



In February and March 2003, South Africa hosted the ICC Cricket World Cup. President Thabo Mbeki opened the event on Saturday 8 February with a glittering ceremony that was beamed across the world. The competition, the eighth of its kind, was the largest ever. Fourteen national teams battled it out at venues across the country and in Kenya and Zimbabwe. Television audiences of up to one billion people tuned in.

After six weeks of intense competition, most visitors agreed that this was the best Cricket World Cup in the event's history; the stadiums were better appointed, and the ticketing, travel and logistical arrangements ran smoother than ever before. Tens of thousands of fans from the West Indies to India to New Zealand had the holiday of a lifetime.

Cricket World Cup 2003 (won by the nation's arch-rivals Australia) followed South Africa's similarly successful hosting of the 1995 Rugby World Cup (which South Africa won over rugby arch-rivals New Zealand).

Both 1995 and 2003 were triumphs for South Africa, and both proved that the country is more than equipped

to stage even bigger events. South Africa was narrowly denied the right to host the 2006 Soccer World Cup. Similarly, Cape Town lost out to Athens for the 2004 Olympics.

But after the overwhelming success of two world cups, South African sports men and women, fans and administrators have reason to believe that one, if not both, of the world's premier sporting events will soon be held in this country.

In South Africa, sport, always a passion infecting all races, genders and classes, has become big business. Isolated for decades because of apartheid, South African sports men and women are revelling in the opportunity to take on the world without restrictions.

In 2000, sport and recreation contributed 2% to gross domestic product (GDP). Including capital expenditure, that contribution rose to R16,7 billion or 2,1% of GDP. According to a survey in 2000, sport and recreation provided employment for some 34 325 full-time, 6 140 part-time workers, as well as about 8 000 volunteers.

Government's interest in sport is not, however, concerned only with the superstars and the business end of sport.

During 2001/02, 55 sports facilities were delivered to disadvantaged, mainly rural communities. In total, 2 126 people were employed to construct these facilities. Some 47% were women, 39% youths and 70 of the employed were people with disabilities. A total of R8,75 million was paid in wages.

For 2002/03, Sport and Recreation SA (SRSA) planned to double its input through the construction of 85 sport and recreation sites throughout the country. Sixty-six percent of these sites were located within rural development nodes. The aim was to provide employment for 6 500 people. A further 105 projects are planned for 2003/04.

South African corporates have responded enthusiastically to the call for investment in sports development. In October 2002, for example, South Africa's United Cricket Board announced a R25-million, private sector-

funded development of cricket facilities. Government contributed R12,5 million to the project.

Sports tourism

SRSA has launched a major sports tourism project. The project is based on the following pillars:

- promoting 'home-grown' events internationally with a view to attracting more foreign participants and spectators to South African events such as the Comrades Marathon, Midmar Mile, Dusi Canoe Marathon, Argus Cycle Tour, Two Oceans Marathons and other similar events
- assisting potential hosts in bidding for and hosting major international events in South Africa
- negotiating better tourist packages for spectators accompanying international sports teams visiting South Africa
- marketing South Africa as 'an out of season' training venue for northern hemisphere athletes
- marketing South Africa's sport and recreation facilities abroad such as golf courses and beaches.

International relations

SRSA is in the process of developing an international relations policy in accordance with national government policy. It is aimed, particularly, at developing South Africa's relations in sport with countries on the African continent in line with the New Partnership for Africa's Development and in support of the African Union.

Sports highlights

The South African team, comprising athletes from various sporting disciplines, beat 33 countries at the Commonwealth Games in Manchester during July and August 2002 to be ranked sixth overall with a total of 46 medals (nine gold, 20 silver and 17 bronze).

The athletics team was a source of many surprises, one of which was Mbulaeni Mulaudzi's gold in the men's 800 m. His medal was South Africa's first gold on the track in 44 years. Frantz Kruger won gold and broke two Commonwealth records when he threw 66,39 m in the men's discus. Gold also went to Shaun Bownes (hurdles), Okkert Brits (pole-vault), Hestrie Cloete (high jump) and Roland Schoeman (100 m freestyle).

Swimming sensation Natalie du Toit stole the show with her inspiring performance in the 50 m and 100 m elite athlete with a disability freestyle swimming events, for which she won two gold medals and broke two world records. The 18 year-old from Cape Town, who had her left leg amputated following an accident in 2001, also made it into the final of the 800 m open swimming event where she achieved a personal best of 13,57 seconds. Du Toit was awarded the inaugural David Dixon Award as the most outstanding Commonwealth Games athlete in Manchester.

At the Games, elite athletes with a disability participated for the first time as part of a fully inclusive Team South Africa.

In September 2002, Hestrie Cloete and Okkert Brits won gold in their respective events at the World Cup meeting in Madrid. Cloete is also the current Olympic champion.

From the track and field to the fairways, there was no holding back South Africans in 2002. Ernie Els won the British Open at Muirfield after five extra holes in August. Els continued his winning streak when he beat Spaniard Sergio Garcia to win the World Match Play Championship in Wentworth, England, in October.

More glory was garnered on the rugby field when South Africa beat Australia to snatch the under-21 rugby world cup. This achievement was repeated in April 2003.

On the world's biggest sporting stage, South Africans showed their mettle as well. Bafana Bafana, the national soccer team, did well in the 2002 FIFA/Korea Japan Soccer World Cup. The squad moved into the second round of the tournament with a narrow victory of 1 – 0

over Slovenia. They were heading for a last 16 matchup against Germany when a third and final goal by rivals Paraguay in another Group B game spelled disaster.

South Africa and Paraguay finished tied on points for the qualifying second place and were also level on goal difference. Paraguay went through by dint of scoring six goals to South Africa's five.

Even on water, South Africans excelled. South Africa claimed surfing's prestigious International Olympic Committee President's Trophy for the first time since re-admittance to the International Surfing Association (ISA) in 1992, at the 2002 Quicksilver ISA World Surfing Games at North Beach in Durban in June 2002.

In February 2003, heavyweight boxer Corrie Saunders knocked out Ukrainian-born German Vladimir Klitschko, the world number two.



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