

AURORA CRICKET CLUB



1973 - 1998

SILVER JUBILEE



AURORA TEAM 1976/77

Back Row: M.Chetty, M. Hickson, D. Pillay, A. Manson, D. Moodley, T. Croudale

Front Row: F.S. Ally, N. Painter, R. Bunwarie (Pres), G. Manikum (Capt), C. Davis and J. Gordon

Front : M. Pillay (Scorer)



23 Laager Centre

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Pietermaritzburg, 3201

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**Proud to be associated with
Aurora Cricket Club**

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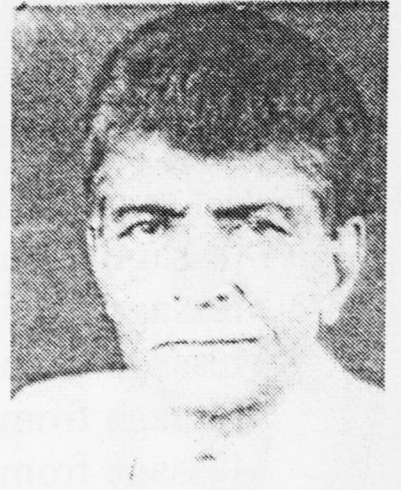
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Message From Roy Bunwarie : Aurora President



Twenty-five years ago, a nondescript band of S. Africans - White, Indian and Coloured - consented to form a non-racial cricket club. For "non-white" members it was a decision that would adversely affect their vocation and life style - harassment by the Special Branch, intimidation by White superiors, non-promotion, etc.

Today, I salute every member of that band (not any particular individual) who stood as steadfast as the Rock of Gibraltar in their determination to form a club that truly reflected our diversity and their unflinching resolve to defy the Government; to scoff at, and distance themselves from White cricket administrators especially at national level who took refuge behind Dr Koornhof's skirt which he labelled policy. These stubborn cricketers even had the "audacity" to refuse offers of intervention/ mediation by certain politicians and a reputable Afrikaaner journalist. And what of their blank rejection of the grandiose idea of two White Natal cricketers to form the Cricket Club of S. Africa - "totally unacceptable." The one "indiscretion" that is "unforgivable" is when our delegation, "the three C's", exploited their host Koornhof by partaking of Koffie and Kooksusters till 1 a.m and then not bowing to his "reasonable" request to abort the idea of Aurora.

I hang my head in shame for those White administrators/cricketers/politicians and the Minister who buried their heads in the sand like ostriches. Realisation should have dawned on them in 1973 that footprints in the sands of time were not made by sitting down but standing upright and striding resolutely towards a universal goal - non-racialism.

Well done, Gentlemen! You were sincere, unselfish trail blazers who stood up.



Supports Aurora Cricket Club
188 Church Street and 240 Victoria Road, Pmb, 3201
Tel 423220 / 422445 Fax 422172

**Message from :-
Krish Mackerdhuj : President UCB**



It is with pleasure and joy that I send this message of goodwill to you on attaining your silver jubilee, firstly as President of the United Cricket Board of South Africa, and secondly as one who has been very closely associated with your club throughout its existence.

This is a proud and memorable occasion in the history of your club.

South African cricket history will always reserve pride of place for your club because of its vision and tenacity in the days of struggle. I will always remember your Club with fond thoughts, especially for your contribution to the fight for freedom in sport, during the darkest days of SA's political history.

Best wishes in this era, a new beginning for a new South African nation.

**Message From :-
His Worship the Mayor : Siphiwe Gwala**



It is my sincere pleasure as Mayor of the City of Pietermaritzburg to congratulate the Aurora Cricket Club on 25 years of community upliftment and promotion of cricket in the City.

This club spearheaded non-racial sport, being the first non-racial cricket Club in the country. Aurora was formed initially by a small group of dedicated sportsmen who were determined that our entire population of Pietermaritzburg would be afforded the opportunity to participate in this international sport together.

Congratulations to Aurora on their Silver Jubilee - you have achieved your goals & dreams and we wish you continued success in uniting one and all in this wonderful world of sport.

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**Message From
S. K. Reddy - President :
Natal Cricket Union**

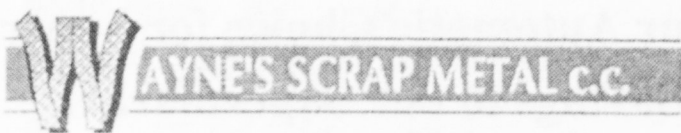


Few cricketers of this generation will realise the immense significance of the role that the Aurora Cricket Club played in the history of cricket in this country. Some twenty five years ago the founding fathers of this club which included members of the different race groups in Pietermaritzburg showed tremendous moral courage and vision in exposing the hypocrisy of the so called progressive sports policy of the government of the day.

In surviving threats of legal action and possible imprisonment they rallied together to prove that people of different races could play sport at club level together and against each other; that they could socialise with each other; and that all this could be achieved in complete harmony by observing the simple creed of all self respecting human beings: respect and judge people for what they are and not by their colour.

Their pioneering endeavours were taken a step further in the late seventies when, having found that their membership of the white controlling body had become untenable, they affiliated to the non-racial cricket controlling body in the Capital. The wheel had turned full circle for Aurora; having successfully tested the principle of mixed sport at club level they now espoused themselves to the cause of playing "normal cricket in an abnormal society."

On behalf of all those involved with cricket in Natal, I acknowledge with pride your invaluable contribution to cricket in this country and congratulate you heartily on having reached this milestone in your history. May your 25th anniversary celebrations be crowned with success and long may your club continue to prosper.

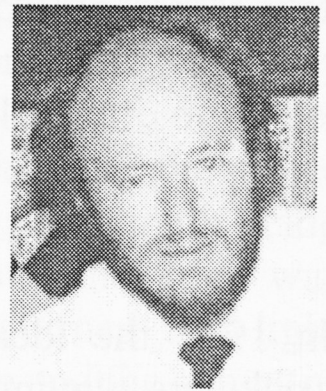


Congratulations Aurora Cricket Club

Tel (0331) 944 455 Fax (0331) 944 458

Cell 082 572 1717

Message From Mike Hickson - President: MCA



On behalf of the Maritzburg Cricket Association and its affiliated clubs, I would like to wish Aurora well on its 25th anniversary. Seeing that South African cricket is still not 'normal' at club level, Aurora's role is almost as important today as it was in the beginning of the club's history. In the three leagues in which Aurora played, fewer than one quarter of the clubs were also multi-racial.

This is undoubtedly the general pattern throughout the country, and is surely just as great a problem for South African cricket as the lack of black players in national and provincial sides.

It is now clear that too many promising products of the development program are not comfortable in existing first division sides, and choose to play in black sides in leagues below their true capabilities. In attempting to deal with this hindrance to the advance of black players, cricket's development gurus need to grasp the nettle of a lack of a true non-racial cricket culture at grass-roots level. They could do worse than learn from those most experienced in these matters - and no other club in this country has consistently fielded mixed teams for as long as Aurora.

Message From Dr Piet Koornhof

Sincere and warm congratulations to all the members of Aurora Cricket Club, as well as its public gallery, on your Club's Silver Jubilee Awards Celebrations. It is indeed a great and memorable occasion of Aurora Cricket Club.

You believed in what you were doing, you were committed and dedicated to it, come what may, and you have been richly and deservedly rewarded.

Congratulations, enjoy it, make the most of it, and may the years ahead bring great successes to the Aurora Cricket Club.

AURORA: THE FIRST YEAR

BY C. Merrett

In 1973 the idea of white and black cricketers playing together on a public ground in South Africa was enough to provoke the close attention of the authorities. So alarmed was the government at the prospect of a mixed Aurora team playing in the white league in Pietermaritzburg that on 3 October 1973 three club officials (Churton Collins, Chris Davis and Chris Nicholson) were summoned by Piet Koornhof, Minister of Sport, to Pretoria for discussions. These came to naught and as expected a proclamation, which had been ready for several weeks, was issued in terms of the Group Areas Act. It banned the presence of racially disqualified persons from group areas for a *substantial period of time*, presumably with the purpose of prohibiting mixed club cricket. The possible penalty on conviction was two years or R400, or both.

Local legal opinion held that the proclamation was so loosely worded as to be meaningless and it gave rise to ribald comment concerning the possible illegality of mixed dinner parties or black caddies on white golf courses. Government caution was shown by the

fact that the proclamation did not mention sport. Nor was there any likelihood that Aurora would be banned: use of the Suppression of Communism Act would only invite ridicule. Nevertheless, the club was taking considerable risk by its refusal to apply for a permit which would depend upon segregated seating, toilets and refreshment facilities. The Pietermaritzburg City Council, however, made it known that it would remain uninvolved unless complaints were received.



Goupal Manikum directs the field while Mike Hickson looks on.

The key date was 6 October when Aurora was due to meet the University of Natal 2nd XI in a division two match at the Forsyth Ground. it rained. In time-honoured tradition the players inspected the wicket, an



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activity that in itself might have been sufficient for prosecution. Aurora's first league match actually began on Saturday 13 October 1973 in bizarre circumstances. apart from the teams and



Gopaul Manikum

about 50 spectators there were some unusual visitors. The most prominent was Mnr Boucher of the Group Areas Department accompanied by six policemen and their wives masqueraded as cricket lovers for the purpose of 'unobtrusive observation'. More heavy handed was the presence of Colonel J Pieterse, the Pietermaritzburg commandant, a man photographing cars, another watching the match through binoculars and yet another lurking behind a tree on the boundary. At 5.20pm with the University team in field (Aurora were struggling on 41 for 6 in reply to 209 for 8) Boucher approached Gopaul Manikum, the Aurora captain, and asked if he had a permit for the match as it was taking place in a white group area. Having received a negative reply, Boucher proceeded to take the names of five players, the 12 year old scorer, John Rayner (plus his sister who was helping him) and a dozen of the spectators.

Boucher justified his action on the

grounds that a prosecution might well follow. Reactions were fairly low key except when Mrs Sadler, wife of one of the supposed spectators from the police force, objected to her photograph being taken by a journalist. The film was confiscated but later returned. Bad light stopped play at 6.20pm and the names of University players were taken as they left the field. Police attempted to seize the scorebook as an exhibit but Aurora refused to surrender it without a warrant and it was handed in the next day. The official police report downplayed the event and pointed out that there had been no interference on the field of play. Boucher submitted a docket to the Attorney-General but no one was ever prosecuted under proclamation R228.

The origins of this incident may be found in a match played at University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg between white and mixed teams in April 1973. In June Aurora applied for admission to the second division of the Maritzburg Cricket Union (MCU) taking care to ascertain the application procedure before admitting it had black members. The MCU took the usual step of referring the matter to the provincial body, the Natal Cricket Association (NCA). Aurora argued that its actions were not political and that its primary interest was cricket. This was necessarily disingenuous: a challenge to aspects of the apartheid system as fundamental as group areas and segregated facilities could hardly avoid being political. What Aurora was up against was a broad-based conservatism in white cricket circles and a hope that, if the government was not annoyed, international links could be restored

while the segregated basis of club and provincial cricket was maintained.

Aurora's confidence in its cause had not only moral force but also legal support. According to legal opinion, mixed cricket was possible as long as certain proprieties were satisfied. It was widely held that occupation of space as defined under the Group Areas Act could hardly apply to the time required for completion of a cricket match, although the consumption of food and drink would present problems under the Reservation of Separate Amenities and Liquor Acts. Under the Criminal Law Amendment Act players might be liable for prosecution if their activities could be construed as a political demonstration against apartheid law. But, as the press pointed out, most white South Africans thought that unless activities were specifically sanctioned by government

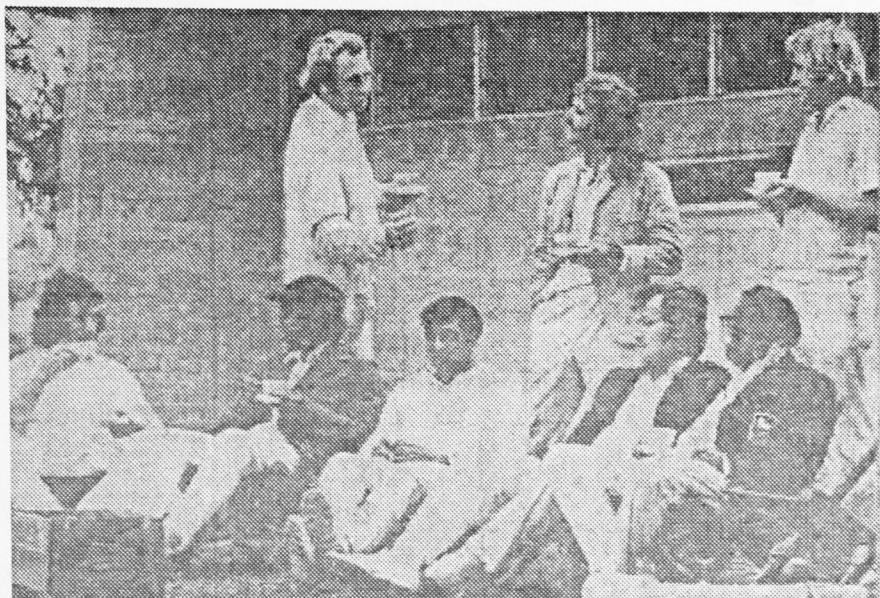
specifically sanctioned by government permits they were illegal. Such was the pervasive nature of *aprtheidsbeleid*.

The NCA approved Aurora's application in principle in June 1973, evoking a strong reaction from Koornhof who emphasised government policy regarding segregation at all levels of sport except certain events which were run on a 'multinational' basis. Meanwhile Aurora held its first AGM and signed up as non-playing members those who wished to watch matches. Its lawyers advised that it could play on private and municle grounds as long as the general public did not have access. Stalemate ensued, during which time Aurora members were smeared as 'political agitators' by the government. This was also the view of many members of the white cricket establishments still hoping for readmission to world cricket.



**Page in Memory of
the Late Mr. h. Gella**

During August Aurora went ahead with friendly matches while the government reacted by warning local authorities of the need for permits for mixed events.



Tea-time during the Kloof Match

Government intervention put paid to a projected match against a Rhodesian Stragglers side. At the local level the MCU finally accepted Aurora's application to join the 2nd division after some prevarication by the Police and Voortrekker Clubs. It was understood, however that Aurora members would use neither clubhouse nor changing facilities and that they would supply their own refreshments. There is evidence that numerous MCU members were still nervous about provoking the government. Aurora continued to point out that it intended operating strictly within the law.

Aurora's first friendly game was on 16 September 1973 versus a University of

Natal Invitation XI. There was no reaction from the police although opponents simply had to turn up to watch in order to make the match illegal. The

club had prepared an alternative venue and planned an urgent application to the Supreme Court if necessary. Government rhetoric became increasingly wild and threatening but this did not prevent further friendlies against Michaelhouse at Balgowen and against a Kloof Invitation XI.

In Aurora's second league match, against Standard at Alexandra Park, police



Mike Patrick bowls to Tony Croudace

surveillance was noted at the beginning. Further controversy was created by the

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the behavior of other clubs: Voortrekker twice defaulted against Aurora for unknown, although almost certainly political, reasons. Public reaction was muted with a couple of complaining letters received by the City Council and at least one vitriolic contribution aimed at Koornhof.

The government's reaction to Aurora was simple: masterly inactivity. In this Koornhof showed himself to be a shrewd politician. He had been through the motions for the sake of mainstream

National Party opinion but clearly recognised that to take legal action against a group of professedly apolitical cricketers would expose the government to ridicule at a time when it was trying to project a 'reformist' sports policy. Aurora's cricketers had siezed the moment to challenge the government, the weight of white tradition proved less than monolithic. It was a political as well as a sporting triumph.

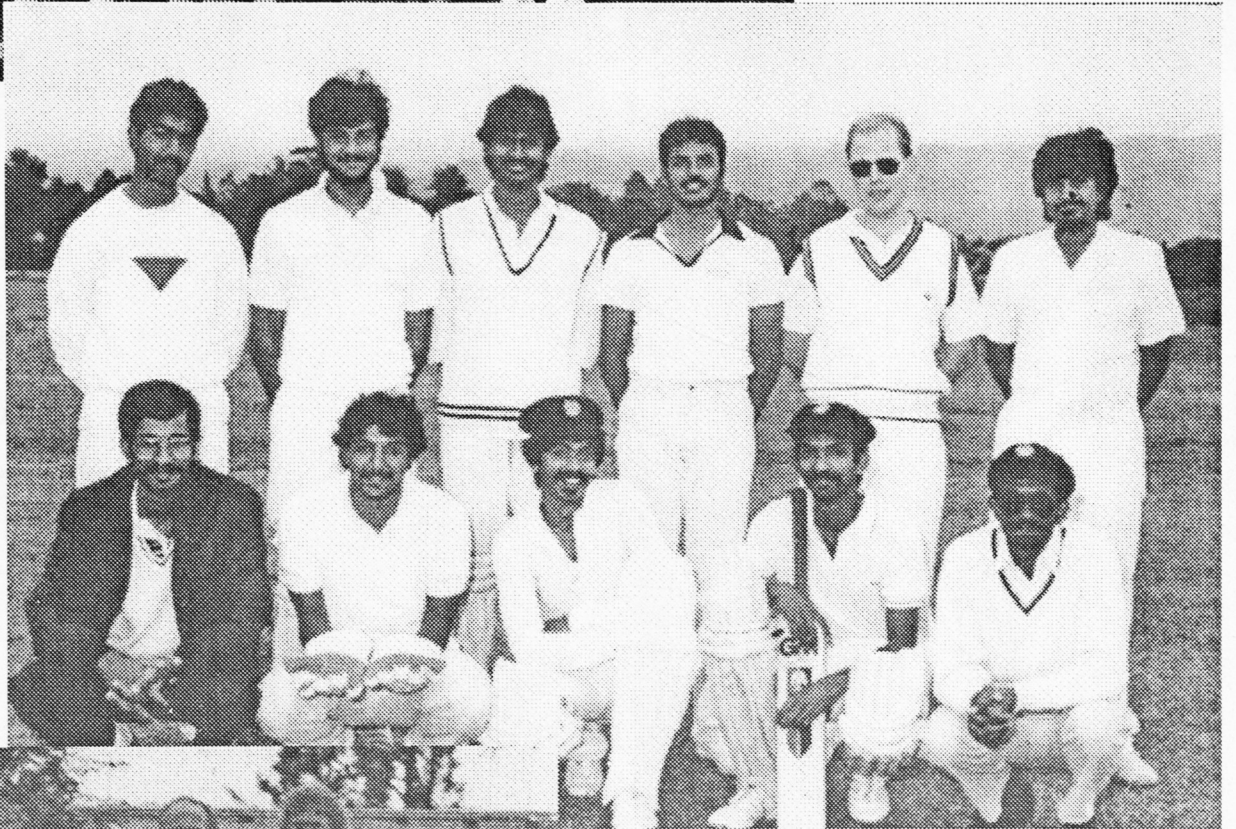
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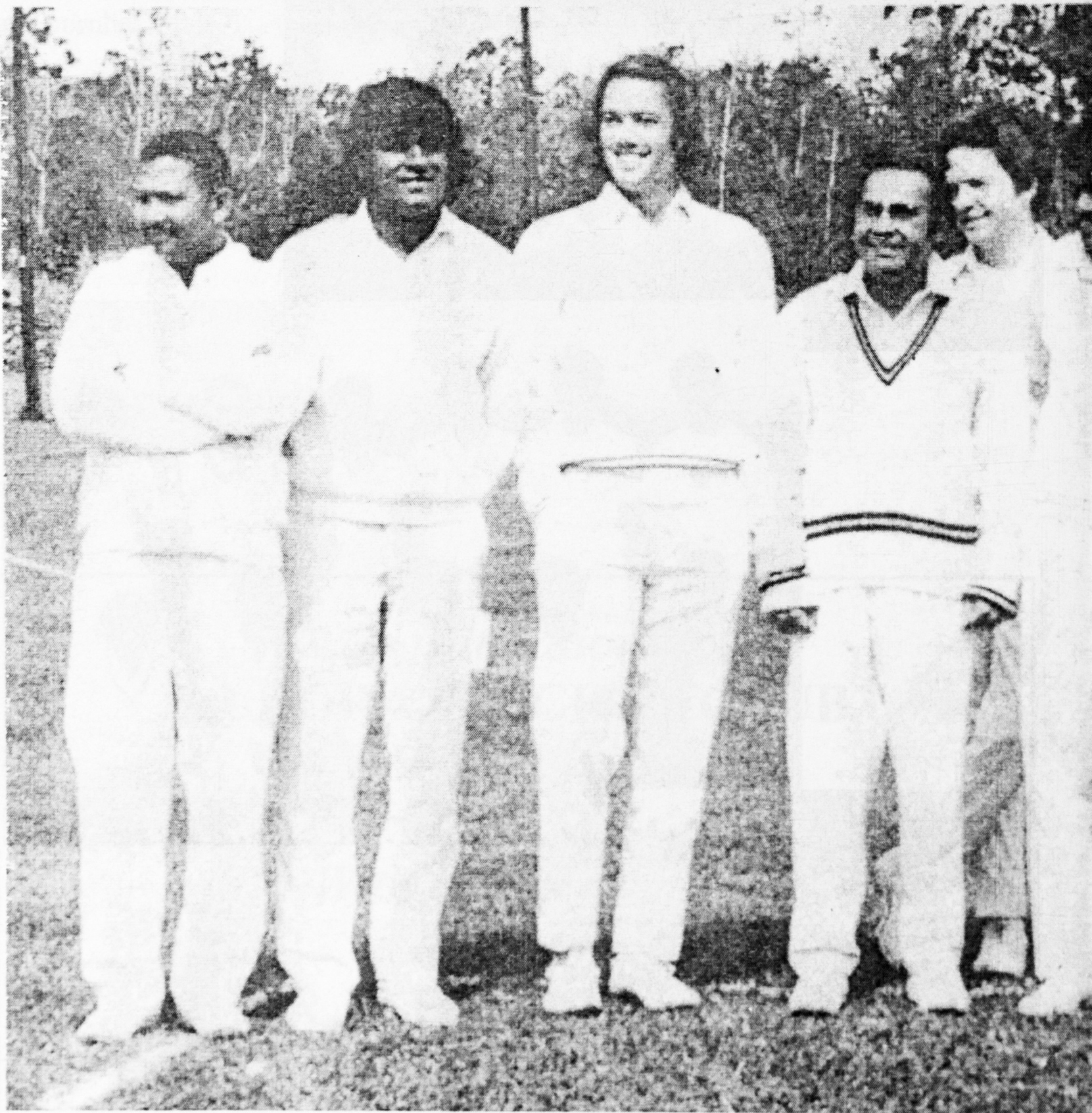
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Aurora Photo Album



The First A

(Photo Drum,



Lee Bozalek

Mike Patrick

Deva Moodley

Churton Collins

Amos C

rora Team

November 1973



Chris Davis

Brian Stewart

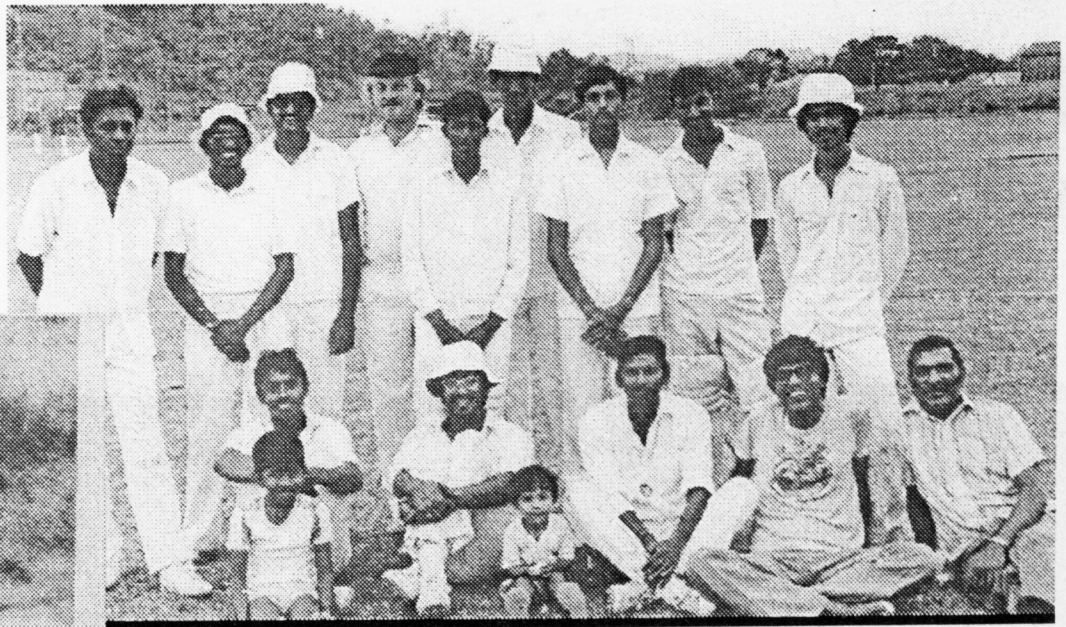
Jimjee

Gopaul Manikum

Chris Nicholson

Baby Haffajee

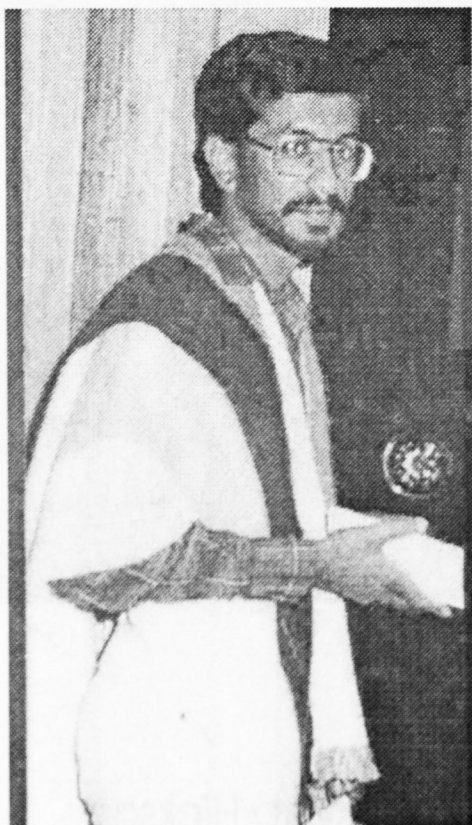
Mike Hickson



Sobantu Practice 1988



John and Merle Pope



Visagen Naidoo



Chris vd Merwe

Achievements

Compiled by M. Hart and F. Ally

Playing

Mike Hickson	NCB Natal A&B (80/81)
Chris Arnold	NCB Natal A (80/81)
Paul Weinberg	NCB Natal B (78/79)
Richard Compton	NCB Natal A (80/81, 82/83)
Patrick Compton	NCB Natal A&B (82/83)
Sean van der Bijl	KZN Schools A (96/97)
Jody Harper	KZN Schools Country Districts (96/97)
Reg Keats	Captain KZN Midlands USASSA u17 (97/98)

Administration

Mike Hickson	Executive of Natal Cricket Union (91/92 to present)
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Umpiring

Farouk Ally	Natal B vs North West (3 day game) (96/97) Fourth Official for India vs South Africa A (96/97)
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League Achievements

“A” team won the MDCU first division 5 times (78/79; 82/83; 83/84; 85/86; 89/90)

Voted Club of the Year - (89/90)

“B” team won MDCU second division twice

“B” team won MCA Saturday second division (96/97)

“A” and “B” teams voted by other clubs as the fairest umpires and most pleasant teams to play against

Making News - Sample Headlines

Daily News 20/9/73

Aurora Cricket Club

Security police get orders

Daily News Pietermaritzburg Bureau

SECURITY POLICE in Pietermaritzburg have been given instructions about the activities of the multi-racial Pietermaritzburg second league cricket club, Aurora - but the instructions remain a closely guarded secret.

Natal Witness - 25/8/73

PM SAYS 'NO' TO AURORA FIXTURE

Staff Reporter

PRETORIA - The Prime Minister, B.J. Vorster, last night squashed any chance of an international cricket match being played by the multi-racial Aurora Club of Pietermaritzburg and a Rhodesian side. If permission was requested it would not be given.

Sunday Times 7/10/73

Aurora's 6am 'No surrender' sparks cricket clamp

By GRAHAM LINSKOTT and MARTIN SCHNRIDER

Natal Witness - 6/10/73

CRICKETERS DEFY GOVT BAN

STAFF REPORTER

THE Maritzburg Cricket Union and the multi-racial Aurora Cricket Club are to ignore a proclamation appearing in the "Government Gazette" attempting to prohibit multi-racial sports meetings.

All-night
'Koornhof
koffie and
Koeksusters'
session
fails
to talk
club into
pulling out

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POLICE ACT AT AURORA

MATCH

Players have
names taken:
'A test case'
says officer

By RON STEELE

FIVE POLICEMEN, headed by a warrant officer, took the names of players in the multi-racial cricket match between Aurora and a University Second XI at Maritzburg yesterday afternoon. The names and addresses of some of the non-White spectators were also taken.

Daily News - 19/6/73

Multiracial cricket club not political

- SECRETARY

Daily News Reporter

MR MIKE HICKSON, acting secretary of Pietermaritzburg's multiracial Aurora cricket Club, has denied reports that his club was formed to test the sincerity of White officials. "We just want to play cricket," he said yesterday.

Defiant Aurora will field multi-racial side

Daily News Reporter



An Annual Dinner in the Eighties

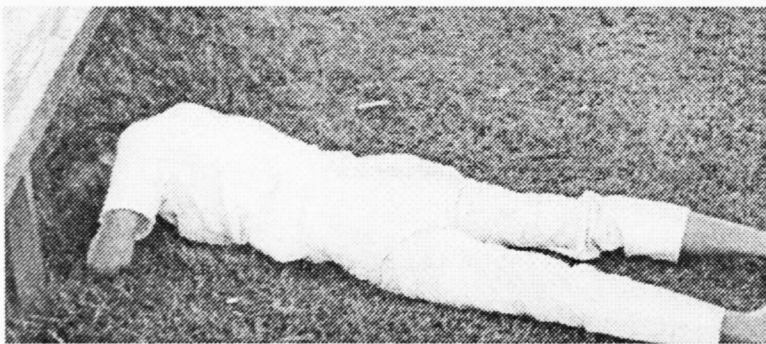
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It's Not Just Cricket...

The 'Aurora Supporters Club' was particularly active during the Eighties, much to the delight of our players and chagrin of the opposition. Many appeals were met with shouts of "Bowl him out! Don't shout him out!".

Regular lunch-time braais were purposely set up-wind of the opposition, and were the envy of many teams, even when pork was the predominant meat.

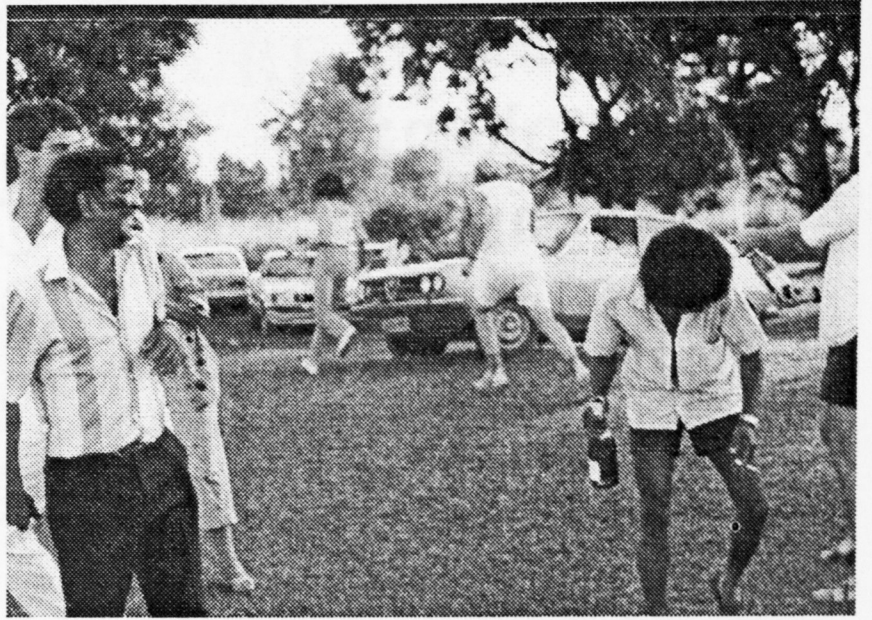
For many supporters, Aurora represented their first exposure to cricket and left them with a desire to see more.



Being President can be tiring

Even though watching cricket coverage on TV was frowned upon as 'supporting' racially based sport, it was difficult to dampen this enthusiasm.

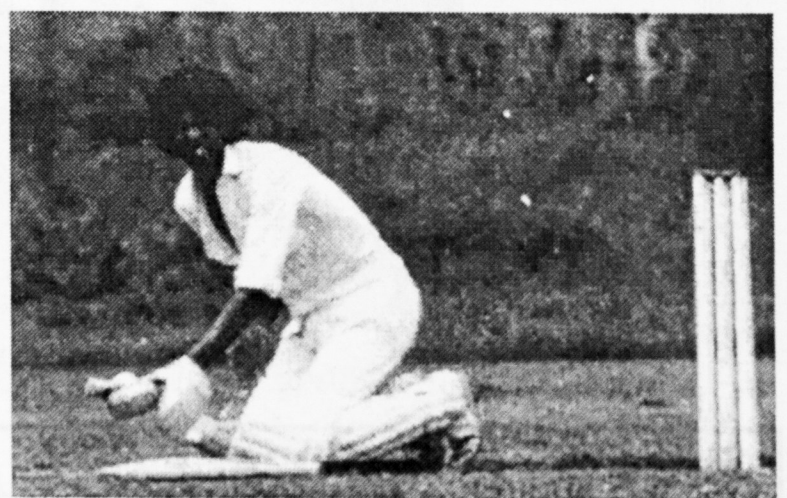
Enjoying these games resulted in a dilemma similar to that of the Rabbi who achieved a hole-in-one while playing golf on the Sabbath. The prophets approached God to punish the Rabbi for breaking the Sabbath, to which God replied, "What for? Who can he tell?"



The "Aurora Support's Club" celebrate victory

The influence of TV coverage was seen at a game played at Rich Park. After Aurora got the important wicket of Richmond's main batsman for a duck, a supporter (Merle Pope) ran on to the field and followed the dejected batsman off, rolling a frozen chicken in his wake.

For many years the Captain's dinner speech would include "Farouk Ally" stories from the past season.



Richie Ramarak having a ball?

One had him, on dropping a 'sitter',

berating his twelve year old nephew for not being on his knees next to him to take the spilled catch.



The Dark Lord (M Hart)
as Fine Master.

A n o t h e r recalled a ferocious appeal (arms out wide, running directly at the umpire) by him for LBW. Someone suggested that the batsman had been at full stretch half way down the track, and that the ball had hit him high up (on the knee) anyway. This

failed to convince the distraught Ally, who retorted that the batsman 'was a short ou.'

As a batsman, Farouk was not immune to these tales, one of which recall his coming down the wicket for a lofted drive and failing to connect. As the ball went of his pads to square leg, Farouk stood there elegantly replaying the shot a

few times until the square leg fielder ran him out.

Umpires were usually drawn from to the batting team, which could cause problems for the batting captain, particularly after a long morning in the field. The "A u r o r a Supporters Club" a r e t o b e commended for often suppling umpires to relieve tired players.



Who could refuse
Viddy Naidoo's
appeal?

O n e possible exception may be during a game played against A t l a n t i s at Brookside, which may have resulted in other "first" for Aurora. Having twice "no balled" the Atlantis opening bowler for a 'suspect action' during the first over, the umpire (E. Latt) was removed by the captain (M Hickson) for 'suspect umpiring.' Unfortunately, the umpire did not object, but the fact that he was Hickson's student cannot be ignored.

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QUOTABLE QUOTES

Collated By Roy Bunwarie

Sunday Times - 17/06/73

"Dennis Gamsy and Andre Bruyns 'opposed this move.' They felt the spirit was right but the tactics unwise as they might lead to confrontation with the Govt's policy."

---X---

Daily News - 18/06/73

"White S. Africans are often excessively meek towards a Govt which enjoys wielding authority. Perhaps they are cowed, or perhaps the Govt's policy merely confirms their own prejudices."

---X---

Sunday Tribune - 24/06/73

SACA on acceptance of Aurora's application "The practicalities of the problem brought about by a multi-racial club taking part in a White League are so enormous that if SACA did not turn down the application, the Govt would definitely step in and put a stop to it."

---X---

Post - 24/06/73

"A tour abroad by a multi-racial cricket side ... are(sic) on the cards following the birth of Aurora. I can disclose that one of

the key figures behind the formation of Aurora is Mr Hassan Howa. Springboks are now members of the Club which paid thousands of rands for a plot of land in Maritzburg,' stated Mr R. Brijlall."

---X---

The Natal Mercury - 29/06/73

"Dr Piet Koornhof 'The Govt's policy is well known and clear, namely that all sport at club, provincial and national level in S.A. shall be separate for the different race groups. It appears that these persons who agitate for mixed cricket do not have the game as such, at heart, but their actions do, in fact, have a political motive behind them.'"

---X---

Daily News - 05/07/73.

"The Transvaaler hit back at Pretoria's Oggenblad. 'If S. A was stupid enough to take Oggenblad's advice, what would be left of the sports policy? In fact what would be left of the Govt's whole race policy?'"

---X---

Daily News - 06/07/73

"It is important at a time when S A cricket stagnates in isolation that cricketers and administrators make their stand on principle

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and refuse to do the politicians' dirty work for them."

---X---

Unknown Source

Mr Hassan Howa - President of SACBOC - on our acceptance by MCU - 'It's wonderful. This is a great step forward for cricket. I think the whole movement will snowball.'

---X---

Sunday Times - 22/07/73

Andre Bruyns, when the Govt squashed plans by the Cricket Club of SA to launch non-racial friendly games "Clearly it would be seen as confrontation and the Govt might take action to stop the games by legislation. If this happened we would not have achieved anything apart from cricket martyrdom."

---X---

Sunday Tribune - 29/07/73

W. Boon - President of SACA 'there are an awful lot of other laws wrapped up under the Group Areas Act - amenities, liquor laws, and this and that and the other thing.'

---X---

Daily News - 31/08/73

"So the sports policy progresses, like a drunken man staggering on a slippery slope: one step forward, one sideways and one back."

---X---

Natal Witness - 09/09/73

"The multi racial Aurora Cricket Club was last night officially admitted into White league cricket in PMB and in doing so made history as the first all race club ever to enter White league sport in S. Africa."

---X---

Natal Witness - 06/10/73

"The MCA and Aurora CC are to ignore Proclamation No 228 of 1973 which states, *inter alia*, 'that the provisions of the said Act relating to the occupation of land or premises shall apply also with reference to any person who is at any time present in or upon any land or premises in the controlled area or in a group area for a substantial period of time.'"

---X---

Unrecorded Source

"The anti-Aurora Group areas proclamation is so confusing that legal experts could not say if an African nanny could still take madam's toddler to the park."

---X---

The Natal Mercury - 06/10/73

"The effect of proclamation R228 is that a match involving Aurora could cost some of the players and spectators fines up to R400 or prison sentences of up to two years, or both."

---X---

Sunday Tribune - 7/10/73

"All night Koornhof, koffie and kooksusters session fails to talk the Club into pulling

out. Representing Aurora were Messrs C. Nicholson, C Collins and C Davis. But when they were still deadlocked at 1.30 a.m. Dr Koornhof gave up and drove them himself to the other end of Pretoria."

---X---

Daily News - 15/10/73

"'Hope you enjoyed the game' - from the investigating officer and the solemn noting of the 12 year old scorers name as one of the suspects. The sour note came when a photographer took a picture of a detectives wife who was dressed in the fashion of Biarritz or Cannes."

---X---

Sunday Times - 19/10/73.

"Five policemen, headed by a Warrant Officer, took the names of players in the multi-cricket match between Aurora and a University Second XI at Maritzburg yesterday afternoon."

---X---

Natal Witness - 27/06/78

"'After five years of playing under the NCA, we no longer feel that this body is an effective vehicle for the normalisation of cricket in Natal,' the Aurora spokesman said yesterday."

---X---

Natal Witness - 15/04/83

"The admission of Aurora to the white Maritzburg Cricket Union in Sept 1973 in the face of strong government opposition heralded the beginning of a new era in S African sport"

---X---

Natal Witness - 08/10/97

"Recognition that there was much that was ridiculous about apartheid in the 1970's, should not blind one to the fact that it was a wicked and inhuman system that caused untold misery, nor should it lead one to underrate the integrity and the courage of the main players in the Aurora saga"

---X---

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Sailor Chetty	
Dino Singh	

1997/98 Team Captains and Managers

- 1st Team : - Captain - Brendon Hart, Reg Keats
Manager - Vis Naidoo
- 2nd Team : - Captain - Marlan Chetty
Managers - Sailor Chetty and Dino Singh
-

In Memoriam

The following members of Aurora are sadly missed:-

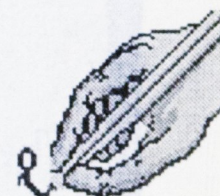
Gopaul 'Gops' Manikum

Sudesh 'Snail' Ramharry



Well done Aurora - Bat on to 50
P. O. Box 21421, Mayors Walk, 3208
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AUTOGRAPHS



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Mike Hickson

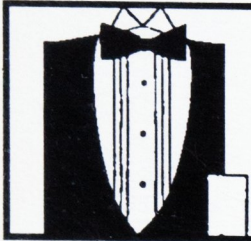
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