



DEPARTMENT OF THE ENVIRONMENT
2 MARSHAM STREET LONDON SW1P 3EB
01-212 3434

My ref:

Your ref:

1 September 1979

J G M HART Esq
Honorary Secretary
Committee of Home Rugby Unions
c/o East India Sports, Public Schools
and Devonshire Club
16 St James' Square
London SW1

Dear Mr Hart,

I am writing to you about the invitation the Home Rugby Unions have extended to the South African Barbarians Club to tour here in October.

I recognise that progress has been made over recent years, particularly in certain sports, in South Africa towards non-racialism. I note that the Barbarians team is reportedly to be a mixed one.

But this country has obligations under the Gleneagles Agreement, a copy of which I enclose. The Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary stated in Parliament on 19 June that the Government accepts this agreement.

Your own invitation must therefore be viewed in this light.

I value the independence of our sports bodies. They have a right to order their own affairs. But I believe that they should consider their wider responsibilities too.

In the light of the Gleneagles Agreement I would ask you to reconsider your invitation to the South African Barbarians Club.

I am sending copies of this letter to the Presidents of the Home Rugby Unions and to the Chairmen of the Sports Councils.

Yours sincerely
Hector Monro

HECTOR MONRO

(Agreed by Mr Monro and
signed in his absence)

The member countries of the Commonwealth, embracing peoples of diverse races, colours, languages and faiths, have long recognized racial prejudice and discrimination as a dangerous sickness and an unmitigated evil and are pledged to use all their efforts to foster human dignity everywhere. At their London meeting, the Heads of Government reaffirmed that apartheid in sports, as in other fields, is an abomination and runs directly counter to the declaration of Commonwealth principles which they made at Singapore on 22 January 1971.

They were conscious that sport is an important means of developing and fostering understanding between the people, and especially between the young people, of all countries. But, they were also aware that, quite apart from other factors, sporting contacts between their nationals and the nationals of countries practising apartheid in sport tend to encourage the belief (however unwarranted) that they are prepared to condone this abhorrent policy or are less than totally committed to the principles embodied in their Singapore declaration. Regretting past misunderstandings and difficulties and recognizing that these were partly the result of inadequate inter-governmental consultations, they agreed that they would seek to remedy this situation in the context of the increased level of understanding now achieved.

They reaffirmed their full support for the international campaign against apartheid and welcomed the efforts of the United Nations to reach universally accepted approaches to the question of sporting contacts within the framework of that campaign.

Mindful of these and other considerations, they accepted it as the urgent duty of each of their Governments vigorously to combat the evil of apartheid by withholding any form of support for, and by taking every practical step to discourage, contact or competition by their nationals with sporting organizations, teams or sportsmen from South Africa or from any other country where sports are organized on the basis of race, colour or ethnic origin.

They fully acknowledged that it was for each Government to determine in accordance with its laws the methods by which it might best discharge these commitments. But they recognized that the effective fulfilment of their commitments was essential to the harmonious development of Commonwealth sport hereafter.

They acknowledged also that the full realization of their objectives involved the understanding, support and active participation of the nationals of their countries and of their national sporting organizations and authorities. As they drew a curtain across the past they issued a collective call for that understanding, support and participation with a view to ensuring that in this matter the peoples and Government of the Commonwealth might help to give a lead to the world.

Heads of Government specially welcomed the belief, unanimously expressed at their meeting, that in the light of their consultations and accord there were unlikely to be future sporting contacts of any significance between Commonwealth countries or their nationals and South Africa while that country continues to pursue the detestable policy of apartheid. On that basis, and having regard to their commitments, they looked forward with satisfaction to the holding of the Commonwealth Games in Edmonton and to the continued strengthening of Commonwealth sport generally.