

Abstract

Academic and popular studies of South African sport generally reveal a bias towards cricket and rugby and this perpetuates the myth that these games are the most popular in South Africa. This in turn is often viewed through the lens of 'race' in which the simplifications of sport along racial lines occur. This paper argues that football was more important in South Africa amongst all South Africans in the late 19th and early 20th century than has been previously acknowledged. Not only was the game important and popular in South Africa but that its teams and administrators played a significant role in globalising the game on the world stage during this period. Tours to and from South Africa were important, politically, financially and for sporting reasons. Five ground breaking football tours took place during a ten year period and these serve as the basis of discussion in this paper.

Keywords

South African Football Association, Corinthian Football Club, Orange Free State football, sport, football tours.

South African football tours at the turn of the twentieth century: Amateurs, Pioneers and Profits

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This paper argues that football at the turn of the twentieth century was more important than generally acknowledged amongst all South Africans and that the South African game acquired a significant place in the world football landscape at that time. To evidence this claim, the paper analyses three visits by an English touring team, the first overseas tour of a black South African team and a white representative team visit to South America, all of which occurred in the period between 1897 and 1907. These analyses show that football was

¹ Particular thanks to Maria Quinteiro for sources, Teresa Barata and Ana Maria Madrigal for the Portuguese and Spanish translations, and Paul Darby and the anonymous reviewers for their constructive comments and suggestions. All interpretations remain my own.

widely played across South Africa and indeed, rivalled and often exceeded cricket and rugby in popularity. In exploring the significance of these pioneering early football tours to and from South Africa, it is also revealed that the country's football administrators and teams were at the forefront of popularising, globalising and institutionalising the game during this period within the country and abroad.

The study of South African football remains underdeveloped both in academic and popular spheres. Despite the publication of groundbreaking research on football in South Africa and the African continent in the last decade,² studies on South African sport more generally continue to reveal a bias towards the games of cricket and rugby in particular.³ This has resulted in cricket and rugby receiving much more academic exposure than other sporting codes, including football. This in turn has perpetuated a myth that South Africa's most significant summer and winter sports are cricket and rugby respectively. This characterisation is often qualified by reference to 'race' in which football is deemed the most important sport for black South Africans.⁴ This reveals a crude simplification of the popularity of a range of sports in South Africa along racial lines. Indeed, John Nauright warns that 'to merely depict rugby as a white man's game and soccer as a black man's game is a deterministic mistake'⁵. Before exploring the significance of a series of South African football tours in the period under consideration and in doing so make a contribution to redressing the 'deterministic mistake' referred to by Nauright, some brief context is required. Thus, in the following section the origins of football in South Africa will be considered along with the role played by cricket and rugby tours to and from the country. This highlights how football developed in tandem with other sporting codes in the country.

² See for example P. Darby, *Africa, Football and FIFA: Politics, Colonialism and Resistance*, (London, 2002), G. Armstrong and R. Giulianotti, eds. *Football in Africa: Conflict, Conciliation and Community* (New York, 2004), P. Alegi, *Laduma! Soccer, Politics and Society in South Africa* (Scottsville, 2004), P. Alegi and C. Bolsmann, *South Africa and the Global Game: Football, Apartheid and Change*, (London, 2010), and P. Alegi, *African Soccerescapes: How a Continent Changed the World's Game*, (Ohio, 2010).

³ D. Black and J. Nauright, *Rugby and the South African Nation* (Manchester, 1998), C. Merrett and B. Murray, *Caught Behind: Race and Politics in Springbok Cricket*, (Scottsville 2004), A. Odendaal *The Story of an African Game: Black Cricketers and the Unmasking of one of Cricket's Greatest Myths, South Africa 1850-2003* (Cape Town, 2003), A. Grundlingh, A. Odendaal and B. Spies, *Beyond The Tryline Rugby and the South African Society* (Johannesburg, 1995), A. Desai, V. Padayachee, K. Reddy and G. Vahed *Blacks in Whites: A Century of Cricket Struggles in Kwa-Zulu-Natal* (Scottsville, 2002) and B. Murray and G. Vahed, *Empire and Cricket: The South African Experience 1884-1914* (Pretoria, 2009).

⁴ In any analysis of South Africa a consideration of the use of racial categories and terminology is necessary. The Population Registration Act of 1950 and subsequent amendments classified South Africans as African, Coloured, Indian and White. In addition, a range of derogatory racial terms were used. For the purposes of this analysis I have used these words in direct quotations and the term Black to include African, Coloured and Indian South Africans.

⁵ J. Nauright *Sport, Cultures and Identities in South Africa* (London, 1997), 101-102.

Origins of football in South Africa

The earliest references to football matches in South Africa are dated to the 1860s where games were played in 1862 in Port Elizabeth and Cape Town respectively and in 1866 in Pietermaritzburg. Football was played among white settlers and the military in the Natal colony as early as the 1870s and 1880s and this region became ‘the home of the game in South Africa’.⁶ The British military helped popularize the game when soldiers were stationed in Natal during the Anglo-Zulu War (1879) and the Anglo-Transvaal War (1880–1881).⁷ Pietermaritzburg County Football Club and the Natal Wasps Football Club were established in 1880⁸ and the Natal Football Association formed in 1882, the first of its kind in South Africa. The discovery of gold on the Witwatersrand in 1886 and the emergence of Johannesburg as the most important economic centre in South Africa saw the game develop in the region and the Transvaal Football Association was established in 1889. Seven years later, the Transvaal Indian Football Association was founded.⁹ In 1892, the whites-only South African Football Association (SAFA) was formed to give the ‘dribbling code a stronger place in sport in the country’.¹⁰ Donald Currie, the shipping magnate, donated trophies to five sports codes in South Africa during the 1880s and 1890s and the football version was first contested in 1892. Cecil Rhodes was made Honorary President of the Association in 1895,¹¹ with Presidents Paul Kruger of the South African Republic and Francis Reitz of the Orange Free State Republic named patrons of the Association. In 1897 SAFA affiliated to the English Football Association (FA) and a representative of this body was based in London to attend meetings and, as will be highlighted shortly, to canvass support for football tours.

According to Andre Odendaal, Africans were introduced to British sports at informal and formal levels in South Africa. At the informal level, spectatorship and participation in games were important while at a formal level, mission schools such as Lovedale, Healdtown and Zonnebloem introduced sport to Africans students as part of their curriculum.¹² I have argued

⁶ G.A. Parker ed. *South African Sports* (London, 1897) 86, 89; L. Hill, ‘Football as Code

⁷ Alegi, *Laduma!*, 16.

⁸ A. Gibson and W. Pickford *Football and the Men who Made it* (Cape Town, 1906), 233.

⁹ T. Couzens, ‘An Introduction to the History of Football in South Africa’, in B. Bozzoli, ed, *Town and Countryside in the Transvaal* (Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1983), 198-214.

¹⁰ ‘South African Football Association’. *Diamond Field Advertiser*, October 6, 1892.

¹¹ *The Cape Argus*, August 14, 1894.

¹² A. Odendaal ‘South Africa’s Black Victorians: Sport and Society in South Africa in the Nineteenth Century’ in J.A. Mangan ed. *Pleasure, Profit, Proselytism: British Culture and Sport at Home and Abroad 1700–1914*. (London 1988) 196.

elsewhere that Africans were playing football in the Orange Free State in the mid-1890s¹³ while Peter Alegi suggests that black South Africans watched and probably played football with British soldiers in the besieged towns of Kimberley, Ladysmith and Mafeking during the South African War.¹⁴

Cricket and rugby tours

During the period under consideration a number of cricket and rugby tours to and from South Africa took place. The relevance to football is evident in terms of the rationales for these tours. Cricket was brought to the Cape after the first British occupation in 1795. During the 1840s and 1850s cricket clubs were formed in South African towns and the first regular competition took place in the Cape in 1862.¹⁵ The first African cricket club was established in Port Elizabeth in 1869.¹⁶ Instances of black versus white cricket matches were recorded in the eastern Cape¹⁷ but also in Orange Free State towns such as Kroonstad and Jagersfontein where black versus white football matches were played. An English cricket eleven captained by R.G. Warton toured South Africa in 1888-9,¹⁸ and the South African Cricket Association was formed in 1889. A second English tour took place in 1891-2 with W.W. Read's side playing their final match against a combined Malay side at Newlands. Further English tours, led by Lord Hawke, took place in 1895-6 and 1898-9 and again in 1905-6 and 1909-10. A number of Australians played in the first touring teams and these teams could also be described as 'Imperial Wanderers'.¹⁹ South African sides reciprocated and toured England in 1894, 1901, 1904 and 1907. In 1909, South Africa, Australia and the Marylebone Cricket Club became founder members of the Imperial Cricket Council. For Nauright 'cricket in South Africa represented British imperial classist ideology and increasingly racist exclusivism'.²⁰

Rugby was first played in the Cape in the 1860s and the first club Hamilton established in 1875. In 1889 the South African Rugby Board was formed and became a founder member of

¹³ See C. Bolsmann 'The 1899 Orange Free State Football Team Tour of Europe: 'Race', Imperial Loyalty and Sports Spectacle' forthcoming in *International Journal of the History of Sport*

¹⁴ Alegi, *Laduma!*, 18; Couzens, 'An Introduction to the History of Football', 200.

¹⁵ R. Archer and A. Bouillon *The South African Game: Sport and Racism* (London 1982), 81.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 197.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 199.

¹⁸ See J. Winch, 'Guardians of the Game: The Role of the Press in Popularising the 1888/89 tour and Establishing the South African Cricket Association' in B. Murray and G. Vahed, eds, *Empire and Cricket: The South African Experience 1884-1914* (Pretoria, 2009), 45-60.

¹⁹ Quoted in Nauright *Sport* 29.

²⁰ Nauright *Sport*, 25.

the International Rugby Board the following year. In 1891 a rugby team comprising of English and Scottish internationals and captained by W. E. Maclagan toured South Africa. Gibson and Pickford noted that a 'question of guarantee was the chief difficulty [and] the English Rugby Union was courteous but inexorably business-like'.²¹ The Cape Colony Prime Minister, Cecil Rhodes solved this problem by acting as guarantor for the tour. Not only Rhodes but other entrepreneurs backed these early international tours keen to financially gain from their endeavours. The tourists played 19 games including three internationals winning them all. In 1896 a British rugby team toured South Africa losing one of the four internationals played. In 1903 a British side visited South Africa and lost eight matches including the test series. During this tour the South African representative side wore the green jerseys of the Old Diocesans' Club for the first time in the final Test match at Newlands. In 1906, a South African representative rugby team toured Britain and France. Captained by Paul Roos, the team wore the Springbok badge and were named the Springboks.²² The tour was a great success with the visitors winning 26 of the 29 matches played. Archer and Bouillon remark that South Africa from 1906 onwards 'dominated the small world of international rugby for half a century'.²³

The significance of cricket and rugby tours went beyond the sporting contest and the financial gains. They were important politically, particularly in relation to maintaining the bonds of Empire and the forging of a white South African identity. During the second Australian cricket tour to England in 1880 for example, *The Times*, reporting on a speech made by Lord Harris at a farewell function hosted by the Sir Francis W. Truscott, Lord Mayor of London, noted that 'the game of cricket has done more to draw the Mother Country and the Colonies together than years of beneficial legislation could have done'.²⁴ Moreover, representative South African sides, particularly in rugby, comprised Dutch and English-speaking white South Africans that contributed to the fostering of a united South African identity prior to Union in 1910.²⁵ During the 1890s South African football administrators harboured hopes of sending South African teams to Britain and hosting tours to the country too. Many of the South African football administrators were involved in the organisation of cricket in the country and were aware of the financial, political and sporting benefits of such tours.

²¹ Gibson and Pickford *Football*, 203.

²² I. D. Difford *The History of South African Rugby Football (1875-1932)* (Wynberg. 1933), 34.

²³ Archer and Bouillon *South African*, 60-62.

²⁴ 'The Australian Cricketers' *The Times* Tuesday, Oct. 5 1880 p6.

²⁵ See for example D. Allen, 'Tours of Reconciliation: Rugby, War and Reconstruction in South Africa, 1891-1907', *Sport in History*, 27, 2, (June 2007), 172-189.

Corinthian Football Club tour to South Africa 1897

In 1893 South African football officials discussed the possibility of sending a touring team to Britain²⁶ and in 1894 considered bringing a Scottish side to South Africa.²⁷ Although nothing ever came of these proposals, two years later discussions were held on extending an invitation to an English side to tour South Africa.²⁸ SAFA wrote to N. L. Jackson, sports journalist and former honorary assistant Secretary to the English Football Association (FA) asking him to arrange a visit by an English team.²⁹ Jackson had already corresponded with SAFA stating he was 'keen' to bring out a team to South Africa.³⁰ SAFA discussed the merits of bringing out an amateur or professional team and it was resolved that an amateur side in the form of Corinthian Football Club (FC) should visit South Africa. Jackson formed the Corinthian FC in 1882 to give English players more opportunities to play together due to 'lack of combination'³¹ when playing international matches as compared to representative sides from Scotland. The club was based in London, only played friendly matches and Mason notes developed 'a distinctive style of play with five forwards attacking in a line with long sweeping passes . . . for a colleague to run on to'.³² According to Taylor, the side was an 'amateur "superclub" which brought the best ex-public school and university players' together.³³

The 1897 Corinthian tour of South Africa captained by R. Topham, was the first overseas tour by a British football team. They were followed by an English FA representative team that played in Berlin, Karlsruhe and Prague in 1899,³⁴ an Oxford University XI that played in Vienna in 1899 and Southampton who did likewise in 1900.³⁵ It was reported in *South Africa* that the tour 'will succeed in greatly enhancing the popularity of the game, which in South Africa is in comparatively backward condition, Rugby being the general favourite'.³⁶ Jackson

²⁶ 'Football in South Africa' *Birmingham Daily Post* 25 Jan. 1894.

²⁷ *The Cape Argus* 14 Aug. 1894 p3.

²⁸ *Natal Witness* 26 Aug. 1896.

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ N. L. Jackson, 1899 *Association Football* (London, 1899), 329. N. L. Jackson *Sporting Days and Sporting Ways* (London, 1932).

³² T. Mason *Association Football and English Society 1863-1915* (Sussex, 1980), 216.

³³ M. Taylor *The Association Game: A History of British Football*. (Harlow, 2008), 83.

³⁴ P. Beck *Scoring for Britain: International Football and International Politics 1900-1939* (London, 1999), 53.

³⁵ D. Goldblatt *The Ball is Round: A Global History of Football* (London, 2006), 140.

³⁶ 'Footballers for South Africa' *South Africa*, 3 July 1897, 12.

wrote to *The Sportsman* and noted that the Corinthian FC would visit South Africa and that SAFA ‘will pay the whole of the travelling and hotel expenses; but our committee think it will be better for the members to adhere to the Corinthian rules and pay for their own wines and spirits’.³⁷ While the Corinthian FC was travelling to South Africa concerns over the costs of the tour were reported in the South African press. *The Cape Times* noted that unlike rugby tours in the past where respective centres would guarantee certain costs and take any profits generated from matches staged in their towns, SAFA had suggested smaller guarantees and that each centre generating profits would hand over 75 per cent of this to the association. The Western Province Football Association (WPFA) was unhappy with this arrangement and all correspondence with SAFA was suspended.³⁸ Englishman G. A. Parker,³⁹ the secretary of SAFA and the South African Cricket Association and manager of the Corinthian side approached Cecil Rhodes to act as guarantor for the tour. Rhodes agreed to guarantee half of the expenses of the tour.⁴⁰ On arrival in Cape Town, Parker met with officials of the WPFA and it was agreed that they would guarantee £400 and pay 10 per cent of profits generated to SAFA despite the threat that no games would be played in Cape Town at all.⁴¹

The weather in Cape Town was particularly bad and despite cheap railway tickets on sale to travel to the Newlands rugby ground where three games were to be played, gates were poor with 800 spectators for the opening game.⁴² At a banquet hosted by the Western Province’s football and rugby associations, held in honour of the tourists, Simkins president of the Western Province Rugby Union noted that rugby followers were pleased to welcome their ‘sister code’ to South Africa.⁴³ He remarked that ‘there was no ill-feeling between the followers of the rival codes’, and that as long as professionalism could be kept at bay both codes would prosper.⁴⁴ The tourists travelled to and played in King Williamstown, Queenstown and East London before moving on to the Witwatersrand where the first international was played against a South African eleven.⁴⁵ *The Star* reported that the result of this match would be significant in determining whether a South African football side would

³⁷ *The Sportsman*, 27 Mar. 1897, 7.

³⁸ *The Cape Times*, 15 July 1897, 7.

³⁹ Parker authored *South African Sports* (1897).

⁴⁰ See J. Gemmell review of B. Murray and G. Vahed *Empire and Cricket: The South African Experience, 1884-1914* (Pretoria: UNISA Press) in *Sport in Society* 12, 10 2009.

⁴¹ The Griqualand West Football Association in Kimberley insisted of taking 75 per cent of profits *The Star* 4 Aug. 1897 p.5.

⁴² *The Cape Times*, 19 & 21 July 1897, 7.

⁴³ *The Cape Times*, 19 July 1897.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵ In front of 5,000 people at the Wanderers ground in central Johannesburg, the Corinthian FC beat the South Africans three nil.

tour Britain the following year.⁴⁶ During the visit to Pretoria by Hammond's touring British rugby team in 1896, the players visited two prisoners captured during the ill-fated Jameson Raid of 1895.⁴⁷ This would have displeased Kruger and officials of the South African Republic. The Corinthian team also visited President Kruger prior to their game against a Pretoria eleven. Kruger is reported to have asked whether the Corinthian team 'were Rhodes' men' and when Topham replied no 'he seemed much pleased'.⁴⁸ In their game against the Old Natalians in Johannesburg, the Corinthian side drew their first match of the tour and *The Star* suggested that 'these games should do a great deal to develop the taste for the Association code on the Rand'.⁴⁹

The tourists played four games in Natal. In Pietermaritzburg a crowd of 1,000 spectators saw the local team include Swifts' player Charles Bennett 'Buck' Llewellyn. Llewellyn was known as a cricketer who played fifteen tests for South Africa and according to Christopher Merrett 'played cricket in Natal as a white man, although he was employed . . . in Durban as a coloured clerk'.⁵⁰ The Corinthian tourists were popular in Natal as 2,500 spectators watched the test against South Africa and 5,000 attended the game against Natal at the Lord's ground.⁵¹ Indeed, in the drawn game against Natal, the *Natal Witness* reported 'there was a scene of wildest excitement, the crowd breaking from all parts of the ground and cheering wildly, white hats and sticks were thrown into the air, and an attempts was made to "chair" the principal members of the Natal team'.⁵² Corinthian captain Topham was however quoted in the local press and said South African teams were no better than English second league teams and he 'did not hold much encouragement for [South African sides] . . . visiting England'.⁵³ Prior to the game played at the Recreation Ground in Bloemfontein, *The Friend* noted that 'we trust the Free State Association will have reason to congratulate themselves on a record gate, which will show that the Bloemfontein public appreciate the efforts made to show them the game as it is played in "Merrie England"'.⁵⁴ Carl Borckenhagen's *De Express*

⁴⁶ *The Star* 16 Aug. 1897 p5.

⁴⁷ See Allen, 'Tours of Reconciliation' 174.

⁴⁸ B. O. Corbett *Annals of the Corinthian Football Club* (London, 1906) p60.

⁴⁹ *The Star* 7 Aug. 1897 p5.

⁵⁰ C. Merrett *Sport, Space and Segregation: Politics and Society in Pietermaritzburg* (Scottsville 2009) see also Murray and Merrett *Caught Behind*.

⁵¹ *Natal Witness*, 20 Aug. 1897.

⁵² *Natal Witness*, 23 Aug. 1897 p3.

⁵³ *Natal Witness*, 19 Aug. 1897.

⁵⁴ *The Friend of the Free State and Bloemfontein Gazette*, 6 Aug. 1897.

en Oranjevrijstatsche Advertentieblad billed the game as ‘England vs Free State’. Watched by a crowd of 1,000 people that included President Steyn, an Orange Free State side lost to the Corinthian team. The game generated receipts of £90 and at the evening banquet attended by President Steyn, the national anthem the ‘Volkslied’ was sung, followed by ‘God Save the Queen’. Before the game in Port Elizabeth, local merchants closed shops early so that employees could attend the game. Despite the home side losing 3:0 in Port Elizabeth *The Telegraph and Eastern Province Standard* noted that the home side ‘made a far better display against a visiting English team than any other local cricket or Rugby team as hitherto done’.⁵⁵ The Corinthian side played 23 games in less than two months and towards the end of the tour *The Sportsman* reported that ‘many of our men showed signs of having had enough football’.⁵⁶

The tourists won 21 games and drew two matches they played and Jackson noted that the 1897 ‘visitors were much too strong for the colonists, but the latter displayed a capital knowledge of the game, with every prospect of improvement’.⁵⁷ Indeed, the Transvaal Football Association wrote ‘that the season of 1897 was a memorable one . . . from the fact that thousands of people had visited the grounds and witnessed a magnificent exposition of the game as exhibited by members of the most important club in England. [The South Africans] . . . worthy of their steel . . . had shown some remarkably good play, and proved themselves not to be so far behind as many thought previously’.⁵⁸ Moreover, Corbett claimed in 1906 that the 1897 tour had been a success and the ‘large attendances at the matches, and the interest shown in all the places visited, testify to the popularity of the game in South Africa’.⁵⁹ South Africa proved popular with the Corinthian team as J. E. Grievenson and A. N. Guy settled in the country and the side visited again in 1903. Despite the success of the 1897 Corinthian tour, a deficit of £186.15s.5d. was recorded⁶⁰ and at the Corinthian game played in Pietermaritzburg, a collection box was placed at an entrance to the ground to defray expenses and this ‘afforded the rank-and-file a chance to do their whack’.⁶¹ The Corinthian tour of 1897 highlighted the popularity and political significance of the game in South Africa at the time with good numbers, including statesmen and politicians, attending games across

⁵⁵ *The Telegraph and Eastern Province Standard* 9 Sep. 1897 p4.

⁵⁶ *The Sportsman* 21 Sep. 1897 p4.

⁵⁷ Jackson *Association Football*, 258.

⁵⁸ *The Star* 13 Sep. 1897, 5.

⁵⁹ Corbett *Annals* p65.

⁶⁰ *The Natal Witness* 27 Aug. 1898, 10.

⁶¹ *The Natal Witness* 11 Aug. 1897, 5.

the country. Yet despite Rhodes providing financial guarantees the tour recorded a loss. The tour also revealed the relative weakness of the game in South Africa as the visiting team went unbeaten. Despite this, enterprising footballers and administrators in the Orange Free State saw the opportunity of taking a touring South African side to Britain two years after the Corinthian visit.

Orange Free State tour of Europe 1899

The first references to white football matches played in the Orange Free State Republic date back to 1889, when British merchants in Heilbron played against a Kroonstad team.⁶² In April 1892, the first tournament was contested between two Heilbron sides and teams from Lindley and Vechtkop.⁶³ In July a second tournament was held with teams from Bethlehem, Heilbron and Lindley.⁶⁴ In 1894 the diamond mining town of Jagersfontein emerged as a popular home for football in the Republic. In August 1894, sides representing Heilbron, Jagersfontein, Railways and Savages competed in Bloemfontein, with Heilbron victors. During the same tournament the Orange Free State Football Association (OFSFA) was formed. The popularity of the game spread as white teams were formed in Parys, Vrededorp, Rouxville, Senekal and Bloemfontein. Games were also played in Dewetsdorp, Ladybrand and Springfontein.⁶⁵

In April 1899, *The Football Echo* in Britain reported that the OFSFA had canvassed support from British clubs for a tour by a 'Kaffir team'.⁶⁶ The newspaper confessed ignorance in the standing of the OFSFA and wondered 'what sort of football will these dark beauties play?' They suggested a 'Boer Football Association' might be more suitable opposition 'over here [to] do battle'. In June 1899, the *Manchester Times* reported on the forthcoming tour and wrote 'the team is said to be strong, the players being of splendid physique'.⁶⁷ The *Scottish Sport* noted that they were reportedly 'big, powerful men, with a "rare turn of speed" and "considerable individual skill"' and went on to describe them as a 'determined, fine-built

⁶² Parker, *South African Sports*, 86.

⁶³ *The Friend of the Free State and Bloemfontein Gazette*, 26 Apr. 1892.

⁶⁴ Heilbron defeated Bethlehem seven nil and Lindley two nil.

⁶⁵ There was also a sizable English speaking community in the Orange Free State that would have participated in and promoted the spread of the game. See S. F. Malan *Die Rol van J. Geo. Fraser in die Vrystaat, 1863-1927* (Pretoria, 1974).

⁶⁶ *The Football Echo and Sports Gazette*, Saturday 29 Apr. 1899, 1.

⁶⁷ *Manchester Times*, Friday 30 June 1899.

body of men, who have only picked up the game in the last four or five years'.⁶⁸ The tour was also reported in the *Chicago Tribune* and *Brooklyn Daily Eagle* in the United States and the *Evening Post* in New Zealand. The press reports highlighted the stereotypes around the black African body that can be understood against the backdrop of Social Darwinism prominent in Britain at this time. In addition there were many instances of Africans being put on display in Britain contributing to the notion of a 'spectacle'. Parallels were drawn with events at Earl's Court, where in May 1899 the 'Savage South Africa' exhibition opened, in which daily performances were staged of Ndebele King Lobengula and his troops engaged in 'battle' with the British South Africa Company. Over 200 South Africans were part of the 'exhibitionary spectacle'.⁶⁹

The team of sixteen black South African players captained by Joseph Twayi and accompanied by white officials M. D. 'Toffy' Roberts, Lionel Nathan, Percy Day and Arthur Moss. Roberts and Nathan had both been active in Orange Free State football. Roberts had played for a number of years with the Jagersfontein team and represented the club at the OFSFA while Nathan, a hotel proprietor in Bloemfontein, was treasurer of the club. The six months' tour was to be financed by opposing teams who had provided guarantees and promised 50 per cent of gate receipts. Invitations had been received for the team to play in Germany and Austria. *The Friend* reported: 'the "boys" are said to be extremely clever at the game, and the novelty of a Kafir team is sure to command success in the old Country'.⁷⁰ The press in the Orange Free State briefly reported on the tour and was generally supportive, but the same cannot be said of the Cape press. In 1894 the *Cape Argus* opined: 'the races are best socially apart, each good in their own way, but a terribly bad mixture',⁷¹ a direct reference to the inclusion of coloured cricketer 'Krom' Hendricks in a touring South African team. In similar vein, this time referring to the 1899 Orange Free State football tour, the *Cape Argus* noted:

The whole affair is farcical as it is unsportsmanlike, and smacks very much of hippodrome. Western Province "socket" enthusiast can scarcely credit the fact that a

⁶⁸ *Scottish Sport*, 18 July 1899, 3 and 11 July 1899, 1.

⁶⁹ A. Coombes *Reinventing Africa: Museums, Material Culture and Popular Imagination in late Victorian and Edwardian England* (New Haven, 1994), p. 85.

⁷⁰ *The Friend of the Free State and Bloemfontein Gazette*, 15 Aug. 1899.

⁷¹ Quoted in V. Bickford-Smith *Ethnic Pride and Racial Prejudice in Victorian Cape Town: Group Identity and Social Practice, 1875–1902* (Cambridge, 1995), 149.

gang of Kafirs should seriously be expected to give an exhibition worthy of the name, and the British football public will soon realise this fact. Probably the enterprising financiers will rake in the shekels, but every white man south of the Zambesi not directly interested in the venture will regret the whole proceedings.⁷²

Indeed the Western Province FA raised the issue of the tour at the SAFA annual general meeting held in Bloemfontein in September 1899. It was resolved ‘... that before a coloured team can be sent by an affiliated Association permission must be obtained’⁷³ from SAFA.

The *Cape Times* wrote that:

It is hoped that the English sporting press and public will take the same view of such a burlesque of the game as the niggers are bound to provide ... The governing body of the Association football seems to have quite ignored the proceedings in connection with this nigger troupe. This is all very well in a way, and no doubt silent contempt is often the best way [of] treating matters unworthy of notice, but the present case is, we submit one of which a very great deal of notice should be taken. The question is, what attitude did the Orange Free State Football Association take up in this matter, and how was it that the organizers of the tour were allowed to slip out of the country with their hirelings almost unheeded?⁷⁴

Parker, manager of the 1897 touring Corinthian side was interviewed in *The Football Evening News*. He admitted to knowing little of the team and added that reportedly a ‘strong line of distinction is drawn between the white and black population in South Africa, consequently the membership of athletic clubs is strictly confined to whites’.⁷⁵ The *Sport and Play* predicted that ‘much of the success of the tour depends on the earlier matches. If the play shown in these is of the proper standard of quality all will be well. If not, then it will be a case of lady footballers once again, and curiosity rather than skill will have to stand as the main attraction’.⁷⁶

The first match of the tour was played against Newcastle United. It was soon evident that the South African side, dressed in their orange shirts with black shorts, would be no match for first class British opposition. The side played with enthusiasm but ‘the spectators in fact laughed more than they would do at the most successful comic opera on the boards’.⁷⁷ It was

⁷² *The Cape Argus*, 10 Aug. 1899, 7.

⁷³ *The Friend of the Free State and Bloemfontein Gazette*, 1 Sep. 1899.

⁷⁴ *Cape Times*, 21 Sep. 1899, 5.

⁷⁵ *The Football Evening News*, 2 Sep. 1899, 3.

⁷⁶ *Sport and Play*, 4 Sep. 1899.

⁷⁷ *The Newcastle Daily Journal*, 6 Sep. 1899.

evident that the South African side lacked the technique and ability to seriously challenge first class opposition. The tour progressed to Scotland where they played and lost six matches in front of large crowds. The *Scottish Sport* reported that ‘the Africans ought to come very well out of their engagements. The demand for novelty is not so pronounced in football as in some other sports, but the latest Colonial incursion is something out of the common’.⁷⁸ In response to the emerging criticism of the tour, the *Scottish Sport* published an interview with Day, Roberts and Twayi, who explained that the team officials had arranged a series of games against foreign opposition with the support of the OFSFA. A letter written by the OFSFA claimed that the ‘native football team . . . are officially recognized as representing the native Association players in this State and have our sanction to be advertised and play under our name’.⁷⁹ This letter was used in negotiations with the English FA’s secretary Frederick Wall.

In an interview with Twayi published in the *Football Sun*, he revealed that he had learnt to play football in his early twenties and was playing for a team called the Oriental.⁸⁰ Twayi admitted that he had learnt the game when ‘We saw white gentlemen play, and thought it would be a nice game’.⁸¹ Twayi worked as a grocer while other members of the team were employed as masons, tailors, carpenters, tradesmen and clerks. In response to a question whether they played against white teams, Twayi answered ‘Yes we play against white [sic] at Krontstadt, Jagersfontein, Heilbron, and other places’. Roberts interjected by saying ‘I’ve played for Jagersfontein against Joseph’s team’ and Twayi remarked: ‘That’s quite right, Mr Roberts’.⁸² In response to a question on the on-going crisis with the South African Republic, Twayi said ‘Sir, if Queen Victoria fights we fight for her, and 25,000 Basutos march through the Orange Free State to have their revenge’.⁸³ The reporter asked ‘is that a fact Joseph?’ to which Twayi replied: ‘As true as the white mother is sitting on the throne’.⁸⁴ Twayi’s loyalty to Britain was also evident at the function held in honour of the visiting team after their game against Hamilton. In his speech he was quoted as saying that ‘he wished them to understand . . . that although their skin was black, they were all loyal subjects of Her Majesty the

⁷⁸ *Scottish Sport*, 8 Sep. 1899.

⁷⁹ Cited in ‘The Game in Kaffirland’, *Scottish Sport*, 19 Sep. 1899.

⁸⁰ *Football Sun*, 9 Sep. 1899, 1.

⁸¹ *Scottish Sport*, 19 Sep. 1899.

⁸² *Ibid.*

⁸³ *Ibid.*

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

Queen'.⁸⁵ In the game against Aston Villa played on 20 November 1899 watched by 4,000 spectators; the home side won easily (7:4). The significance of the game is that the takings from the match totaled £61 and the South Africans suggested this be donated to the *Birmingham Daily Mail* Reservists' Fund in support of the British war effort. In addition, the South Africans wore red, white and blue ribbons on their orange shirts during the game 'as a manifestation of their loyalty to the Queen'.⁸⁶ Additional collections were taken for the Football Association War Fund.

The tour was not a financial success and nothing came of the invitations to tour Germany and Austria. The South Africans did however play one game in northern France against the Sporting Club Tourcoing in Roubaix. Watched by a large crowd that included amateur players from Brussels and Paris, the South Africans were victorious and won by three goals to one. This represented the team's only victory in the 47 games it played while on tour. Significantly, the South Africans did not play against the Corinthian FC. In many of the towns visited, the South Africans were greeted by crowds at railway stations, were taken to view local sights of interest and numerous evening functions were held in their honour. These were often attended by town dignitaries including mayors, councilors and business people. The South African tourists were football pioneers in that they were the first South Africans to play abroad. Moreover, for many of the opposing teams they represented the first foreign opposition.

Corinthian Football Club tours to South Africa 1903 and 1907

After a two year break due to the South African War and the 'unsettled state in the country'.⁸⁷ SAFA met in September 1901 in Port Elizabeth. It was agreed to invite a British football team to tour South Africa in 1902. It was suggested that players would be selected from various teams and these could include eight Corinthian, four Casuals and Clapham, two Scottish and one Irish and Welsh players.⁸⁸ These players would receive two thirds of gate monies generated while on tour. Rather than a combination side visiting South Africa, the second Corinthian tour took place the following year and kicked off in Cape Town in July

⁸⁵ 'Kaffir Football Team in Hamilton', *Hamilton Herald and Lanarkshire Weekly News*, 22 Sep. 1899, 6.

⁸⁶ *Birmingham Daily Post*, 21 Nov. 1899, 8.

⁸⁷ *The Eastern Province Herald* 21 Sep. 1901, 3.

⁸⁸ *The Eastern Province Herald* 21 Sep. 1901, 3.

1903. The tourists captained by C. Wreford-Brown again proved too strong for South African teams, despite some of the home sides fielding former British professionals and in many instances matches were attended by more spectators than in 1897.

The Corinthian FC played two matches against South Africa during the 1903 tour. In Johannesburg the game attracted a crowd of 7,000 to the Wanderers ground and in Cape Town between 6 and 7,000 spectators to the Green Point Oval. In an indication of the popularity of the game in South Africa at this time, these attendances exceeded the numbers who turned out to watch the British rugby team that toured the following month.⁸⁹ A Corinthian player remarked on arrival in Southampton that ‘everywhere we went we were treated right royally, and whenever there was a municipality the mayor and Corporation and civic functionaries welcomed us. We were banqueted, feted, entertained at smoking concerts, invited to dances, and we had a splendid time’.⁹⁰ The results were generally much closer in 1903. The Corinthian FC did lose their first game to foreign opposition one nil in Durban in front of 6,000 spectators.⁹¹ Prior to their return to England *The Cape Times* reported that the Corinthian FC had shown

‘wonderful stability and resourcefulness of the team that, after the constant strain of the past ten weeks, consequent on journeying about in a country that knows little or nothing of the luxuries of modern travel, and the incessant exertions associated with engaging in so many games, and not less the exhausting effects of much banqueting and junketing generally – for it must be borne in mind that a tour of this character imposes severe duties of a social character, as well as the need of keeping in fine football condition’.⁹²

The Corinthian FC played two matches against South Africa during the 1903 tour. In Johannesburg the game attracted a crowd of 7,000 to the Wanderers ground and in Cape Town between 6 and 7,000 spectators to the Green Point Oval. In an indication of the popularity of the game in South Africa at this time, these attendances exceeded the numbers who turned out to watch the British rugby team that toured the following month.⁹³ A Corinthian player remarked on arrival in Southampton that ‘everywhere we went we were

⁸⁹ The games in Johannesburg attracted 5,000 and Cape Town 6,000 respectively. *Cape Times* 7 September 1903; Cavallini, 2007; www.lionsrugby.com/history.

⁹⁰ Quoted in R. Cavallini *Play up Corinth: A History of the Corinth Football Club*. (Chalford, 2007) 73.

⁹¹ The 1903 Corinthian team played 24; won 21; lost one; drawn two goals for 72; against 18 as compared to the 1897 team played 23; won 21; drawn two; goals for 113; goals against 15.

⁹² ‘Corinthians’ Tour’ *The Cape Times* 7 Sep. 1903, 7.

⁹³ The games in Johannesburg attracted 5,000 and Cape Town 6,000 respectively. *Cape Times* 7 September 1903; Cavallini, 2007; www.lionsrugby.com/history.

treated right royally, and whenever there was a municipality the mayor and Corporation and civic functionaries welcomed us. We were banqueted, feted, entertained at smoking concerts, invited to dances, and we had a splendid time'.⁹⁴

In 1905, president of the Football League in England John Bentley wrote to SAFA and offered to bring out a team of professionals to tour South Africa.⁹⁵ SAFA resolved not to entertain the offer but rather invite the Corinthian FC to tour again in 1907. The honorary secretary of the club W. U. Timmis wrote to SAFA and suggested that their team would consist almost wholly of Cambridge and Oxford players. SAFA in turn urged Timmis to ensure that a side equal in strength that had toured North America in 1906 be sent to South Africa.⁹⁶ In addition the SAFA executive decided to procure olive green shirts with the Springbok badge in old gold for the use of the national teams during the test matches. They also agreed to convey their congratulations to South African Rugby authorities on completion of the successful tour of Britain and Ireland.⁹⁷ In 1906 SAFA unsuccessfully tried to affiliate to the International Football Association Board (IFAB) through its imperial connections. The Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) invited SAFA to join in 1908 and the latter became a member in 1910: the first from outside of Europe.⁹⁸

Prior to the 1907 Corinthian tour commentators remarked that '... nowhere in South Africa . . . does the standard of Association football compare with that of the best British teams . . . Rugby in South Africa is quite equal to Rugby in the United Kingdom . . . At all events Association is now making headway: compared with the sister code it occupies a position about equal which Rugby does in England, and considerably better one than Association does in Wales and even Ireland'.⁹⁹ The third and final visit by the Corinthian FC, captained by T. S. Rowlandson, occurred against the backdrop 'the split' in English football over the issue of amateurism/professionalism. In 1906 professional clubs were admitted to County FAs. The Corinthian FC and other amateur teams opposed this and formed the Amateur Football

⁹⁴ Quoted in R. Cavallini *Play up Corinth: A History of the Corinth Football Club*. (Chalford, 2007) 73.

⁹⁵ Minutes of the Council Meeting of the South African Football Association 14 Mar. 1905. Historical Papers Collection, William Cullen Library, University of the Witwatersrand, AG3827

⁹⁶ The Corinthian FC visit to Canada and the United States saw the team play 17 games, lose one and draw two with games against Cincinnati ending 19:0 and All New York 18:0 to the visitors.

⁹⁷ Minutes of the Council meeting of the South African Football Association Jan. 1907. Historical Papers Collection, William Cullen Library, University of the Witwatersrand, AG3827

⁹⁸ FIFA, *Minutes of the 7th Annual Congress*, Milan, 15-16 May 1910.

⁹⁹ S. W. Black 'Football in South Africa' in A. Gibson and W. Pickford *Football and the Men who Made it* (Cape Town, 1906).

Defence Council. In 1907 the Amateur Football Alliance was formed and the Southern Amateur League announced. Sir William Clegg former England international and Sheffield politician remarked that ‘we don’t want these class distinctions in English sport. We don’t want so called amateurs, who are so keen on getting the best guarantee on their tours – to go in at one door and the professionals in another door’.¹⁰⁰ The conflict over amateurism in Britain was also discussed by SAFA at its General Meeting in 1907. Indeed, members of the Corinthian party met with SAFA delegates and in lengthy discussion stated their case for amateurism. Corinthian representative R. D. Craig asked,

‘for a declaration of support and sympathy with the amateurs of England in their movement . . . if you really believe in us, if you really believe in the principles for which we are fighting, why not help us, because I believe a declaration from you would be some real help in, perhaps, bringing this unfortunate dispute to a close’.¹⁰¹

SAFA carried the motion ‘that this Association being purely an amateur Body extends to the Amateur Association its sympathy and support in its struggle for Amateurism’. The motion however highlighted differences within SAFA as it was carried after a vote of 7 votes to 5.¹⁰² SAFA withdraw its application for reaffiliation from the English FA in 1907 [and reaffiliated in 1926 and remained so until 1961].¹⁰³ SAFA representatives such as Natal’s J. Thompson felt the Association ‘was quite strong enough to stand on its own legs and did not need to affiliate to anybody outside of South Africa’.¹⁰⁴ L. French the Transvaal representative was keen on a central organization embracing the British Empire, although he was in favour of amateurism, he felt SAFA should not ‘affiliate to any body at all, but to remain absolutely neutral’.¹⁰⁵ Moreover, the Corinthian side deliberately missed penalties when awarded to them as a manifestation of the amateur spirit.¹⁰⁶ This incensed parts of SAFA that it was agreed with the tourists that they would respect the decision of local referees and attempt to score from such positions in the future.

The 1907 tour highlighted the improvement in the standard of play in South Africa and also revealed the limitations in the abilities of the touring side. The Corinthian side played 24

¹⁰⁰ Quoted in Cavallini *Play up*, 94.

¹⁰¹ *The Friend*, 23 Aug. 1907, 6.

¹⁰² Minutes of the General Meeting of the South African Football Association 23 Aug. 1907. Historical Papers Collection, William Cullen Library, University of the Witwatersrand, AG3827

¹⁰³ *The Friend* 23 Aug. 1907.

¹⁰⁴ *The Friend* 29 Aug. 1907, 6.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁶ *The Sportsman*, 5 Aug. 1907, 7.

winning 12, losing five and drawing seven although they did not lose any of the test matches played against South African representative sides. After the completion of the Corinthian tour, several SAFA representatives including Thompson bemoaned the weakness of the touring side, the lack of inclusion of more prominent players and the late arrival of four replacement players. He noted that their relatively weak showing had adversely affected the gate receipts in Natal.¹⁰⁷

The Corinthian tours of 1897, 1903 and 1907 were significant in global football terms as they marked the first tour of a British team abroad but also set a trend for the team and others to embark on overseas tours. The Corinthian teams were amateurs and gentlemen and this was initially an attraction to the South African football authorities. However, prior to the ‘split’ in English football the South African authorities were keen to invite professional teams to South Africa. It is also notable that after 1907 the Corinthian side they would never visit South Africa again. Rather an English FA team visited in 1910, 1920, 1929 and 1939 and indeed Aberdeen FC were the first professional club side to visit South African in 1927. The English FA tours comprised amateur and professional players. Frederick Wall of the English FA noted ‘the Association [English FA] has been charged with being insular and therefore narrow minded. At Chancery Lane in 1895, there was perhaps, an attitude that England was our parish and we had no liabilities to the game in other countries. [W]e soon began to take a wider view [and] have done much missionary work since 1899’.¹⁰⁸

Writing prior to the 1910 English FA tour, A. B. Godbold SAFA president remarked that the ‘great advance we have made in the game since the first tour [1897], and the enormous value which these visits have been to us . . . It will enable us to know if – (as some believe) – we have in Association Football reached the same high standard which our confreres in the sister code have arrived at, and should we be able to conclusively prove that such is the case, then it cannot be long before we shall ask “the powers that be” in the Old Country to receive the first South African Soccer team’.¹⁰⁹ This however did not take place until 1924 when a white SAFA representative side played 26 matches on their tour of England, Holland, Ireland and Wales.

¹⁰⁷ Minutes of the General Meeting of the South African Football Association 23 Aug. 1907. Historical Papers Collection, William Cullen Library, University of the Witwatersrand, AG3827

¹⁰⁸ F. Wall *Fifty Years of Football*. (London 1935).

¹⁰⁹ A. B. Godbold ‘Tours and Their Value’ in L. A. Cox and F. G. Pay eds. *Official Souvenir of the British Rugby and Association Football Tours*. (Cape Town 1910).

South African tour of South America 1906

After affiliation to the English FA lapsed during the South African War, SAFA re-affiliated again in 1903 (again to lapse the following year) and the Argentine FA did the same in 1904.¹¹⁰ As a result of this, the Argentine FA invited South Africa to play in South America. Initial discussions centered on taking a South African side to England however it was felt ‘that the standard of play here is far below the Old Country’.¹¹¹ Henry Heeley, who was born in Pietermaritzburg and played most of his adult football in Johannesburg, captained the side that toured South America. On his first visit out of South Africa he remarked that ‘it is the ambition of every player to visit some other country . . . to exhibit his prowess, and to learn something of the science of the game in vogue there . . . this has always been my ambition, and to go to England – “home” I call it – and play against the crack teams there with a South African team’.¹¹² The Argentine FA invited SAFA to send a side to South America that would compete in a triangular tournament that would include Fulham FC who would represent England. Heeley noted his concern in playing against a professional side like Fulham after the relatively poor performances of South African sides against the Corinthian FC in 1903.¹¹³ The triangular tournament did not take place but a South African representative side that comprised five Transvaal; four Cape; three Border and three Orange River Colony players made up the team that departed for South America. Three South African players from Natal including goalkeeper Dave Nourse¹¹⁴ had been named in the team, however due to military commitments during the Bambatha Rebellion in which Zulus revolted against British rule, they were replaced. Seven of the 15 players were born in South Africa while the rest hailed from England and Scotland. The players were employed by the Colonial Civil Service, Government House, Chief Commissioner’s Department, Department of Mines and the mining and banking sectors. The Argentine FA covered all costs and included first class passages on the return journey via Southampton as no direct passenger ships were available to the Cape. The team was accompanied by two of the players’ wives and a full programme as laid on for the visitors that included concerts, dances, visits to

¹¹⁰ For an analysis of the relationship between the FA and the Argentine FA at this time, see E. P. Archetti ‘In Search of National identity: Argentinean Football and Europe’ in J.A. Mangan ed. *Tribal Identities: Nationalism, Europe and Sport* (London, 1996), 203.

¹¹¹ H. N. Heeley ‘Tour of the Argentine’ in E.J.L. Platnauer *Sport and Pastime in the Transvaal* (Johannesburg 1908), 111.

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ Ibid.

¹¹⁴ Nourse played for Natal against the Corinthian side in 1903. Nourse also played 45 cricket test matches for the South African cricket team.

factories, theatres and the zoological gardens. Games of cricket, tennis and golf were arranged. *The Buenos Aires Herald* referred to the team as ‘representatives of the Dark Continent’.¹¹⁵

During the 1905 tour two non-British origin players represented the Argentinean national team for the first time.¹¹⁶ *The Standard* noted that the Argentine authorities had made ‘an extremely wise move in dropping professional teams for a year and providing our boys with a team to oppose them more their equals, both as regards football ability and social standing’.¹¹⁷ *The Buenos Aires Herald* noted that ‘the composition of the team is that unlike any other which have visited this and other countries, as “amateurs” it is composed exclusively of sportsmen and gentlemen in every sense of the words’.¹¹⁸ Heeley remarked in a speech at a banquet that certain quarters had suggested the South Africans were professional players which he strongly denied. The Argentinean hosts remarked that ‘no one who has seen the South Africans on the field, could be in doubt as to their status, as their play was so clean and gentlemanly . . . footballers in [Argentina] will do well to model their play on the excellent standard set by our guests, who played football for the game’s sake and would not stoop to an ungentlemanly act to avoid defeat’.¹¹⁹

The South Africans dressed in their white shirts and blue shorts won 11 of 12 matches played scoring 60 goals and conceding seven in South America. The team beat an Argentine league side (4-1) in Buenos Aires (classified as a ‘test’), ‘Combinados’ (6-1) in Montevideo, Uruguay, and the ‘Scratch-Team Paulista’ (6-0) in São Paulo, Brazil that included Charles Miller credited to having brought the first footballs to Brazil in 1896 and watched by Brazilian president elect, Afonso Pena.¹²⁰ All games played in Buenos Aires were contested at the Sociedad Sportiva Argentina ground in Palermo which had originally been established as an equestrian society (Sociedad Hípica Argentina) for the affluent and influential in the

¹¹⁵ ‘The Arrival of the South African Football Team’ *The Buenos Aires Herald* 19 June 1906, 5.

¹¹⁶ E. P. Archetti 1999. *Masculinities: Football, Polo and the Tango in Argentina*. (Oxford, 1999) 52. See E. E. Bavio *El Fútbol en la Río de la Plata (desde 1893)* (Buenos Aires, 1923) and J. Iwanczuk *Historia del fútbol amateur en la Argentina* (Buenos Aires, 1993).

¹¹⁷ *The Standard* 23 June 1906.

¹¹⁸ *The Buenos Aires Herald* 19 July 1906, 5.

¹¹⁹ *The Standard* 26 June 1906.

¹²⁰ *The Buenos Aires Herald*, 17 July 1906; Platnauer, *Sport*; *El Día* 18 July 1906; *O Estado de São Paulo* 31 July 1906. For more on Charles Miller see A. Hamilton *An Entirely Different Game: The British Influence on Brazilian Football* (Edinburgh, 1998); J. Mills *Charles William Miller 1894-1994 Centenary Memorium* (São Paulo, 1994) and J. Lacey *God is Brazilian: Charles Miller The Man Who Brought Football to Brazil*. (Stroud, 2005) and on Brazilian football history see T. Mazzoni *História do futebol no Brasil 1894-1950* (São Paulo, 1950).

city.¹²¹ The South Africans recorded the highest victory by a foreign side when they defeated Universitarios 14:0 in their opening match. The *Buenos Aires Herald* reported that the ‘colonials gave a brilliant exhibition of high class football and utterly routed the local players . . . their combination was magnificent and their short accurate passes were a treat to see . . . the understanding between the players bordered on perfection’.¹²² *The Standard* suggested the South Africans were ‘not ultra-clever, and no man stands out from the rest as exceptionally brilliant . . . doubtless, due to their unselfish play, combination being the watchword of this team . . . they never charge and rarely attempt to dribble past an opponent’.¹²³ The South African performed a ‘Zulu war cry’ prior to this game and this became a feature of the remaining games and indeed at functions held in their honour throughout the tour. *The Buenos Aires Herald* reported that ‘this unexpected addition to the programme caused great amusement and was heartily applauded’.¹²⁴ The only defeat on tour was in front of 12,000 spectators that included the Argentine president Jose Figueroa Alcorta against Alumni FC with the home side winning one nil. Alumni included the five Brown brothers and the team had been established by former pupils of the Buenos Aires High School and dominated Argentine football in the first decade of the twentieth century. *The Standard* proclaimed that the result was ‘most magnificent’ ‘a glorious victory’ ‘great win’ and the result ‘promise well for the future of football in Argentina’.¹²⁵ Heeley was commended by the press and the Alumni team for suggesting and permitting a substitution of an Alumni player after an injury was sustained early on in the match.¹²⁶ Heeley stated that ‘the result came as a distinct shock to us all for we all expected to win comfortably’.¹²⁷

The South African team that toured South America was at the forefront of popularising and globalising the game in Argentina, Brazil and Uruguay. Despite the loss to Alumni, the South Africans were victorious in all of their games highlighting the superiority of football in South Africa during this period. Argentinean commentators remarked that the visits of the Corinthian FC had improved the standard of play in South Africa. The game played in Brazil was also the first played by a foreign side. The South Africans were also popular both on and off the pitch. Indeed their popularity was due to their gentlemanly and sportsmanlike

¹²¹ C. R. Torres ‘Tribulations and Achievements: The Early History of Olympism in Argentina’ in J.A. Mangan and L. P. Da Costa eds. *Sport in Latin American Society Past and Present*. (London, 2002).

¹²² ‘South Africa v. Argentine Universities’ in *The Buenos Aires Herald* 23 June 1906.

¹²³ *The Standard* 23 June 1906.

¹²⁴ ‘South Africa v. Argentine Universities’ in *The Buenos Aires Herald* 23 June 1906.

¹²⁵ *The Standard* 25 June 1906, 1.

¹²⁶ Substitutions for injured players were introduced in the English league in 1965.

¹²⁷ H. N. Heeley ‘Tour of the Argentine’. 116.

behaviour. Their social standing was often mentioned in relation to the two previous visits by English professional teams. The South Africans seem to have followed the example set by the Corinthian visits to South Africa of 1897 and 1903.

Conclusion

South African football was more important at the turn of the twentieth century than has previously been acknowledged and this is manifested in a number of ways. Through SAFA's affiliation to the English FA they were able to arrange tours and help popularise and globalise the game at the turn of the twentieth century. The first Corinthian visit of 1897 represented the first tour by a British team overseas. These amateur gentlemen toured South Africa on three occasions and were instrumental in popularising and spreading the game in the country. Indeed, similar numbers of spectators watched South African representative sides against the Corinthian football and British rugby teams in the period under consideration. During the 1903 football and rugby tours, football attracted more spectators than rugby during test matches. The Corinthian FC attempted to spread their message of amateurism, however, the evidence suggests South African football authorities were also keen to entertain visits by professional teams and eventually adopted a position of neutrality in relation to 'the split' between amateurs and professionals in England. The Corinthian visits helped cement bonds of Empire in similar ways to the cricket and rugby tours.

The European tour by the Orange Free Staters is significant in that it demonstrates that African football was played in the Boer Republic prior to British occupation during the South African War and that games between black and white teams in towns such as Heilbron, Jagersfontein and Kroonstad took place. Despite this unusual occurrence, the response of white officials and press in South Africa to the tour is indicative of an increasingly racist and segregated society. For the majority of opponents on tour, the South Africans represented the first foreign opposition and despite being outplayed throughout their visit they remain an important team in South African sport in general and football in particular. The first overseas tour by a white representative team to South America is significant in that they were very successful while abroad and helped popularise the game in Argentina in particular. The team played in front of large crowds and were commended for their sportsmanlike behaviour on the pitch and gentlemanly demeanour off the field. In conclusion, this paper has demonstrated the significance of football at the turn of the twentieth century across all social groups in pre-Union South Africa.

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