

**Making the Transition: Empire, Amateurism and  
Reggie Walker, the ‘Little Natalian’ Sprinter.**

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## **Making the Transition: Empire, Amateurism and Reggie Walker, the ‘Little Natalian’ Sprinter.**

### **Abstract:**

*This thesis utilizes a narrative approach by presenting a biography of Reggie Walker, the South African 1908 Olympic sprint champion to illustrate the interactions between nationalism and Empire during the late Victorian and Edwardian periods and to explore the ongoing tensions between amateurism and professionalism. At the start of the twentieth century, nationalism was often extended to include countries like South Africa, which consisted of four British colonies at the time of the 1908 London Games, despite recent wars (1880-81 and 1899-1902) between Britain and the two Boer republics. Walker’s colonial triumph appealed to the Britons present, especially since he defeated Britain’s main rivals, the North Americans, and he was subsequently celebrated in the British media as being from British native stock. Athletic distinction also became valued in the selection of troops in the Empire with those men from public schools, who were more likely to have taken up the British sports that became a feature of colonial life, being seen as promoting the power of British masculinity. Walker himself displayed specific forms of masculinity, both in his athletic and military career, and this was reflected in depictions of his muscular appearance. As an amateur and professional, Reggie was assisted by a number of individuals, some, like Sam Wisdom, professional advisors and others, like Herbert Keartland, Rufe Naylor and James Wallace, who came from different occupational backgrounds. The collective biographies of those who interacted with Walker help explain his own biography and illuminate some of the intersections between athletes, trainers and the sport during this period. Reggie’s transition between his athletic career as an amateur and as a professional occurred during the decolonization of the British Empire and the thesis draws attention to the suggestion that the decline of amateur sport could be seen as a metaphor for the decline of the British Empire. The author draws some tentative conclusions about the implications of this research and proposes that Walker’s athletic biography can be seen as representative, in some respects, of the way that nationalism and imperialism intersected during this period.*

**Keywords:** Reggie Walker; South Africa; Empire; Nationalism; Masculinity; Olympic Games

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## Abbreviations

AAA	English Amateur Athletic Association
AAC	Amateur Athletic Club
AGM	Annual General Meeting
BOA	British Olympic Association
CA	Cycling Association
DAAA	Durban Amateur Athletic Association
DAC	Durban Athletic Club
DSO	Distinguished Servant Order
FIFA	Federation International Football Association
IOC	International Olympic Committee
KRRC	Kings Royal Rife Corps
NAAA	Natal Amateur Athletic Association
NGB	National Governing Bodies
OBE	Order of the British Empire
ORC	Orange River Colony
SAAA	South African Athletic Association
SAFA	South African Football Association
USA	United States of America

## Introduction

The 1908 Olympic Games were celebrated in the British media as a defining moment in Britain's historical role as the originator and leader of world sport. *The Times* and the *Daily Mail*, both proponents of the establishment and British imperialism, viewed the Games as a demonstration of Britain's overall capacity to continue to develop and expand in the face of competition.<sup>1</sup> The celebrations in Britain of the success of Reggie Walker, the South African sprinter who won the 100 metres, was evidence of how 'Britishness' had been extended to the Empire and how colonials, who were British in all but name, were continuing the traditions of British sporting dominance. Despite this perspective, however, Britain's global role came to be challenged by the growth of the industrialized economy and military capability of the United States of America (USA). In addition, the 1908 Games revealed the friction between amateur ideals about participating in sport for its own sake and those who believed in winning in order to validate Britain's right to remain a global power. By the end of these Games, the nationalist Olympic discourse had become standardized, ideologically consistent and predictable.<sup>2</sup>

For Britons, the term 'nationalism' included those living under the umbrella of the British Empire, particularly white colonists in Australia, Canada, New Zealand and South Africa, with some elite athletes from these countries being recruited into Oxford University as Rhodes Scholars. The later Empire Games were often portrayed as a public celebration of imperialism but imperialism was only one of many debates surrounding both the Olympic and Empire Games. The most notable of these was the role of mass sporting events in expressing local and national identities, the incorporation of imperial competition within the broader confines of international sport and debates about the nature of amateur sport in the face of professionalization.<sup>3</sup> For example, while Rhodes Scholars were clearly amateurs, *The Quarterly Review* expressed alarm in 1904 that such 'seasoned men' represented a shift towards professionalism at Oxbridge.<sup>4</sup> Whilst much has been written on the subject of Empire and

<sup>1</sup> Matthew McIntire, 'National Status, the 1908 Olympic Games and the English Press', *Media History* 15, no. 3 (2009): 271-286.

<sup>2</sup> George R. Matthews, 'The Controversial Olympic Games of 1908 as Viewed by the *New York Times* and *The Times* of London', *Journal of Sport History* 7, no. 2 (1980): 40-53.

<sup>3</sup> Daniel Gorman, 'Amateurism, Imperialism, Internationalism and the First British Empire', *The International Journal of the History of Sport* 27, no. 4 (2010): 611-634.

<sup>4</sup> Roberta Park, 'Athletes and Their Training in Britain and America', 1800-1914, in *Sport and Exercise Science: Essays in the History of Sports Medicine* eds. J.W. Berryman and Roberta J. Park (Illinois University Press, Chicago, 1992), 84.

Imperialism, including the Anglo-Boer Wars of 1880-81 and 1899-1902, many gaps still exist in the historiography of sport, Empire and nationalism, and, in particular, individual sporting lives have not been explored in this context.<sup>5</sup>

The aim of this study is to begin to address these gaps within the literature, by using a case study of a South African athlete, Reginald ('Reggie') Edgar Walker, to explore colonial sport both at the level of the individual and, by implication, at the level of British identity. A key part of this study is to place the sporting ideals of amateurism within the pre-First World War period. The author presents, firstly, a review of the existing literature on Empire, Imperialism and sport to help position the case study of Walker into a wider context. This chapter acknowledges the value of individuals as being significant to broader sociological and historical processes<sup>6</sup> and increases the understanding of Walker as an individual sportsman and national figure. Nationalism and sport are closely linked, although it is important to note that this relationship varies from one political setting to another and raises a range of different questions, including that of Walker's identity. One of the notable aspects of this work is exploring how Walker, a South African, was celebrated by the British as one of their own in 1908, only six years after the conclusion of the Second Anglo-Boer War. This rapid acceptance of South African athletes says something particular about nationalism and Imperial identity.

Sport is an important element in the construction of social and national identity so it is no surprise that the historiography of sport and nationalism is quite extensive.<sup>7</sup> Sporting lives can be particularly emblematic for newly established nation states, the rulers of which may be

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5 Dean Allen, 'Beating Them at Their Own Game: Rugby, the Anglo-Boer War and Afrikaner Nationalism, 1899-1948', *The International Journal of the History of Sport* 20, no. 3 (2010): 37-57; Dean Allen, 'The Race of Supremacy': 'The Politics of 'White' Sport in South Africa, 1870-1910', *Sport in Society* 14, no. 6 (2011): 741-53; Bernard Porter, *The Lion's Share: A Short History of British Imperialism 1850-2004* (London: Longman, 2004); Bernard Magubane, *The Making of a Racist State: British Imperialism and the Union of South Africa, 1875-1910* (Trenton: Africa World Press. Inc, 1996).

6 Graeme Kent, *Olympic Follies: The Madness and Mayhem of the 1908 London Games. A Cautionary Tale* (London: JR Books, 2008).

7 Mike Cronin and David Mayall, *Sporting Nationalisms: Identity, Ethnicity, Immigration and Assimilation* (London: Frank Cass Publishers, 1998); James Mangan, *Tribal Identities: Nationalism Europe, Sport (Sport in the Global Society)* (London: Routledge, 1995); Pierre Lanfranchi, Richard Holt and James Mangan, *European Heroes: Myth, Identity, Sport (Sport in the Global Society)* (London: Routledge, 1996); Dilwyn Porter and Adrian Smith, *Sport and National Identity in the Post-War World* (London: Routledge, 2004).

inclined to look to sport in their efforts to foster a sense of national unification. It is often the case that sporting heroes, alongside national flags and anthems, are important in promoting unity between people who have been brought together within a constitutional entity that has often been artificially created. However, using national sporting representatives for this political end can be a difficult strategy to manage in situations where people retain deep affinities for their own tribal, ethnic or linguistic groups. Perhaps nowhere is this more apparent than in South Africa where sport has frequently been seen as critical in generating a national identity. Politicians have used sport to establish a sense of national purpose and have recognized sport's relationship with nationalism, which became a particular focal point in global sport when Olympic athletes were arranged into national teams for the first time in 1908 in London and the national dimension remains an important part of sport.<sup>8</sup>

In chapter two the thesis discusses Olympism and Internationalism, and the English attitude to sport during the nineteenth-century, a period in which the British ex-public schoolboy and university graduate attempted to both rule and guide change in different parts of the Empire, an essential element of their colonial success.<sup>9</sup> Studies on sport and colonialism have previously considered the ways in which sports were imposed on colonial peoples as a means of social segregation, and how sport was utilized by indigenous nationalists to forge national unity and pride.<sup>10</sup> Emphasis has also been placed on the analysis of sport as a mechanism of national solidarity, which helps promotes unity and identity. Another nexus of sport is the link with the military. This was most evident in nineteenth and early twentieth-century Germany and Italy, predominantly in sports such as athletics and gymnastics, where sport was endorsed as a way of provoking and facilitating the production of the perfect national body.<sup>11</sup>

The main body of this work is an in-depth analysis of the life course of amateur and later professional sprinter Reggie Walker, born on 16 March 1889, in Durban, Natal, South Africa, who established himself as the world's premier sprinter after defeating Canadian Robert Kerr in

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<sup>8</sup> Allison Lincoln, 'Handbook of Sport Studies', in *Sport and Nationalism* eds. Jay Coakley and Eric Dunning (London: Sage, 2000).

<sup>9</sup> Avril M.C. Maddrell, 'Empire, Emigration and School Geography: Changing Discourses of Imperial Citizenship, 1880-1925', *Journal of Historical Geography* 22, no. 4 (1996): 373-387.

<sup>10</sup> Mike Cronin and David Mayall, *Sporting Nationalisms: Identity, Ethnicity, Immigration and Assimilation* (London: Frank Cass Publishers, 1998), 11.

<sup>11</sup> Alexander Motyl, *Encyclopedia of Nationalism*, vol. 2, (London: Academic Press. Inc, 2001), 508.



the 100 metres final at the 1908 London Olympic Games at the age of nineteen. Walker's life course was defined by a sequence of position, transitions and turning points all of which were subject to both personal and environmental influences. Because there is no definitive text on Walker, this biography outlines the rudimentary facts of his life as well as discussing Walker the athlete. Noting the basic details of Walker's life enables the author to understand his family formations across generations, a narrative that is required in order to conceptualize his life within the contexts of families, society and sport. This analysis is underpinned by the use of primary sources such as birth, marriage and death certificates, war records, shipping manifests and census records.

The use of case studies such as this is common practice among researchers who employ the approach in a range of different fields<sup>12</sup> and biographical case studies have had a variety of applications in the writing of history. Biographical writing not only presents a closer look into its subject's personal life but also examines the times and places in which they lived and the historical, social and cultural forces that shaped and influenced their identities.<sup>13</sup> In one typical example, Harrison and Lampman examined the life of Paul Robeson as a scholar-athlete, law student and professional football player, and related this to the contemporary paradigm in education, race and sports.<sup>14</sup> This study of Walker uses a number of supplementary biographies to help understand the influences and networks that surrounded the South African athlete, especially important when trying to analyze his transition into the role of professional athlete.

It needs to be recognized, however, that there is an on-going debate regarding the historical validity of biographies. Norman Denzin argued that in biographical writing there is a tendency towards a 'constructionist' position, with a reliance on the 'text' and the shaping of 'text'.<sup>15</sup> Interpretation feeds upon interpretation and, as a result, the work can lack both historical insight into the political context and a sociological perspective on society and structure. John Bale suggested that 'to write of life is the recognition that writing is about representations' and that

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12 Roland Scholz and Olaf Tietjie, *Embedded Case Study Methods: Integrating Quantitative and Qualitative Knowledge* (London: Sage Publications Ltd, 2002).

13 Catherine Parke, *Biography: Writing Lives* (London: Taylor and Francis Group, 2002).

14 Keith Harrison and Brian Lampman, 'The Image of Paul Robeson: Role Model for the Student and Athlete', *Rethinking History* 5, no. 1 (2001): 117-30.

15 Norman Denzin, *Interpretive Biography: Qualitative Research Methods* (Beverly Hills: Sage Publishing, 1985).

the narrative often discovers different ‘layers of truth’ so that biographies can never tell the full story.<sup>16</sup>

The thesis recognizes these limitations but suggests that the study of individual life courses can add to an understating of a range of issues that cannot be illuminated in any other way. A key theme of the current study, for example, is how Reggie Walker was represented by both the British and South African media. This thesis utilizes British sources such as *The Times*, *Daily Mail* and *The Morning Post*, alongside South African newspapers such as the Afrikaans publication *Die Burger* and English-speaking papers *The Friend*, *Rand Daily Mail*, *The Star* and *The Latest*, which was not only read in Durban, but also had a wider circulation and was often quoted in other newspapers. The use of non-English sources has been particularly useful in uncovering material on Walker’s life that helps provide a clearer picture of how he was received at home and abroad. Other national newspapers, such as *The Washington Times* and the *Sydney Morning Herald*, assist in exploring how both Americans and Australians responded to Walker’s success. The use of newspapers alone, however, should be treated with some caution since, despite the claims of factual reporting, bias as well as inaccuracies will inevitably exist.<sup>17</sup> Collins points out that, even in the late nineteenth century, the sporting press had its own agendas and that reporting was probably as selective and superficial as it is today.<sup>18</sup>

To support the newspaper sources other important primary resources included archives at the National Library in Cape Town, South Africa, and the British Library in both London and Boston Spa. Further sources accessed included a range of relevant texts such as Reggie Walker’s training manual, the 1908 Official Olympic Report, the Imperial South African Annual Report, and contemporary writings, including Henry Brooks’ book on *Natal, a History and Description of the Colony*, produced between 1880 and 1920. In addition, material was collected from the Amateur Athletic Association (AAA) archives at the University of Birmingham and the British Olympic Association (BOA) archives at University of East London. Pictures represent valuable evidence and the occasional use of photographs here assists further in clarifying and enhancing the written text. Arthur Marwick has long been using visual

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<sup>16</sup> John Bale, ‘Ernst Jokl and Layers of Truth’, in *Sporting Lives*, ch. 1, ed. Dave Day (Cheshire: MMU, Institute for Performance Research, 2011).

<sup>17</sup> Kitson Clark, *Guide for Research Students Working on Historical Subjects* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1968).

<sup>18</sup> Tony Collins, *Rugby’s Great Split: Class, Culture and the Origins of Rugby League Football* (London: Taylor and Francis Group, 1998).

material as genuine primary sources not simply as ornamentation,<sup>19</sup> and visual sources that can enhance a study should be considered.

In summary, then, this study utilizes a narrative approach by presenting a biography of Reggie Walker to illustrate the tension between nationalism and Empire during the late Victorian and Edwardian periods and to explore the ongoing tensions between amateurism and professionalism. In addition, Walker's experience, having been born in Natal, resulted in him expressing different attitudes towards Britain and South Africa and to him being received slightly differently in different places at home and abroad. While the author draws some tentative conclusions about the implication of this research and proposes that Walker's athletic biography can be seen as representative, in some respects, of the way that nationalism and imperialism intersected during this period, it is recognized that these conclusions are likely to be only some of the possible interpretations available.

### **Chapter 1: Empire, Imperialism and Nationalism**

In order to understand the influences that shaped Reggie Walker's life course and swayed how he was perceived both at home and abroad, it is important that the global context within which sports were played out is understood. During the nineteenth century, the term 'British Empire' commonly defined a collection of regions and individuals ruled by Britain, a nation that established worldwide supremacy during this period, as evidenced by both its territorial expansion and its economic wealth.<sup>20</sup> This economic and territorial network was sustained by rapid advances in the means and reliability of communication, especially the development of postal services, telegraphs, steamships and railways. It was also reinforced by the spread of the English language and by improved business organization, notably in banking and joint stock enterprises. This combination of territory, capital and technology turned migration, in part government-sponsored but overwhelmingly voluntary in nature, into a fundamental feature of

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<sup>19</sup> Arthur Marwick, *The New Nature of History: Knowledge, Evidence, Language* (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2001).

<sup>20</sup> Timothy Parsons, *The British Imperial Century, 1815-1914: A World History Perspective* (Maryland: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers. Inc, 1999), 2; Andrew Porter, *The Oxford History of the British Empire: The Nineteenth Century*, vol. III (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 1; Richard Price, *An Imperial War and the British Working Class: Working-Class Attitudes and Reactions to the Boer War 1899-1902* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1972), 1.

colonial economic life and social development.<sup>21</sup> The development of the British capitalist economy, both at home and abroad, was also accompanied by political intervention,<sup>22</sup> which, in turn, often provoked conflict, and the Empire exercised an ongoing influence on Britain's international relations, as reflected through both imperial issues and foreign policy. Britain's superiority over the colonies and increasing political intervention gave rise to a growth in international institutions and practices that reflected the considerable extent of Britain's cultural influence.<sup>23</sup>

This period, often referred to as Britain's 'Imperial century',<sup>24</sup> was characterized by the significant social, religious and cultural impact made by Britons overseas, an indication of how the Empire expanded between 1815 and 1914. In this respect, 'culture' is interpreted as the ideas, principles, social practices and societal structures which helped distinguish the British and their colonial subjects from one another, and which gave to them their sense of identity, purpose and achievement.<sup>25</sup> Culture was shaped by encounters with different people within the framework of Empire and colonial cultures and imperial institutions continually played upon each other. A colony was considered by the home nation as something to be exploited and colonies were viewed as a reserve of wealth. As a result, the idea that their overseas colonies could become wealthier and strong enough to declare their independence, caused concerns at home since this could weaken the Empire's imperial unity.<sup>26</sup>

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21 H.J. Mandelbrote, 'Constitutional Development, 1834-1858: Fitness for Self-Government', in *The Cambridge History of British Empire* vol. VIII, eds. A.P. Newton and E.A. Benians (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1936), 367.

22 Alfred Maurice Low, 'Nationalism in the British Empire', *The American Political Science Review* 10, no. 2 (1916): 225.

23 'Imperialism', *The Huddersfield Daily Chronicle*, February 9, 1880, 4; 'The Meaning of Empire', *The Morning Post*, April 20, 1896, 3; 'The Spirit of Imperialism', *The Yorkshire Herald*, February 8, 1900, 4.

24 Bernard Porter, *The Lion's Share: A Short History of British Imperialism* (London: Longman, 1976).

25 Maria Frawley, *Invalidism and Identity in Nineteenth-Century Britain* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2004).

26 Alfred Maurice Low, 'Nationalism in the British Empire', *The American Political Science Review* 10, no. 2 (1916): 223-224, 227.

Many of these perspectives can be identified in the nineteenth-century history of British colonialism in South Africa. In 1806, Britain occupied the Cape, having captured the colony in 1795 to prevent it falling into French hands, and it became a British colony in 1814. In the 1820's, the Cape saw one of the largest of British immigrations into Africa and its approximately 4,000 settlers established their own identity.<sup>27</sup> English settlers continued to arrive in Africa throughout the nineteenth century, which saw the annexation of the Boer Republic in Natal in 1843, and the white population of Natal was principally made up of English settlers who shared the ethnic roots of Britain.<sup>28</sup> After the 'Great Trek' of the 1830s and 1840s, the Afrikaners who stayed in the Cape by the end of the nineteenth century remained dedicated to the British Empire and, in particular, to Rhodesia's founder, Cecil John Rhodes. They saw themselves as being involved in a multiparty colonial imperial project, one that often conflicted with the aspirations of both the British government and South African administrators. Even after support for Rhodes dwindled following the Jameson Raid (1895-1896), many remained loyal to their association with the British.<sup>29</sup> Britishness was most intense in Natal where English people, who formed three-quarters of the white population, were constantly aware of the insecurity of their position so they looked to Britain to support them.<sup>30</sup> Even after the new Union of South Africa was created in 1910, Natal was dominated politically by Afrikaners who asserted their Britishness through their belief in British cultural superiority.

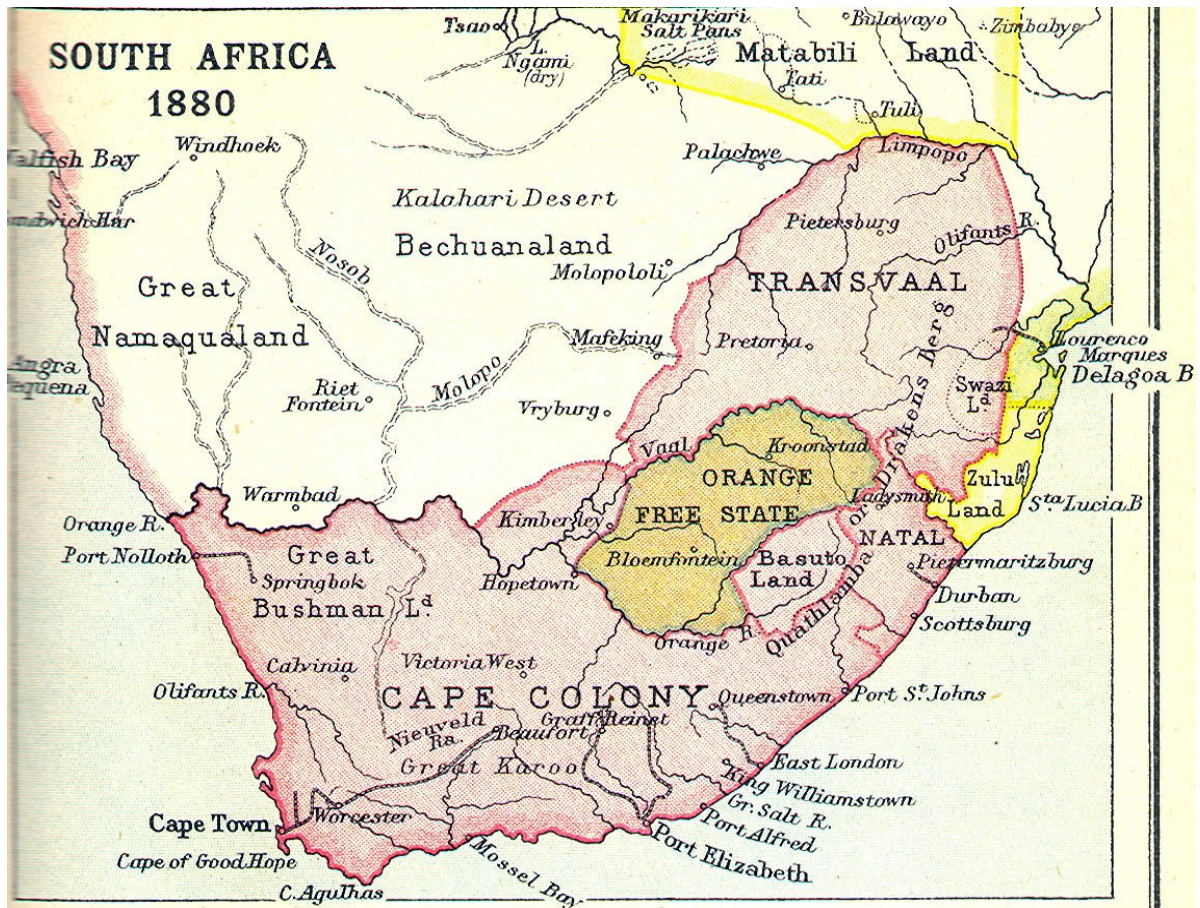
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27 Robert Ross, *Status and Respectability in the Cape Colony 1750-1870: A Tragedy of Manners*, *African Studies Series* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 14; Vivian Bickford-Smith, *Ethnic Pride and Racial Prejudice in Victorian Cape Town* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

28 Henry Brooks, *Natal; A History and Description of the Colony: Including its Natural Features, Production, Industrial Conditions and Prospects* (London: L. Reeve and Co., 1876).

29 Mordechai Tamarkin, 'The Cape Afrikaners and the British Empire', in *The South African War Reappraised: Studies in Imperialism*, ed. Donal Lowry (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000); 'Reconcilement and Fusion', *The North-Eastern Daily Gazette*, November 22, 1899; 'The Triumph of Rhodes', *Freeman's Journal and Daily Commercial Advertiser*, May 9, 1896; 'Patriotism and Imperialism', *The North-Eastern Daily Gazette*, June 8, 1900.

30 Paul Thompson, 'Schools, Sport and Britishness: Young White Natal, 1902-1961', *South African Historical Journal* 45, no. 1 (2001): 223-248.



**Figure 1.** A map of South Africa, the red colour illustrating British Possessions in 1880. Source: Historical Map Directory, 2013.

Britishness took so many different forms in the broader South African context because of some South Africans' ties to the Empire although, while conflict between Britain and South Africa was believed to have completed the British imperial project, it also led to the Boer Wars. The Second Boer War (1889-1902), commonly known as the South African War, was often referred to as the 'biggest small war' of the late-Victorian period and it has been described as an Imperial war that involved the whole nation. The war provided a case for an economic interpretation of 'Imperialism'<sup>31</sup> a term often used in the nineteenth century to describe the process by which a country attained informal influence over another nation's political, economic and social affairs.<sup>32</sup> While the definition is straightforward, the factors that led Britain

31 Richard Price, *An Imperial War and the British Working Class: Working-Class Attitudes and Reactions to the Boer War 1899-1902* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1972), 1.

32 Timothy Parsons, *The British Imperial Century 1815-1914: A World History Perspective* (Maryland: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers. Inc, 1999), 2; 'Economic Aspects of

and its rivals to adopt imperialistic policies in the nineteenth century have been the subject of debate. Evident in the majority of literature on Britain and British imperialism is Britain's ability to hold its vast imperial preserve over a long period.<sup>33</sup>

Undoubtedly, the Empire left its mark on a British society infused with 'Imperialism' in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries<sup>34</sup> and there is little dispute that the significance of imperialism during the late-nineteenth and twentieth centuries can be credited to the emergence of colonial rivalries and an increase in colonial powers. However, when diamonds were discovered in the colonized African regions in Kimberley and the development of gold mining got underway on the Witwatersrand, this fuelled Boer-British antagonism<sup>35</sup> and made Britain wary of its industrial and imperial rivals.<sup>36</sup> Mineral discoveries and mining investments brought demands for labour and infrastructure and the British considered South Africans incapable of meeting these demands.<sup>37</sup> Gold was the financial solidity of the economic world and was the currency of many industrial nations. However, gold production had plummeted worldwide since the 1870's, even more so after the crash of the Baring Brother financiers, who had become the largest source by 1898. One of Britain's main concerns with South Africa was securing control over the Rand production, which accounted for 27.5 per cent of the world's gold,<sup>38</sup> and this could only be achieved by taking control over the Transvaal, or, indeed, the whole of South

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Imperialism', *Reynold's Newspaper*, July 29, 1900.

33 Brian Stoddart, 'Sport, Cultural Imperialism, and Colonial Response in the British Empire', *Sport in Society: Cultures, Commerce, Media, Politics* 9, no. 5 (2006): 809-835.

34 Bernard Porter. 'What did they know of Empire?', *History Today*, October 1, 2004, 42-8.

35 Bill Nasson, *The Boer War: The Struggle for South Africa* (Gloucestershire: The History Press, 2011), 21.

36 Nigel Worden, *The Making of Mordern South Africa: Conquest, Apartheid, Democracy* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2007), 29.

37 Anthony Atmore and Shula Marks, 'The Imperial Factor in South Africa in the Nineteenth Century: Towards a Reassessment', *Journal of Imperial and Commonweath History* 3, (1974): 105-139.

38 Peter Richardson and Jean Jacques van Helten, 'The Gold Mining Industry in the Transvaal, 1886-99', in *The South African War: The Anglo-Boer War, 1899-1902*, ed. Peter Warwick (London: Longman, 1980), 18-36.

Africa.<sup>39</sup> Not surprisingly, Transvaal had become the most economically valuable region of Southern Africa by the late 1890's. While Iain Smith has argued that the significance of the gold calamity and the needs of the mining industry were inconsequential in originating the war that stemmed from the Afrikaner and British rivalry at the time of the Transvaal conflicts,<sup>40</sup> it does appear that the Rand mining industry was a fundamental imperative constituent of the Boer War.

In October 1899, Paul Kruger declared war on the British, with support from the Orange Free State and the Boer Republic. Despite hopes that the war would be brief and decisive, it lasted three years and generated a degree of resentment between the Boer and the British that endured throughout the twentieth century.<sup>41</sup> The war extended over a wide area, initially in the Northern Cape and Natal, followed by lengthy sieges at Ladysmith, Kimberley and Mafeking. Even after the Boer Republic had been subjugated by mid-1900, when British troops commandeered Bloemfontein, Johannesburg and Pretoria, resistance continued for over two years. The British destroyed Boer farms, harvest and cattle and, most notoriously, imprisoned families and their servants in concentration camps, in which approximately 26,000 Boer children and women and 14,000 African detainees died.<sup>42</sup> Only after British military control was established over the Highveld (Johannesburg, Pretoria, Bloemfontein, Vereeniging, Welkom, West and East Rand) were the Afrikaners forced to admit defeat at the signing of the Treaty of Vereeniging in May 1902. The war had ruined many lives and property, an estimated 22,000 British troops had died, the majority from disease, and in excess of 30,000 farmsteads in the Northern Cape had been destroyed.<sup>43</sup> The war did not merely involve the white population. Peter Warwick illustrated the important role that black South Africans played, both as soldiers, often with old scores to settle, and as messengers. In the Northern Cape and Western Transvaal, the Tswana assisted the British

39 Shula Marks, 'Lord Milner and the South African State', *History Workshop Journal* 2, (1979): 50-80; 'Economic Aspects of Imperialism', *Reynold's Newspaper*, July 29, 1900.

40 Iain Smith, *The Origins of the South African War, 1899-1902* (London: Longman, 1996), 36.

41 Nigel Worden, *The Making of Modern South Africa: Conquest, Apartheid, Democracy* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2007), 32.

42 Peter Warwick, *The South African War: The Anglo-Boer War, 1899-1902* (London: Longman, 1980), 60-1.

43 Nigel Worden, *The Making of Modern South Africa: Conquest, Apartheid, Democracy* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2007), 33.



during the siege of Mafeking while the Zulus raided Boer territory in response to their lands being annexed.<sup>44</sup> Black South Africans also assisted in defending the Cape Town to Kimberley railway line and acted as transport drivers for the British forces.<sup>45</sup>

The aftermath of the Boer War marked the end of the prolonged process of the subjugation of South Africa by settlers and imperial powers. Although the Boer troops had been defeated, the outcome of the war was by no means determined. After fighting what was evidently a costly war, the terms of the Treaty of Vereeniging turned the Boer Republics into British colonies, but only with the pledge of internal self-government as soon as that was viable, provided they could confederate into a single economic and political structure that supported the interests of mining capitalism. Britain's conquest of the Transvaal and the Orange Free State during the Boer War thereby paved the way for the Union of South Africa in May 1910. Authorization by the British government had been given to the Boer to govern the politics of the Highveld but economic and political stability required the incorporation of Afrikaner politicians into a central government, rather than as a self-governing Boer community. In 1910, a Union Central Government was established with regions being allowed a degree of self-determination; Cape Town was the parliamentary capital, Pretoria the administrative and Bloemfontein the legal.<sup>46</sup>

#### *Boer War and the British Working Class*

The impact of the Boer War on British politics was evident in the outcome of the 1906 election, which saw the victory of the traditional anti-war Liberal Party, although the growth of support for Labour from 1909 had resulted in the decline in the Liberal Party by 1910.<sup>47</sup> Historians have generally been content with an interpretation that the war illustrated a British working-class attachment to imperialism, which rests almost entirely upon working-class behaviour during the Boer War, as illustrated by evidence from working-class men's clubs. The origins of the club

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44 Peter Warwick, *Black People and the South African War, 1888-1902* (London: Longman, 1983), 33.

45 William Richard Nasson, 'Doing Down their Masters: Africans, Boers and Treason in the Cape Colony, 1899-1902', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 12, (1983): 29-53.

46 Nigel Worden, *The Making of Modern South Africa: Conquest, Apartheid, Democracy* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2007), 29-36; 'The Need for National Unity', *The Courier and Argus*, December 10, 1900, 4.

47 David Baker, Andrew Gamble, and Steve Ludlam, '1846, 1906, 1996 Conservative Splits and European Integration', *The Political Quarterly* 64, no. 4 (1993): 420-434.

movement lay in middle-class philanthropy and the clubs were one of many social reforming institutions founded by the middle-class for the working-classes although within this ‘social-reforming philanthropy the working-class had retained their character both in composition and in function’.<sup>48</sup>

In 1899, the Hackney Club reflected the dominant trades of the area, with the majority of the membership composed of shoemakers, cabinet-makers and wood-workers,<sup>49</sup> and when Henry Solly, an English social reformer,<sup>50</sup> established the Club and Institute Union, his objective was to provide legal and moral advice from patrons of the upper- and middle-classes. These clubs represented a collective expression of social, cultural, political and educational features of working-class society. By 1900, nearly 900 clubs and 321,000 members were allied to the Clubs and the Institute Union that governed them.<sup>51</sup> Formed to provide an alternative to pubs, the clubs were practical meeting places for politically conscious workers so lectures of political interest were commonplace and it was from these debates and lectures that the basic characteristics of working-class attitudes emerged. Since these discussions and debates were rarely within any particular political framework, the clubs reveal attitudes and reactions that were typical of working-class men.<sup>52</sup> In general, working-class men were seen by middle-class socialists as having a lack of knowledge or lack of culture. One socialist complained that ‘certain words which had always signified clear and worthy ideas, such as honour, patriotism, justice, either form no part of the working-man’s vocabulary or are grossly and malignantly perverted from their true sense.’<sup>53</sup>

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48 Richard Price, *An Imperial War and the British Working Class: Working-Class Attitudes and Reactions to the Boer War 1899-1902* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1972), 2, 3, 47.

49 *Working Man*, March 17, 1866, 151; *Club Life*, April 29, 1899, 1.

50 Censuses 1861(RG/9/3159); 1871(RG/10/4082); 1881(RG/11/813); 1891 (RG/12/590); 1901 (RG/13/1373); 1903 National Probate Calendar.

51 Richard Price, *An Imperial War and the British Working Class: Working-Class Attitudes and Reactions to the Boer War 1899-1902* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1972), 47, 49, 51.

52 *Ibid.*, 48-49.

53 *Ibid.*, 72-73; Rowena Hammad. ‘How Long Before the Sunset? British Attitudes to War, 1871-1914’, *History Today*, 2010.

The South African ‘question’ formed part of the debate over colonialism within the working-classes and is important in the context of any discussion of Walker since much of his support in Britain came from those classes who followed sport. The debate that did take place in these clubs over the Boer War was almost entirely anti-war but there were considerable differences between the working-class objections to the war and those that were expressed through assorted anti-war committees. In 1896, the Imperial South African Association<sup>54</sup> was established to propagate the necessity for a United British South Africa, by persuading the working-classes of the importance of British supremacy in South Africa. In 1898, the Association’s Annual Report asserted that there was a growing demand for lectures, predominantly from the Radical Association in the Metropolis where the views of the South African Association speakers had been met with approval.<sup>55</sup> In 1901, a *Club Life* correspondent commented that ‘we are pleased to note these lectures at the Isle of Dogs Club are being well received for they largely tend to improve the tone of club life’.<sup>56</sup> Nevertheless, this does not mean that working-class institutions were devoid of the customary forms of patriotism and it was perfectly possible to hold anti- and pro-war meetings without the fear that they would be disrupted, which tended to be true of all working-class institutions.<sup>57</sup> In 1901, attempts were made by the Trade Council to obtain a united condemnation of the ‘methods of barbarism’ being committed by the army in Southern Africa and many working men were concerned as to what degree the British soldier was to be held accountable for the farm burnings and other atrocities.<sup>58</sup> While members were prepared to condemn the government, they were not prepared to do anything that might censure the actions of the working-class soldier.<sup>59</sup> This reluctance was never a rejection of the idea of Empire or of

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54 Imperial South African Association, ‘Case for the British Subjects in the Transvaal’, *Journals of the House of Representatives*, 1899, A-05.

55 Imperial South African Association, ‘Annual Report 1897-98’.

56 *Club Life*, March 23, 1901, 10.

57 Samuel Cron Cronwright-Schreiner, *The Land of Free Speech: Record of a Campaign on Behalf of Peace in England and Scotland in 1900* (London: New Age Press, 1906), 18; Richard Price, *An Imperial War and the British Working Class: Working-Class Attitudes and Reactions to the Boer War 1899-1902* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1972), 81.

58 *Ibid.*, 86; Rowena Hammal. ‘How Long Before the Sunset? British Attitudes to War, 1871-1914’, *History Today*, 2010.

59 *Daily Free Press*, March 7, 1901.

imperial identity or unity, and neither could it be taken as any lessening of the traditional nationalistic attitudes of the British working-class.

The ambivalence of this popular approach to the South Africans was reinforced when the Boer generals (Botha, De la Rey and De Wet) visited England. Arriving on the steamship *Saxon*, in 1905, they were welcomed by a ‘tremendous concourse’ of the public, who expressed their admiration for the Boer by cheering them on their arrival. The generals travelled on to London by train and for a second time they were greeted with enthusiasm, with members of the press struggling to get close to ‘our friend the enemy and brave soldiers’ for an interview. General Botha was reported to be gratified at the reception and the hospitality provided by the British government. In London, Botha and the other generals attended a private meeting with the King, who spoke about the Boer Wars, noted the ‘gallant and brave manner’ in which they had fought, the ‘consideration and kindness’ they had shown to British soldiers, including the wounded, and he wished them well for the future.<sup>60</sup> The importance of this reception in the context of this thesis is the way in which all sections of British society seem to have reacted to South Africans in general and later, of course, to Reggie Walker in particular.

### *Nationalism*

Sport has been consistently used as a vehicle to express nationalist sentiment and, in recent years, there has been a substantial growth in literature on the relationship between sport, nations and national identities. Thus sport, perhaps better than any social practice, clarifies the essence of nationalism, namely the tensions and contradictions involved in forming collective social identities.<sup>61</sup> For some authors, the term ‘nationalism’ is a modern term and one that has a range of meanings in the contemporary world. These can relate to the formation or growth of nations, sentiment of belonging and a political and social movement on behalf of the nation, an ideology of the nation. Traditionally, the emergence of the concept of nationalism is often associated with the French Revolution of 1789, when the first ‘nation-state’ was created.<sup>62</sup> French writer Ernest Renan defined the term ‘nation’ as a national community, a kind of moral conscience and a ‘daily plebiscite’, and a pledge to the nation, as a voluntary, individual decision, taken every

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<sup>60</sup> *Sheffield Daily Telegraph*, August 1905, 5.

<sup>61</sup> Richard Holt, *Sport and the British: A Modern History* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), 253.

<sup>62</sup> Anthony Smith, *Nationalism* (Malden: Polity Press, 2010), 5.

day to be an American or a French man or woman. Although related, the terms ‘nationalism’ and ‘national identity’, are not synonymous. In the ongoing discourse, nationalism usually implies the existence or construction of forms of national identity, while the latter does not presuppose the existence of the former. As sport is an international phenomenon, the terms nationalism and national identity describe the currents that are, in themselves, international and the concepts thrive on both contests and rivalries.<sup>63</sup>

For Walter Bagehot, ‘nation-making’ was an essential feature of nineteenth-century evolution,<sup>64</sup> when the seeds were planted for the emergence of the majority of Europe’s nations in the twentieth century at a time when Empires were beginning to disintegrate. Much of contemporary social theory and research perceives nationalism and war as equally interdependent but, while war inevitably increases national solidarity, nationalism is neither the product of, nor the cause of, war.<sup>65</sup> Benjamin Akzin asserted that the complexity lies in defining the nation itself, with the term ‘nation’ conveying to individuals, or ethnic groups, characteristics such as language, tradition, mores, culture and religion.<sup>66</sup> Shared nationality, in some ways, vouches for a mutual understanding on issues such as language, history, culture and other symbols and, in this respect, Benedict Anderson’s ‘imagined community’ has long survived as a distinct observation on what constitutes national identities.<sup>67</sup>

In many parts of the world, nationalism arose in conjunction with the rise of democratic government but, elsewhere, it was a reaction to imperial conquest, as in the early twentieth-century African nationalist movements which were political coalitions formed to fight colonialism.<sup>68</sup> State creation, where the defined goal was to unify a nation under one state, as in Italy and Germany, was one of the most significant events of the nineteenth century and

<sup>63</sup> Ernst B. Haas, ‘What is Nationalism and Why Should We Study It’, *International Organisation* 30, no. 3 (1986): 707-744.

<sup>64</sup> Walter Bagehot, *Physics and Politics*, vol. III (London: Paul Trench, 1887), 48-64.

<sup>65</sup> Sinisa Malesevic, ‘Nationalism, War and Social Cohesion’, *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 34, no. 1 (2011): 143.

<sup>66</sup> Benjamin Akzin, *State and Nation* (London: Hutchinson, 1964), 30.

<sup>67</sup> Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (London: Verso, 1986).

<sup>68</sup> James Mayall, *Nationalism and Internationalism Society* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 2.

nationalism played an important part in the revolutions, especially during 1848.<sup>69</sup> The first within Europe was in Italy, although the events that played out in Germany were much more obvious. In 1864, Bismarck went to war, together with Austria, against Denmark to expel them from Schleswig and turned against Austria to help Italy challenge Austria, before supporting Hungary's independence in 1867. The Prusso-Franco War during 1870–71, Bismarck's final campaign, concluded with the affirmation of the German Empire.<sup>70</sup>

A British national identity had been forged in conflict with their continental neighbours, especially France, and the British people, both at home and abroad, were a cohesive whole, bound by their ties of allegiance and their ethnic identity.<sup>71</sup> During the late nineteenth century, distinct regional identities became apparent in the British Empire colonies in South Africa. The Cape Town region of South Africa was inseparably identified with racism and imperialism. The Eastern region of Cape Town, which included Port Elizabeth, was substantially different from the Western region, which identified with values of liberalism and Afrikaner loyalty.<sup>72</sup> Many of these different approaches were displayed in diverse approaches to sport and masculinity.

### *Sport and Masculinity*

Sport always permitted cultural differences to be displayed, including extending the relationship of masculinities to broader issues such as class, race and nationality.<sup>73</sup> In the historiography of imperial sport, the role of gender, especially masculinity, is inadequately represented,<sup>74</sup> even

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<sup>69</sup> Eric Hobsbawm, *The Age of Revolution 1789-1848* (New York: Random House, 1996), chapter 7.

<sup>70</sup> Otto Pflanze, *Bismarck and the Development of Germany: The Period of Unification, 1875-1871* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1968).

<sup>71</sup> Biku Parekh, 'Defining British National Identity', *The Political Quarterly* 71, no. 1 (2000): 4-14.

<sup>72</sup> Takayuki Horiuchi, 'British Identity in the Late Nineteenth Century Cape Colony: Racism, Imperialism, and the Eastern Cape', *Zinbun* 41, (2008): 21-43.

<sup>73</sup> Raphael Samuel, *Patriotism: The Making and Unmaking of British National Identity* (New York: Routledge, 1989).

<sup>74</sup> Clare Midgley, *Gender and Imperialism* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1998); Mrinalini Sinha, *Colonial Masculinity: The "Manly Englishman" and the "Effeminate Bengali" in the Late Nineteenth Century*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995); Mrinalini Sinha, 'Gender in the Critique of Colonialism and Nationalism', in *Women and Gender in Islam: Historical Roots of a Modern Debate*, ed. Ann-Louise Shapiro (New

though sport operated within imperial contexts as a way of constructing athletic masculinities, to counteract British ideology,<sup>75</sup> and provided a forum where the ideologies of British Imperialism, such as manhood and nationalism, could be challenged.<sup>76</sup> Britain drew heavily on the symbols and ethos of sport and what it meant to be a man as different communities continually appropriated sport as a mechanism to define the personal qualities associated with the terms ‘man’, ‘manly’ or ‘masculine’. Although the term ‘manliness’ was often used during the nineteenth century to portray characteristics of the ideal civilized individual, an increasing use of the term during the early twentieth century shifted discussion from an ‘upright manliness’ to one of ‘virile masculinity’. Definitions of the term ‘masculinity’ took into account both good and bad characteristics witnessed in real men.<sup>77</sup> Depending on the group doing the judging, there was the possibility that some men might not have all the required traits of masculinity and when men from another class or culture did not live up to their perceptions of gender appropriateness such groups were not considered to be ‘real men’. Sport in the British Empire helped to define perceptions of gender and a process of competition resulted in perpetual reinforcement and revision.<sup>78</sup>

As the twentieth century progressed, sporting competitions between men of different nations increased.<sup>79</sup> Sport was not, and is not, related to a single vision of masculinity, and different games formed different masculinities.<sup>80</sup> Similarly, the same sports in different locations produced distinct masculinities, with varieties of masculinities based on political power, race, class and age, all of which were traversed by gender. Communities throughout the British

Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1994).

75 Patrick McDevitt, *May the Best Man Win: Sport, Masculinity and Nationalism in Great Britain and the Empire, 1880-1935* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2004), 138-143.

76 Ibid., 7.

77 David Gilmore, *Manhood in the Making: Cultural Concepts of Masculinity* (London: Yale University Press, 1990), 172; Judith Allen, ‘Men Interminably in Crisis? Historians on Masculinity, Sexual Boundaries, and Manhood’, *Radical History Review* 82, (2002): 199-202.

78 Patrick McDevitt, *May the Best Man Win: Sport, Masculinity and Nationalism in Great Britain and the Empire, 1880-1935* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2004), 1-13.

79 Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1993).

80 Patrick McDevitt, *May the Best Man Win: Sport, Masculinity and Nationalism in Great Britain and the Empire, 1880-1935* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2004), 6-10.

Empire used sport to construct, propagate and maintain national conceptions of manhood and viewed these games as transformative endeavours that created men out of boys. Thus, sport became not just a mirror to society but a creation of and a preservation of power relationships<sup>81</sup> and, by spreading these games, it was believed that these men were also spreading civilization.<sup>82</sup>

While colonial peoples took these basic lessons on board, they also used their own experiences and environments to develop distinctive cultural and athletic masculinities. Like British men, who played and advocated games for a variety of personal reasons, colonial subjects also expressed their own agendas and meanings on the playing fields of the Empire. Organized games functioned crucially within the imperial context as a means for distributing British ideals of masculinity. Although the elite might have promoted the games for one set of reasons, and subordinate colonists might have embraced them for another, there is evidence to suggest that they met on common ground as far as their understanding of what constituted 'masculinity'. While the sentiment 'may the best man win' was generally accepted within Britain and the Empire, it was also a prime measurement of the worthiness of the term 'man'.<sup>83</sup> This helps to explain, in part, the positive reaction to Walker's victory in 1908, which was portrayed not only as a victory for the 'Briton', who just happened to be living in the colonies, but also as a victory for the right kind of man.

#### *Masculinity and Patriotism in Natal*

National identity is defined as an expression of difference, based on perceived members of a community within a given region, such as Natal, the birthplace of Walker, and is often articulated as 'patriotism'.<sup>84</sup> The transformation of this sense of mutual difference between groups of individuals into hostile orientations to other individuals, nations and states, defines them as rivals.<sup>85</sup> As a means of ensuring social integration, dominant groups of individuals find

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81 Clifford Geertz, *Myth, Symbol, and Culture* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1917).

82 James Mangan, *The Games Ethic and Imperialism: Aspects of the Diffusion of an Ideal* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981).

83 Patrick McDevitt, *May the Best Man Win: Sport, Masculinity and Nationalism in Great Britain and the Empire, 1880-1935* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2004), 6-10.

84 John Hargreaves, 'Olympism and Nationalism: Some Preliminary Consideration', *International Review for the Sociology of Sport* 27, (1992): 119-135.

85 Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (London: Verso, 1986).



it in their personal interest to identify with and support their populations. The commitment to cohesion is a common denominator and seems to account for the way in which a community can exist. A national community shares ‘something’; this ‘something’ may not be original or exclusive but is enough to fill the need for symbols within communities. This ‘something’ could range from ideas and values (including beliefs in myths stressing the community’s ethnic uniqueness) via languages, religions, sports and history, to activities and territories.<sup>86</sup>

When considering Britishness in South Africa, and what it meant to individuals, in particular to those who were not originally from Britain, the different types of Britishness included those whose first language was English and those of British ancestry who had settled in South Africa. The majority came from England, with relatively few identifying with Scotland, Ireland or Wales, although they tended to merge into a broader British identity.<sup>87</sup> The immigrants who came from elsewhere within Europe took on different forms of British identity. Some identified politically with Britain while, for others, Britishness meant a territorial relationship. There were also those who spoke English and were key to the British Empire, in particular in South Africa and the colony of Natal, where Britishness was evidently strong.<sup>88</sup> In 1909, Englishmen in Natal voted against entering the Union of South Africa, although their identification with Britain and the Empire faded as the British Empire declined. Even so, many British South Africans retained their allegiance to the Crown and the Empire after the Union in 1910.<sup>89</sup> Depending on the individual, loyalties to South Africa and the British Empire could be shared in different ways. The historian Arthur Keppel Jones described how he had two primary

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**86** Eric Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990); Bruce Carrington and Geoffrey Short, ‘What Makes a Person British? Children’s Conceptions of their National Culture and Identity’, *Educational Studies* 21, no. 2 (1995): 217-238.

**87** Donal McCracken, *The Irish in Southern Africa, 1795-1910*, vol. 2, *Southern African-Irish Studies* (Durban: Ireland and Southern Africa Project, 1992).

**88** John Lambert, ‘South African British? Or Dominion South Africans? The Evolution of an Identity in the 1910s and 1920s’, *South African Historical Journal* 43, no. 1 (2000): 197-222; David Robbins and Wyndham Hartley, *Inside the Last Outpost* (Pietermaritzburg: Shuter and Shooter, 1985).

**89** John Darwin, ‘Third British Empire? The Dominion Idea in Imperial Politics’, in *The Oxford History of the British Empire: The Twentieth Century*, vol. IV, eds. Judith Brown and Roger Louis (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999); Paul Thompson, ‘Schools, Sport and Britishness: Young White Natal, 1902-1961’, *South African Historical Journal* 45, no. 1 (2001): 223-248.

identifications; to South Africa, when growing up in Cape Town during the early years of Union,<sup>90</sup> the land he knew, and the other to Britain. In his memoirs, he spoke about the pressure that was placed upon him by family traditions and English society, along with the prestige of being attached to England. Being ‘home born’, rather than merely ‘colonial’, carried a even greater privilege.

The white people of Natal were British and intensely patriotic and regarded themselves as the last outpost of England. Working through different institutions, including the family, sports and leisure clubs, the military and, in particular, the schools, masculinities were being shaped by the settlers themselves, which, in turn, created a tight, culturally adhesive, identity. This settler masculinity became hegemonic, binding white men to a set of gender values, which were class and race specific. A keen sense of class was developed which made it difficult for outsiders to gain admission. In order to become a member, new immigrants could enrol in some of the many social institutions that had been created. These were consciously modelled on their British counterparts and masculinity permeated the colony, becoming a key feature of the colonial gender order. A strong emphasis was placed on being tough and fit, on obedience and teamwork. These were the values that made sport popular within the colony and sporting institutions provided men with power and served as networks by which white male prestige and influence were sustained. Modelled on the ideals of the British public schools, white boys and men found the demands of Natal masculinity exacting, in that sport was played in a manner that saw sport as a physical manifestation of masculinity. This required hard, athletic bodies and stigmatized men who did not fit the mould.<sup>91</sup>

This hard masculinity was a necessary part of the elevation of Natal families to positions of social status and prestige. In colonial settings, education was an integral part of social capital and the schools played a major role in uniting masculinity and colonial power structures. Social values were spread by the masters and boys of these schools and, from the outset, Natal’s schools were staffed by men from Britain<sup>92</sup> because, for Natal’s education administrators, the

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<sup>90</sup> Arthur Keppel-Jones, *A Patriot in Search of a Country* (Kamloops: University College of the Caribook Print Services, 2003).

<sup>91</sup> Robert Morrell, *From Boys to Gentlemen: Settler Masculinity in Colonial Natal 1880-1920* (South Africa: UNISA Press, 2001); Robert Morrell, ‘Forging a Ruling Race: Rugby and White, Masculinity in Colonial Natal, c. 1870-1910’, in *Making Men: Rugby and Masculine Identity*, eds. Timothy Chandler and John Nauright (Oxon: Routledge, 1996).

<sup>92</sup> Cape Town National Library Archives. *Council Education Minutes*, April 26 1889, 3.

English education system was the preferred model. To provide the right kind of men with the required middle-class values and ambition, good secondary schooling became essential, and the connection between schooling and a career was fundamental, particularly for ambitious young men. Durban High school resembled an English grammar school and commanded a prestigious place in the secondary schooling in Natal. Boys belonged to a range of formal and informal groups, including sports teams. Close friendship was not common, since it was not an accepted form of male relationship, so sport became the central experience of the school year for many boys. In learning and participating in sport, boys developed a relationship with their own bodies, as well as with the social world, and sport provided the context in which boys measured themselves.<sup>93</sup>

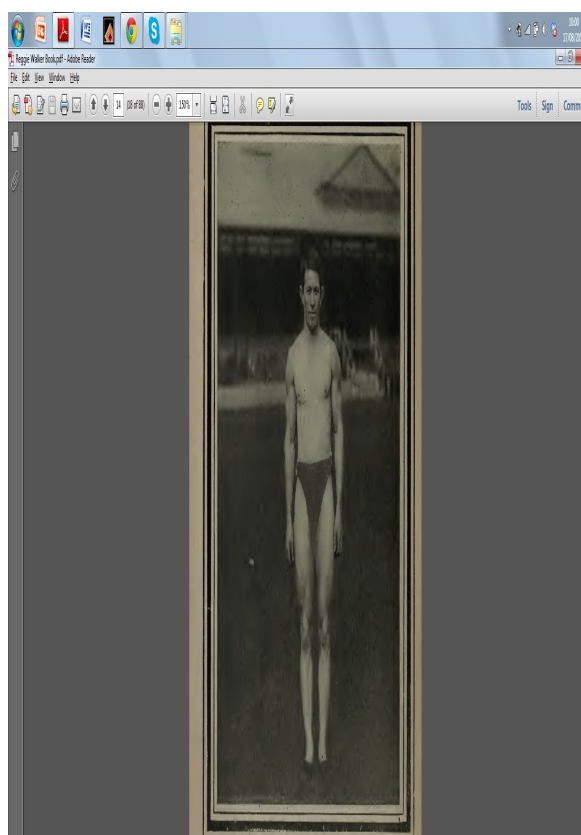
### *National Sport and Masculinities*

As sports have been linked to masculine values it should come as no surprise that the most celebrated national sports are particularly entangled with masculinity. For example, Australia is a nation excelling in most water sports, like swimming and rowing. On the other hand, there are sports that have specific significance to a nation. In South Africa, there has been an obsession with rugby while cricket is a visible part of the English heritage in the West Indies. Within Britain and her colonies, cricket came to symbolize the very essence of British society, particularly during the Victorian period. Cricket, the countrified game, was transformed into a symbolic and powerful force that represented all the values of the ruling classes and their representatives. The game was regarded as an exclusively English creation<sup>94</sup> and when it was developed in South Africa, it was situated against a backdrop of a secure British nationalism. The term 'national' involves some popular consensus, hence 'national' sports must be embraced by the population at large. Every national sport seems to be a carrier of claimed implicit virtues, highly regarded in the home country, and they are seen as symbols of uniqueness.

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<sup>93</sup> Robert William Connell, *Which Way is Up? Essays on Sex, Class and Culture* (Australia: Allen and Unwin, 1983).

<sup>94</sup> Dean Allen, 'A Man's Game: Cricket, War and Masculinity, South Africa, 1899-1902', *The International Journal of the History of Sport* 28, no. 1 (2010): 63-80.



**Figure 2.** The anatomy of Reggie Walker. Synonymous with the ‘athletic body’.

*Source:* Reginald. E. Walker, *Textbook of Sprinting: Olympic English and South African Sprint Champion-Holder of Several World’s Records* (London: Health and Strength Ltd, 1910).

Different ways of applying the term, ranging from politically determined applications to cultural preferences showing themselves through activity or spectator interest, can be distinguished. They illustrate various historical approaches to the cultural role of sport and they indicate a concept still considered applicable in certain circumstances. In nation building, defined by its political and administrative imperatives, national authorities have declared a certain sport or activity to be, officially, the national sport of the country. Secondly, ‘national sports’ can be found in nation-states having moved further on in the process of nation building, but where there still exists a need or desire to elevate an element of the popular culture to something national or uniting, such as with the American approach to baseball.

A third way of utilizing the national sport concept has been to ‘elect’ national sports based on how well the country has been doing in international competition. This does not seem particularly cultural but a rather more cynical way of inventing uniting symbols and it is not a way of building or representing deep identities. Nevertheless, it would be the consequence of a reduction of the nation, at least the sports interested part of the nation, to sports consumers

without any real loyalty. A fourth means of detecting a country's national sport has been to study participation and simply state that what the people of the nation do must be the national sport or pastime. Such an approach is made, from time to time, especially by countries where the sports organization historically has been built on popular movements with an inherent and explicit goal of mass sport, such as gymnastics, as in many northern European nations.<sup>95</sup> Finally, the definition of a national sport can be based on what the nation engages in, including as spectators, be it in the arena or in front of the television set. From such a perspective, sports would be regarded as part of the mass culture and the commercialized entertainment industry.

The difference between the fourth and fifth definitions is cultural, dealing with opposing views on what was most important, participation or sport as commercialized entertainment. Cricket was often portrayed as an archetypal British game, displaying values and attitudes considered typically British even if these values were contested. There was also the image of cricket as the game of the British Empire. Hence, cricket has come to mean a lot to nations that have not much else in common, except their having been a part of the British Empire, either as a dominion or a colony such as Australia, New Zealand and South Africa, the West Indies and the Indian sub-continent.<sup>96</sup> Rugby was another sport that transmitted shared values across the Empire, especially to South Africa and New Zealand who began touring the home country around the start of the twentieth century. The growth of international competitions between these countries in these sports was mirrored by a significant growth in international competitions in a range of sports worldwide, epitomized by the revival of the Olympic Games in 1896. It was in these events that some sports, which transcended national boundaries and stereotypes, such as track and field athletics, became the common denominator by which nations measured themselves against others. The USA, in particular, was especially keen to use athletics as a yardstick for their comparative dominance over other countries, especially Britain.

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<sup>95</sup> Steven Pope, *Patriotic Games: Sporting Traditions in the American Imagination, 1876-1926* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 60-78.

<sup>96</sup> 'The British Empire', *The Times*, October 20, 1877, 4.

## Chapter 2: Olympism and Internationalism

Within the British Empire, ‘cultural power’<sup>97</sup> was used as a mechanism for the prolonging of British dominance, as evidenced by the beliefs and ideals that were passed on throughout the Empire by British administrators, military representatives, entrepreneurs, tradesmen, educators and settlers. These philosophies reflected the preoccupations within the governing circles of the Empire for whom sport was envisaged as a powerful but informal social institution that generated shared beliefs and attitudes among masters and servants, while at the same time highlighting the social differences between them. The growth of the British Empire during the late-nineteenth century harmonized with what constituted a games revolution. Within the British imperial setting, sport, which had originated in Britain, became a philosophy of social relations and the history of British sport helps to explain the peculiar social institutions and cultural patterns of colonial society.<sup>98</sup> This chapter explores the British cultural influence, both on a national and international level, in particular in their colonial dominion of South Africa, and within sport where the concepts of professionalism and amateurism produced some distinctive interpretations. These differences will be further explored in relation to Walker’s life course later in the thesis.

The Church was one establishment through which the shared values of games were spread throughout the Empire, particularly when the ideals of muscular Christianity emerged during the late-nineteenth century. Imbued with the games spirit, young men saw a natural link between healthy sport and Christianity, a trend associated with a particular vision of male virility. The Missionary Society of the Church of England was one of the largest organizations to be recognized by non-religious men as a powerful factor in the growth and maintenance of British Imperialism and supremacy.<sup>99</sup> While this middle-class athletic philosophy came to be widely accepted, athletic competition was valuable to the local community, and sport was actively involved in the creation of manhood. As organized games spread from the confines of Britain, the British working-class and colonial competitors began to excel and the idea that elite British men were the finest athletic specimens was challenged. This was significant since their

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<sup>97</sup> Brian Stoddart, ‘Sport, Cultural Imperialism, and Colonial Response in the British Empire’, *Sport in Society: Cultures, Commerce, Media, Politics* 9, no. 5 (2006): 650.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*, 812-813.

<sup>99</sup> ‘Foreign Missions’, *The North-Eastern Daily Gazette*, May 3, 1893; ‘The Church Missionary Society’, *The Standard*, March 15, 1899, 8.

assumed superiority had characterized the relationship between the British games philosophy and the athletic world of the British Empire.<sup>100</sup>

British middle-class sport was played or directed by amateurs, men who pursued their activity within the distinctive social relationships established within the British public schools, where the sporting preference was for team sports.<sup>101</sup> Amateurism became the dominant sporting philosophy in the late nineteenth century and gradually replaced the practice of professionalism in sport, itself a much older concept that could be traced back to the athletic practices of the Classical world. Amateurs shunned the temptation to mix money with sport, because they deemed it unsportsmanlike, whilst professionals remained characterized by having an income often dependant on gambling. During the mid-nineteenth century, elite sports clubs emerged, controlled by amateurs who brought British sport under their control. Amateurism was embedded in the English universities, Oxford and Cambridge, and institutionalized by the Amateur Athletic Club (AAC) in London. Magazines and books provided information on how to play but also on how to conduct oneself, how to dress and how to act as models of social acceptability.<sup>102</sup> By the end of the nineteenth century, the majority of these sports were firmly established throughout the British Empire and this acceptance meant also adopting the social purpose of the games.<sup>103</sup> As British athletes competed in more international events in the late Victorian and early Edwardian periods, amateurism became diluted, since the material benefits of professional sport became more attractive to certain nations and to particular communities.

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100 Jackson Lears, 'The Concept of Cultural Hegemony: Problems and Possibilities', *American Historical Review* 90, no. 3 (1985): 567.

101 Keith A. P. Sandiford, 'The Victorians at Play: Problems in Historiographical Methodology', *Journal of Social History* 15, no. 2 (1987): 271-287; Peter Bailey, *Leisure and Class in Victorian England: Rational Recreation and the Contest for Control, 1830-1885* (London: RKP, 1978), 136-140; James Mangan, *Athleticism in the Victorian and Edwardian Public School: The Emergence and Consolidation of an Educational Ideology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 413; Daniel Gorman, 'Amateurism, Imperialism, Internationalism and the First British Empire', *The International Journal of the History of Sport* 27, no. 4 (2010): 613; Brian Stoddart, 'Sport, Cultural Imperialism, and Colonial Response in the British Empire', *Sport in Society: Cultures, Commerce, Media, Politics* 9, no. 5 (2006): 815.

102 Brian Stoddart, 'Sport, Cultural Imperialism, and Colonial Response in the British Empire', *Sport in Society: Cultures, Commerce, Media, Politics* 9, no. 5 (2006): 819; Neil Carter, 'From Knox to Dyson: Coaching, Amateurism and British Athletics, 1912-1947', *Sport in History* 30, no. 1 (2010): 55-81.

103 Daniel Gorman, 'Amateurism, Imperialism, Internationalism and the First British Empire', *The International Journal of the History of Sport* 27, no. 4 (2010): 626.

This led some British athletes to believe that their amateur sport culture left them at a disadvantage in comparison to more professionally orientated sporting nations in the early 1900s and their concerns led to a debate about the quality of British coaches and the accessibility of training facilities. The amateur-professional dichotomy developed further when American colleges adopted a far more rigorous approach to competition than did the British. In late nineteenth-century America, where class lines were less distinctive than in Britain, amateurs were considered less skilful compared to the professionals. Their solution was to retain amateurism in the international arena but accept a degree of professionalism at home. Smith argues that the Americans were no less enthusiastic in their orientation to amateurism than were the British but that they regarded the ethos as more of an ideological construct than an actual set of practices with regard to rules.<sup>104</sup> American newspapers distinguished between amateurism and professionalism based on skill level, and not economic status.<sup>105</sup> Nevertheless, the different approaches taken by British and American sportsmen resulted in considerable tension and conflict over how sport should be played in the years leading up to the 1908 Olympic Games in London, where these issues erupted into a series of confrontations.

#### *Nationalism and the Olympics*

Sports were regulated on an international scale through formal organizations by 1908. Governing bodies such as the International Olympic Committee (IOC) and the Federation of International Football Associations (FIFA), founded in 1894 and 1904 respectively, had allied themselves with idealistic debates of internationalism and they represented their events as catalysts for international understanding and goodwill.<sup>106</sup> The growth of these organizations provided a vehicle for national pride and prestige through events such as the Olympic Games, which offered to all nations a global platform unmatched by other cultural and political bodies. The British influence on the modern Games can be traced back to the Much Wenlock Olympian Games organized first in 1850 by Dr William Penny Brooke, who subsequently founded the

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<sup>104</sup> Ronald Smith, *Sports and Freedom: The Rise of Big Time College Athletics* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 171.

<sup>105</sup> Ronald Smith, 'History of Amateurism in Men's Intercollegiate Athletics: The Continuance of a 19th-Century Anachronism in America', *Quest* 45, no. 4 (1993): 430-447; 'A Year Amongst Americans', *The Times*, August 14, 1908, 8.

<sup>106</sup> David Whitson and Donald Macintosh, 'The Global Circus: International Sport, Tourism and the Marketing of Cities', *Journal of Sport and Social Issues* 20, no. 3 (1996): 278.



National Olympian Association in 1865.<sup>107</sup> Pierre de Coubertin was one of several individuals concerned with the idea of re-establishing the Olympic Games in this period<sup>108</sup> and he looked to the British public schools, whose sporting philosophy he especially admired, and to Brooke's initiatives, for a modern interpretation of the ancient ideal. Coubertin believed strongly in the concept of internationalism, which had emerged from within economic and social elites with their development of organizations like the International Red Cross (1863), the Esperanto Movement (1887) and the Scouting Movement (1908). The principles of internationalism formed a fundamental tenet of the philosophy of Olympism, which functioned within a global political context.

To make sense of the connection between Olympism and nationalism, one must distinguish between the concepts of politics and culture, which normally refers to a cluster within a nation, more specifically as a means of forming identities. Political affairs were the process whereby social groups mobilized themselves in pursuit of perceived interest and valued objectives in order to influence powerful relations within and between states. The majority of the literature<sup>109</sup> regarding the link between sport and politics focuses on the methods used by nations to promote themselves through utilizing sport as a tool and a highly visible political medium. In actual fact, pioneering figures in the organization of international sports revealed a commitment to both internationalism and to the welfare of their own nation states. Coubertin, for example, wrote enthusiastically about sporting events bringing together young male athletes from across the world but he was also particularly concerned with the physical well-being of young Frenchmen following defeat in the Prusso-Franco War.<sup>110</sup>

It seems then, that the concepts of nationalism, internationalism and Olympism were interconnected. Nationalism is characterized as a political construct and Olympism as a cultural construct, which, in given circumstances, can have political significance, thus becoming

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107 Don Anthony, 'Shropshire Lad in Pursuit of an Olympic Dream', *The Times*, July 19, 1990.

108 'International Olympic Committee', *The Times*, June 21, 1904, 9.

109 David Black and John Nauright, *Rugby and the South African Nation: Sport, Cultures, Politics, and Power in the Old and New South Africans* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1998).

110 William J. Morgan, 'Cosmopolitanism, Olympism, and Nationalism: A Critical Interpretation of Coubertin's Ideal of International Sporting Life', *Olympika: The International Journal of Olympic Studies* IV, (1995): 19-92.

implicated in the process of forming national identity and generating nationalism. This relationship between Olympism and nationalism was a political phenomenon, which exerted an impact both on international relations and on the internal politics of participant states, in particular, the host country to the Olympic Games.<sup>111</sup> Because nationalism and Olympism were inextricably linked, even though Olympism claimed an international foundation, the Olympic Games emerged as a suitable arena for political and nationalistic actions, especially in 1908.

### *The 1908 Olympics*

The London Games took place during a period when the USA was contesting Britain for the political, economic and athletic leadership of the world. Many Americans supported the Olympic ideals and associated nationhood, patriotism and elite sporting competition with the spirit of Olympism.<sup>112</sup> However, the American style of Olympism was seen as a means of portraying political and sporting culture by linking athletic prowess to national mythology. For the Americans, the Olympic Games became a self-perpetuating forum for the demonstration of athletic superiority as a national characteristic and this caused consternation in Britain. The media prior to the 1908 Games represented the intense nationalism of American participants with headlines such as ‘Britishers fear Yankee athletes’<sup>113</sup> and ‘American athletes sure of success’.<sup>114</sup> Conceding that the Americans were now in the ascendant, the *Athletic News* reported prior to the Games that Britain should be prepared to hand over the 100 metres Olympic Championship title to Americans or ‘preferably’ to some colonial sprinter, as British athletes were no longer good enough.<sup>115</sup>

It should be noted that, at this point, the IOC saw the Olympics as a competition between individuals and not between nations. Nevertheless, the IOC itself encouraged nationalistic fervour by stating that the individuals had to represent their own national Olympic Committees. Individual athletes now became an emblem of nation, with the nation acting as a participant

<sup>111</sup> John Hargreaves, ‘Olympism and Nationalism: Some Preliminary Consideration’, *International Review for the Sociology of Sport* 27, (1992): 119-135.

<sup>112</sup> Hywel Iowerth, Carwyn Jones, and Alun Hardman, ‘Nationalism and Olympism: Towards a Normative Theory of International Sporting Representation’, *Olympika* XIX, (2010): 81-110.

<sup>113</sup> ‘Britishers Fear Yankee Athletes’, *The New York Times*, July 13, 1908.

<sup>114</sup> ‘American Athletes Sure of Success’, *The New York Times*, July 12, 1908, 1.

<sup>115</sup> Strephon, ‘The New Sprint Champion’, *Athletic News*, July 6, 1908.

unit. The IOC, whose own status stimulated the importance of national interest and prestige, was at the centre of the Games and perhaps it was no surprise when the Games became a political arena for national rivalries.<sup>116</sup> Coubertin also seems to have had a highly developed visual sense, which gave him an appreciation of the power of symbol,<sup>117</sup> and this was reflected in the march-past of national teams in the opening ceremony, with teams decked in national colours, and preceded by their national flag. The opening ceremony became an event of its own where the host nation put on a performance by integrating elements of the national culture, in order to project a representation of itself to the whole world. For later Games, the IOC also allowed the introduction of an official national points table.

The 1908 London Olympics are best remembered for demonstrations of competitive national self-assertion as Britain and the USA collided in the search for Olympic success.<sup>118</sup> During the Games, the Americans and British demonstrated various interpretations of the concept of amateurism, despite the IOC having approved the amateur definition established by the leading governing bodies in England.<sup>119</sup> Lord Desborough, president of the 1908 Olympic Games, publically noted the ongoing conflicts between amateurism, professionalism, imperialism and internationalism that surrounded the world of sport.<sup>120</sup> The event witnessed a confrontation between contrasting sporting philosophies, exaggerated by an intense Anglo-American rivalry, reflecting both a far wider debate over systematic physical training methods and increasing concerns over Britain's global position. This highlighted the tension between the ethos of amateurism, and its focus on participating in the game for its own sake, and arguments that only through British Olympic successes would Britain's international status be confirmed.<sup>121</sup>

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116 John Hargreaves, 'Olympism and Nationalism: Some Preliminary Consideration', *International Review for the Sociology of Sport* 27, (1992): 119-135.

117 John McAloon, *This Great Symbol: Pierre de Coubertin and the Origins of the Modern Olympic Games* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981).

118 Matthew Llewellyn, 'The Battle of Shepherd's Bush', *The International Journal of the History of Sport* 28, no. 5 (2011): 688-710.

119 Theodore Andrea Cook, '1908 London Olympics Official Report' (London: The British Olympic Association, 1909).

120 'Olympic Games in London', *The Times*, November 24, 1906, 6.

121 Daniel Gorman, 'Amateurism, Imperialism, Internationalism and the First British Empire', *The International Journal of the History of Sport* 27, no. 4 (2010): 611-634.

These Anglo-American tensions were not short-lived and arguments over the question as to whether or not international encounters in sports were for the ‘good of the game’ continued up until the First World War, while international events continued to create acrimony. However, it was argued in 1911 that Anglo-American meetings in the field of first class amateur sport were a positive thing with polo matches in June at Meadowbrook being described as the two ‘greatest’ games of polo ever seen between teams representing England and America, although the Americans won both games. A month later, on 11 July, at Queen’s Club, Oxbridge won the athletics match between a combined Oxford and Cambridge team and a combined Harvard and Yale team, by five events to four. Elsewhere, at Newport, the English and American Lawn Tennis team met to play for the right to challenge Australia for the Davis Cup. The Americans won by four to one taking all the matches in the singles and losing the doubles. Elsewhere, on 17 September, at the Apawmis Golf Club, H.H. Hilton the British Amateur Golf Champion, won the American Amateur Championship and, in the following week, he won the Open Tournament at the National Golf Club at Shinnecock, a ‘truly extraordinary performance’. The reporter observed that every minute of every event in each of these four meetings had seen hard, clean competition and it was impossible for the men who represented either country in any of these contests to pretend to anything but a thorough respect for their rivals. When Britain failed to succeed, it was not because of inferior physique, skill, or sportsmanship in comparison with their American opponents, but more likely to have been due to the training or equipment necessary for the particular sport. American observers commented positively on the quality of the material in the Oxford and Cambridge teams but also noted their obviously inadequate training.<sup>122</sup>

Another key aspect arising from the growing importance of the Olympic Games was their utility in the creation and confirmation of new nations. For the 1908 Games, the British Colonies in Southern Africa, the Cape of Good Hope, Natal, the Orange River Colony (ORC) and the Transvaal, were allowed to participate in the Games under the umbrella name of South Africa.<sup>123</sup> Surprisingly, given that the ending of the Second Boer War had occurred only six years before the Games, British newspapers often portrayed these colonial representatives as being British, at least in origin. This rapid acceptance of South African athletes says something

<sup>122</sup> ‘Anglo-American Meetings’, *The Times*, December 28, 1911, 9; ‘American Rivalry in Sport’, *The Times*, June 28, 1913, 9.

<sup>123</sup> Theodore Andrea Cook, ‘1908 London Olympics Official Report’ (London: The British Olympic Association, 1909); Frederick Webster, *The Evolution of the Olympic Games, 1829 B.C.-1914 A.D* (London: Health Cranton and Ouseley, 1914).

interesting about national and imperial identity. The British saw South Africa as an extension of their Empire and celebrated any colonial achievement as a direct result of the influence of British culture.

### *The Development of South African Sport*

The invitation to a 'South African' team to compete in the 1908 Games was issued to a conglomerate of states, which had not yet coalesced into one nation state, and reflected the difficulties faced by the IOC in this respect. The IOC was always faced with the dilemma of how to distinguish between a 'sports nation' and political nation-states. Sports were a means to draw attention to, and to give respect to, the existence of a small nation's place in the consciousness of the big world. Many of the British colonies had borders that were not naturally demarcated and emerging independent nations contained ethnic groups that seldom constituted a national community. To create a nation under these circumstances was a challenge. Nation building through utilizing national heroes such as sportsmen like Reggie Walker was one strategy for creating national unity.

By the late 1800's, British forms of sport had been established within South Africa and the Boer War of 1899 did not signify an end to sporting activities among the British and Dutch descendants. Games symbolized a link to the British Empire and reinforced the fundamentals of the middle-class culture shared by the South African colonies. In the late 1880's and early 1890's, regional football organizations were established and, in 1892, a South African Football Association (SAFA) was founded.<sup>124</sup> In 1895, Cecil Rhodes was made honorary president of the association and Paul Kruger, of the South African Republic (Transvaal), became its president.<sup>125</sup> In 1897, the Corinthian Football Club was the first football team to visit South Africa and they revisited South Africa in 1903 and 1907. The 1907 tour drew attention to the standard of play in South Africa and highlighted the decline in performance that had resulted from the split between amateurs and professionals in Britain. A sense of white South African identity emerged with the successes of the football side in South Africa and rugby in Britain after the Boer War. Consequently, SAFA decided to withdraw its affiliation to the English Football Association (EFA) in 1907.<sup>126</sup> In 1908, FIFA invited SAFA to become a member and,

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<sup>124</sup> *Diamond Field Advertiser*, October 6, 1892.

<sup>125</sup> *The Cape Argus*, August 14, 1894.

<sup>126</sup> *The Friend*, August 23, 1907.

in 1910, they became the first team from outside Europe to join the association.<sup>127</sup> While SAFA adopted an international approach to football when playing abroad, they still looked towards the EFA for leadership. The SAFA enterprise was part of a broader theme within the Empire that emphasized continuing political control by English governing bodies of sport with indirect ruling of the colonies being contained within informal structures and contacts.

When the war finally ended in 1902, it left bitter divisions within South African society. The Boer and Britain seemed further apart than ever before, with the passion for sport seemingly the one thing they had left in common. The South African Springbok and England rugby post-war tours were exploited in South Africa to try to reconcile a divided society. The pioneering rugby tour came in 1903 when Mark Morrison, the Scottish international forward, led the first fully representative British side to South Africa. Significantly, though, many of the teams that the tourists faced comprised British born players. The 1906 South African rugby tour team to Britain came soon after the Boer War hostilities had finally ceased and the team was generally considered colonial-born, with the exception of W. Neill. More interestingly, perhaps, this team contained players such as W.A. Millar, who had been seriously wounded when fighting on the side of Her Majesty's Forces during the war, yet it also included burghers, who had supported the Boer Republics, like the forward player W.S. Morkel.<sup>128</sup> A clear identity was needed to bring these men together and the team was promoted within the British press as the 'Springboks', with their 'myrtle green jerseys' first being worn in 1893.<sup>129</sup> South African rugby was a vital symbol of masculinity and much of the admiration expressed concentrated on the manliness of these men and the fact that these men were simply 'Britishers' living abroad.

The idea of a South African Athletic Association (SAAA) had been first mooted in Durban in 1892 and C.L. Andersson, secretary of Wanderers Club in Johannesburg, later accepted the challenge of forming the SAAA.<sup>130</sup> The final decision to form the association was taken on 4 January 1894 at Wanderers New Year Sports. The first Annual General Meeting (AGM) was

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<sup>127</sup> Chris Bolsmann, 'White Football in South Africa: Empire, Apartheid and Change, 1892-1977', *Soccer and Society* 11, nos. 1-2 (2010): 31.

<sup>128</sup> F. Neville Piggott, *The Springboks, History of the Tour 1906-07* (Cape Town: Wm Dawson and Sons, 1907). Dean Allen, 'Tours of Reconciliation: Rugby, War and Reconstruction in South Africa, 1891-1907', *Sport in History* 27, no. 2 (2007): 172-189.

<sup>129</sup> 'Springboks', *Daily Mail*, September 20, 1906.

<sup>130</sup> 'SAAA', *The Natal Mercury*, February 18, 1892; 'Proposed Formation of SAAA', *Cape Times*, December 29, 1893.

held on 15 January 1895 and the association became an affiliated member of the English Amateur Athletic Association (AAA) until 1910.<sup>131</sup> Provincial associations were established across the country with Natal, after several attempts, being the first province to form an athletic association in 1904. Subsequent rivalry between the different associations was exaggerated by communication problems, caused by the vast distance that needed to be covered between the associations, and by the political situation. The conflict between athletics and cycling was another focus for some disputes. Athletics was already an established sport when the first cycles appeared but, by the end of the nineteenth century, cycling had captured the public's attention and attracted large crowds to sports meetings. Therefore, in 1904, a new association was formed, the SAAA and Cycling Association (CA), to control both sports (SAAA and CA).<sup>132</sup>

### *James Tyrell Wallace*

As has been shown recently, the development of sports and sporting structures in the days before formal governing bodies in England was entirely dependent on the drive and the enthusiasm of individuals.<sup>133</sup> Circumstances were no different in South Africa where prominent men in the community with the power and authority to create change, such as journalist James Wallace, developed and sustained particular sports. Wallace was particularly influential in supporting Reggie Walker at certain points in his athletic career. He was born in Limerick, Ireland, on 15 January 1876,<sup>134</sup> the son of John Wallace and Mary Tyrell, who also had a daughter, Ellen, born 28 November 1874. James later married a Margaret Stevenson from Aberdeen. In the 1890's, Wallace began a career in athletics in South Africa after arriving in Cape Town, where he also competed in athletics for a year. At this point, there was renewed enthusiasm for the revival of the Natal Amateur Athletic Association (NAAA), a provincial body, which had been formed in 1898, although the power of the Durban Amateur Athletic Association (DAAA) had made it ineffective and it had become defunct. During the Boer War,

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131 'SAAA and Annual General Meeting', *Diamond Field News*, January 12, 1895; 'SAAA Meeting at Wanderers', *The Star*, January 5, 1894.

132 'SAAA and CA', *The Star*, February 18, 1904.

133 Dave Day, 'London Swimming Professors: Victorian Craftsmen and Aquatic Entrepreneurs', *Sport in History* 30, no.1 (2010): 32-54; Samantha-Jayne Oldfield. 'George Martin, 'Wizard of Pedestrianism' and Manchester's Sporting Entrepreneur', in *Sporting Lives* ed. Dave Day (Cheshire: MMU, Institute for Performance Research, 2011), 142-166.

134 Shipping-Manifest List for S.S California Arriving in Glasgow September 1929.

its athletic accountability had been taken over by the Durban Athletic Club (DAC). In 1900, when Wallace moved to Durban he won the NAAA mile trophy at the Pietermaritzburg Athletic Club. When the Lords ground was annexed by the military, athletics became almost non-existent in Durban. However, in October 1902 a meeting was held to revive the DAC and Wallace was appointed secretary, by which time he had already had articles published on athletics in a range of newspapers. In 1903, Wallace organized the DAC sports and arranged a series of handicaps and evening meetings to generate interest. That same year, Wallace organized the first full-scale Natal Championship meeting and it was being reported by *The Natal Mercury* that ‘never before was such widespread enthusiasm given to local matters’.<sup>135</sup> At the AGM of the DAC in 1904, Wallace revealed that the club would again organize the Natal Championships and that plans were well advanced to reform the NAAA.<sup>136</sup> Efforts by the NAAA and CA to raise funds to finance athletes for the South African Championships were made by holding sports meetings. Wallace began this fund raising idea in 1904, but these sports were not well attended and, by 1910, the initiative had been terminated.<sup>137</sup>

Following the 1908 Olympic Games, and the interest generated in marathon running, Wallace, who was also apparently managing billiard rooms, was urged to organize a marathon in Durban, finishing at Lords, in 1909. Meanwhile, the SAAA, founded in 1894 with the intention of participating in the Pan-Britannic Festival (a competition between members of the British Empire), had become the SAAA and CA in 1904 and the Natal athletic and cycling championship was allocated to Durban to organize in the same year. These proposals caused conflict. The SAAA and CA rules forbade the granting of vouchers as prizes but Natal cyclists objected, saying that they were governed by Natal Cycling Union rules, to which the DAC was not affiliated, and that the new SAAA and CA rules had only come into effect on 1 January 1905. The dispute dragged on for another year by which time Wallace had resigned as secretary of the DAC. His report in August 1906 highlighted a degree of apathy within the association. The NAAA was not operating properly, finances were low, and the SAAA and CA did not reimburse the expenses of the competitors from Natal in the South African Championships.

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<sup>135</sup> *The Natal Mercury*, May 5, 1898; ‘Natal Championship Events’, *The Natal Mercury*, June 24, 1903.

<sup>136</sup> *The Natal Mercury*, January 21, 1904.

<sup>137</sup> *The Latest*, March 13, 1909.



By 1907, Wallace had returned as secretary of the committee and he was appointed to organize the South African Championships. He also published a booklet, *The South African Champions and Springbok Athletes*, in conjunction with the championships. Wallace was praised for his good work at the AGM of the SAAA and CA. In 1908, Wallace represented the NAAA and CA at the AGM of the Durban Sport Association, although not a member of the executive committee. As a journalist, Wallace played an influential role in athletics in South Africa as editor of the *Latest*, a specialist sports newspaper, published by the *Natal Mercury* from 1908 to 1927, and he wrote under the pseudonym 'Qrius'. Wallace moved to Johannesburg in 1914, where he became editor of the *Rand Daily Mail* and the *Sunday Times* in March 1915.<sup>138</sup> Writing in *The Latest*, Wallace covered a range of topics and made many predictions about the future but his views often brought him into conflict with other writers and administrators. In 1911, Wallace took issue with those who believed 'once a professional, always a professional', disputed that they were obligated to follow English rules, argued that athletes should be given the chance to revert to their amateur status,<sup>139</sup> and conducted a long campaign to have the payment of expenses authorized. Wallace believed that the SAAA and CA should finance provincial teams to the South African Championships, and argued that competitions between the best athletes were essential and could only be arranged if athletes' travelling and accommodation expenses were paid.<sup>140</sup>

The SAAA and CA, which agreed to change its rules in 1911 despite strong opposition, was criticized by Wallace on more than one occasion, particularly over its general management, its selection policy,<sup>141</sup> the organization of Olympic teams and the scheduling of the 1909 AGM. He wrote about the need for managers for touring teams and provinces having representation on the national governing body.<sup>142</sup> Wallace was so disappointed with the SAAA and CA that he suggested that the administration should rotate between different provincial centres, and, in 1910, he said Natal should consider withdrawing its affiliation.<sup>143</sup> For the selection of the 1908

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138 *The Latest*, March 6, 1914; October 9, 1915; October 9, 1915.

139 *The Latest*, January 16, 1909; June 17, 1911; January 2, 1909.

140 *The Latest*, June 25, 1901; May 21, 1910; May 28, 1910; July 23, 1910; January 28, 1911.

141 *The Latest*, January 1, 1912; February 17, 1912; March 16, 1912.

142 *The Latest*, March 20, 1909.

143 *The Latest*, July 23, 1910.

London Games' and 1912 Stockholm Games' teams, Wallace suggested that each province should be represented on the selection committee and that selection should not be left to a 'few gentlemen' in Johannesburg.<sup>144</sup> Wallace believed that the administration of athletics in South Africa was too amateurish and that 'business methods applied to international sports are indispensable to international successes'.<sup>145</sup> He was also critical of the South African Olympic Committee and the manner in which its affairs were managed.<sup>146</sup> In 1913, Wallace again predicted future developments, and suggested that a few top athletes should be encouraged to compete in England each year, in addition to competing in the Olympics every four years.<sup>147</sup>

Wallace was a pioneering journalist and administrator whose influence was only limited by the fact he worked in Durban and not on the Rand, in Johannesburg. Wallace was not popular, although he was certainly respected, and after he returned to Durban following World War I, he was nominated president of the NAAA and CA in 1924. When Wallace travelled to Southampton first class in 1939 he was listed as a theatre manager,<sup>148</sup> but in a lifetime of involvement with athletics his impact on the sporting life of the embryonic South African nation had been just as significant as his impact on its cultural life. In the course of his engagement with athletics he had been able to interact with, and observe the performances of, Reggie Walker, whose own life exemplified the experiences of the elite colonial sportsman.

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144 *The Latest*, December 23, 1911.

145 *The Latest*, August 24, 1923.

146 *The Latest*, September 14, 1912.

147 *The Latest*, May 3, 1913.

148 'Names and Description of British Passengers', ed. Shipping Manifest Dunnottar Castle Union Cantle  
Mall Steamship Co. Ltd (Durban, 1939).

### Chapter 3. Reggie Walker: The ‘Little Natalian’ Sprinter

In America, thousands of dollars were spent on producing ‘track champions’, with the aim of attracting large groups of spectators to stadia, while money was also spent on making sure that coaches and trainers were available. Since sport was considered effective in promoting a healthy lifestyle, young American boys were trained from an early age in a number of athletic sports, including sprinting, in contrast to the situation in England where young men turned to cricket and football. This was believed to be responsible for the continued success of American athletes and for the fact that a good sprinter would rarely emerge from the English public schools. Similarly, sprinting was not particularly highly developed within colleges and universities in the British colonies, although individuals did have opportunities at annual sports meetings, and the occasional athlete might show unusual pace when playing football and rugby. However, in 1908, the American ‘system’ failed to provide the sprint champion at the London Olympic Games, with Reggie Walker from South Africa, an honorary Briton, wresting the title from his North American opposition.<sup>149</sup>

World renowned amateur, subsequently professional, sprinter Reginald ‘Reggie’ Edgar Walker, was born on 16 March 1889, in Durban, Natal, South Africa, the son of Samuel Ogden Walker, late of Manchester, and Kate Walker of Durban, Greyville. Walker grew up in the Greyville and Stamford Hill areas, close to the Lords cricket grounds. He would run from his home to practices at the track and he attended the Boys Model School in Durban.<sup>150</sup> In 1907, at the age of eighteen, Walker joined the Albion Harriers Club in Durban. He soon became the scratch man (who ran off the start line and was not awarded any handicap advantage) to beat in local events, ranking alongside Reverend G.W. Rolland, who established a world’s record of

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<sup>149</sup> Harry Sunderland, ‘Sunderland’s Sporting Snapshots’, *The Courier-Mail*, December 9, 1935, 9.

<sup>150</sup> ‘Walker, Reginald Edgar’, *Who’s Who in Natal*, 1935, 258; ‘South Africa Has Boy Wonder’, *Oregonian*, December 4, 1921, 4.

nine-and-a-half seconds for the 100 yards in 1882.<sup>151</sup> Although a young man, Reggie was fully involved in all the activities of the club. As captain, Walker also showed an interest in selecting the most promising runners in any race as well as finding out their capabilities, and, on 22 April, he attended a club general meeting held to decide on the Harriers' sports events for June.<sup>152</sup>

Walker, subsequently described as 'a runner of exceptional merit', first came to public attention at the 1907 South African Championships in Durban, where, on 2 July, he won both his heats in the 100 and 200 yards by less than a yard. Emphasizing that, at this point, he was still a relative novice, Walker initially turned out in ordinary plimsolls but was sent back and ended up borrowing a pair of spiked shoes. In addition, if it had not been for one of the officials he would not have competed in the heats, because he had not taken the trouble to look at *The Natal Mercury* and, therefore, had not noticed the changes made to the scheduled heat times.<sup>153</sup> Writing for *The Natal Mercury* on the eve of this meeting, Wallace observed that Walker was, 'Too young to be at his best, lightly built and small in stature' at five feet seven inches and weighing ten stone.<sup>154</sup> Wallace later noted, 'he was only a boy, at the age of eighteen', but in the years to come, he would become a candidate for 'premier honours'.<sup>155</sup>

In the final of the 100 yards at the South African Championships in 1907 there were a number of false starts before the gun went and the subsequent contest between Walker and James Duffy (Transvaal) was described as 'magnificent'. Duffy held the lead for the first seventy yards but Walker drew up alongside him and, after racing side by side for twenty yards, Walker just got ahead to win in ten seconds flat.<sup>156</sup> A year later, the odds were on Walker retaining the 100 yards championship at Cape Town.<sup>157</sup> The meeting was held at Green Point

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151 J.T. Wallace, 'South African's Great Victory in the Sprint', *The Friend*, July 23, 1908, 5.

152 'Albion Harriers', *The Natal Mercury*, April 18, 1907, 10; Ped, 'Athletics Notes', *The Natal Mercury*, April 30, 1907.

153 Ped, 'Athletics', *The Natal Mercury*, July 4, 1907, 16.

154 'The Springbok Champion to Visit Australasia', *Northern Times*, April 12, 1913, 7.

155 J.T. Wallace, 'South African's Great Victory in the Sprint', *The Friend*, July 23, 1908, 5.

156 'Albion Harriers Club Durban', *The Natal Mercury*, July 2, 1907, 10.

157 'Athletics SA Championships at Cape Town', *The Friend*, April 18, 1908, 5.

Break, the weather and general conditions were described as ‘perfect’, but the attendance was disappointing, with only around two thousand spectators. The meeting opened with the heats of the 100 yards with both Duffy and Walker qualifying easily. The final produced another fine race between the two men with Duffy coming through with a late spurt to beat Walker to the post, the margin being so close that most people thought that Walker had just managed to win.<sup>158</sup> Walker’s performance at these championships left Albion Harriers’ members proud of their promising athlete, whose performance reflected their ongoing success as an athletic club.<sup>159</sup>

### *Selection for the 1908 South African Olympic Team*

In the run up to the 1908 London Olympic Games, the British Olympic Association (BOA) approached Dr Jameson, Premier of Cape Colony, with a view to having South Africa represented at the Olympic Games. The task was subsequently delegated to Henry Nourse, the then chairman of the SAAA and CA, which now consisted of seventeen different clubs, representing twelve different towns.<sup>160</sup> The athletes to represent South Africa were to be chosen after the 1908 South African Championships. On the question of finance, Nourse observed that two thousand pounds would be sufficient to cover all costs for sending ten men and he argued that the Transvaal should find one thousand pounds, the Cape Colony five hundred pounds, the ORC and Natal two hundred and fifty pounds each.<sup>161</sup> Meanwhile, the South African government had planned to send a team of twenty amateurs, and a letter had been sent to the colonial government asking for their cooperation and assistance. A sum of three thousand pounds would be required, of which fifteen hundred pounds could be raised in the Transvaal and three hundred and fifty pounds in Natal, along with six hundred pounds from Cape Colony and two hundred pounds from Rhodesia.<sup>162</sup> If the funds could be raised, the proposed South African team would consist of thirteen riflemen, ten athletes and cyclists, and four tennis players. Selection would be made purely based on whether or not a competitor, in the opinion

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<sup>158</sup> ‘Amateur Championship’, *Rand Daily Mail*, April 20, 1908, 4.

<sup>159</sup> ‘Albion Harriers Meeting’, *The Natal Mercury*, August 17, 1907, 8.

<sup>160</sup> ‘Sport and Pastime’, *The Friend*, March 10, 1908, 10.

<sup>161</sup> ‘S.A Representation Allocation of Contributions’, *The Friend*, February 19, 1908, 5.

<sup>162</sup> ‘S.A Team of 25 Athletes’, *The Friend*, March 13, 1908, 5.

of the committee, was likely to be able to uphold the honour of the country. The committee was looking for financial support and contributions were invited from amateur sporting organizations and the public.<sup>163</sup> After it was decided that each district would select at least one competitor, and would pay all expenses, Walker was nominated by the council as the Southern District representative.<sup>164</sup>

#### *Walker's Omission*

On 2 May 1908, the first review of names was submitted and Walker's name was proposed to the Olympic Committee as a candidate for the team.<sup>165</sup> Two days later, *The Friend* published the names of those chosen to represent South Africa, most of which met with general approval, except in Natal after Duffy was preferred to Walker, possibly because he was seen as a better all-round athlete and he certainly had greater experience.<sup>166</sup> The 1908 South African Championship result had reinforced this view, even though there had been a difference of opinion as to who had actually won. The Olympic Committee had been guided in making their selection by a 'committee of experts', consisting of delegates from each colony and including a representative from Natal, appointed by the SAAA to watch the championship meeting prior to the team being selected in order to make suitable recommendations. On the form shown at this meeting, Walker was placed sixth on the committee's list although, had the funds been available, Walker would have been in the original selection. Natal was indignant at the omission and their objections brought the committee's decision to the public notice.<sup>167</sup>

#### *Walker's Subscription*

At the meeting of the Olympic Committee in Johannesburg on 9 May, it was decided to include marathon runner J.M. Baker in the South African team but only because he was able to pay his

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163 'The S.A Team', *The Friend*, March 14, 1908, 5.

164 'Athletics NAAA and CA Southern District Special Meeting', *The Natal Mercury*, February 20, 1908, 10.

165 'S.A Representatives, Hefferon Recommended', *The Friend*, May 2, 1908, 5.

166 'South Africa's Representatives', *The Friend*, May 4, 1908, 7.

167 'Olympic Committee's Position', *The Star*, July 24, 1908, 5; 'The Natalian Sprinter', *The Star*, July 24, 1908, 5.

own expenses.<sup>168</sup> The Natal sporting bodies contributed nothing towards the Olympic funds and it was only when the population of Natal heard that Walker had been omitted that James Wallace set to work to raise funds to pay his expenses. No obstacle was placed in the way by the Olympic Committee, which was willing to allow Walker to accompany the team as long as Natal could guarantee the finance, a position described at the time as ‘perfectly understandable’. The Olympic Committee had insufficient funds to send as many men as they would have liked and, in the matter of selection, they could not avoid taking the advice of people better placed than themselves in judging the abilities of the athletes.<sup>169</sup>

In order to increase Walker’s fund, two 100 and 220 yard races and a cycle event were held at Lords cricket ground in Durban, which had been used as a prisoner of war camp by the British during the Second Boer War. When it was handed back to the DAAA they did not have the money to restore it but, fortunately, the Agricultural Society restored the grounds and it was reopened in 1905, although the cycling and athletics track was only completed in 1907.<sup>170</sup> These sprint races benefited the fund by eight pounds, twelve shilling and sixpence. Progress was also being made elsewhere through the ‘Walker’ subscription lists, which included Central Cigar Store, Albion Harriers, Randles Brothers’ staff, and the proceeds from a concert in the Theatre Royal.<sup>171</sup> In addition, several sporting bodies decided to make a donation. Durban alone contributed over one hundred pounds, which said a great deal about the sporting community of the town. A list was also issued to neighbouring towns, including the names of a large number of their prominent townsmen, but the funds raised were limited to a single guinea. Since there would be some expense entailed in connection with Walker’s entrance fees in the English championships, it was hoped that the hundred pounds would be exceeded to meet these and other contingencies. By 11 May, satisfactory progress was being made and substantial amounts were still coming in, with forty-seven pounds, eighteen shillings and nine pence already having been collected. This, however, did not include the majority of lists that were being issued at various business places and information from within the city suggested that subscription lists were being well supported at Ladysmith, Dundee, Vryheid, Newcastle and Greytown. Nevertheless, the hope was expressed that all ‘lovers of sport would not relax their

168 ‘J.M. Baker and Walker’, *The Natal Mercury*, May 11, 1908, 7.

169 ‘Olympic Committee’s Position’, *The Star*, July 24, 1908, 5.

170 ‘Test Races at Lords’, *The Natal Mercury*, May 14, 1908, 6.

171 ‘Walker Subscription List’, *The Natal Mercury*, May 14, 1908, 6.

efforts until all their expectations had come to fruition'.<sup>172</sup> Eventually, sufficient funds were raised to allow Walker to join the Olympic team. Although the NAA and CA, Southern District, asked in July if it was possible to defer Walker's departure for London until the following Thursday, a telegram arrived on the same day stating that Walker was leaving for Cape Town to join the team and that he would sail the next day.<sup>173</sup>

### *Olympic Champion*

On 21 July 1908, Walker easily won his heat in the London Games 100 metres, in fine style, defeating J.H. Kirably from America in the process, and in the semi-finals he defeated two other American 'cracks', W.W. May of Illinois University and L.B. Stevens from Chicago. In the final, on 22 July, Walker equalled the world record of ten and four-fifth seconds, set by the American Jarvis at Paris in 1900, after exhibiting a 'lightning finish'.<sup>174</sup> While Robert Kerr and John Rector were engaged in a tremendous struggle for the lead, the South African 'wonder' passed them twenty yards from home, eventually winning by at least a yard. Walker, wearing green and gold, with a Springbok emblem on his shirt, thereby recorded the first ever athletics win for South Africa and he became the youngest sprint champion, at the age of nineteen. The interesting thing from a contemporary perspective is the way in which a British crowd reacted only a few short years after the end of the Second Boer War. Achievements such as that of Walker's were attributed to the direct result of British influence which, in reality, for most of the nineteenth century had essentially been confined to the English-speaking townspeople, mainly immigrants themselves or those born in the colony. Nevertheless, following this 'Imperial' triumph, the British elements in the crowd were ecstatic and his victory was described as having 'thoroughly restored the spirits of the Britishers present'.<sup>175</sup>

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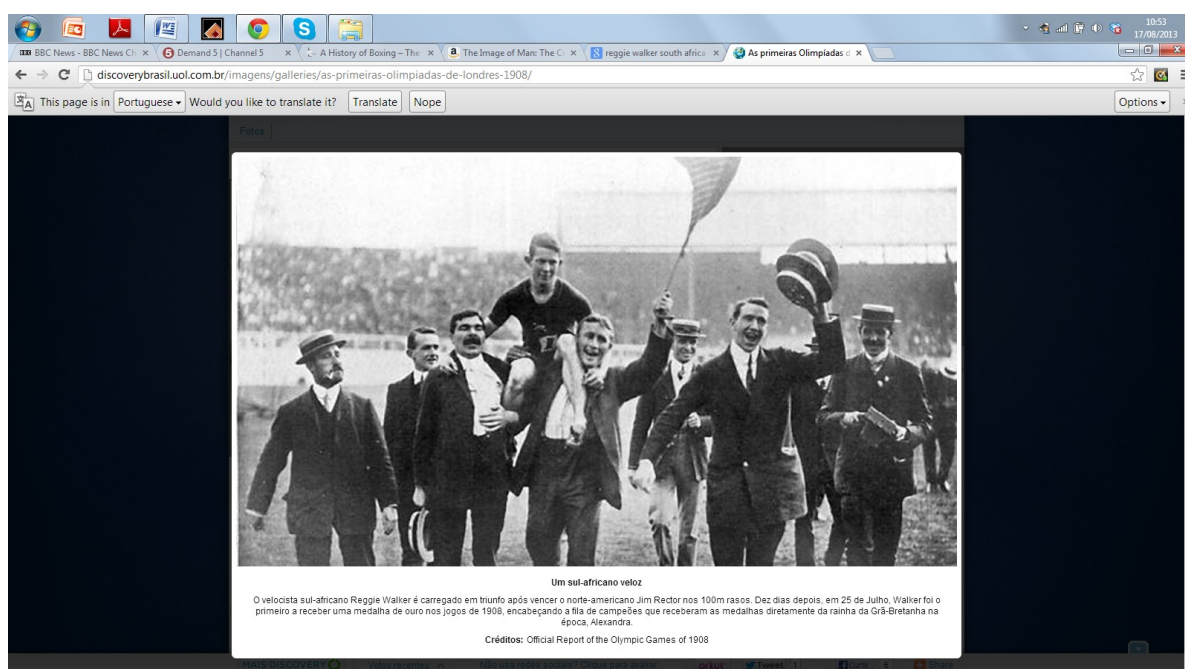
172 'Durban Contributes Over £100', *The Natal Mercury*, May 14, 1908; 'Walker Subscription List', *The Natal Mercury*, May 14, 1908, 6; 'The Subscription List', *The Natal Mercury*, May 11, 1908, 7; 'Walker Subscription List', *The Natal Mercury*, May 12, 1908, 10.

173 J.T. Wallace, 'South African's Great Victory in the Sprint', *The Friend*, July 23, 1908, 5; 'J.M. Baker and Walker', *The Natal Mercury*, May 11, 1908, 7; 'Wednesday's Concert', *The Natal Mercury*, May 11, 1908, 7.

174 'Walker's Magnificent Effort', *The Friend*, July 22, 1908, 5; 'Walker Wins 100m Results', *The Natal Mercury*, July 21, 1908, 16.

175 W.W. Alexander, 'Athletic Notes', *The Sporting Mail*, August 15, 1908, 6.





**Figure 3.** Reggie Walker been carried off the track. Britons found solace in his colonial victory, after his win over the North Americans. *Source:* Anorak, 2013

Walker, who was later said to have been overwhelmed by the response, was immediately seized, put in a chair and carried shoulder high around the arena.<sup>176</sup> The huge crowd cheered for fully five minutes and waved the South African colours. Reggie was then presented to Her Royal Highness the Queen and to the other royal personages present in the royal box where the Duke of Connaught shook Walker by the hand and warmly congratulated him on his victory. Among the British Press, Walker's performance was widely regarded as the best of the many 'great records and remarkable victories' throughout the 1908 athletics events.<sup>177</sup> The morning after the race, pages of illustrations in newspapers were devoted to him and his race. Several published entire columns on Reggie's triumph and described how the Americans, who had been rehearsing the ovation they were going to give John Rector, generously applauded Walker instead.<sup>178</sup> The *Daily Mail* reported that the results showed that Britain had no sprinters worthy to be classed with Walker, while the *Morning Post* was convinced that Britons, Dutch and South Africans were capable of absorption into an Imperial partnership, because they knew how to

176 'Young Natalian Overwhelmed', *The Natal Mercury*, July 24, 1908, 5.

177 J.T. Wallace, 'South African's Great Victory in the Sprint', *The Friend*, July 23, 1908, 5.

178 'Disappointment for Americans', *The Natal Mercury*, July 25, 1908, 10.

‘play the game’.<sup>179</sup> In many respects, this reinforced the British attitude to colonial athletes, and reflects both their contemporary attitude towards the Boers and their faith in their own national identity. Despite the obvious challenge from America, and others such as Germany, Britain did indeed feel secure in their national aspirations in 1908, when their Empire, although decolonizing, was still extensive and the games they played were still regarded worldwide as a great British success.

To fully appreciate Walker’s performance, and the British reaction, it needs to be remembered that he had beaten the Americans John Rector and Nathaniel Cartmell, who was prominent in collegiate sports in the USA, and the Canadian Robert Kerr, who had been Canadian champion at 100 and 200 yards for three years. The British response to Walker’s victory can be explained, at least partly, by the pleasure gained from watching the defeat of their North American rivals. The 100 metres was considered the ‘Blue Riband’ event of the Games and because British athletes were unable to compete effectively, their performance being described as ‘disappointing’,<sup>180</sup> they took solace in a colonial victory. On the other hand, Walker was clear where his own loyalties lay, having previously expressed his desire to uphold the status of South Africa and to serve his country well.<sup>181</sup>

Following Walker’s triumph at the Olympic Games, he was invited to visit America and meet John Rector in a special match race over 110 metres at Trenton New Jersey on 28 September,<sup>182</sup> but Walker stayed in England to compete at a number of different venues. Several Olympians appeared at Glasgow later in 1908, including Walker who was now being described as having ‘lowered the United States colours’, reinforcing the notion that Walker’s Olympic success was celebrated so much in Britain because he had defeated the Americans. In Glasgow, Walker took part in the Rangers Football Club annual bank holiday athletic sports 100 yards event, equalling the British amateur record of nine and four-fifth seconds. In this race, Walker had had to run against the wind, which proved to be challenging, given his small stature.<sup>183</sup> Later that August, Walker competed in another 100 yards race at Halifax from

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179 ‘Did Hefferon Win?’, *The Friend*, July 28, 1908, 5.

180 W.W. Alexander, ‘Athletic Notes’, *The Sporting Mail*, August 1, 1908, 7.

181 ‘The Natalian Sprinter’, *The Star*, July 24, 1908, 5.

182 ‘Walker and Rector’, *The Friend*, September 18, 1908, 7.

183 ‘Walker at Glasgow’, *The Natal Mercury*, August 8, 1908, 10.

scratch and won by a foot from Morton, who had received two yards, in a time of nine and three-fifth seconds.<sup>184</sup> In this event, Reggie had had the assistance of the wind, which, together with a drop in the course, accounted for his outstanding time. Observers were left wondering what time he might accomplish at a meeting on a certified track, and whether such an opportunity would lead to him producing a world record.<sup>185</sup> Unfavourable weather spoilt Walker's appearance at the Manchester Athletic Club in September 1908 when he was billed to attack the record. Apparently, he was 'not himself and the Manchester climate was not to his liking'.<sup>186</sup> Walker ran well to get within six inches of Jefferies of Crewe, who had started off four yards, and who was considered to have great potential as a sprinter. The time of ten and one-fifth seconds was described as 'very good running against a stiff breeze'. Many people now believed that Walker was capable of running nine and four-fifth seconds for the 100 yards, although it was doubted that he would be able to do that during that season unless he went to the USA, where the conditions remained favourable until well into October.<sup>187</sup>

Walker, who was keen to get home, was expected to return to South Africa at the end of September 1908, even though he had been pressured to stay in England because several clubs were anxious to feature him in their meetings.<sup>188</sup> At Abergavenny in August, Walker won the 100 yards handicap from scratch in nine and two-fifth seconds, beating the existing world record. W.W. Alexander, who reported for the *Sporting Mail*, received a letter from Wheathley, one of the official timekeepers at Abergavenny, noting that Walker had started very well but that he had finished a yard outside of nine and two-fifth seconds. Apparently, the track had a fall of thirty inches in 120 yards, which invalidated any record since this would never have passed the AAA committee. Alexander himself could not understand why the time was being recorded as nine and two-fifth seconds, if Walker had actually been 'a yard outside.' He was familiar with

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184 'Walkers Performance a Win at Halifax', *The Natal Mercury*, August 12, 1908.

185 W.W. Alexander, 'Athletic Notes', *The Sporting Mail*, August 15, 1908, 6.

186 'New Athletic Champions and the Old-R.E. Walker, Olympic Champion Beaten', *Athletic World Cycling and Football Chat*, September 2, 1908, 12; 'Walker and Rector', *The Friend*, September 18, 1908, 7.

187 'Attacks on Record', *The Friend*, September 25, 1908, 6.

188 'Overseas Sports', *The Friend*, September 4, 1908, 8.

timing at championship meetings, and believed that ‘officials at these important events would not give the runner the benefit of the watch’.<sup>189</sup>

### *Walker’s Return Home*

Following Walker’s success at the Games an application had been made to the Mayor of Durban, Charlie Henwood, for permission to call a meeting in the Council Chamber of all those interested in arranging a suitable welcome back and an appropriate presentation for Reggie.<sup>190</sup> Durban had been as delighted with Walker’s success as it had been with its competitors in the marathon<sup>191</sup> and it was pointed out that if the people of Natal had not subscribed the funds to send Walker to England, the 100 metres would probably have been won by the USA, the ‘country of sprinters’.<sup>192</sup> When Walker eventually arrived back in Johannesburg on 16 December, he was surrounded by representatives of the Wanderers Club and the SAAA and CA who accompanied him to the Hotel Victoria. In the absence of Henry Nourse, the Olympic Committee was represented by Wertheim and Palmer, who were the first to welcome Walker back to the Rand. A crowd of nine hundred athletic enthusiasts was present and ‘hearty cheers greeted the boyish Olympic hero’ who ‘looked fit and intended to get to work at once’.<sup>193</sup>

Surprisingly, Walker was almost immediately matched with Arthur Postle, the professional sprinter from Australia who was known for his performances running in the Sheffield handicaps.<sup>194</sup> A private message was filtered through to Postle and Walker via a well-known Rand sportsman, G.J. Plunkett, who put up a thousand pounds to back them at three distances (100 yards, 130 yards and 150 yards), although Plunkett had no intention of enticing Walker into giving up his amateur status. However, the DAAA did not allow Walker to run against

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189 ‘Walker Flies’, *The Natal Mercury*, August 6, 1908, 7; W.W. Alexander, ‘Athletic Notes’, *The Sporting Mail*, August 15, 1908, 6.

190 ‘Walker’s Return and a Public Meeting’, *The Natal Mercury*, July 28, 1908, 8.

191 ‘Walker’s Win’, *The Star*, July 24, 1908, 5.

192 ‘And the Men He Beat’, *The Star*, July 24, 1908, 5.

193 ‘Politics and Sport’, *Rand Daily Mail*, September 1, 1908, 7; ‘Walker’s Arrival on the Rand’, *Rand Daily Mail*, December 17, 1908, 7.

194 ‘Turned Pro’, *Townsville Daily Bulletin*, November 25, 1948, 3.

Postle because it would have transgressed the amateur athletic rules.<sup>195</sup> Back in Johannesburg, a stake worth six hundred pounds had been offered for a 100 or 120 yards match, to be run in Christmas Week, between the two men. This offer was dependent on another race of 75 yards taking place at Durban with a final in Sydney, Australia, for a separate purse worth five hundred pounds. Walker's expenses to Australia would be paid by the promoter Rufe Naylor, whose short biography appears in the next chapter. This proposal had created considerable discussion among the sporting public, although Walker declined the offer since it would mean he would have to turn professional. Reggie did not intend to lose his status as the world amateur champion and it was noted by *The Latest* that he had politely refused Naylor's offer even though the proposed event meant three hundred and fifty pounds (£29,999 in today's money) to the winner and two hundred and fifty pounds (£21,420) to the loser. At the time, Walker, who had restarted training, was running really well and the general opinion was that he might easily have beaten Postle over 100 or 120 yards.<sup>196</sup> These initiatives reinforce the differences in interpretations of amateurism between those in the colonies and the adherents of the ethos in Britain, where the mere mention of money in association with athletics, or competing directly against a professional, would have led a man to be banned from the sport, and other amateur sports, for life. For these amateurs, Walker was already under a degree of suspicion for his use of professional coaches in his pre- and post-Olympic preparations.

### *Coaching Reggie*

The dilemma faced by Walker about whether or not to turn professional was never dependent on the access to quality coaching since both amateurs, although less obviously, and professionals in this period were in the habit of turning to experienced professional coaches to improve their performances.<sup>197</sup> Exploring how coaching was received and practiced in the colonies can help explain how different attitudes towards amateurism and professionalism were related to different expressions of national and imperial identity. This also helps to understand the continuing tensions between professional and amateur sport around the time of the First World War. In addition, this process sheds light on how coaching communities developed and

<sup>195</sup> 'Walker v. Postle a Question of Amateur Status', *The Friend*, August 10, 1908, 5.

<sup>196</sup> 'Tempting offer Declined', *Rand Daily Mail*, November 30, 1908, 4; 'Walker v. Postle', *The Friend*, November 30, 1908, 5.

<sup>197</sup> Dave Day, 'Massaging the Amateur Ethos: Professional Coaches at Stockholm in 1912', *Sport in History* 32, no. 2 (2012): 157-182.

how they sustained coaching practices as ex-athletes became trainers and drew upon the knowledge they had gained as competitors, from their own coaches and from their rivals.<sup>198</sup>

One example of this process in action can be clearly seen in the way that Reggie mastered the mechanics of the American track start. The USA athlete, Rector, who held the joint 100 metres record of ten and three-quarter seconds with Walker in 1912, recalled giving advice to Walker in 1908. Apparently, after the American team reached London he had been approached by a man who said he was from South Africa and was training a young athlete who would be competing against Rector in the 100 metres. He told Rector that the youngster knew little about the sport, but had the natural ability to become a ‘great runner’. He complained that his start was poor and Rector agreed to lend a helping hand. The next day, Rector was introduced to Reggie, who had a ‘wretched crouch’ style of starting which began with a long step and, therefore, ruined his stride. Rector showed him his start, the short first step and low crouch, and Walker took great pains to study Rector’s style. After Rector had worked with him a short while he then went about his daily training under American coach Mike Murphy. Walker continued to watch Rector’s starts closely all day and the following day the American team left for Brighton for two weeks training. Rector did not see Walker again until the day of their race but, when they went onto the track for their warm up, Rector noticed that Walker had mastered his start. When the race started, Walker got away from the mark as quickly as Rector did, the first time that Rector had not beaten his competitors away from the gun. Rector believed that he would have beaten Walker had he not known the ‘Rector system’ of starting, although he always remembered Walker as a great runner.<sup>199</sup>

Walker’s trainers, coaches and supporters, were critical in developing his performance and in his achievements in becoming an Olympic champion and a national figure. The training methods employed by these men were outlined in a number of texts, such as *The Complete Athletic Trainer* (1913) by Sam Mussabini<sup>200</sup> and Harry Andrews’ *Training for Athletics and*

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198 Dave Day, *Walter Brickett: A Respectable Professor, Recording Leisure Lives Conference* (Bolton: Leisure Studies Association, 2009); Dave Day, ‘Craft Coaching and the “Discerning Eye” of the Coach’, *International Journal of Sports Science and Coaching* 6, no.1 (2011): 179-195.

199 ‘Feature and Society News Section’, *El Paso Herald*, March 7, 1912; ‘How Jimmy Rector Lost to Walker Former Lawrenceville Student Taught South African Runner His Style’, *Trenton Evening Times*, February 14, 1912, 13; *Coshocton Daily Times*, February 27, 1912, 6; *Altoona Mirror*, March 5, 1912, 14.

200 Sam Mussabini, *The Complete Athletic Trainer* (London: Methuen and Co. Ltd, 1913).

*General Health* (1903) and *Massage and Training* (1910), all of which emphasized that coaches were practical not theoretical men. Walker himself produced a *Textbook of Sprinting* in 1910 which detailed his training regimes and presented ‘important hints on the art of sprinting’ gathered from his own personal experience and observations. His book also contained instructions on health and on sprinting essentials (starting, balance and finishes), including massage and bathing, as well as twenty pages of illustrations. Reviews of his work quickly appeared in the newspapers<sup>201</sup> and the three reprints (1912, 1922 and 1934) of his text were perhaps evidence of how he was still in demand well after his Olympic victory, although some believed that he had generally fallen into disfavour in South African athletic circles for eventually leaving the amateur ranks.<sup>202</sup>

An increase in the internationalization of sport during the late nineteenth century had broadened the coaching opportunities for both competitors and coaches. Even though the British amateur approach supposedly marginalized professional coaches, training and coaching were still regarded as integral to performance for professionals and for some elite amateur athletes.<sup>203</sup> Under the amateur ethos, coaching became more complex as coaches sometimes struggled to reconcile the need for discipline and the values inherent in the amateur approach to sport.<sup>204</sup> Generally, though, coaching credibility was still achieved through coaching experience, personal accomplishment and athletes’ successes.<sup>205</sup> The progress of coaching as a profession in Britain was hampered by the boundaries established by National Governing Bodies (NGBs),<sup>206</sup> who centralized teaching and coaching in their definitions of amateurism for

201 ‘Reggie Walker Writes Dope for Young Runners’, *Anaconda Standard*, May 15, 1910, 2.

202 Reginald E. Walker, *Textbook of Sprinting: Olympic English and South African Sprint Champion-Holder of Several World’s Records* (London: Health and Strength Ltd, 1910); ‘Text Book on Sprinting by R.E. Walker’, *The Athletic Field and Swimming Wolrd 1910*, April 2, 1910, 205.

203 Adrian Smith and Dilwyn Porter, *Amateurs and Professionals in Post War British Sport* (London: Frank Cass, 2000).

204 Mike Huggins and Jack Williams, *Sport and the English 1918-1939* (London: Routledge, 2006).

205 Neil Carter, ‘From Knox to Dyson: Coaching, Amateurism and British Athletics, 1912-1947’, *Sport in History* 30, no. 1 (2010): 55-81.

206 Dave Day, ‘From Barclay to Brickett: Coaching Practice and Coaching Lives in Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Century England’ (PhD diss., De Montfort University, 2008).

the 1908 Games where the AAA, for example, described an amateur as someone who had never taught an athletic exercise as a means of financial gain.<sup>207</sup> Because investing in the coaching and funding of athletes would have breached this ethos of amateurism, athletes were under little external pressure to improve their athletic performance.<sup>208</sup> Any serious coaching would have suggested an unacceptable degree of professionalization and a deviation from ‘pure’ amateurism towards a greater emphasis on the pursuit of excellence.<sup>209</sup> Holt suggests that British sport was perceived as a celebration of the natural, voluntary qualities of the body<sup>210</sup> and that, from the British perspective, coaching diminished characteristics such as creativity, personal style and individualism.<sup>211</sup> Nevertheless, despite the influence of these amateur ideals, elite athletes both at home and abroad stretched the boundaries created by the amateur ethos and employed the best help that they could find. At times, even the NGBs engaged professional trainers to assist with their Olympic teams. The English Amateur Swimming Association, for example, exploited the skills of a professional swimming instructor, Walter Brickett, throughout the 1908 and the 1912 Games, when twelve other professional trainers accompanied the British Olympic team.<sup>212</sup>

Britain’s Sam Mussabini, a professional track and field coach, who was senior coach at the Polytechnic in London from 1912-1927, went on to coach athletes to a number of Olympic medals and he has been described as the ‘father of British coaches’. Mussabini was an accomplished journalist and, as a trainer, he has been remembered through the 1981 Oscar

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207 Theodore Andrea Cook, ‘1908 London Olympics Official Report’ (London: The British Olympic Association, 1909).

208 Neil Carter, ‘From Knox to Dyson: Coaching, Amateurism and British Athletics, 1912-1947’, *Sport in History* 30, no. 1 (2010): 55-81; Richard Holt, *Sport and the Working Class in Modern Britain* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1990).

209 Neil Carter, ‘From Knox to Dyson: Coaching, Amateurism and British Athletics, 1912-1947’, *Sport in History* 30, no. 1 (2010): 55-81.

210 Richard Holt, ‘The Amateur Body and the Middle-Class Man: Work, Health and Style in Victorian Britain’, *Sport in History* 26, no. 3 (2006): 352-369.

211 Matthew Llewellyn, ‘The Battle of Shepherd’s Bush’, *The International Journal of the History of Sport* 28, no. 5 (2011): 688-710.

212 Dave Day, *Walter Brickett: A Respectable Professor, Recording Leisure Lives Conference* (Bolton: Leisure Studies Association, 2009); Dave Day, ‘Massaging the Amateur Ethos: Professional Coaches at Stockholm in 1912’, *Sport in History* 32, no. 2 (2012): 157-182.



winning film, *Chariots of Fire*, in which Ian Holm portrayed him at the 1924 Olympic Games in Paris.<sup>213</sup> One of the myths surrounding Mussabini is that he trained Reggie Walker,<sup>214</sup> but this has recently been conclusively disproved by research that has confirmed Walker's statements in his autobiography that his coach had been Spencer (Sam) Wisdom.<sup>215</sup> Wisdom, born in 1850 and working as a plumber in London by 1871,<sup>216</sup> was competing regularly across London between 1881 and 1884, concentrating on distances under 150 yards, often calling himself 'S. Wisden', as when he raced on the sprinting circuit in Sheffield.<sup>217</sup> Described again as a plumber in 1881,<sup>218</sup> Wisdom trained leading sprinter Henry Hutchens and accompanied both Hutchens and his backer Arthur Markham on his Australian tour in 1886. In 1887, Hutchens broke the English sprint record for 50 yards using Wisdom as his pacemaker and Sam subsequently gave his occupation as 'athletic trainer' at his marriage in 1894 and in both the 1901 and 1911 censuses,<sup>219</sup> reinforcing his status as a leading expert in the field.

Given his reputation as trainer of Hutchens, it is no surprise that, prior to his Olympic victory in 1908, Walker turned to this 'practiced hand at preparing athletes'.<sup>220</sup> Commentators of the period were clear that Walker had 'one of the best trainers, Sam Wisdom'<sup>221</sup> and that he

213 David Powell, 'Athletics Catches Up with Mussabini at Long Last', *The Times*, October 30, 1992, 44.

214 Mark Ryan, *Running with Fire: The True Story of 'Chariots of Fire' Hero Harold Abrahams* (London: JR Books, 2011).

215 Reginald E. Walker, *Textbook of Sprinting: Olympic English and South African Sprint Champion-Holder of Several World's Records* (London: Health and Strength Ltd, 1910).

216 Census. 1871 (10/10/32).

217 'Star Grounds Fulham', *Bell's Life*, October 7, 1871, 2; 'Star Grounds, North End, Fulham', *Bell's Life*, September 14, 1870, 4; 'Lille Bridge Grounds', *Bell's Life*, October 28, 1871, 2; 'Lille Bridge Grounds, West Brompton', *Bell's Life*, January 18, 1873, 9.

218 Census. 1881 (RG/11/6).

219 Dave Day and Deborah Pitchford, 'Play it Again Sam: Mussabini and Wisdom: A Biographical Conundrum' (paper presented at the British Society of Sport History, The University of Glasgow, September 8, 2012); GRO (1894/marriage/November/ London/70); Census. 1901 (RG/13/1218); Census 1911.

220 *Morning Bulletin*, February 5, 1887, 5.

221 Talbot, 'Athletic Notes Walker is a Wonder', *Athletic World Cycling and Football Chat*, August 12, 1908, 12.

had ‘made a runner of Reggie Walker’.<sup>222</sup> After he arrived back in South Africa, Walker said that he had been delighted with the treatment received from everyone in England, and his praise of his trainer, Sam Wisdom, would have made that ‘veteran blush, if repeated’.<sup>223</sup> When plans were being made for Walker to visit America in 1909 he was to be accompanied by Wisdom, ‘who prepared him for the Olympic meeting’ and proposals for a visit to Australia and New Zealand were dependent on the Australasian Union making suitable plans for both Walker and Wisdom.<sup>224</sup> Before he left Durban in April 1909 Walker stated that his previous coach, Sam Wisdom, would take him in hand on arrival in England before visiting the States with him<sup>225</sup> and a year later it was being reinforced that Walker had been trained by Wisdom during his stay in England.<sup>226</sup> Wisdom’s death on 20 September 1912 came as something of a surprise, although the sixty-two-year old ‘athletic trainer’ had been ill for some time. Newspaper reports of his death recalled that he had trained Walker for the 1908 Olympics and ‘there is no doubt he considerably helped the Natal crack’.<sup>227</sup>

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222 Outspoken, *Daily Express*, February 26, 1913, 8; Reginald. E. Walker, *Textbook of Sprinting: Olympic English and South African Sprint Champion-Holder of Several World’s Records* (London: Heath and Strength Ltd, 1910).

223 *Auckland Star*, February 6, 1909, 14.

224 *Otago Witness*, May 19, 1909, 63; *Evening Post*, June 1, 1909, 3.

225 ‘Famous Runners Sail for England’, *Rand Daily Mail*, April 30, 1909, 7.

226 *The Athletic Field and Swimming World*, April 2, 1910, 205.

227 *The Bulawayo Chronicle*, November 1, 1912, 3; ‘Athletes’, *East African Standard*, November 16, 1912, 23; GRO (1912/death/September/Belgravia); *Otautau Standard and Wallace County Chronicle*, November 26, 1912, 7.

#### **Chapter 4. Walker in Transition**

By the time of Wisdom's death Reggie had been a prominent athlete on the international circuit for nearly four years. During that time he had established himself as one of the leading sprinters of the age and he had been helped in the process by a number of individuals, some, like Wisdom, professional advisors and others, like Herbert Keartland and James Wallace, who came from different occupational backgrounds, such as athletic correspondents. Key individuals emerged from all sections of South African society, reflecting the engagement in sport by all classes in the colonies, especially those who were immigrants rather than being colonially born. For example, one important influence on Walker's career, following his return to South Africa in 1908 was John 'Banks' Brady, a military man and an educator, who was reported in December 1908 as being Walker's trainer.<sup>228</sup>

##### *John 'Banks' Brady*

John Brady was born in Ireland in November 1875 and educated at Middleton College and Trinity College, in Dublin. On the outbreak of hostilities in South Africa, Brady volunteered for

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<sup>228</sup> 'Walker in Form', *Rand Daily Mail*, December 22, 1908, 7.

the 45<sup>th</sup> Company, 13<sup>th</sup> Battalion, Imperial Yeomanry, soldier number 9629.<sup>229</sup> He was subsequently commissioned into the Commander-in-Chief's bodyguard and served in Kitchener's Fighting Scouts. After the war, he became head teacher at Grey College, in Bloemfontein in the ORC, where he organized athletics and arranged an inter-school match with St Andrew's College in Grahamstown. He became secretary of Ramblers Amateur Athletic Club and initiated the inter-capital sports between Bloemfontein and Pretoria. Brady himself was an active athlete from 1903 to 1907 and ran second in the 440 and 880 yards at the South African Championships in 1904. He was elected onto the ORC and AAA committees and remained active until 1907. The interest in cross-country running, the impact of the 'Walking Craze', and the beginning of Caledonian Sports, with the Caledonian Society holding its first sports in May 1903, together with Brady's arrival on the scene, brought about a boom in athletics in Bloemfontein. In 1909, Brady became Chief Inspector of Schools within Southern Rhodesia,<sup>230</sup> although, later that year, a farewell dinner was being held for him.<sup>231</sup> The Department of Education recognized his work in encouraging physical culture and, as a result, a decision was made to run competitions following in the English public school traditions. The Rhodes Trustees responded by contributing a trophy while several other 'gentlemen' had awarded Rhodes cups for the boxing competitions. The purpose of these was to raise the standard of efficiency of the schools and competitions were planned for the following year (1913) to be held at Salisbury.<sup>232</sup> In 1914, Brady enlisted as a member of the Rhodesian Volunteers and, on the outbreak of hostilities in August, he sailed for London, being listed on the shipping manifest as a civil servant.<sup>233</sup> He was commissioned as a Lieutenant on the 'Special List' and made Captain in the sixth Battalion, Kings Royal Rifle Corps (KRRC). In December 1914, Brady was given command of the Rhodesian Platoon in France. In 1917, he

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229 John Brady Banks, 'Imperial Yeomanry Soldiers Documents', (South Africa, The National Archives WO128).

230 Pierce Noonan and Christopher Webb. Auction Archive; from Dix Noonan Webb (accessed March 1, 2013).

231 'Rhodesian Inspector', *The Bulawayo Chronicle*, July 30, 1909, 4.

232 'Purpose of the Competitions', *The Bulawayo Chronicle*, June 21, 1912, 10.

233 Pierce Noonan and Christopher Webb. Auction Archive; from Dix Noonan Webb (accessed March 1, 2013); Shipping-Manifest List for Norman Arriving in London November 1914.

returned to frontline duties, won a Distinguished Service Order (DSO) plus the French Croix de Guerre and he joined the first Battalion that September. Less than a month later, he was appointed the Battalion's second in command. By January 1918, he held overall command with the rank of Temporary Major, but he was wounded in action at Le Sars in March and evacuated to the United Kingdom. In July 1918, Brady returned to France, where he rejoined the 1st Battalion prior to taking command of the 4th Battalion as a Temporary Lieutenant-Colonel towards the end of the year. He regularly led reconnaissance raids to ensure the best possible intelligence for his command, not least at the River Escaut, between Marquincourt Farm and Quincamp Mill, in early October 1918, and again at the crossing of the River Selle later that month. Brady resigned in March 1920, with the honorary rank of Lieutenant Colonel, and returned to Rhodesia to pursue his career in education, firstly as Senior Inspector of Schools, and afterwards as headmaster of Milton School at Bulawayo.

Brady also maintained his links with the military establishment, commanding the Bulawayo Military District when the defence system was reorganized, and sitting on the Southern Rhodesia Council for Defence. In addition, he was largely responsible for fostering the alliance between the KRRC and Royal Rhodesia Regiment. In 1930, Brady retired from education and entered politics being elected as an M.P. for Bulawayo East until 1946. In 1939, Brady returned to uniform and he served until being compelled to return to Rhodesia as a result of ill health. Brady was later awarded the Order of the British Empire (OBE) and, after he died at the age of seventy-seven, his obituary in the KRRC *Chronicle*, recalled that in his youth he had been a 'fine athlete', particularly on the track.<sup>234</sup>

#### *Brady, Walker and the Timing Question*

During the late nineteenth century, British athletic administrators concerned about the increasing level of American performances attempted to diminish their importance by questioning the ability of American officials to properly time races and measure jumps and throws. In the 1880's, similar concerns were being expressed about the ability of 'colonial athletes' to run the 100 metres in ten seconds and the accuracy of 'colonial timekeeping'. At this point, the English clearly believed that colonial athletes, or, indeed, anyone other than themselves, could not legitimately perform to these new standards and doubts about the validity of South African sprint times were often expressed.<sup>235</sup> While this scepticism was quashed, at

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234 Pierce Noonan and Christopher Webb. Auction Archive; from Dix Noonan Webb (accessed March 1, 2013); Peter McLaughlin, *Ragtime Soldiers: Rhodesian Experience in World War One* (Zimbabwe: Books of Zimbabwe, 1980).

235 'English Sport', *The Cape Argus*, December 15, 1880.

least partly, by Walker winning the 100 metres in 1908, the ‘timing question’ arose once again at the end of the year.

On 17 December 1908, Brady and Walker visited the Wanderers in Johannesburg to inspect the track and to undertake starting practice. According to Brady, Walker was the type of athlete who always tried hard, whether he was running in a big event or merely training, and on the morning of 21 December, at the Wanderers grounds, Walker put in some good 100 yards times during training. Brady, who was described as Walker’s trainer, was asked to start the runs, but he preferred to leave it to the timekeepers, who were officials of the AAA. Brady had encouraged Walker to speed up over the last thirty yards and Walker finished strongly with a time of nine and two-thirds seconds. The officials believed that Walker had beaten the gun by at least a yard but Brady insisted that Walker had started on the gun and that the trial could be regarded as being appreciably under nine and three-fifth seconds. In view of Walker’s performance, Brady said it was only reasonable to believe that he would run quickly at the Wanderers<sup>236</sup> and, on 26 December, Walker was well supported.<sup>237</sup> The knowledge that both Walker and Charles Hefferon, another of South Africa’s Olympic champions, were competing at the event attracted a crowd of five thousand. Walker won his heat, but got off badly in the final, after two false starts, with the result being that he came fourth.<sup>238</sup> Reflecting the widespread misgivings about the training times supposedly recorded by Walker, Postle wrote to *The Star* three days later pointing out that no human being had ever run 100 yards in nine and a half seconds on a fair level track and with no following wind. Postle himself had been credited with achieving this time but it had been downhill and with the wind and he had never run faster than three yards inside ten seconds or nine and seven-ten seconds. Postle went on to say he was not writing to try and detract from Walker’s merits as a sprinter but merely to point out that neither he, nor anyone else, could run this time.<sup>239</sup>

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236 ‘Walker in Form’, *Rand Daily Mail*, December 22, 1908, 7.

237 ‘Walker Sets up the New Records’, *The Friend*, December 26, 1908, 8.

238 ‘Walker and Hefferon’, *Rand Daily Mail*, December 28, 1908, 3.

239 ‘A.B. Postle Opinion on Walker’s Record Times’, *The Friend*, December 31, 1908, 8; Hewitt Griffen, ‘Athletics R.E. Walker African Records’, *Athletic World Cycling and Football Chat*, January 27, 1909, 16.

### *Walker's 1909 Season*

An exploration of Reggie's performances during 1909, the competitions he attended and the people he interacted with, help to chronicle and, at least partly, explain his gradual transition from amateur champion to professional athlete. During New Year 1909, visitors to Pretoria had the opportunity of witnessing Walker attempting the world record for the 75 yards and the 100 metres.<sup>240</sup> John McNamara wrote a letter to *The Star*, saying he would pay for John O'Connell, who was 'The Stadium' professional starter from Queensland, to travel to Pretoria to start Walker's race on New Year's Day. As in England, it seems that professional coaches and trainers also performed the important role of starting and they were often regarded as the only men who could actually time accurately. O'Connell wrote back complaining about the offer, which actually amounted to only three guineas (about £269.90 at today's rates). The secretary of Pretoria disagreed, and proposed that O'Connell should be offered only two guineas (£197.90) and suggested that O'Connell should pay his own travelling expenses to the capital. It was widely believed that, if the Pretoria secretary would not pay the fees asked for by 'one of the best starters', the public would be disappointed by his absence from the event and some remarks were made about having 'professional starters' at 'amateur foot races' with the problems of timing that might result. Nevertheless, in the interests of Walker, with whom he had a working relationship, O'Connell reconsidered his position and agreed to pay his way to the capital.<sup>241</sup> Although Walker placed second in his heat and should not have been able to progress, he was allowed to compete in the final of the 100 metres, which he won in ten and two-fifth seconds, supposedly a world record. However, once again, it was claimed that Walker had beaten the gun.<sup>242</sup>

In a letter to the *Rand Daily Mail*, Rupert Naylor discussed the meaning of the phrase 'beaten by the pistol' and this particular event. He explained that the pistol was supposed to beat every runner, as nobody was supposed to leave his mark until after the pistol had been fired, so the runners that started before the pistol had left Walker, who started after it had been fired, at a disadvantage. Naylor reported that the timekeepers started their watches by the flash of the pistol and not from the movement of Walker's opponents so Naylor 'presumed' that the time recorded for the final was correct. Nonetheless, Naylor observed that Walker, who was beaten

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240 'Walker World's Record Breaker', *Rand Daily Mail*, December 30, 1908, 6.

241 John MacNamara, 'A Timing Question', *Rand Daily Mail*, 1908, 2.

242 *The Star*, April 12, 1909.

by four yards by the early start of his opponents, would have run the hundred yards in ten seconds from the time the pistol was fired until he reached the tape. Thus, Naylor believed there was a discrepancy of some six yards between the final race and Walker's heat times and so it was 'no wonder' the authorities had refused to accept it as a record.<sup>243</sup>

In January 1909, Walker wrote to Alexander that he was on a visit to friends in Manchester and might either remain in England for that winter or return to South Africa in the next few days. At that point, he was undecided and his decision would depend on news from home. In any case, he hoped to be in England the following summer for the 1910 AAA Championships.<sup>244</sup> This letter was written at a time of heightened discussion about the relative merits of Walker and Postle and it seemed obvious that the question could only be settled by a head-to-head race, something that the SAAA and CA wanted to avoid. As a prominent member and supporter of the national association, E.J.L. Platnauer, who wrote on all aspects of athletics, particularly on the value of cross-country running, continually speculated about Walker turning professional and condemned the evils of professionalism. On 3 February 1909, he reviewed the whole situation in the *Transvaal Leader*, pointing out that amateur athletics was a sport, professional athletics a business. Platnauer claimed that Naylor and Postle were only in South Africa because interest in professional running was waning in the USA, England and Australia, whereas in South Africa it still remained relatively high. Naylor, it appeared, had formed a professional club, Johannesburg Athletic Club, in December 1909 with himself as managing director.<sup>245</sup> He had acquired a piece of ground on the corner of Main and End Streets and announced that he intended to build an up-to-date sports ground, 'The Stadium', and that challenges would be sent all over the world. Although the opening was delayed several times, the stadium finally opened its doors on Saturday 13 February, which generated a sudden boom in professional athletics.<sup>246</sup>

Naylor described life at 'The Stadium' as putting young men on the 'right track' and he believed that the public of the Rand liked 'good, healthy sport'. With the public's support, he would be able to offer 'sufficient inducement' to bring the 'world's best' to the stadium. Naylor

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243 Rufe Naylor, 'Life of the Stadium', *Rand Daily Mail*, August 21, 1909, 11.

244 W.W. Alexander, 'Athletic Notes', *The Sporting Mail*, January 2, 1909, 3.

245 *The Star*, December 19, 1908.

246 *The Star*, April 12, 1909.



reported that the existence of the stadium would not depend entirely on betting, because the public would get their money's worth purely from a spectator's point of view, and he was said to be confident in the future of the stadium. While a *Rand Daily Mail* editor 'Front Brake' referred to professionalism as 'gilt without glory', Naylor countered by reporting that there was 'no doubt that glory and gilt can run together' and, in his opinion, the athlete who decided to go after both showed more sense than the man who was 'content with the moiety'.<sup>247</sup> Naylor also planned to use a 'recall gun' should an athlete obtain any slight advantage and believed that this would result in world records being accepted by both the Australian and English authorities.<sup>248</sup>

### *Rupert 'Rufe' Theodore Naylor*

Rupert Naylor was variously described as the 'King of Stings' and one of the 'greatest swindles from down under'<sup>249</sup> and it seems clear that he offered financial inducements to Walker which helped to shape Reggie's athletic career. Naylor was at various times during his career a bookmaker, racehorse owner, punter gambler, sporting entrepreneur, lottery salesman, skilled orator and aspiring politician. He travelled the world with his gambling and promotional activities and appeared in the USA, India and New Zealand, organizing and gambling on horseracing, cycling, footraces and boxing. Above all, he was an 'ideas man', and someone who was up for making a 'fast buck'. He was always running into trouble with the authorities as he put his latest 'get rich quick scheme' into practice, but it was in racing circles, as a promoter, owner and bookmaker, that he gained most notoriety.<sup>250</sup> Naylor was Sydney's most well-known tipster, one of many who appeared on radio station 2 KY every Friday night, and he secured the gimmick telephone number 1021 (10-1). Naylor attracted the gullible by offering 'Racing Revelations' and 'The Quick and the Dead', while he tagged himself 'The Mastermind of the Turf'.<sup>251</sup> He was renowned for his access to key information from all the training tracks and stables and, at a time when basic wages were only three or four pounds a week, he charged up

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247 Rufe Naylor, 'Life of the Stadium', *Rand Daily Mail*, August 21, 1909, 11.

248 *Ibid.*, 11.

249 James Morton and Susanna Lobez, *Kings of Strings the Greatest Swindles from Down Under* (Australia: Victory Books, 2011).

250 GRO (1930/electoral roll/South Sydney/96).

251 'Rufe Naylor', *The Sydney Morning Herald*, November 23, 1986, 88.

to five pounds for his ‘specials’, although he was never short of clients. As with most of his kind, finding ‘mugs’ ready to pay five pounds was more important to Naylor than finding winners and after he offered a gold plated special for the following Saturday on one of his radio appearances his office was inundated with letters containing a total of one thousand pounds.

Naylor had been born in 1882 at Captain’s flat in Australia, near the New South Wales country town of Queanbeyan in the Canberra district.<sup>252</sup> He was the son of Henry and Susannah Naylor and he spent his childhood at the outback town of West Wyalong, New South Wales, until he ran away from home at the age of fifteen. By the time he was eighteen he had become a bookmaker, travelling around bush race meetings in the New South Wales country towns of the era. He managed to accumulate a ‘bank’ and used it to bet at Sydney’s pony tracks but he lost most of his money and found himself embroiled in both a long running fight with several of the jockeys and in a number of costly legal actions. Naylor headed for Queensland, where he switched his attention to professional foot racing, then a booming sport around Australian rural towns. Betting at the bigger meetings was often substantial and a runner could easily be backed to win thousands of pounds. Naylor established a stable of his own professional runners to take on tour around Australia. In 1905, he was listed as a sports promoter on the electoral roll<sup>253</sup> and by 1906 Naylor had travelled to Western Australia with his runners, including the Queensland sprinter Arthur Postle. Postle was known as the ‘Crimson Flash’, from the colour of his running gear, and acknowledged as the ‘fastest sprinter’ in the country. In December 1906, Naylor became the biggest promoter in the West by staging a series of three match races at Kalgoorlie between Postle and an Irish champion, Bernard Day. The events were over 75, 130 and 220 yards and won by Postle before a crowd of nearly 20,000 spectators.

In 1908, Naylor sailed with both Day and Postle to South Africa.<sup>254</sup> At the time, Naylor was listed on the electoral roll as a financier and he had recognized an opportunity to develop professional athletics, something which directly threatened the amateur circuit, at that point being kept alive by the Harrier Clubs. Postle’s performances enabled Naylor to rapidly amass a fortune and, after he recognized that a match between Postle and Walker would be very lucrative, Walker was offered a match on the Rand for six hundred pounds. Walker said he would run if the SAAA and CA agreed, which of course they did not, and then it was suggested

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252 GRO (1882/birth/Sydney-New South Wales).

253 Ibid., 88; GRO (1905/electoral roll/Brisbane/60).

254 ‘Big £100 Handicap at Newcastle’, *The Courier Saturday*, April 18, 1908, 6.

that the two athletes should run at separate venues with electric timing. Walker would receive a gold trophy worth a hundred pounds if he could run 100 yards in nine and four-fifth seconds, while Postle would receive a two hundred pounds trophy or purse if he ran nine and three-fifth seconds. Walker agreed but stipulated that the event should take place under the control of the Transvaal Amateur Athletic Association and that the *Rand Daily Mail* should appoint the officials. Naylor was not happy with the arrangements and wrote to *The Star* pointing out that there was no international athletic body and that the SAAA and CA were not bound by English laws so that there was no reason why the men should not race together. Anticipating future developments, he also said that Walker should turn professional. Naylor regarded Reggie, as the 'greatest runner' aged nineteen, but believed that, if Walker were to race Postle on level terms, the Australian would make Reggie look like a 'poor champion'. As discussions continued on the prospect of a match between Postle and Walker, Reggie kept on declining Naylor's offers and remained true to his amateur status.<sup>255</sup> Over the next few years, Postle and Jack Donaldson engaged in a series of celebrated races in England, Australia and South Africa. These events were largely responsible for maintaining the high level of interest in professional running in South Africa before World War I.

In 1919, a charge was brought against Naylor for bribing former members of the Executive Committee of the Transvaal Provincial Council with a view to influencing racing legislation but, at the conclusion of his trial on 17 May, Naylor was found not guilty.<sup>256</sup> Having returned to Australia, Naylor set up as a bookmaker at Sydney's pony tracks in 1925 and was rarely out of the headlines for the following fourteen years.<sup>257</sup> In October 1931, he was charged and fined a nominal amount for illegally selling shares in state lottery tickets in the heart of Sydney. The state lottery director had refused to sell Naylor a large number of tickets and he had employed others to buy four at a time. A writ for ten thousand pounds for slander was served on the Commissioner of State Lotteries for comments he subsequently made about Naylor's activities. In the following month, November 1931, Naylor was charged with being the keeper of a common gaming house. At the same time, Naylor introduced a one shilling lottery ticket in opposition to New South Wales State Lottery, calling his venture 'Rufe Naylor's State Lottery,

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<sup>255</sup> *Wanganui Herald*, February 24, 1909, 6.

<sup>256</sup> 'Well Known Racing Man Found Not Guilty of Bribery Charge', *Evening Telegraph*, May 23, 1919, 2; 'Rufe Naylor's Trail', *Poverty Bay Herald*, March 1, 1919, 4.

<sup>257</sup> GRO (1936/electoral roll/State Waverley/14).

Co-Adventures Syndicate Ticket'.<sup>258</sup> Eventually he took the State Lottery Office to the English courts in a bid to have his syndicate selling declared legal. In Australia, in March 1934, Naylor entered into a lengthy and costly legal battle with the Australian Jockey Club after he had been warned off from the Randwick race-course following an inquiry into the performance of two horses. He was disqualified by the Jockey Club Committee under a rule of racing which referred to 'any person who had given at an inquiry held by the committee or stewards, any evidence which in their opinion is false or misleading'.<sup>259</sup> Naylor, who vehemently maintained his innocence, took the Australian Jockey Club to court and won the first of his two battles. Later that year the Jockey Club appealed to the Privy Council in Britain and won their case. During 1934, Naylor stood unsuccessfully for a seat in the New South Wales parliament.

In April 1935, Naylor was arrested and fined as part of a group charged with illegally using a wireless device, which had been used to receive messages from inside the Rosehill racetrack so that a radio station could broadcast race commentaries. In 1936 and 1937, Naylor's occupation was listed as 'an investor' and, in 1939, he travelled to the USA as manager for the racing campaign of an Australian race horse, Winooka. Winooka won several match races in the USA but Naylor's big pay day came at the expense of American sports promoters and bookies when he was part of the group which planned the infamous 'Travallion plunge'. Travallion was supposed to be nothing more than an 'old hack' accompanying Winooka as a calming influence but, with Naylor's and Winooka's connections,<sup>260</sup> Sydney bookies Joe Matthews and Bill McDonald backed Travallion across the USA in a minor race at Laurel and won a fortune. On the Saturday before his death from a heart attack in September 1939,<sup>261</sup> Naylor won £1,650 on the 33-1 shot Val Eaton at Rosehill but, although Naylor constantly declared that 'he had never gambled, he always won', he eventually left an estate of only £2,447.<sup>262</sup>

### *The 'Trek' to the Rand*

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258 'Rufe Naylor', *The Sydney Morning Herald*, November 23, 1986, 88.

259 Ibid., 88; 'State Lottery Rufe Naylor Case', *The Sydney Morning Herald*, March 17, 1932.

260 'Winooka Australia's Wonder Horse', *The Sydney Morning Herald*, July 1, 1979.

261 GRO (1939/death/September/Paddington).

262 'Rufe Naylor', *The Sydney Morning Herald*, November 23, 1986, 88.

By 1909, members of the SAAA and CA wanted to form a central body to control the whole of the amateur athletic world in South Africa. The idea, which was not a new one, had been inspired by a desire to keep in closer touch with many different sporting bodies in the country. This was based upon the successful decision of the Amateur Athletic Union of Australia to distance itself from their relationship with the English Associations and to the difference between English and Australian rules. It was not clear, however, why South Africa would give the Australians the ‘cold shoulder’ after adopting their own centralized structures, especially since the amateur laws in Australia were, according to one commentator, much more strictly defined and adhered to than in South Africa. During this period, the definition of an amateur recognized by the Transvaal was someone who had not competed for a money prize to which he might have added to or used to back himself to win. By contrast, in a traditional British scenario, if an amateur competed in an event for a valuable trophy alongside a professional the amateur became a professional as well.<sup>263</sup> The Transvaal rules also allowed amateur and professional football players to compete against each other because there were ‘no money prizes’ involved.<sup>264</sup>

According to Hewitt Griffen, the exodus of athletes from all parts of South Africa to the Transvaal was continuing, and Walker had left Natal. By staying on at the Rand (Johannesburg), Walker was accused of ‘not playing the game’, although there was no possibility of ‘veiled amateurism’ being inferred from his presence in Johannesburg, which had attracted Walker during the Christmas and New Year holidays. It was to be hoped, however, that some opportunity would be given to Walker to run in Durban.<sup>265</sup> There was a strong suspicion that the Rand was steeped in professionalism and that the pick of athletes from the South African colonies were being lured to Johannesburg with Natal contributing more recruits to Transvaal sport than all the other colonies put together.<sup>266</sup> It was noted that Johannesburg people had been against sending Walker to England as a competitor in the Olympic Games in 1908 and it seemed that the Rand people would rather get him to stay there than let him leave South Africa. Walker had probably been offered inducements to stay, presumably so he could attract crowds

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263 ‘What is an Amateur?’, *Rand Daily Mail*, August 18, 1909, 6.

264 ‘Amateur v. Professional’, *Rand Daily Mail*, August 21, 1909, 11.

265 Hewitt Griffen, ‘Athletics R.E. Walker African Records’, *Athletic World and Football Chat*, January 27, 1909, 16.

266 Sprinter, ‘The Trek to the Rand’, *Rand Daily Mail*, February 14, 1909, 4. 1909

to the Wanderers, but it was possible that he remained on the Rand simply because, through his own 'pluck, enterprise and initiative, he had been able to better himself in every respect'.<sup>267</sup>

The migration to the Rand was particularly noticeable in association football, the players in the Transvaal teams coming from many nations, ranging from ex-Scottish, English and Irish internationals to the 'cracks' of the imperial garrisons. The worst feature of this sporting migration was the loss of the 'local hero'. It was widely believed that either Walker had been intimidated by the professional touts of the Rand or else he had been lured to Johannesburg with the promise of a lucrative job. All this, of course, in a part of South Africa where, outwardly, the sporting organizations adhered most strongly to the amateur laws and took drastic action in dealing with the tainted 'ped' or cyclist, however outstanding his performance. According to one report, it was because of his firm belief in pure amateurism that powerful influences were being brought to bear to keep hold of Walker. Other South African sportsmen concentrated on the Rand because of the 'business side of life', which appealed to them more than their sporting reputation in field games. They were in a place where there was always an opportunity for a man who worked and played well, and they would attract others with the same attitudes into a group of pure amateur sportsmen, which would subsequently improve and consolidate all the best athletic talents in South Africa in one place.<sup>268</sup>

#### *The South African Championship and European Tour, 1909*

In April 1909, at the South African Championships, which took place on the Rand, large crowds gathered with athletes coming from Cape Town, Port Elizabeth and the British colonies. Interest was centred on the flat race events, both short and long distance, and among the Transvaal competitors was Reggie. The twenty entries for the 100 yards were run off in four heats, with Walker winning his heat from scratch in ten and two-third seconds, and he went on to win the final in ten seconds. During the closing ceremony, Walker previewed the DAC meeting to be held on 24 April, where he planned to attempt two world records.<sup>269</sup> Observers noted that South

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267 Hewitt Griffen, 'Athletics R.E. Walker African Records', *Athletic World and Football Chat*, January 27, 1909, 16.

268 Sprinter, 'The Trek to the Rand', *Rand Daily Mail*, February 14, 1909, 4.

269 Sprinter, 'South African Championships', *Rand Daily Mail*, February 17, 1909, 9; 'Walker Wins the Sprint', *The Friend*, July 5, 1909, 5; 'Natal's Team', *Rand Daily Mail*, April 5, 1909, 8. 'Athletics', *Rand Daily Mail*, April 23, 1909, 8; 'Walker Smashes Record', *Richmond Times Dispatch*, April 26, 1909, 5.

Africa had produced athletes capable of holding their own against the 'best in the world' and at the DAC meeting this view was confirmed when Walker broke the world record for 150 yards, in fourteen and one-fifth seconds. In the 180 yards, he covered the distance in seventeen and four-fifth seconds, beating Wendell Baker's record of eighteen seconds, achieved at Beacon Park in Boston, on 14 June, 1886. Walker had shown that he was 'equal to the world's speediest sprinters'.<sup>270</sup> In Toronto, papers reported that J.A. Proctor, the Canadian athlete who raced against Reggie in the 100 yards final at the Olympic Games in London, had received a letter from President Roosevelt, asking him to come out of retirement, and resume training for a meeting with Walker, John Rector and Robert Kerr, plus the pick of the American sprinters.

After the South African Championships, Walker left for England to compete in the English Championships, via the Armadale Castle which departed from the Cape Town harbour with an estimated seven-hundred and fifty passengers on board, among which was Arthur Postle. After the championships, Reggie planned to visit America, where he would compete against Rector again, before proceeding on to Canada and Australia.<sup>271</sup> Henry Nourse, president of the SAAA and CA from 1894 to 1924,<sup>272</sup> had made these arrangements to remove Walker from the constant pressure exerted by Naylor to turn professional, with the assurance that the organization would 'assist in keeping Walker in the amateur ranks'. In a Press Association statement, Walker noted that he would go into strict training with Sam Wisdom on arrival at Southampton on 22 May.<sup>273</sup> Walker's first appearance was in early June, at Abergavenny, where he finished third in the 120 yards handicap.<sup>274</sup> At the Civil Service Sports meeting, Walker won the scratch sprint and the 100 yards handicap, with a time of ten and one-fifth seconds which was the best he had recorded since his arrival in England.<sup>275</sup>

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270 'Athletics', *Rand Daily Mail*, April 23, 1909, 8; 'Walker Smashes Record', *Richmond Times Dispatch*, April 26, 1909, 5.

271 Sprinter, 'Walker for England', *Rand Daily Mail*, February 17, 1909, 9; *Ottawa Journal*, April 12, 1909, 12; *Dominion*, June 4, 1910, 12.

272 *Springfield Daily News*, January 28, 1913, 6.

273 'Famous Runners Sail for England', *Rand Daily Mail*, April 30, 1909, 7; 'Champ Spinter Coming', *The Indianapolis News*, May 22, 1909, 9.

274 'Walker Unsuccessful', *Rand Daily Mail*, June 3, 1909, 7.

275 W.W. Alexander, 'Athletic Notes', *The Sporting Mail*, June 19, 1909, 6; 'Walker in Form', *Rand Daily Mail*, June 14, 1909, 7.

In a letter to an English newspaper, Postle agreed that Walker was a 'fine sprinter' and reiterated that he was keen to race against him. He also suggested that Reggie turn professional because he knew what Reggie's recent times were and believed that they were 'not quinine', in particular his time for the 100 yards of nine and two-fifth seconds. Postle continued by stating that he knew a number of amateur athletes in Australia that could equal Walker's times.<sup>276</sup> In early June 1909, Walker began his preparations for the English Championships, with his training focusing on the half way mark and the three quarter mark of the 100 metres race, which was where he was thought to be much slower, although he would always finish strongly. Walker was reported to be 'very anxious' about gaining a few pounds, which would have an effect on his performance. Reggie also found the British climate rather unpleasant, in contrast to the warmth of South Africa, and he intended to visit America where he believed he could run faster since it would be a much better track and climate to that found in England.<sup>277</sup>

In the AAA Championship meeting, held at Stamford Bridge, Walker, Kerr and Cartmell took the first three places in the final of the 100 yards event, after winning their respective heats, all with a time of ten and one-fifth seconds. In the final, Walker's time was ten seconds 'dead', which was said to be a disappointing performance in view of the favourable conditions. Walker had been expected to equal the British amateur record of nine and four-fifth seconds set by James Duffy.<sup>278</sup> Walker decided to remain in Europe and he abandoned his proposed American visit because, according to the newspapers, he was dissatisfied with the arrangements.<sup>279</sup> On 24 July, Walker competed in the Birchfield and Rover Amateur Athletic club sports meeting in Birmingham, but he was beaten in the 120 yards by the American Cartmell by a yard in twelve and three-fifth seconds.<sup>280</sup> Cartmell's victory over Walker was the first ever by an American and he was one of the very few men that had beaten Walker in scratch races.<sup>281</sup> Walker also competed at Pontypridd, Glamorganshire, where he was beaten in the

<sup>276</sup> *Auckland Star*, May 15 1909, 14.

<sup>277</sup> *Dominion*, June 4, 1910, 12.

<sup>278</sup> 'Athletics in England', *The Advertiser*, August 10, 1909, 11; 'English Amateur Championships', *The Mafeking Mail and Protectorate Guardian*, July 5, 1909.

<sup>279</sup> 'Dissatisfied with Arrangements', *The Natal Mercury*, July 11, 1909, 8.

<sup>280</sup> 'Foreign Sport', *Sunday Times*, August 29, 1909, 3.

<sup>281</sup> 'Trio of Crack Sprinters of America is Now in the Public Eye', *The Washington Times*, August 13, 1909, 12; 'Cartmell First to Beat Walker', *The Washington Times*, August 13, 1909,



open 100 yards handicap event by Davis, of Cardiff, to whom he conceded a ten yards start.<sup>282</sup> In September, Walker went on to compete in the 100 metres in Berlin, where he defeated Rau in a time of ten and four-fifth seconds, his success continuing in the 100 metres handicap on the same day, this time in ten seconds.<sup>283</sup>

In August 1909, one newspaper reported that Walker would be appearing in four meetings in New Zealand and that Postle would be competing in the professional meetings at the same time. Walker's plans to visit Australasia were estimated to cost three hundred pounds for approximately three months. However, it was pointed out that if Walker did travel to the Southern hemisphere he would miss competing in the South African Championships and, in December, it was being reported that Walker would not be visiting Australasia.<sup>284</sup> By this time, reports were beginning to emerge from Cape Town, in South Africa, that claimed Walker was no longer an amateur, and, to a certain extent, this was true. The SAAA and CA had a strict rule that stated that a competitor in an athletic meeting who enquired about, or received, travelling expenses would cease to be an amateur although, clearly, an athlete could not go to England without any supporting finance. Nourse had made the necessary finance available but, after the two hundred and fifty pounds had been spent, another 'hat' was sent round with the result that Walker was still in England and technically running against the amateur laws of the SAAA and CA. Thus, Walker came under suspicion as a result of his extended tour of Europe. The English press intimated that he should be considered a professional in view of the financial assistance he was receiving but no comment was made by the organization which had originally paid for Walker to go on tour and his status was left unclear.<sup>285</sup> It appears that Walker, at this point in time, did not intend to give up his amateur position, particularly since he had plans to settle in England the following year, having apparently secured a position in a family business.<sup>286</sup>

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282 'Reggie Walker in Wales Twice Beaten in Handicap', *Rand Daily Mail*, August 3, 1909.

283 W.W. Alexander, 'Athletic Notes', *The Sporting Mail*, September 18, 1909, 1.

284 *New Zealand Herald*, June 26, 1909, 9; *Wanganui Herald*, August 26, 1909, 6; *Auckland Star*, December 18, 1909, 16.

285 *The Star*, April 12, 1909; *Cape Times*, September 25, 1909; 'Is Reggie an Amateur?', *Rand Daily Mail*, September 30, 1909, 8.

286 *Auckland Star*, February 6, 1909, 14; *Wanganui Herald*, February 9, 1909, 6.

However, the actions of Nourse had stimulated debates regarding Walker's amateur status and raised questions in the British media about such practices going against English AAA laws and, in the light of this, it was suggested that Reggie should officially turn professional.

## **Chapter 5: Turning Professional**

In view of Walker's subsequent announcement to run for the professional ranks, it is useful to understand the context that he found himself in and the individuals he was surrounded by, in order to help explain his decision. Professional pedestrianism, the forerunner of modern track

and field athletics, was the major sport of the working-class in Britain during the first half of the nineteenth century. It was characterized by gambling and by systematic modes of preparation. Both of these aspects of the sport contravened key aspects of the emerging amateur ethos in the later stages of the century, when the sport was overtaken by track and field as an activity for middle-class and upper-class athletes. Pedestrianism also suffered from the popularity of association football and lost much of its support as working-class spectators deserted the tracks for the football stadia. Because of the increasing power of the AAA and the popularity of football, professional pedestrianism in Britain had virtually died out when the modern Olympic Games were started in 1896. By the time of the 1908 London Games, it had retreated into small enclaves around the country, most notably to Scotland where it retained a foothold at Powderhall.

However, professional athletics had a much stronger presence abroad in this period, especially in the USA and colonial countries such as Australia and South Africa, and there were opportunities for outstanding athletes to make a living through matching themselves with suitable opponents. This must have been an attractive proposition for someone like Walker who did not have the independent means of support that many of his upper-class rivals took for granted. It was always difficult, however, for those moving from the amateur ranks into the professional version of the sport. When Downer turned professional, it was considered unlikely that he would stand a chance against the best professionals although he had proved the doubters wrong and shown himself to be one of the great sprinters in England. It was considered just as likely that Walker would be equally as effective as Downer when he turned professional.<sup>287</sup>

In December 1910, writing from Johannesburg, Naylor discussed Walker's situation. While Reggie was recognized as the champion of the world amongst the 'lilywhite' brigade, amateur officials were still left wondering about when he would return home from England. Naylor believed that Walker would stay in England and 'star' in the next summer's meetings, where he could make money as the 'amateur' champion. Walker responded by saying 'I am an amateur, now and always'.<sup>288</sup> However, that same year, Herbert Kearthland, who was later involved with Walker as manager and trainer, stated in an interview with the *Rand Daily Mail* that, after Walker's European tour, he 'could be thinking' of turning professional and that he would earn more money in three months than he would normally earn in three years. Kearthland himself had

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287 'Walker v. Donaldson', *Rand Daily Mail*, December 10, 1910, 11; 'Donaldson Beats Walker', *The Rhodesia Herald*, December 30, 1910, 10.

288 'The World of Sport', *Sunday Times* February 13, 1910.

no objection to Walker racing against the professional Postle, provided that Walker received no payment.<sup>289</sup>

### *Herbert Burt Kearthland*

Herbert Burt Kearthland, known as Bertie Warnes in the 1891 census,<sup>290</sup> born in London, circa 1887, was the son of Charles and Lauretta Warnes. Kearthland travelled to South Africa in 1909, having made the acquaintance of Reggie Walker while assisting with the South African Olympic team in 1908. Kearthland, who went to Durban as sports editor of the *Natal Advertiser*, was a keen supporter of athletics, and a man who prided himself on his ability to discover and develop athletic talent.<sup>291</sup> He became Charles Hefferon's manager in 1909, when he turned professional, and Kearthland promoted his visit to England.<sup>292</sup> In 1911, when the South African Championships were held in Durban, Kearthland assisted some of the visiting Transvaal athletes and, in March 1912, Kearthland was appointed by the SAAA and CA as trainer, after he wrote to the SAAA and CA offering his services.<sup>293</sup> His appointment was greeted with a degree of opposition because some people felt that a local man, such as Tincler or Grady, should have been appointed and letters of protest were received by the SAAA and CA. By this time, Kearthland and Walker, who had now turned professional, had both moved to Johannesburg.<sup>294</sup> Kearthland also persuaded the Olympic Committee to allow the sprinters in the 1912 team to train with Reggie, a move not popular with purist amateur administrators.<sup>295</sup> Some of the team

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289 'Why Walker Turned Pro', *Rand Daily Mail*, October 11, 1910, 3.

290 Census1891(/12/357/14).

291 Floris Van der Merwe, 'Onthullings Oor Suid Afrika se Goue Medaljes in Atletiek', *Journal of the South African Sport Medicine Association*, Olympic Issue 3, no. 2 (1996): 4-6.

292 *The Latest*, January 8, 1910, 6.

293 *The Star*, January 19, 1912, 8.

294 'Reggie Walker a Professional', *Rand Daily Mail*, September 15, 1910, 8; Sprinter, 'The Trek to the Rand', *Rand Daily Mail*, February 14, 1909, 4.

295 *The Latest*, March 2, 1912; 'Reggie Walker is Now a Coach', *Salt Lake Telegram*, May 17, 1912, 11; 'Olympic Team will see College Men Occupying Same Important Places', *Times-Picayune*, May 26, 1912, 28; *Muskogee Times*, May 23, 1912, 9; *The Huntington Herald*, May 28, 1912, 6; 'To Act as Coach', *The Evening Star*, May 1912, 18.

members later criticized Kearthland because it was felt he was ‘aping the American’ in his approach, and Kearthland also clashed with Captain Weatherall, manager of the team. Weatherall’s most important contribution during this period was the establishment of athletics in the army and he organized the first Army Athletic Championships in 1908. After the Olympics, Kearthland linked up again with Walker and returned to Durban as sports editor of the *Daily News* until he enlisted at the outbreak of World War I. While in Durban, Kearthland once again wrote to the SAAA and CA asking to be appointed as trainer for schools and athletes on the Witwatersrand. After World War I, Kearthland became sports editor of *The Star* newspaper and served on the executive of the SAAA and CA, acting as chairman in 1923.<sup>296</sup>

### *The 1910 Season - Turning Professional*

At the start of Walker’s 1910 amateur season, he had been suffering from a slight attack of blood poisoning,<sup>297</sup> and he made his first appearance for the season, on 15 May, at a meeting held under the auspices of the Amalgamated Press at Herne Hill. Walker failed in the preliminary heats of both the 100 and 200 yards handicaps and did not progress to the finals.<sup>298</sup> On 2 July, back at the Stamford Bridge for the English Championships, many of the entries, like Walker, came from the colonies. Reggie got away well in the 100 metres but he was beaten by Fred Ramsdell with Applegarth in third place.<sup>299</sup> In the International Sports at Brussels on 12 July, Walker was first in the scratch race over 100 metres, in eleven and one-fifth seconds, but only came third in the handicap 100 metres, being beaten by two Belgian athletes.<sup>300</sup> In Manchester on 23 July, at the Salford Harriers sports, Walker again raced Ramsdell of Pennsylvania in the 100 yards, defeating him by a yard in ten and four-fifth seconds.<sup>301</sup> At the

<sup>296</sup> ‘The Springbok Champion to Visit Australasia’, *Northern Times*, April 12, 1913, 7; ‘Reg. Walker as a Pro’, *The Athletic Field and Swimming World*, March 19, 1910, 155.

<sup>297</sup> ‘Reggie Walker’s Health’, *The Journal Grahamstown*, February 12, 1910.

<sup>298</sup> ‘Reggie Walker Re-appears’, *The Natal Mercury*, May 16, 1910, 7.

<sup>299</sup> ‘Reggie Walker Beaten in Sprint’, *Rand Daily Mail*, July 4, 1910, 10; ‘English Championship’, *The Rhodesia Herald*, July 8, 1910, 11.

<sup>300</sup> ‘Walker in Brussels’, *The Rhodesia Herald*, July 15, 1910, 4.

<sup>301</sup> ‘A Win for Reggie Walker’, *Rand Daily Mail*, July 25, 1910, 4; ‘Walker at Manchester’, *The Rhodesia Herald*, July 29, 1910, 10.

Redhill sports meeting in August, Walker won the 220 yards invitation scratch race in twenty-two and four-fifth seconds.<sup>302</sup>

Meanwhile, Harry Duggan, a Cardiff sports promoter, had matched Walker to run Jack Donaldson, the Australian sprinter, for a race that would be decided on the Rand, in Johannesburg, during Christmas week. Negotiations had been in progress since the arrival of Donaldson with Charles Terry in England and, although the announcement had not yet been made public, it was understood that Keartland, acting for Walker, had satisfactorily concluded the arrangements and agreed that Duggan would handle the match. Duggan was free to make his own plans as to where the match should be run but it was understood that, unless the terms were prohibitive, the race would be run at 'The Stadium' over 100 yards, at which distance Donaldson, the 'Blue Streak', was world champion. Following this announcement, it was reported by *The Sporting Life* that Walker was about to turn professional and that he was confident of recovering his best form back in South Africa. He was keen to meet Donaldson and, if successful, he would challenge the 'world cracks' for the championship. When Keartland left for Johannesburg on 17 September, it was announced that Donaldson was willing to meet Walker.<sup>303</sup>

When the amateur athletic community first heard about Walker's decision to run as a professional, there was a degree of disappointment and a considerable amount of speculation about what seemed to have been a sudden decision. The general view was that he had been motivated by a desire to challenge himself rather than as the result of any financial inducements. One newspaper later suggested that the 'unsuspected reason' for his decision had been that he wanted to see a 'white man champion' in the boxing arena and not Jack Johnson, a black sportsman. The athlete who Walker believed could take the title from Johnson was the amateur boxer Fred Storbeck, described as a 'big, young Boer,' who stood six feet one inch tall and weighed in at two hundred and five pounds, who had won the English championships at the age of twenty-one. Because Reggie did not feel comfortable in asking his friends and family for the funds to support Storbeck in turning professional he had signed up to race the professional Jack Donaldson, which, providing Walker won, would raise sufficient funds to send for Storbeck

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302 'Walker's Success', *The Rhodesia Herald*, August 26, 1910, 10.

303 'Great Race on the Rand', *Rand Daily Mail*, September 15, 1910, 8; 'Reggie Walker a Professional', *Rand Daily Mail*, September 15, 1910, 8; 'Matched Against Walker', *Rand Daily Mail*, September 15, 1910, 8.

who was in South Africa. Given the variety of ethnic groups in South Africa, and the prejudices of the time, this was a plausible, if unusual, reason for Walker having turned professional.<sup>304</sup>

#### *Walker's First Professional Meeting*

In an interview related to the forthcoming race between Walker and Donaldson, Walker's manager Kearthland made it clear that Walker had gone over to the professional ranks entirely of his own accord. He further stated that he had not been forced to take this action by any pressure brought to bear on him by the English AAA or by any 'extraordinary incentive' offered by any promoters in South Africa or in England. According to Kearthland, Walker's sole reason for going over to the professional side was the feeling that he should make use of the 'wonderful speed' he possessed to assist him into some 'kind of business' before it was too late and if he had not turned professional he would have retired from athletics altogether. Since the match had been arranged, Walker had been in serious professional-type training, which included sea bathing, which was believed to have made him a better performer than he had been previously. Walker himself would have preferred to run on any other track than 'The Stadium' because Donaldson was accustomed to the grounds and this venue would work in his favour. Otherwise, he did not mind about where the race was run, even if he was forced to run on grass.<sup>305</sup> Walker arrived back in South Africa in October, when he was met by Kearthland, accompanied by several local sportsmen. Questioned as to his position, Walker confirmed that he was, to all intents and purposes, now a professional and could not compete as 'an amateur' again, having agreed to run Donaldson within the next three months. He also stated that he could not appear at any other meeting during this period. When told that the race was had been fixed for Boxing Day at 'The Stadium', Walker turned to Kearthland and asked if he had agreed to that arrangement, to which Kearthland replied in the negative. Apparently, there had been a lack of communication, as Kearthland was plainly ruffled and he drew attention to the statement in *The Star* to the effect that he had had nothing to do with this first match between Donaldson and Walker. Reggie, however, stated that, since Kearthland was his manager and representative, all business should have been referred to him and he was somewhat surprised that the match was definitely reported as fixed. Walker remarked 'I would want to know more than the paper

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304 'Boer Farmer to be Brought to England to be Developed', *Tampa Tribune*, September 20, 1910, 4; *Dominion*, December 3, 1910, 12; *Grey River Argus*, December 9, 1910, 2.

305 'Why Walker Turned Pro', *Rand Daily Mail*, October 11, 1910, 3; Shipping-Manifest List for Armadale Castle Arriving in Southampton April 1912.

reports,' and, until the forthcoming engagement, he would remain in Durban. He fancied his chances against Donaldson but he was by no means confident.<sup>306</sup> Articles were drawn up by the *Rand Daily Mail* specifying the terms and condition for the match, including the side wagers between Walker and Donaldson, and the arrangements were finalized by Naylor. On 15 November, the articles for the world's 100 yards championship were signed by both athletes.<sup>307</sup>

Walker stayed in Durban until early December, training at the Lords grounds, where he had reportedly shown good form in practice. It was understood that a Mr Pearse was backing Walker and that he was prepared to increase the side stakes if Walker continued to show improvement in training. Walker arrived in Johannesburg by the Durban mail train on 10 December to complete his preparations for his first professional race on Christmas Eve.<sup>308</sup> He had never seen 'The Blue Streak' in action and he went down to the stadium that same evening to see how 'the man shaped up'. Donaldson, on the other hand, had had the advantage of having seen Walker in action at Manchester in July 1909. However, this time around, Walker had been able to focus on running, since he had 'no business' to attend to, and Donaldson was expecting to see a 'faster man' than the Walker he had seen at Manchester. The race was expected to attract a very large crowd keen to see how Walker would perform.<sup>309</sup> He had chosen the Turffontein Hotel, based near the racecourse, for his training quarters and he had put himself in the hands of O'Connell, Arthur Postle's old trainer. He carried out his 'slow work' in the morning on the track, following the same regime Postle used, and he would use the stadium for sprinting practice in the afternoon.

The race between Walker and Donaldson was the major feature of the Christmas meeting at 'The Stadium' in 1910. Walker was appearing as the current Olympic sprint champion whereas Donaldson had previously 'astonished' the athletic world with his performances in

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306 'Who Made the Arrangements?', *Rand Daily Mail*, October 24, 1910, 7; 'Reggie Walker Returns', *The Rhodesia Herald*, October 7, 1910, 10; 'Walker Returning', *Rand Daily Mail*, October 3, 1910, 7.

307 'Walker to Meet Donaldson', *The Rhodesia Herald*, November 18, 1910, 10.

308 'Great Sprint Match', *Rand Daily Mail*, November 8, 1910, 8; 'Reggie Walker Arrives', *Rand Daily Mail*, December 12, 1910; 'Reggie Walker After the Coin', *The Washington Herald*, November 27, 1910, 1.

309 'Walker v. Donaldson', *Rand Daily Mail*, December 10, 1910, 11; 'Donaldson Beats Walker', *The Rhodesia Herald*, December 30, 1910, 10.



Johannesburg and Australia.<sup>310</sup> The stadium had been leased for the occasion to the promoters of the race and a substantial number of well-known sportsmen and gamblers had taken a keen interest in the event to see what sort of ‘show’ Walker would put up against the ‘crack’ professional. Both men declared that they were in their ‘best form’, and stated publicly that they would find it ‘impossible to improve’ on what they would be able to show, so there would not be a rematch because the loser, whoever it was, would be satisfied that the winner was too good for him. It was recognized that the Hon. Frank White, who was the judge, was not going to have an easy task. O’Connell was nominated as the starter with J. Macnamara, G.S. Weale and J. Brock as the timekeepers.<sup>311</sup>

Walker got the best of the start, in which he had improved significantly, and for the first quarter of the race, it was a close contest. Then, at the half way mark, Donaldson put in a few of those ‘electric strides’ for which he had become famous, putting a yard and a half between himself and Walker. Walker then collapsed at sixty yards and, while Donaldson was being carried off ‘shoulder high’ as the winner, he was being assisted off the field, limping. Donaldson’s time was nine and a half seconds, slower than the run in which the ‘Blue Streak’ had defeated both Postle and Charles Holway. After the race, Walker accounted for his collapse by saying that earlier that day he had had a ‘break-down’ although, just prior to the race, he had stated to the public that he was as ‘fit as ever’.<sup>312</sup> It later transpired that Walker had severely strained his groin muscles when he fell. This necessitated a long rest, which he took on a farm near Kokstad, but he was still only twenty-four and he had his whole future ahead of him.<sup>313</sup>

#### *Walker Back on Form*

A year later, Walker competed in his hometown in a 110 yards event, where he clocked a new professional world record, of ten and two-fifth seconds,<sup>314</sup> beating the world record of eleven

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310 ‘£600 Sprint’, *Rand Daily Mail*, December 24, 1910, 2.

311 ‘Walker v. Donaldson’, *Rand Daily Mail*, December 10, 1910, 11; ‘Donaldson Beats Walker’, *The Rhodesia Herald*, December 30, 1910, 10.

312 ‘Walker’s Poor Show’, *Rand Daily Mail*, December 27, 1910, 3.

313 ‘New World’s Record’, *The Rhodesia Herald*, December 1, 1911, 10; ‘Walker’s Poor Show’, *Rand Daily Mail*, December 27, 1910, 3.

314 ‘World’s Record by Reggie Walker’, *The Mafeking Mail and Protectorate Guardian*, November 27, 1911.

seconds established by the American F.N. Bennie in 1886.<sup>315</sup> At the Lords ground, on 3 March 1912, Walker competed against the American Holway in a triple sprint, in front of over four thousand people. The track was slightly on the soft side after heavy overnight rains but there was a steady breeze right behind the runners. O'Connell sent the men off to a good, level break in the 75 yards race, with Holway being the quickest into his running and leading at twenty-five yards by three-quarters of a yard. At thirty-five yards, Walker drew closer and at fifty yards, he was half a yard in front. By the sixty yards mark he led by a yard and a half, and he won, in seven and one-fifth seconds, the slowest time given by the three official watches. Walker believed that the real time had been seven and one-tenth seconds, although the breeze was said to be worth a good yard. The crowd were suitably impressed at this win because Walker had simply looked back at Holway when he put in his finishing spurt. The second event, over 100 yards, also ended in an easy win for Walker. Again both men were level at the start and Holway competed strongly within the first fifty yards, after which Walker won easily by four yards. The time recorded was nine and three-fifth seconds, while Holway reached the tape in nine and seven-tenth seconds. After this race, Holway remarked that it was pointless running the third event but said he was 'prepared to back himself at longer distances'.<sup>316</sup> On 23 March, Walker again decisively defeated Holway when the pair met in their return match at the Lords ground. The first race was over 130 yards and, once again, Holway led by a slight margin for the first fifty yards. They ran on even terms to 110 yards, where the American made a sudden dash getting half a yard lead. Walker, however, responded with a final spurt and won by a yard in twelve and two-fifth seconds. Walker also won the 100 yards in nine and three-fifth seconds, by two yards. Holway's leg began troubling him after this race and so the third event, planned for 130 yards, was abandoned.<sup>317</sup>

In June 1912, reports suggested that Walker intended to go on an extended tour to America and Australia, where he would attempt to win the world's professional sprinting championships,<sup>318</sup> but he was in England by early August when Walker, Postle, Holway and

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315 'Reggie Walker's Sprinting', *The Friend*, December 23, 1911, 10.

316 'South African's Fine Performance', *The Natal Mercury*, April 9, 1912, 7; 'World's Record for 75 Yards', *The Rhodesia Herald*, March 8, 1912, 10.

317 'Walker Again Defeats Holway', *The Natal Mercury*, May 2, 1912, 7.

318 *The Bathurst Times*, May 20, 1912, 4; *Auckland Star*, May 28, 1912, 1; *Poverty Bay Herald*, May 31, 1912, 9; *Grey River Argus*, June 10, 1912, 8.

Donaldson competed at the Manchester Athletic meeting.<sup>319</sup> Walker won both the 120 and 130 yards races, defeating Postle and Donaldson respectively. In the 120 yards, Walker received a yard start and completed the distance in eleven and a half seconds, beating Postle, who went off a half yard start. In the 130 yards, Walker received two yards start and covered the distance in twelve and a half seconds. Walker's overall performance was described as 'wonderful'.<sup>320</sup> In London, on 26 August, at the Taff Vale handicap meeting, Walker ran from scratch for a purse of a hundred and forty pounds recording a time of twelve and three-fifth seconds in the preliminary heat. Postle, with a yard start, and Donaldson, from scratch, won their respective heats in twelve and four-fifth seconds. Walker was scheduled to meet the favourite, Crowley, in the second round but he fell during practice and scratched his arms and legs badly. The following day, Walker was still stiff from his fall and was unable to compete in the semi-final. Neither Donaldson nor Postle made the final, which Crowley won easily.<sup>321</sup>

Later in August, Walker wrote to the promoters responsible for a proposed match between Donaldson and Postle expressing his desire to join in the event billed as a race for the 100 yards championship of the world. Postle agreed that Walker should be allowed to compete but Donaldson suggested that Walker could meet the winner. Subsequently, in Manchester in September, before six thousand spectators, the 100 yards world championship was decided between Donaldson, Postle and Walker, for a hundred pounds each and a purse of two hundred pounds, sponsored by Manchester *Sporting Chronicle*. The odds before the race were 7 to 4 on the eventual winner Donaldson, with Walker in second place, a yard and a half behind, and Postle third, a yard behind Walker. Donaldson's time was two and a half yards inside ten seconds.<sup>322</sup> Around this time, Postle wrote to Sydney from England reporting that he would 'challenge the world' for a race up to 100 yards, although he believed the only sprinters to accept such a challenge would be Reggie Walker and, perhaps, Jack Donaldson.<sup>323</sup> The following month Walker competed in a 130 yards race, which included Postle, Donaldson and

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319 'A Great Quartette', *The Rhodesia Herald*, August 2, 1912, 10.

320 'Walker at Manchester', *The Rhodesia Herald*, August 9, 1912, 10; 'Running', *The Rhodesia Herald*, August 9, 1912, 10.

321 'Walker in Form', *The Rhodesia Herald*, August 30, 1912, 10.

322 'Sprint Championship', *Illustrated Star*, September 14, 1912, 14.

323 *Auckland Star*, September 28, 1912, 16.

boxing champion Bombardier Billy Wells. Wells was made favourite in the betting on his heat although he only managed to finish second with a time of twelve and two-fifth seconds, a time, it was later noted, which was faster than the heat time run by Walker.<sup>324</sup>

*International Sprint against Arthur Postle, 1912*

In November, Walker arrived back in South Africa, from England.<sup>325</sup> By this time, he had improved his knowledge of sprinting considerably, as demonstrated by the manner in which he won races, often conceding long starts. He had also improved his sprinting action since he no longer carried his head back and body erect but ran with the proper body posture, in which the head and chest were inclined forward, which helped to increase his pace.<sup>326</sup> Walker's trainer, Keartland, said the morning after returning from England, that Walker had 'found his form' and that his training would start immediately for a meeting against Postle on 26 December 1912.<sup>327</sup> Both men had also been matched by Naylor to run over 100 yards in Johannesburg on Christmas Day.<sup>328</sup> Everywhere that Walker ran, he made a point of comparing his short distance running with that of Postle's and, in arranging these matches, Walker was doing something that no other professional runner had yet done, which was to meet Postle over 50, 60 and 75 yards.<sup>329</sup> Hector Gollan, Postle's trainer-manager, said that he would not 'believe that Postle could be beaten over these distances until he actually saw it',<sup>330</sup> and, while he knew all three races would be very close, Postle pointed out that he held the records for all three distances. He

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324 'Great Sprinters due Next Month', *Time-New Orleans*, October 6, 1912, 7; *Ogden City Evening Standard*, November 9, 1912.

325 'Professional Sprinting', *Illustrated Star*, November 9, 1912, 9.

326 'Reg. Walker Again Breaks Record', *The Rhodesia Herald*, December 5, 1912, 10; 'Walker in Form', *The Natal Mercury*, November 25, 1912, 22.

327 *Ibid.*, 7.

328 'Miscellaneous', *Sunday Times*, December 1, 1912, 3.

329 'Inches Will Divide', *The Natal Mercury* December 25, 1912, 9; 'The Big Sprint', *The Natal Mercury*, December 30, 1912, 9.

330 'Postle's Trainer Speaks', *The Natal Mercury*, December 25, 1912, 9.

added 'I am certain of this, that if anyone living can beat me, it is Reggie Walker, we are the two fastest runners in the world, but I think I can just win.'<sup>331</sup>

The race between these two men generated a significant amount of interest, not only at a local level among Walker's supporters but also among the wider sporting audience, partly because of the popularity of Postle. Both men were acknowledged as the fastest athletes of the century over these distances and the winner of the three sprints would have to establish remarkable times. South Africa had produced champions in all branches of sport, but it was considered doubtful that there had ever been a man more capable of 'upholding his country's prestige than the young Natalian'. As both an amateur and a professional, Walker had kept South Africa in the public eye all over the athletic world. As an athlete, Arthur Postle had had a remarkable career on the track and both athletes were particularly popular with the Durban community.<sup>332</sup> Walker had struck his 'true form' and the event attracted a considerable crowd at the Lords grounds. The Australian's remarkable performances on the track, and the way in which he pushed the clock during training at the Albert Park Oval, favoured his chances over the two shorter distances. In fact, in the 50 and 75 yards sprints, Walker started quicker and got into his running earlier than Postle. In the 50-yard sprint, both men stayed level right up to the tape where the verdict was given in favour of Postle by inches, in five and two-fifth seconds. This caused some debate but those at the tape agreed that the 'Crimson Flash' had finished first. Postle won the 60-yard sprint by six inches in six seconds.<sup>333</sup> Walker won the 75 yards, by a yard in seven and one-fifth seconds.<sup>334</sup>

### *Australian Tour, 1913*

During the 1912 athletic season, Walker had succeeded in defeating Jack Donaldson, Arthur Postle and Charlie Holway, the latter five times in succession.<sup>335</sup> Still in his early twenties,

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331 'Postle Feels Confident', *The Natal Mercury*, December 25, 1912, 9; 'Walker's Challenge', *The Natal Mercury*, December 27, 1912, 7.

332 'Postle v. Walker', *The Natal Mercury*, December 12, 1912, 14; 'Great International Event', *The Natal Mercury*, December 21, 1912, 14; 'The Big Sprint', *The Natal Mercury*, December 30, 1912, 9.

333 'Postle Wins the Rubber', *The Natal Mercury*, December 30, 1912, 8.

334 'Walker Notches the 75 Yards', *The Natal Mercury*, December 30, 1912, 8.

335 *Northern Times*, April 12, 1913, 7.

Walker was now regarded as one of the fastest sprinters globally and he was able to throw out challenges to any sprinter in the world at any distance from 80 yards to 220 yards.<sup>336</sup> The following year, Walker, acting on the advice of a number of Australian sportsmen in England, planned to tour Australia in the company of his trainer and manager, Keartland.<sup>337</sup> While three years previously, Walker had been unable to tour the Australasian continent as an amateur under the auspices of the Australian Amateur Athletic Union, he was now in a position to undertake the tour as a professional.<sup>338</sup>

Walker had written to the local Hibernian Society, which was holding a £200 sports meeting in March, hoping to arrange a match with Postle, and newspapers reported confidently that both Walker and Postle would be visiting New Zealand and Australia.<sup>339</sup> It was also reported that both men would be competing at the St. Patrick's Sports in Auckland, on 17 March 1913, although the organizers of these sports were apparently reluctant to have them compete.<sup>340</sup> In a letter from Keartland, confirmation was given that both Walker and his manager were due in Wellington, New Zealand, on 4 March and that they intended to make a tour through the principal Australian States.<sup>341</sup> Walker was prepared to run any sprinter from 60 yards to 220 yards for a purse of £100 to £500, a challenge that was particularly aimed at Jack Donaldson. Reports noted that Walker would be the most well known professional sprinter to have visited Australia since Harry Hutchens,<sup>342</sup> who had also travelled to Australia with the trainer Sam Wisdom. However, there was always some doubt over these arrangements since, in a letter dated 27 January 1913 to A. Woodley, Postle had said that could not decide whether or not to visit New Zealand and Australia because he had a 'proposition pending' which would keep him

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336 'The Springbok Champion to Visit Australasia', *Northern Times*, April 12, 1913, 7.

337 *Marlborough Express*, February 19, 1913, 6.

338 *Ibid.*, 7.

339 *Dominion*, March 1, 1913, 17.

340 *Marlborough Express*, February 10, 1913, 4; *Otago Daily Times*, February 13, 1913, 8.

341 'His Intentions', *Dominion*, February 22, 1913, 12.

342 *Northern Times*, April 12, 1913, 7; *Dominion*, February 22, 1913, 12.

in South Africa.<sup>343</sup> Subsequently, on 4 March, a Mr D. Moriarty, who had arranged to meet both Walker and Postle on arrival, was reporting that they had missed the boat at Cape Town.

This failure to appear in Australia, and other missed opportunities to travel to America, raises some questions over Walker's commitment to the role of the professional sprinter since these were the places where professional sprinting remained a viable financial proposition. Whatever the reasons behind his failure to travel, the onset of the First World War effectively ended his sprinting career. In late 1914, the South African sprint champion G.H. Patching, the winner of the 100 yards amateur championship of England in 1912, gave up his amateur status and was looking for a match against Walker. By this time, Walker had done very little running since his last race against Jack Donaldson and Arthur Postle in England so this challenge, had it been accepted, would have effectively brought him out of retirement.<sup>344</sup>

#### *Love, Marriage and War 1914-1918*

When Britain declared war on Germany in 1914, approximately 40% of white colonial men, some from Southern Rhodesia, fought alongside the British troops, although it should also be noted that approximately 50,000 South African troops allied themselves with Germany.<sup>345</sup> In early November 1914, Walker enlisted in the South African Infantry, alongside another South African athlete, marathon runner Ken McArthur.<sup>346</sup> At the same time, it was reported that Walker had no intention of giving up running and he hoped that when the war was over he would succeed in his 'claim to the World's championships', provided that he arrived back safely from the conflict. Between 4 August 1914 and 18 February 1917, Walker served in the army, firstly in German South-West Africa (Namibia) and then in the South African Infantry,<sup>347</sup> later describing the area in which he served as 'damnable'.<sup>348</sup> In June 1915, Walker returned home

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343 *New Zealand Herald*, March 8, 1913, 10; *Otago Daily Times*, March 13, 1913, 10.

344 *Auckland Star*, November 28, 1914, 2.

345 Peter McLaughlin, *Ragtime Soldiers: Rhodesian Experience in World War One* (Zimbabwe: Books of Zimbabwe, 1980).

346 *Manitoba Free Press*, November 14, 1914, 6; 'More Athletes Enlists', *Washington Post*, December 23, 1914, 10.

347 'Reggie Walker in England', *Referee*, June 6, 1917, 10.

348 *Evening Post*, February 26, 1915, 11.

from serving six months in Kimberley,<sup>349</sup> after which he served on the pay staff of the Railway Regiment until January 1916 when he took clerical employment at the New Henot Mine. Reggie was still extremely anxious to meet Patching, Meyer and Solomon over 100 yards. Arrangements were being made by the Transvaal AAA and the SAAA and CA, although Walker wanted to meet Solomon on amateur terms, thus there were no cash requirements.<sup>350</sup>

In June 1917, it was being reported that Private Reggie Walker had arrived in England by boat from Mozambique.<sup>351</sup> On 21 July 1917, at the age of twenty-eight, Lance Corporal Walker was married at the Parish Church of St John's Viking in Surrey, to Maisie Minnie Hill, aged twenty-three, whose residence was in Marylebone, London.<sup>352</sup> Maisie's parents, Henry and Marie-Hill, had baptised her in 1894 in Surrey.<sup>353</sup> At the time of Walker's marriage, his occupation was listed as a soldier, although he had been shown as a clerk in 1908.<sup>354</sup> Then in 1926, aged thirty-eight, Walker, now listed as a bachelor and shipping clerk, was married for a second time, to Sarah Anne Lynch, a widow, in Salford at the Registry Office.<sup>355</sup> At the time of their marriage, both their fathers were deceased. Sarah, listed as a spinster in 1911, had previously married, aged twenty-one, Ernest Lynch,<sup>356</sup> a painter from Salford, who had been in the 19<sup>th</sup> Bn. (Pioneers), Welsh Regiment, and who had died on 4 September 1917, aged thirty-two.<sup>357</sup> Some reports suggest that Walker had also been wounded during the First World War, on 21 September 1917,<sup>358</sup> and that he had contracted measles and malaria. What is definitely

349 *Janesville Daily Gazette*, June 25, 1915, 12.

350 *Auckland Star*, May 26, 1917, 14.

351 'Reggie Walker in England', *Referee*, June 6, 1917, 10.

352 GRO (1917/marriages/July/Guildford/167); 'Sprinter Married in England', *The Rhodesia Herald*, October 12, 1917, 19.

353 GRO (1894/baptised/April/Surrey/432/55).

354 Shipping-Manifest List RMS Briton Arriving in Southampton June 1908.

355 GRO (1926/marriages/December/Salford/45).

356 GRO (1911/marriages/May/Salford/67/34).

357 GRO (1917/deaths/September/Dozinghem).

358 *Jeffersonville Star*, February 4, 1918.



known is that Walker was in hospital in France suffering from trench foot in March 1918 and that he was sent back to England for further treatment.<sup>359</sup>

As to his running exploits during this time, Walker had turned out for several events in the Aldershot Command Sports Festivals after his marriage in 1917, but his successes were limited and he appeared to have lost much of his form. Back in London, on 7 July 1917, at the AAA sports meeting at Stamford Bridge, the Canadian Field Artillery won the two miles relay race and the three-quarters of a mile relay race for naval and military teams. Walker was third in his heat in the 100 yards open race and in the 100 yards handicap. The South African Field Infantry team, which also included Walker, was unplaced in the first heat of the three-quarters of a mile relay race.<sup>360</sup> In August 1918, Walker competed for the first time since he was taken ill in France, winning both the 100 yards and 220 yards in eleven seconds and twenty-seven seconds respectively at a sports meeting in Woking.<sup>361</sup> In November 1918, Walker was back on the cinder track and he won both the 100 and 220 yards events at the South African military meeting in London.<sup>362</sup>

Eventually, Walker took his family back to Durban where he coached South African athletes and was often spotted, smoking heavily, on the sidelines. After the death of his second wife, Walker lived with his stepson William and his wife Alma, who heartily disliked her father-in-law. According to his great grandson, if Reggie liked you, he would give you anything you asked for. He also stated in *The Independent* that Walker gave his belongings away and had a drinking problem. Although it has never been definitely confirmed, Walker had been disinherited from the family fortune due to his passion for running and his great aunts, who were both spinsters, left their entire fortune to the Silver Leaf Cat's home in London. Walker ended up living in a one-room apartment in the Riviera Hotel in Durban and he died of tuberculosis in King George V Hospital in Durban on 5 November 1951, at the age of sixty-two. According to *Die Burger*, Reggie had been seriously ill during the seven years prior to his death.<sup>363</sup> Walker left barely enough money to cover his own burial but he remains a prominent

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359 'Day by Day', *The Bulawayo Chronicle*, March 1, 1918.

360 'War Athletics', *The Rhodesia Herald*, July 13, 1917, 15.

361 *Nottingham Evening Post*, August 12, 1918, 2.

362 *The Indianapolis News*, November 6, 1918, 20.

363 *Die Burger*, November 7, 1951, 5; *The Natal Mercury*, November 7, 1951, 7; 'Famed Sprinter Dies', *Boston Traveler*, November 7, 1951, 42.

figure in the history of sports as the first South African to win an Olympic gold medal.<sup>364</sup> In 1914, Harry Greenberg, a sporting authority of New York, drew up a list of the ten greatest sprinters of all time. He rated Jack Donaldson as the 'fastest human', above Harry Hutchens in third place, with Arthur Postle in fourth and Reggie Walker in fifth,<sup>365</sup> although the Welsh starter and handicapper, Teddy Lewis, believed that Reggie Walker was the 'greatest runner who ever put a shoe on'.<sup>366</sup>

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364 Tanya Waterworth. 'Tragedy of Durban's Olympic Hero: Great Champion Who Suffered a Terrible Fall'. *The Independent on Saturday*, August 4, 2012.

365 'Donaldson Rated the Greatest of All World's Great Sprinting Stars', *Seattle Daily Times*, March 9, 1914, 27.

366 *Lloyds Weekly News*, August 11, 1912, 25.

## Conclusion

For British commentators at the start of the twentieth century nationalism was often extended to include countries that had been colonized during the previous century. South Africa consisted of four British colonies at the time of the 1908 London Games and was still part of the British Empire, despite recent wars (1880-81 and 1899-1902) between Britain and the two Boer republics. South African athletes were making their mark at the turn of the twentieth century and one prominent South African athlete was Reggie Walker, who established himself as the world's premier sprinter after defeating Canadian Bobby Kerr in the 100-metre final at the 1908 Games. The support given to Walker by the natives of his British colony of Natal had a great influence on him and was, partly, the result of the culture of athleticism in South Africa, which had been based on the model of the English public schools. At school, the process of physical education became a social discipline and was a means of producing the right kind of leaders for both the nation and the Empire. Natal quite naturally took up sporting traditions and values identified with British culture and this is demonstrated by this case study of Reggie Walker, which reinforces the dominant role of the British in the development of sport in the colonies. Athletics in South Africa was confined to white male English speaking South Africans during the late nineteenth century so it is no surprise that the British claimed Walker as one of their own.

The conflict between Britain and South Africa resulted in a degree of admiration for Boer bravery and the toughness they demonstrated on the battlefield, through which masculinity was moulded. After the Boer War (1899-1902), the British Army recognized the need to build upon the physical strength and endurance of their armed forces and utilized athletics as a means to encourage this. Athletic distinction also became valued in the selection of troops in the Empire with those men from public schools, who were more likely to have taken up the British sports that had become a feature of colonial life, being seen as promoting the power of British masculinity.<sup>367</sup> Sport was never related to a single vision of masculinity as different games formed different masculinities, while the same sport in different locations produced distinct masculinities based on political power, and, in Natal, sport was played in a manner that saw

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<sup>367</sup> Jonty Winch, ““There Were a Fine Manly Lot of Fellows”’: Cricket, Rugby and Rhodesian Society during William Milton’s Administration, 1896-1914’, *Sport in History* 28, no. 4 (2008): 583-604.

sport as a physical manifestation of masculinity. Walker himself displayed specific forms of masculinity, both in his athletic and military career, and this was reflected in his muscular physical appearance. The manner in which Reggie trained, which was described as him being the type of athlete who always ‘tried hard’, also articulated elements of manliness and Walker’s training methods were considered that of an ‘ideal sprinter’.<sup>368</sup> Walker’s decision to enlist in the army adds to this portrait of masculinity. Enlisting in the army suggested bravery and a willingness to embrace the combat masculinity ethic, so Walker conformed to a codified set of behaviours, which played out as the hegemonic masculinity of individual soldiers.<sup>369</sup> The term ‘nationalism’ also reflected a British Imperial identity, which extended onto the international platform of sport, and this combination of excellence in bodily skill and patriotic ambitions helped forge Walker’s Imperial identities in both South Africa and Britain.

South Africans had established themselves as notable sportsmen in 1906, when the Springbok rugby team toured England, and the global expansion of the Olympic Games enabled emerging nations like South Africa to consolidate a national identity. Reggie Walker wore the green and gold Springbok emblem at the 1908 Olympic Games becoming the first South African to win a gold medal at the Olympics. His colonial triumph appealed to those Britishers present, especially since he defeated Britain’s main rivals, the North Americans, and he was subsequently celebrated in the British media as being from British native stock. The London Games also revealed the friction between amateur ideals and professionalism, not only about the seriousness of training, but also about the receiving of money. Amateur attitudes towards professionalism created concerns regarding cheating and betting, which not only changed an individual’s relationship with sport, but was also considered to have distorted the kind of person that he was.<sup>370</sup>

McIntosh described the terms amateur and professional as having different meanings to each individual and notes that the term was used to mean what each person wanted the term to

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368 ‘The Ideal Sprinter’, *Auckland Star*, October 31, 1914, 2.

369 Raewyn Connell and James Messerschmidt, ‘Hegemonic Masculinity Rethinking the Concept’, *Gender and Society* 19, no. 6 (2005): 829-859; Raewyn Connell, ‘On Hegemonic Masculinity and Violence: Response to Jefferson and Hall’, *Theoretical Criminology* 6, no. 1 (2002): 89-99.

370 Peter C. McIntosh, *Sport in History* (London: C.A. Watts and Co. Ltd, 1963), 173.

mean.<sup>371</sup> It was this complex concept of amateurism that was applied in South Africa where, with each wave of British immigrants, the meaning of ‘amateurism’ changed. During the early years of sports in South Africa, the distinction made between amateur, those competing in their leisure time, and professionals, who earned their livelihood through athletics, was unclear. There were no rules or regulations to prohibit them from competing in the same events, partly because there were no occupational restrictions as there were in England. In addition, monetary prizes were regularly awarded. The amateur regulations in South Africa were complicated even more by their military, since soldiers who regularly received money prizes at Regimental sports also competed in ‘amateur’ meetings. Because there was no National Governing Body in South Africa at the time, the English AAA rules did not apply, and the SAAA and CA withdrawal of affiliation to the English AAA made it possible for soldiers to receive prize money, although the value of prize money remained limited. However, this still equated to receiving money for sport since vouchers could be exchanged at the shops of local tradesmen.

As seen with Walker soon after his 1908 victory at the London Olympics, the payment of expenses remained a controversial matter, since his claiming of travelling and accommodation payments was perceived by the British as an exploitation of the term ‘amateurism’. Thus, perhaps a turning point in the course of Walker’s athletic career, was the action of Henry Nourse in sending the ‘money hat’ around for Walker. This allowed Reggie to stay in England in 1909 but it also instigated speculation regarding his amateur status and may have accelerated his joining the professional ranks. Nourse’s action demonstrates that individual sports such as athletics presented a particular problem for administrators who wanted to maintain control over the sport at arm’s length. Another aspect that reflected national differences regarding amateurism and professionals was the status of officials acting at amateur foot races. Unlike England, South Africa did not enforce a rule that prevented professionals officiating at amateur races and this was evident in Walker’s case study, when, for instance, professional John O’Connell was the starter at a race in which Walker competed in 1909.

Professional pedestrianism in England declined during the course of the late nineteenth century as the AAA prosecuted athletes who competed under false names and banned betting so that, by the start of the twentieth century, all that remained were little groups of professional runners scattered across the country.<sup>372</sup> On the other hand, professional athletics was

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371 Ibid., 175.

372 Emma Lile, ‘Professional Pedestrianism in South Wales during the Nineteenth Century’, *The Sports Historian* 20, no. 2 (2000): 94-105.

widespread and popular in America and Australia during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The continuing popularity of gambling and professionalism persuaded the Australian Rufe Naylor to develop a professional running circuit in Johannesburg, South Africa, and bring together leading athletes from across the globe, to compete for money, something that was an issue for British athletic administrators. Not surprisingly, Walker's decision to run as a professional left some ill feeling in Britain, especially since his achievements as an amateur were partly believed to be as a direct result of British influence.

One aspect of Walker's life course that raises some interesting questions for historians of sport is the important role played at various times during his career by key individuals, many of whom had different backgrounds and different perspectives on sport. Both Nourse and Naylor clearly had an impact, as did Sam Wisdom, who prepared him for the 1908 Games. Yet another major influence was John Brady, a military man and educator, who took Walker in hand at the end of his 1908 session in South Africa. When Reggie made the transition from amateur to professional, he put his confidence in Herbert Keartland who became both his manager and trainer until 1913 while another significant influence was James Wallace, who, like Keartland, was a journalist. In looking at sport, historians often focus on the bigger picture and consider organizations and groups rather than the influence of key individuals. If Walker's biography tells the sports historian anything of significance, it is that sport has emerged from the individual passions and commitment of men and women who then go on to motivate others. It seems, therefore, that more attention needs to be paid to each of their contributions to sport. Collecting the biographies together of those who interacted with Walker not only helps explain his own biography but also says something about athletics, particularly about amateurism and professionalism. The significance of Walker's trainers, coaches and supporters was demonstrated in his performance and achievements, becoming an Olympic champion and a national figure, while his decision to turn professional was clearly influenced by the collective biographies of his confidants.<sup>373</sup>

As to the wider perspective, Reggie's transition between his athletic career as an amateur and professional occurred during the decolonization of the British Empire and the emergence of independent countries and it has been suggested that one metaphor for the decline of amateur sport was that the decline of the British Empire.<sup>374</sup> The signing of Treaty of Vereening in 1902

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<sup>373</sup> Koenraad Verboven, Myriam Carlier, and Jan Dymolyn, 'A Short Manual to Threat of Prosopography', in *Prosopography Approaches and Applications*, ed. K. S. B. Keats-Rohan (Oxford: Unit for Prosopographical Research, 2007), 39.

<sup>374</sup> Maya Jasanoff. 'Last Post for the Oddball Empire', *The Guardian*, October 20, 2007.

ended the second Boer War with the Transvaal and Orange Free State becoming self-governing colonies of the British Empire and, in 1910, the formation of the Union of South Africa brought together the Cape and Natal colonies and the Boer Republics and Orange Free States. However, Marks has suggested that British supremacy in South Africa did not end in 1910 with the creation of the Union, under the leadership of the Boer General Botha,<sup>375</sup> because there were still those who retained their adherence to the British Empire after the Union in 1910.<sup>376</sup>

At a personal level, Walker, the 'little Natalian', fell into disfavour with both the South African and the British athletic authorities after he turned professional. Reggie's colonial victory at the 1908 London Games was his highest achievement as an amateur although, during his athletic career, he established several world records, the majority achieved in South Africa. As a professional, he defeated the American Charles Holway five times during his career, although he was not as successful against Arthur Postle, often portrayed as Walker's main rival in the media. Unfortunately for Reggie his transition into the professional ranks came at a bad time. The First World War had a major effect on the soldiers on both sides of the conflict, including those colonials who joined up with the 'Mother Country', and Walker himself was never the same again as a runner despite being still a young man when the War ended. His performance, or lack of performance, as a professional, may have been the result of injuries, illness and the War, but it also appears that Reggie was perhaps never fully committed to running as a professional because he did not follow through on any of his intentions to visit the major professional circuits in either Australia or America. However, he did leave a legacy in the form of his athletic manual, which was reproduced three times after his disappearance from the athletic circuit. In addition, while Walker, a colonial born in South Africa, later became a difficult man with a drinking problem, his early athletic career had reflected great credit on himself and that of his native land, while also exhibiting the traditional values of British sport and visions of acceptable masculinity.

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375 Shula Marks, 'Lord Milner and the South African State', *History Workshop Journal* 2, (1979): 50-80.

376 John Darwin, 'Third British Empire? The Dominion Idea in Imperial Politics', in *The Oxford History of the British Empire: The Twentieth Century*, vol. IV, eds. Judith Brown and Roger Louis (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999); Paul Thompson, 'Schools, Sport and Britishness: Young White Natal, 1902-1961', *South African Historical Journal* 45, no. 1 (2001): 223-248.

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