

ST GEORGE'S COLLEGE

# Rugby as a transport to racial unity in the Apartheid

---

**Nota D**

**Word Count: 3870**

**November session 2013**

## Tabla de contenido

Abstract .....	2
Introduction .....	3
Rugby history.....	3
Apartheid history .....	4
Research Question .....	6
Body.....	7
After Apartheid ended .....	13
Conclusion .....	15
Bibliography .....	17
Annex .....	18

## Abstract

The research question is rugby as a transport to racial unity in the Apartheid this topic was chosen because this is a history worthy of remembering and rugby is a very grand part of college all over Argentina now a days, also to show how sports are very useful to unite the population and as a human tool. The investigation was done through the internet and as main source the movie which was done by Clint Eastwood called Invictus, the research is based on the language before and after the apartheid, the history involved, from rugby and the apartheid. So it has been done by analyzing the movie and secondary sources from the internet such as informative pages and newspaper articles. It has been concluded that rugby was a very important factor to solve the apartheid because Mandela used it to solve humanitarian problems that assured that apartheid would not be repeated in the future because if only the economic and political pressure had ended apartheid the racism would keep on also that Nelson Mandela was a very persuasive leader and that the legacy he left where the Springboks, when everyone wanted to get rid from the Springboks name and jersey he opposed to it, damaging his reputation but it all had a reason, so everything would be remembered so the apartheid was marked as history securing it from not happening again.

## Introduction

### Rugby history

In 1823 the most popular sport in the world was football. A kid tired of playing this game, called William Web Ellis, decided to grab the ball with its hands and run into the goal zone, this is how rugby was born, the name rugby comes from the school they came from Rugby school. Over the years rugby had been modified to end up being what it is now, a fifteen players game which had lots of transformations, for example the ball which was changed from spherical to oval like as to be more comfortable and easy to hold, and they also changed the goal, from a rectangular goal to a “H” form goal. The changing of rules went too far that now a day football and rugby are not even related, one being full contact and the other one pure skill.

In 1652, the Dutch began to settle in South Africa. In 1806, British control was established. The arrival of the British led to economic prosperity and growth of the cultural and political power in the region. By mid 19<sup>th</sup> century the British had already introduced some of their cultural practices such as football and cricket. Football was introduced by Reverend George Ogilvie to South Africa. South African football started to change to rugby football which followed the newly made rugby rules; this was on the year 1875. It started in Cape colony and the first club was Hamilton RFC. Lots of other clubs started to rise to this rugby football game, until William H. Milton arrived to Cape Town in 1878 that inclined the game in favor to the rugby side. Milton joined the Villagers club where he started playing and preaching the rugby code. By the end of 1875 football playing became abandoned as rugby rose.

## Apartheid history

Apartheid divided the different races depending on their “homelands” which set the limitations as a South African citizen. The different words, races, realities were white, colored, black and Indian. Apartheid comes from the “separate development” of the races. In 1949 it was legislated that it was prohibited for mixed marriages to happen and sexual relations between different race individuals to. The “pass laws” were introduced in 1950 which consisted in every black citizen older than 16 needed a “pass” the pass would carry all their identity documents and their current citizen situation (if they had or not the opportunity of visiting white-only services or places). In 1950 also there was a forced resettlement policy, which stated that, the government would segregate the populations in different geographic and social areas depending on their ethnic background (the four stated before), they also segregated the population in the education, and they made an all-black school, and banned the black children from every university except five “ethnic” universities. After all this segregation, this segregation in the 1970s the Bantu Homelands Citizenship Act took place which provided all blacks to eventually be citizens of segregated “homelands”, and revoked their citizenship as South Africans. Inside South Africa, the opposition of the Apartheid was oppressed and banned; some men were harassed or even killed. Every attempt of opposition to the apartheid failed such as the African National Congress whose leaders, one being Albert Luthuli, were imprisoned.

With the rise of anti-apartheid sentiment the whites also acted, for example the Soweto riots in 1976 which by governments ruling Afrikaans was to be the language used by African schools. During these periods thousands of the political opponents were judged and imprisoned with no trial and many anti-apartheid leaders were exiled, some of them joining guerrilla forces outside the borders.

The difference between black and colored is that colored were mix races and black where natives, Indians where a small population with Indian descent. The best lands where taken by the white population, also the industrial areas where under their command and the mining of diamonds and gold and any other expensive resources were kept by the white population and the government (all white representatives). The white population also had their exclusive neighborhoods; any black person who trespassed the boundaries set would be hassled publicly. Black people could be even arrested for being on a white only zone without a "pass" (international passport). The whites were the minority, so the minority was oppressing the majority of the population as only 10% of the South African population was white (and declining) the other 90% where the minorities and still had been segregated. The white's supremacy generated hate on the Indian, mixed and black population, not only in their acts but also in their language. Colonialism generated exploitation of the minorities on the extraction of the rich minerals found such as gold and diamonds. But the white population also feared of a reconquers by a powerful tribe of Africa. This is why the white population combated the minorities this way, to have a better economy, to

be supremacist and finally because the best way to oppress the minorities was under fear.

Racial segregation policy (1948 to 1994) of the government of South Africa, under the system of the apartheid, made the Bantu (black), colored (mixed) or Indian, not only were oppressed but also did not share the same rights as the white minority. For example, black people could not vote in the elections of the parliament, and many public facilities and institutions were restricted to everyone except whites (until 1990). Another manifestation of the apartheid was the establishment of Black Nation States. Apartheid was over as F W de Klerk president of South Africa in 1994 because of the international trade sanctions imposed by the United Nations, which putted South Africa in a bad economic position.

The African National Congress was an old all-black congress created in 1912. Its leader was Nelson Mandela, and when African National Congress had been shut down, they started with guerrilla attacks. This led to Nelson Mandela being sentenced to life in prison, from which he got out after 27 years. Even without the force of the law, being outlaws they were the biggest opposition to the apartheid in 1970s and 80s.

## **Research Question**

According to the previously written histories of apartheid and rugby, the following research question was designed:

How far was the apartheid abolished due to the influence of rugby in South Africa?

With this question we can now analyze the factors that affected the apartheid and the influence of rugby on the apartheid and how important it

was to it, and also why from all the other factors rugby was chosen on this essay.

## Body

Nelson Mandela, the president whose influence on the rugby championship helped the end of apartheid, rose as president after 27 years in jail. He learnt about rugby because as he was in jail he was given too much food on lunch but not enough for supper, so he had to save some, by the time it was supper, lunch's food was cold. The officer on charge of the security of the prison was an English rugby player, who was really disgusted by black political prisoners (common in the apartheid). Mandela to manage and get to form a relationship with him so he could heat his food with their heaters started reading about rugby to learn and communicate with him on an enjoyable chat. He talked to his jailer about rugby that he rushed and got him a hotplate of food. From that moment he knew that rugby was the transport to racial unity in the apartheid. It is said that Nelson Mandela's charm, is what ended the apartheid, the fact that he managed to study rugby, an all-white game, a game that he should disgust (because of what white people did to them), and treated white people and black people as equal, with respect for whites, Indians, mixed and black people. So we can say the common "language" was rugby, as their mutual interest revolved around rugby and all the knowledge it implies.

*"This is no time for petty revenge. This is the time to build our nation using every single brick available to us even if that brick comes wrapped in*



*green and gold*". - pleading with the black sports committee to keep the Springboks. Nelson Mandela, *Invictus*.<sup>1</sup>

This quote is related to the news article in *The Dispatch* under "rugby challenges racial unity" title, (see back) which states that when South African president Nelson Mandela asked to the rugby committee if he could include black native rugbiers in the Springboks (national rugby team), his request was refused. But Springboks officers who were loyal to Mr. Mandela supported him and the team could conserve the name of Springboks. The Springboks name started as a nickname of the team and then the colors and the logo were designed for the shirt of their first tour, by J.C. Carden.

*"If you want to make peace with your enemy, you have to work with your enemy. Then he becomes your partner"*. - Nelson Mandela.<sup>2</sup>

This quote summarizes what he did to raise as president and succeed as one two, and to end the apartheid because he treated black and white people equally, he didn't trash white people because of what they did to him and to the other black, Indian and mixed people, he found the way to convince them and communicate with them, with the use of rugby, the national sport (also cricket was national sport) which there could be or all-whites teams and all-blacks team, and all-black teams could not play with all-white teams. He used rugby as a tool, a tool to balance South Africa, this is why he made peace with his enemy, and making peace with his enemy ended all the racism, the segregation, the cruelty of the measures taken previously. If not, if he would had treated the white population with resentment and

---

<sup>1</sup> Quote extracted from the movie *Invictus*, directed by Clint Eastwood.

<sup>2</sup> Quote extracted from the movie *Invictus*, directed by Clint Eastwood.

anger the problems would not have ended if not, it would have gotten worst and more difficult to end. Even if he could not totally end Apartheid, he contributed a great part of the solution, later being ended with no objection when the UN obliged South Africa to end it. Mandela saw rugby as a human strategy, with dose exact words, this is because he was not looking for political power or economic power he was trying to solve a problem that should not be taking place anywhere on earth that is human problems, because of the wide range of races, origins and religions, which is unacceptable. Mandela used this common game to try and unify the different races into one same goal, so that they cooperate, this was his human strategy, he was not into politics or economics that much, if not into peace.

In invictus, the movie about this event, is clearly shown how before the Springboks got into the finals no one believed on them, because their team was not overpowered and had to face to rivals such as New Zealand and Australia which were and are the strongest rugby nations. The white population as always supported the national team since it was a white made emblem and team, and the black population used to support their rivals to show their revelry. But, as the Springboks got closer and closer to the finals the four races started supporting the Springboks, everyone from their facilities. When the day of the final came it could be seen how the black, Indian, mixed and white population joined to support the Springboks on the field, and there are scenes in the movie where it can be seen everyone cheering for the springboks and when the match ends how Mandela's black and white bodyguards hug each other filled of joy and happiness that the problems seem to vanish. Of course, this single act did not overcome the

apartheid but was a huge step to racial unity, where the four races now joined for a single goal and practiced a sport all together, starting a new age. It was the share of the same interests what took them to racial unity.

Another technique Mandela used relied on words, a poem, called Invictus which he had probably read in jail. The poem is from William Ernest Henley.

“Out of the night that covers me,  
Black as the Pit from pole to pole,  
I thank whatever gods may be  
For my unconquerable soul.

In the fell clutch of circumstance  
I have not winced nor cried aloud.  
Under the bludgeonings of chance  
My head is bloody, but unbowed.

Beyond this place of wrath and tears  
Looms but the Horror of the shade,  
And yet the menace of the years  
Finds, and shall find, me unafraid.

It matters not how strait the gate,  
How charged with punishments the scroll.

I am the master of my fate:  
I am the captain of my soul.”<sup>3</sup>

Mandela used this poem to persuade Springboks’ captain to win and sing the native African song (which they refused to at first). The final phrases “I am the master of my fate: I am the captain of my soul” showed them how everyone could win, only if they had faith in themselves, he told the captain he himself used that poem on hard times, to keep his direction true and accomplish his mission.

The language as well changed in that final match, firstly before the final represented by the guards of Mandela, the relationship between the white minority and the other three races was very cold and distant, relating it to the movie it was shown as how the black colored guards tried to match with black teammates, until they were obliged to guard in pairs of the different races, where they still did not carried along, but as they coexistence continued they started to gain confidence but this confidence had a boom at the rugby matches and even more at the rugby final, as the white guard with all respect explained the game to the black guards each time more kindly, until in one scene it is shown how both black and white guards played rugby outside Mandela’s residence. As well as uniting the country, he set an example, the most important lesson for the country, to forgive, his words, his calm expressions and his humility has shown South African population that they can forgive, that the 90% and rising black population can forgive the white minority who oppressed them in the earlier years, this is the ultimate legacy of Nelson Mandela, the persuasion of his speeches is what made

---

<sup>3</sup> Henley, William E. "Invictus." *PoemHunter*. Anonymous, 3 Jan. 2003. Web. 29 Aug. 2013. <<http://www.poemhunter.com/poem/invictus/>>.

South African powers to accede to his dreams and to achieve them forgiving the ones that oppressed him and his people and accepting them as part of South Africa, as equals after all what happened.

The attempts of early resistance by the black population was suppressed by guns, they had total power over guns and used them against revolutionary moves. Blacks were massacred in a daily basis. Apartheid is the rule of the hangman and his gun. The cruelty of the apartheid has been there from its beginnings. Black, colored and Indians have opposed on the early games, because of their differences, even between the black populations they were separated. But what made them all unite was their intolerance for the apartheid.

As we can see rugby was used as a transport to racial unity because this was Mandela's aim, it did not overcome the apartheid but it helped them unite and have a common goal, as said before, it showed the black, the white, the colored and the mixed that they could live together, unite the country, of course this goal made him have a poor success on the economic and political side but this achievement brought prosperity to the country and over the years a better economy to the country, more works, more ideas and equality. When he got out of the cabin in the rugby championship final with the springboks t-shirt everyone cheered him, this was a clear way to show that everyone was united by this common goal, this common achievement they had reached and enjoyment was mutual and all over the country, it is not for a minority as Springboks now passed from being the "whites team" to being the national team, emblem and colors of their rugby that is worldly recognized and has a very high development now a days, every school, black,

mixed or white in the South African country has rugby, some may have as main cricket but rugby is always present, as a national emblem to remember what happened in the apartheid and to keep uniting the population, as when you play people you enjoy of the third time where you chat and get along with your teammates and opponents, forming new friendships all because of the common goal of rugby. Nelson Mandela saw a window, which he took advantage of until he achieved the impossible, uniting the people.

Apartheid was also ended because people from numerous governments and different cultural backgrounds opposed to it. One important factor was the pressure that was being done from inside the country, this made some politicians of the actual government doubt of the Apartheid regime and also parties which were opposed to the apartheid started to grow stronger (starting on 1970s). Also the pressure from outside, the United Nations and countries such as United States of America started cutting of benefits and affect negatively the welfare of South Africa, this was very useful for the end of the Apartheid too, but the acceptance and help to coexist between the different races was all due to Mandela, who joined South Africa in a humanitarian way.

## **After Apartheid ended**

Of course still up to today south African white population has a better welfare in general than the Indian, black and mixed population, with certain exceptions of course, but the difference in laws, and the racism is now over, the economic power and political power is still unresolved, but the most

important, human differences are now none or minimum, as Mandela has united them into prosperity. South Africa is a complex country, and is still dealing with the racial division only 19 years ago the apartheid system was abolished, the racial barriers have been broken down but they have not been forgotten. The majority of the poor are black, they may be equal on rights but many still feel unequal, less than the others because of the poverty they are suffering which is like if they still where on the apartheid, they do not have access to food on a daily basis or to services not because they do not have the legal power on this case but because they do not have the money to pay it, this is the actual “apartheid” that clearly marks the different races in a economic way. The creation of a democratic state was a new beginning for South Africa, but as Mandela focused too much on solving human differences the economy of the country was in bad conditions, South African population expected for him to, with the new democratic system deliver jobs, wealth, development and growth to the country and each of them. They also expected better housing and services. Also the abolishment of the apartheid has brought new trading partners such as United States which had retrieved their trades because of the social situation of South Africa. Also, after the apartheid ended the crime rates where very high, this made the population and tourists that came all around the world very insecure, complicating the democratic government to try and bring prosperity to South Africa. Some of the crimes committed are associated to the apartheid, black people looking for revenge and justice, some other are more resent and because of the rising of organized crimes, the cities are full of poor people, on its periphery, who at night occupy all the capital, making it unsafe to go outside at night.

## Conclusion

To conclude this extended essay rugby was a transport to racial unity in the apartheid because as this essay states, rugby was the common talk between the population, the world cup was their common goal, and it is a transport because apartheid did not end so quickly after the rugby world cup, this was just a transport as the title states, the Springboks became the national team and all the population started playing rugby against each other, learning and making friendships with this sport, within races and between races, forming bonds that led to racial unity, the apartheid was ended over generations. Of course rugby was not the only unifier, Mandela's leadership; tactics and persuasiveness was the key for racial unity. Apartheid is now over and keeping the national team as Mandela wanted is a memory of the past, so it shall never happen again, a legacy left. Apartheid was only a part of what South Africa was suffering and Mandela only focused on that, but there also are still up to today some issues such as economic, social and political problems, the black population on general is still the poorest and insecurity is rising. South African prosperity is rising because of the human unity. Rugby was one of the many factors that made the apartheid end from outside, that affected negatively their economy as benefits and trading partners were cutting off, and from the inside as opposition started growing stronger and stronger and some politicians did not know why they were



supporting the apartheid. All this contributed to the apartheid getting solved but rugby is the topic chosen because it was a different approach to solving the apartheid, it was a humanitarian way that did not obliged them to end the apartheid if not, learn how to coexist, so that the apartheid would not be repeated and racism would stop, because if the measures taken by outsiders such as the UN and the pressure from insiders where the only reason why the apartheid was abolished the problems would not have ended there, since the apartheid was just a title to the racism that was occurring in South Africa, so rugby, Mandela, the humanitarian part of the apartheid was the most important, and was the one that had to be solved immediately this is why Nelson Mandela's work is so impressive because he managed to solve the problem from its core so that it will not happen again, and leaving a legacy so that this act is remembered, not a selfish act, if not an act that saved a nation, the rainbow nation.

## Bibliography

- Poem Invictus given from Nelson Mandela to Francois Pienaar (Henley, William E. "Invictus." *PoemHunter*. Anonymous, 3 Jan. 2003. Web. 29 Aug. 2013. <<http://www.poemhunter.com/poem/invictus/>>).
- History of Rugby ("The History of South African Rugby." *Rugby Football History*. Anonymous, 2007. Web. 29 Aug. 2013. <[http://www.rugbyfootballhistory.com/south\\_africa.html](http://www.rugbyfootballhistory.com/south_africa.html)>) ("Origins of Rugby." *Rugby Football History*. Anonymous, 2007. Web. 29 Aug. 2013. <<http://www.rugbyfootballhistory.com/originsofrugby.htm>>.)
- After the apartheid (Desai, Ashwin, and Anshu Padayachee. "Post-Apartheid South Africa and the Crisis of Expectation." *Rozenberg Quarterly*. Anonymous, 7 Apr. 2011. Web. 29 Aug. 2013. <<http://rozenbergquarterly.com/?p=4597>>)
- McMahon, Mary. "How did apartheid end?." *wiseGEEK*. 4 Aug. 2013. Web. 1 Jan. <<http://www.wisegeek.org/how-did-apartheid-end.htm>>

## Annex

JOHANNESBURG, South Africa

### **Rugby challenges racial unity**

Nelson Mandela once hoped the sport of rugby could be integrated in South Africa's transition to racial equality. But barriers to black athletes have become a major political conflict.

Rugby is still dominated by whites, and Mandela recently had to testify in a court challenge brought by rugby administrators who are resisting efforts to open up the sport to blacks.

In response, South African sports officials loyal to Mandela have ordered the entire rugby leadership to resign by Saturday or face cancellation of international matches.

Furthermore, the National Sports Council has threatened to strip South Africa's rugby team of its beloved symbol — the Springbok, a graceful gazelle — on grounds that it symbolizes the discredited old order.

<AAIBAJ&sjid=vVIEAAAIBAJ&pg=4618,3083528>