's level of health was.

Time to get moving...

Don't Lose Sight: *Exercise Can Prevent Vision Loss*

Older people tend to have poorer eyesight. Older people also tend to do less exercise. But are the two trends related? And if so, how much of that is one causing the other?

A new study from the University of Virginia School of Medicine solved that mystery - at least for mice. The study found that exercise reduced the harmful overgrowth of blood vessels in the eyes of lab mice by

up to 45%. This tangle of blood vessels is a key contributor to macular degeneration and several other eye diseases.

The study represents the first experimental evidence showing that exercise can reduce the severity of macular degeneration, a leading cause of vision loss, and may benefit other common causes of vision loss, such as glaucoma

and diabetic retinopathy.

The scientists aren't certain exactly how exercise is preventing the blood vessel overgrowth.

They have already submitted grant proposals in hopes of obtaining funding to pursue their findings further - perhaps to see if they can develop a pill or method to give the benefits of exercise without needing to actually exercise.

Continued on page 21

[OLYMPIC DREAM ON HOLD FOR SA SPRINTER]

PETUNIA OBISI

AUTHOR: MYOLISI GOPHE

South African sprinter Petunia Obisi has run many races locally and internationally, but it has always been her ultimate dream to grace the biggest sporting event in the world – the Olympic Games.

**"IT IS A WORLD CRISIS, AND THIS IS
THE SACRIFICE WE MUST ALL MAKE."**

That dream was on the way to reality when she was named in the provisional squad for the South African team for the 2020 Olympics Games – only for the games to be moved to winter next year due to the COVID-19 global pandemic.

“[The postponement] was really devastating, but there is nothing we can do about it,” Obisi comments. “It is a world crisis, and this is the sacrifice we must all make.”

University students were evacuated prior to the national lockdown, so the final-year Bachelor of Arts student at the University of the Western Cape has been at home in Johannesburg for the duration. But she hasn’t lost hope, and has vowed to continue working hard to stay fit and in good shape.

“It was a bit demotivating going back home,

because I can’t even jog 50 metres,” she says. “It’s a bit challenging, but it’s something that really needs to be done. I’m fortunate because I have some equipment at home. My late brother was a sports person and invested a lot in sport equipment.”

When the postponement was announced, Obisi and other women athletes in the provision squad had just returned from a welcoming session, which gave her an opportunity to mix and mingle with top athletes around the country.

“It was a great atmosphere, being surrounded by the likes of Simon Magakwe and all of these up-and-coming athletes, and people who have already made it in athletics,” Obisi remarks. “It was a bit intimidating – but at the same time also gave me even more motivation to work even harder.”

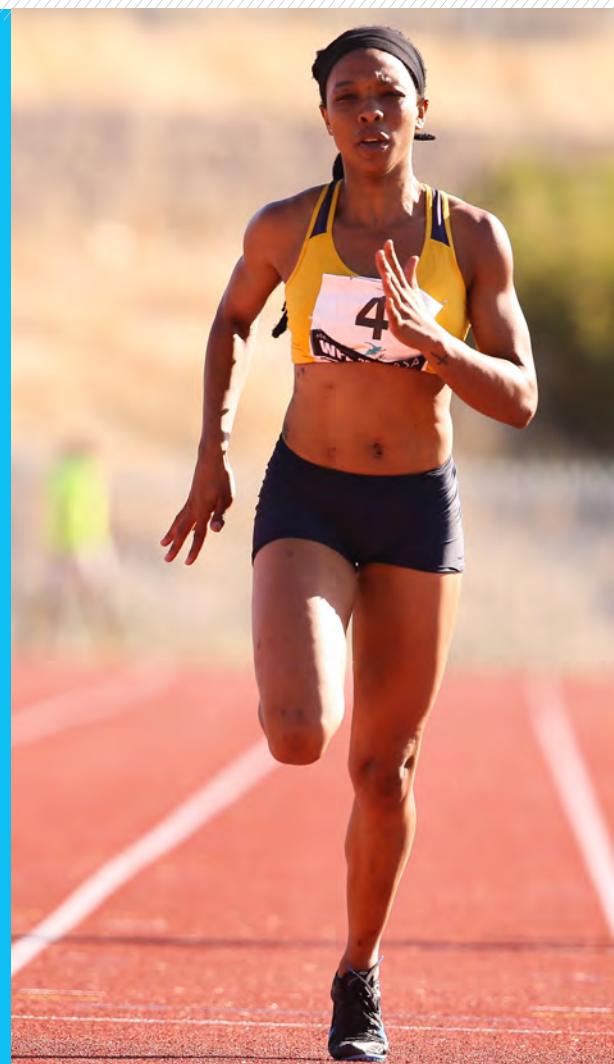
A RUNNING START & ACCELERATING ATHLETIC ACHIEVEMENT

Obisi actually got her sporting start as a netball player, but ended up in athletics – just like her older sister, Rita. But it wasn’t love at first try.

“I hated everything about athletics,” she recalls. “I hated the training; it was tough. But, at the end of the day, when you give yourself time, you end up enjoying what you are doing.”

Her performance over the years speaks volumes about the power of passion (and talent).

She was only 14 years old when she made it to the national championships in the Under-17 category. And in 2016 she was selected to represent South Africa at the African University Championships, now known as USSA. She came home with a gold medal and repeated the feat at the Southern Africa Athletics Championships in Zimbabwe a year later. She is currently the Western Province Champion



and is ranked seventh in 100 metres and 10th in 200 metres in South Africa.

She was also among a number of select athletes from South Africa who jetted off to Europe to take part in the European Season in June and July last year, competing with top athletes from around the globe.

"The Season is about opportunities and money, because there is no money in South Africa. It

is good exposure and also provides a second chance to qualify for big competitions that are coming up," says Obisi.

Like many students, Obisi has found it tough to find a balance between sport and studies. "As sportspeople, we tend to devote most of our attention to our sporting careers rather than academics, forgetting that we're actually here for academics," she acknowledges. "It's difficult to find the balance sometimes, but we must keep on trying."



Continued from page 17

Laying Heads Down During Lockdown: More Sleep, But Not Better Sleep

AUTHOR: NICKLAUS KRUGER

The COVID-19 pandemic has led to lockdowns all over the world (including right here in South Africa, of course). That's meant a lot of people couldn't go to the office, or to the game, or to visit their friends. There's just not that much to do, really. So is it any surprise that people have found themselves sleeping more than before?

A study in *Cell Biology* of 435 people in Austria, Switzerland and Germany (all of whom experienced some form of lockdown) found that they reported sleeping more regularly and for longer periods than before.

But quantity doesn't mean quality: that sleep included problems with things such as falling or staying asleep, and participants reported a reduction in their mental and physical health during COVID-19 lockdowns, which was associated with lower-quality sleep.

Worse sleep, despite spending more time in bed, may have outweighed any benefits from a regular sleep schedule, the authors of this study say. But getting outside in natural sunlight and exercising could help improve sleep quality.

So...get some sun, get moving, and then get into bed. And sweet dreams...

New Knees: Cartilage-Mimicking Gel Could Cut Down On Knee Surgery

Knees. They're weird, they're important, and they're very, very prone to injury. And that's especially true for anyone involved in any sort of high-impact or contact sport.

The thin, slippery layer of cartilage between the bones in the knee is magical stuff: strong enough to withstand a person's weight, but soft and supple enough to cushion the joint against impact, over decades of repeat use. But cartilage has a limited ability to repair itself, and that combination of soft-yet-strong has been hard to reproduce in the lab.

But now, Duke University researchers

say they've created an experimental gel that's the first to match the strength and durability of the real thing. Its developers say it's the first hydrogel – materials made of water-absorbing polymers – capable of withstanding tugging and heavy loads as well as human cartilage, without wearing out over time. It's 60% water, but a single quarter-sized disc can bear the weight of a 40kg kettlebell without tearing or losing its shape.

The research could one day offer people with knee troubles a replacement for damaged cartilage, and an alternative to knee replacement surgery.

HOCKEY STAR

Turns Sport Into Business

AUTHOR: KHANYISILE BRUKWE



For South African international hockey star **Toni Marks**, hockey is a hobby, a career, and a way of life – literally.

Not only has she been good in the sport – so much so that she’s represented the country and currently plays in one of the toughest leagues in the world (or did before the global COVID-19 pandemic put a hold on it) – but she’s also ventured into the hockey business, focusing on hockey products.

“It all started as a hobby, and then my parents got involved, and now it’s something to fall into in times like these, when I can’t just play hockey,” Marks recalls.

Field & Hockey SA, the company she is involved with, is importing Csign Skill Trainer Mats and thundersport range from Holland for local market consumption, as well as sportswear for leisure. The Csign Skill Trainer Mats have proven very helpful during the national lockdown, as it can be used anywhere, including at home.

Marks has joined forces with partners from the Netherlands, notable former hockey internationals Robert Van de Horst and Jeroen Hertzberger, and their products are kind of new to the South African market, she says.

“At the beginning it was something fun to do and kind of exploring to be an entrepreneur. But now, although I don’t have it all, I’m a bit further,

thanks to my parents and the athletes I work with who helped me a lot.”

While she currently swings her hockey stick in Europe, when she is back home she is part of the Eastern Province Hockey team, and she still plays for the Gelvan Club – the same Port Elizabeth hockey club her father used to play for.

“I’ve just recently teamed up with the former Dutch captain Robert van de Horst in bringing in some training aids, which is really unique and something I’m really excited about!”



FIELDANDHOCKEYSA.CO.ZA

**“SPORT IS A
MICROCOSM
OF SOCIETY,**



THE DREAM IN THE JOURNEY

Marks was born into a sporting family in Port Elizabeth, paving the way for her successful hockey journey. She started playing at a young age, inspired by her father's sporting antics.

“I would be at all of his matches, just watching and learning from him and his teammates for many years,” she says. “I enjoy how fast-paced and challenging hockey is, and how there are always new skills to develop and improve on.”

She went on to play for the Gelvan Club, before moving on to the big leagues. In 2013, Toni participated in the Junior World Cup in Germany, and she currently has 14 caps for the senior national team. She spent the last two and a half seasons in the books of Tilburg in the Dutch second highest league, where she is also coaching their Under 18 team. (The third season was cancelled due to the coronavirus, like many sporting leagues in the world.)

There have been a lot of highs and lows over the

years, but what keeps her motivated is always pushing towards the next high - and the fun times that she has with her teammates.

“I remember during a school hockey tournament where one of my teammates somehow managed to push our short corner right over the back net behind the goalposts; I've never seen anyone do that since. Luckily we had it on video, and put it straight onto YouTube.”

For Marks, it's important to enjoy training and playing as much as one enjoys winning: “Like Kobe said, the dream is in the journey.”

Toni believes that sport can be used as a development and transformation tool for society by showing that diversity works and providing opportunity to all that deserve it.

“Sport is a microcosm of society,” she says. “Once we are able to play together, living together becomes easier.”

UNITY IN GYMNASTICS:

MOVING TOGETHER IN #SALOCKDOWN

AUTHOR: WARREN LUCAS

Gymnastics, as an individual and group physical activity, has come to a complete halt due to the national restrictions of the #SALockdown, in an attempt to reduce the spread of the novel COVID-19 pandemic.

For Cape Town Gymnastics and its members, this meant that no competitions or social events would be expected during May, June and July of 2020 – which is typically when the CTGA District Trials are held for gymnasts across the nine disciplines under the SA Gymnastics umbrella.

These disciplines are Men's Artistic Gymnastics, Women's Artistic Gymnastics, Rhythmic Gymnastics, Acrobatic Gymnastics, Aerobic Gymnastics, Rope Skipping, Trampoline, Tumbling and Gym for All, of which all include levels spanning from recreational and beginners gymnastics to high performance and SA-team hopefuls.

These competitions precede the Western Cape Gymnastics Championships and the SA Gym Games. In addition, regular gymnastics training sessions (from Monday - Saturday across 48 clubs) also came to a halt in an attempt to 'flatten the curve'.



The economic impact of COVID19 on our clubs, who are small-medium and family-owned entrepreneurial business have taken the largest blow as overheads are not being met due to the domino effect of reduced gymnastics services being rendered by clubs.

For a sport like gymnastics, this has had a big impact on the way we deliver training and conditioning to our gymnasts, and has shown us the value of the gymnasium as a micro-environment institution for the physical, cognitive and socioemotional development of young gymnasts.



CAPE TOWN GYMNASTICS ASSOCIATION

Cape Town Gymnastics Association is the official district governing body for Gymnastics in the Cape Town metropole, and we are affiliated to the Western Cape Gymnastics Association, The South African Gymnastics Federation, The Cape Town Sports Council as well as the Western Cape Sport Confederation. CGTA offers 8 disciplines in Gymnastics, across the Cape Town District. We are committed to extending gymnastics opportunities for participation to all in Cape Town through promotion, encouragement and institutional networking and partnerships.

SURVEY SAYS...WHAT ARE GYMNASTS DOING DURING LOCKDOWN?

In a recent survey conducted by the Cape Town Gymnastics Association, respondents were asked about their new mechanisms for training, now that attending a gymnasium is not exactly common practice.

A variety of responses were received from members of CTGA, including Programme Managers, Parents, Coaches, Club Administrators, Judging Officials and the Executive Committee. The completion of the survey revealed some interesting findings relating to time spent on school work, at-home training and TV/gaming activity.

Most gymnasts are able to enjoy time at home, but expressed a reduced confidence to re-enter

into competition season after the lockdown, as they have not been able to maintain conditioning levels important for skill and routine execution.

The limited opportunity to train skills and routines in the gymnasium has largely impacted gymnast's ability to confidently execute and perform routines, in general. It's worth noting the impact of the COVID19 lockdown on the periodization of competing gymnasts, and how this has posed a threat to competition preparation and skills mastery.

Unfortunately, some disciplines are hardly a "home sport" activity, due to the high difficulty level in gymnastics skills and the requirement

for appropriate safety equipment.

Contributing to this, some gymnasts and coaches lack the capacity to maintain an at-home training programme due to limited access to communication technology, fitness equipment and/or gymnastics apparatus.

As a result of this, the Cape Town Gymnastics Association has taken the decision to postpone all competitions to the third or fourth term, in an effort to continue initiatives to reduce the spread of COVID19.

In the meantime, gymnastics coaches have decided to embrace the Fourth Industrial Revolution, using technology to adopt more innovative ways to ensure inclusion, connection and continuation of gymnastics sessions practice in the Cape Town metro.

At present, around half registered clubs have been able to start-up remote coaching strategies successfully with minimal issues – but a big challenge facing our gymnasts are issues surrounding limited data capability and the availability of devices (tablets, smartphones and laptops) making the delivery of remote gymnastics more difficult.

Unfortunately, this seems to be a common struggle facing many of our clubs and gymnasts. As a result of these macro-level changes, the gymnastics community has needed to come together and move in synchronicity to keep the sport going.





CAPE TOWN GYMNASTICS: MOVING TOGETHER

Some of the common feelings expressed by gymnasts and club officials are those of fear, anxiety, loss, relief, confusion, disappointment, exhaustion, frustration, and anger. This combination of conflicting emotions may negatively impact motivation to persevere in gymnastics, whether as a coach or gymnast.

But we are striving to remain positive - and the lockdown has also helped us learn some very important lessons, as we come together to support each other during these uncertain times.

Many unique collaborations of gymnastics disciplines have rallied to deliver live strength training, flexibility training and basic preparation for skills through online platforms, and this has been taking place remotely. To make this available to those with connectivity issues, live recordings of sessions have been sent to clubs, so their members can participate in these training sessions as well.

The Cape Town Gymnastics Association is a member of the Western Cape Gymnastics Association and the South African Gymnastics Federation, and both organizations have made relief-funding applications available to clubs who have been economically impacted by the national lockdown. Additionally, we are all working to devise an integration plan for when lockdown restrictions are eased to Level 2 or 1, permitting.

The Olympic Values of Friendship, Respect and Excellence have been the undercurrents of the gymnastics community as we have (ironically) become closer through social distancing. And we will remain hopeful for positive change as we continue to support one another for the remainder of #SALockdown.



Warren Lucas is President of the Cape Town Gymnastics Association. For more information visit the website at <https://capetowngymnastics.com> or follow @CPTGymnastics on Twitter or Facebook, or @capetowngymnastics on Instagram.

EXPOSE YOUR ENEMY:

BASKETBALL COACH COMBATS COVID-19 WITH APP POWER

AUTHOR: FUAD ESSACK, CAPE
COMMUNITY NEWSPAPERS



Cape Town basketball coach Relton Booysen has created an app to help his players, the sporting fraternity and the public at large to stay up to date with the latest developments around Covid-19.

With the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic and South Africa's national lockdown (which led to all games being called off, naturally), Booysen, like many sports fans, had to resort to watching reruns of past games from the comfort of his living room in Goodwood. But

he's not the kind of guy who's inclined to sit still for long.

"Covid-19 is real, it's in South Africa, it's in Cape Town, and it's all over the world. Players can't play, they can't train. So, what do we do at home?"

What Booysen did was create a platform to help spread Covid-19 awareness. With the possibilities presented by modern technology, he developed an app that tracks the latest statistics on the coronavirus.

"Because of Covid-19," he said, "we came up with

an app called The Eye (theeyeapp.co.za) where basketball players and anybody in South Africa can track the day-to-day stats of Covid-19 in their provinces."

He also devised a plan to keep club members on their toes during the lock-down period - presenting what he calls his 21-day fitness challenge to make sure his players are fit and game ready once the season resumes.

"We came up with exercises that you can do in a small space. What it involves is doing 21 sit-ups, 21 push-ups and so on. So they must continue to work hard and stay safe."

Booyesen, was drawn to coaching while at Heideveld Basketball Club - at the time the club didn't have a coach. The intrepid coach has been in love with the sport ever since Michael Jordan dominated the scene in the '90s, having led the Chicago Bulls to six NBA Championship titles between 1991 and 1998.

Originally from Tafelsig in Mitchell's Plain, Booysen grew up in the Eastern Cape and earned a sports bursary to study at Stellenbosch University. While he's passionate about hockey and cricket, he prefers shooting hoops, and has been involved with various basketball clubs and development initiatives to promote the game

across the city for a number of years.

Booyesen, who is also the team manager and assistant of Cape Town Tigers, has also spent time at the University of Cape Town and Nelson Mandela University, and he's a firm believer in the importance of a good education. He tries to encourage his players to work hard on and off the court, and focus on their books as well as their ball skills.

"I'm passionate about basketball and started SID (Skills and IQ development) Basketball four years ago to make an impact on communities on the Cape Flats. Hard work equals success - and sport is a gateway to success in life."

Story and image Courtesy of Fuad Essack (This article modified from original story published by the Cape Community Newspapers)

SPORT, DEVELOPMENT AND PEACE: POLICY IN A TIME OF PANDEMIC

AUTHORS: PROFESSORS CHRISTO DE CONING AND MARION KEIM



The Foundation for Sport, Development and Peace (FSDP) is a non-profit, non-governmental organization engaged in sport, development and peace. The FSDP promotes Universal and Olympic values of friendship, joy of effort, fair play, respect, excellence and balance of body, spirit, will and mind as well as interdependence, sharing, love, tolerance, equality amongst others.

The Foundation for Sport, Development and Peace (FSDP), which is known for hosting the annual International Sport and Peace Conference in Cape Town, has released a Policy Agenda on Sport, Development and Peace as an invitation to stakeholders to consider important policy priorities in these challenging times.

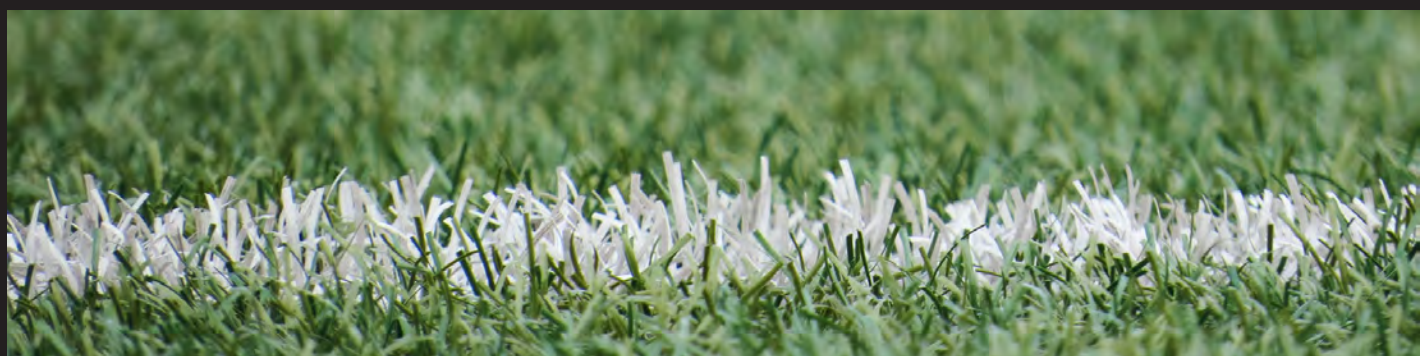
The initiative is a bottom-up approach to constructively engage with the policy agendas of decision-makers, practitioners and scholars, and to rank policy issues by priority and importance.

Although the Policy Agenda recognises the current challenges caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, it is

also evident that sport and recreation have taken advantage of opportunities to offer active support to the well-being of communities in lock-down.

The FSDP supports a cooperative and collaborative approach in policy-making and implementation, and believes that civil society, governments, educational institutions, federations and the private sector should collaborate to achieve sport, development and peace.

The Policy Agenda will be published monthly, and the FSDP is encouraging other like-minded NGOs to develop similar policy agendas of their priorities.



SO WHAT'S ON THE (FSDP POLICY) AGENDA?

The purpose of the Policy Agenda is to stimulate global debate on important policy issues in the field - something that's particularly important now, when alternative options, creativity and social cohesion are very much needed.

The FSDP International Policy Agenda for April 2020 showed the importance of sport for all, gender equity and social cohesion, as well as a call on sport institutions to act with integrity. It was, however, characterised by the impact of the COVID-19 virus, a situation which was not on the cards at all six months ago.

The policy priorities regarding this abnormal time of global health crises, shows that stakeholders value

social cohesion and standing together, and that physical activity and other healthy habits should be promoted.

It is striking that whereas physical activity is normally taken for granted, the restriction of movement has led to a deep and apparent appreciation of the value of being able to be mobile and active.

Policy priorities also indicate the importance of an emphasis on the youth as well as marginalised and vulnerable groups in our society. Policy priorities are, therefore, indicative of the promotion of the various socio-economic benefits of sport and recreation.

SPORT, DEVELOPMENT AND PEACE IN SOUTH AFRICA

The FSDP Policy Agenda for South Africa shows that the COVID-19 lock-down experience which South Africans are experiencing has dominated the Policy Agenda.

The policy priorities which are evident with respect to South Africa include the promotion of healthy lifestyles and regular exercise during the lock-down period.

Whereas South Africans are normally mostly outdoor people with communities actively socializing, the lock-down experience has brought about a new appreciation for the freedom to move around normally, and for sport and recreation (and physical activity in general).

It is clear that a rapid increase in indoor activities is evident and online physical activities such as class-

led exercises, dancing, yoga, recreational activities, e-sport, board games, indigenous games and innovative home-based exercises are on the rise.

The potential for sport to contribute to socio-economic development was stressed including sport infrastructure at schools, employability, small businesses and sustainable employment.

Our networks also gave very high ratings to the safety and well-being of our communities during the lock-down period. This included improving social relationships, social cohesion, responsible citizenship and communication via social media and other means.

In these uncertain times, the value of sport to contribute to a healthy society is more important than ever - and policy should reflect that reality.

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Make sure to follow us on social media to get the latest sporting updates straight out of the Western Cape.



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