

**UNIVERSITY OF GHANA**  
DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY

**FOOTBALL AND NATION-BUILDING IN GHANA  
UNDER KWAME NKRUMAH, 1951-1966.**

BY

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## DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this thesis is as a result of my original research under the supervision of Dr. Cyrelene Amoah-Boampong and Dr. Nana Yaw Spong. It has neither in whole nor in part been presented for another degree elsewhere.

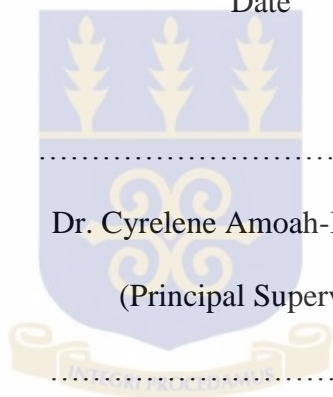
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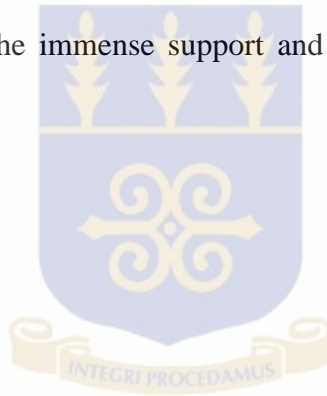
## DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to God, my family and friends.



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

My appreciation goes to the Almighty God for His wisdom, knowledge, mercies and direction in the writing of this thesis. I acknowledge the immense assistance and contributions of my supervisors, Dr. Cyrelene Amoah-Boampong and Dr. Nana Yaw Spong for their insightful comments and suggestions. Again, I acknowledge and appreciate other authors whose published materials have been referred to and cited in this thesis. I am also grateful to Professor Akosua Perbi, Professor Joseph K. Adjaye and Dr. D.E. K. Baku for their advice and guidance in shaping this thesis into a coherent historical piece. My gratitude also goes to staff and colleagues of the History Department for assisting me with my research. I value the immense support and encouragement given me by my family and friends.



## ABSTRACT

Sports was an important element of the colonial administration's attempt to control the leisure life of the people of Gold Coast. After independence, the relationship between sports and politics in the administration of the Convention People's Party (CPP) cannot be underestimated. Sports came to represent an important tool in government's effort in instilling national pride and unity among Ghanaians.

This study examines how football became arguably the most popular among the various sporting disciplines that were introduced by the British. It further looks into the use of football by Kwame Nkrumah and his Convention People's Party (CPP) to execute many agendas aimed at promoting national unity and national pride among Ghanaians. The study argues that football was not just a mere leisure activity and that with the founding of the Central Organisation of Sports (COS), it became a major state institution that was used to unify, and to show the African capability. It was also used to pursue some of the CPP government's foreign policy initiatives which included African unity and the government's stand against apartheid.

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATION

CAF.....	Confederation of African Football
COS.....	Central Organisation of Sports
CPP.....	Convention People's Party
FIFA.....	Fédération Internationale de Football Association
GAFA .....	Ghana Amateur Football Association
GCABA.....	Gold Coast Amateur Boxing Association
GDR .....	German Democratic Republic
PRAAD.....	Public Records and Archives Administration Department
UAR.....	United Arab Republic
USSR.....	The Union of Soviet Socialist Republic

# CHAPTER ONE

## GENERAL INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

### 1.1 Background

Sports over the years has been one of the most popular leisure activities of countries all over the world. Since the end of World War II it has moved from just a social activity to become an important economic and political tool used by various governments to achieve various goals.

The implications of these sports disciplines for Ghana can be seen in political, social and economic terms. Socially, sports is a good way to spend one's free time either by watching or actively participating. Sports thus serves as an arena where people could come together and disregard ethnic and political affiliations and enjoy themselves. Politically, sports can serve as a stepping-stone to launch political careers of individuals. It offers people popularity and exposure, which are very important attributes for a successful political career. For example, the former president of Ghana, John Agyekum Kuffour, served as president of Kumasi Asante Kotoko, one of the leading football clubs in Ghana. Sports can also be a good avenue for gathering people for political rallies and activism. Sports also has economic importance as it can be a source of employment and provide income to many people such as players or athletes, administrators or vendors of both national and club paraphernalia. Sports, therefore, is more than just a pastime; it plays an integral role in the lives of many people, even those who do not participate in it as amateurs or professionals, depend on sports as an outlet for socializing mostly through spectating or throwing their support behind an individual or team.

The integral role of sports in the life of ordinary people is something long recognized by governments. The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) and other communist countries are known to have employed sports for various reasons including furthering political agendas.

In colonial Africa, European sports, including field hockey, cricket, tennis, boxing and football, were introduced by European administrators, missionaries and company managers for many reasons. These include sports as means of socializing with the indigenous people, as a way of passing time and also as one method of inculcating respect for the values of time, discipline and authority within the minds and spirits of the colonized.<sup>1</sup>

The British colonial government in the Gold Coast also recognized the benefits of sports both to the government and to the people and took steps to have full control of it in order to prevent it from being used as a tool to agitate for self-government. Gordon Guggisberg, then governor of the Gold Coast, formed the Accra Football League Committee in 1922 to regulate football in Accra. Under Arden Clark, governor of the Gold Coast from 1949 to 1957, the Ghana Amateur Sports Council was established in 1952 to control all sports in the country so as to ensure that the Gold Coast got the best out of it and that individuals did not use it for their own gains.<sup>2</sup>

When Nkrumah became president in 1957, there was already a history of colonial government controlling sport in the country. However, when the Convention People's Party (CPP) also took charge of sports in the country with

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<sup>1</sup> Laura Fair, "Kickin' It: Leisure, Politics and Football in Colonial Zanzibar, 1900s to 1950s," *Journal of the International African Institute* 67, No. 2 (1997): 224 – 251.

<sup>2</sup> RG 9/1/18, GFA Secretary/ Secretary Assistant: 16.

the establishment of the Central Organisation of Sport in 1960, it did so for different reasons. These were to promote national pride and unity. Football therefore became an important asset in the administration of Dr. Kwame Nkrumah.

## **1.2 Historiographical Context**

Over the past few years, there has been an increase in historical scholarship on sports that explores different aspects of sports on the socioeconomic and political life of people of different parts of the world. The study of sports history in Africa has also not been left out. Various scholars have tackled different aspects of the effect of sports on the history of Africa. Some of these scholars include Laura Fair, Peter Alegi, Paul Darby, Joseph Adjaye, Emmanuel Acheampong, and Charles Amber.

Fair and Alegi argue that sports for some people was an avenue for social advancement and also one of the few ways in which Africans could take on their colonizers and defeat them. Other scholars such as Paul Darby, Peter Alegi, and Charles Amber have however argued that football and other sports were ways of escape from poverty and low social standing through employment and migration. Football history in Africa has thus been seen as a way of looking into the political, social and economic history of Africa.

Laura Fair argues that the colonial government advocated the spread of European sports such as field hockey, cricket and football, as means of inculcating respect for the values of time, discipline and authority within the minds and spirits of the colonised. She maintains that defining the boundaries of 'appropriate' and 'inappropriate' forms of recreation became a major pre-

occupation and leisure became a central terrain of daily struggle between coloniser and colonised to define the shape of life in the city.<sup>3</sup> Therefore, just like many other things introduced by the various colonial administrations into their colonies, the introduction of European sports was intended for the benefit of the colonizers and not the colonized. She argues that in the case of Zanzibar, football soon gained widespread popularity and quickly became an important aspect of the social life of the people. Fair is of the opinion that the study of football in Zanzibar thus brings to the fore the limits of Europeans' ability to mould and control Africans' social experiences. She makes the point that:

Although the British wrote and administered the rules of play, they exercised very little influence over how teams were organised in the neighbourhoods or the meanings which the local people attributed to the game within their own lives.<sup>4</sup>

As increasing numbers of Zanzibari men began to play football they adapted the game to their own local needs, combining the 'vigours' of football with existing leisure pursuits: turning football grounds, practices and clubhouses into some of the principal sites where men would meet to exchange and debate local and international news and rumour.<sup>5</sup>

Fair therefore argues that through football, the men of Zanzibar found a new avenue for expressing class and neighbourhood rivalries and for strengthening communal identities. It also provided the locals with a way to show some kind of resistance to the Europeans through their continued disregard

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<sup>3</sup> Laura Fair, 'Kickin' It: Leisure, Politics and Football in Colonial Zanzibar, 1900s-1950s.' *Journal of the International African Institute* 67, No. 2, Edinburgh University Press, (1997): 224.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 225.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 236.

and haranguing with the referees.<sup>6</sup> Though the locals had been told that the decisions of the officials were final, they continued to disregard the decisions of the referees and consistently lodged protests. In certain cases they even refused to play if certain referees were appointed to officiate their games. Thus in the case of Zanzibar, the British continually tried to define and control the game of football and consistently the local people redefined these boundaries to serve their own social and sometimes political needs and purposes.

Additionally, Akyeampong points out that sports can have both social and political underpinnings. He argues that the historical processes that underpinned the emergence of a martial Ga spirit, beginning with the social dynamics that made fighting in defence of the Ga polity an avenue for the incorporation of strangers, slaves, and ex-slaves into pre-colonial Ga society, also made the introduction of boxing into the Ga community easy. *Asafo atwele* and later boxing became an important player in the processes of social formation and the urban politics of Accra. Akyeampong is thus of the opinion that sport is an important vehicle of individual aspirations and achievement.<sup>7</sup>

The issue of sports and identity is tackled by Peter Alegi in *A Biography of Darius Dhlomo*, and he argues that one can gain considerable insight into how people created identity through sports. He argues that in an era where segregation on the continent was high especially in places like South Africa, sports was one of the ways in which “Africans could carve out possibilities for

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<sup>6</sup> As an emblem of colonial hegemony in Zanzibar, only Europeans were appointed as referees during the early years of league football.

<sup>7</sup> Emmanuel Akyeampong, “Bukom and the Social History of Boxing in Accra: Warfare and Citizenship in Precolonial Ga Society”, *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* 35, No. 1 (2002): 39-60.

self-improvement and thereby raising their self-esteem and acquiring social honours.”<sup>8</sup>

The issue of identity is further expressed by Alegi when he examines the transformation of football from a game for the elite into a popular form of urban African leisure activity during the pre-apartheid era in South Africa. To Alegi, football enabled African workers, community leaders and entrepreneurs to compete, forge collective identities and networks, build alternative institutions and enjoy temporary relief from institutional racism, police pass checks and low paying jobs.<sup>9</sup> Alegi goes further to expose the role that the policy of segregation played in making football so popular among the indigenous African population.

Akyeampong and Amber however consider the study of sports history as a study of the leisure lives of the African. They argued that studying sports offers an opportunity to capture the historical texture of everyday life. That events like the World Cup momentarily brings the leisure lives of Africans into focus and shows how Africans just like other peoples of the world make time for pleasure and enjoyment. The study of leisure thus illuminates social practice and the process of its formation. The story of the spread of football across the African continent, like the stories of the spread of a wide range of pastimes, provides a window not only into the evolving textures of ordinary lives but on the nature of local societies, the lines of division within societies, and many of the critical

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<sup>8</sup> Peter Alegi, “A Biography of Darius Dhlomo: Transnational Footballer in the Era of Apartheid,” *Soccer & Society* 11, No. 1 (2002): 47.

<sup>9</sup> Peter Alegi, “Playing to the Galary? Sports, Cultural performance and Social Identity in South Africa, 1920s – 1945,” *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* 35 No. 1, (2002): 18.

transformations associated with colonialism, post colonialism and the development of capitalism.<sup>10</sup>

Fair, Acheampong and Alegi thus examine how Africans have used sports for various ends, be it as a form of resistance to colonial rule or as a vehicle for carving out identity and in pursuit of better social standing. The study of sports history thus gives us an idea of ways in which people created identity and fashioned opportunities. Africans, especially during the colonial period, took control of sports and redefined them to fit their peculiar needs.

There are also other scholars who consider the importance of sports, especially football, for the economic insight it offers into globalization<sup>11</sup>. These scholars argue that football plays a role in the high level of migration and dependency that exists in most African countries. For scholars such as Paul Darby and Raffaele Poli, as well as Remi Clignet and Maureen Stark, football serves as a form of neo-colonialism, for the exploitation and impoverishment of developing nations.<sup>12</sup> Rupert Emerson argues in his article “Colonialism” that given the extent of the ties built up under colonial rule and the amount of debris it left behind, the gross disparities in wealth and power which continue to divide

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<sup>10</sup> Emmanuel Akyeampong and Charles Ambler, “Leisure in African History: An Introduction,” *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* 35, No. 1 (2002): 1-16; Paul Darby, “African Football Labour Migration to Portugal: Colonial and Neo-Colonial Resource,” *Soccer and Society* 8, No. 4 (2007): 495-509; Raffaele Poli, “Migrations and Trade of African Football Players: Historic, Geographical and Cultural Aspects,” *Africa Spectrum* 41, No. 3 (2006): 393-414; Remi Clignet and Maureen Stark, “Modernisation and Football in Cameroun,” *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 12, No. 3 (1974): 409-421.

<sup>11</sup> Globalization here is defined as the process of enabling financial and investment markets to operate internationally, largely as a result of deregulation and improved communication.

<sup>12</sup> Scholars writing within the framework of neo-colonialism argue that existing or past international and economic arrangements created by former colonial powers were or are used to maintain control of their former colonies and dependencies after the independence movements of the post-World War II period.

the world, and the demand of the new countries for aid in development, it would be incredible if there were not many relationships which could be tagged with the label of neo-colonialism.”<sup>13</sup>

Darby argues that even though the success of African national teams in the last 10 to 15 years can to a large extent be contingent upon the migration of large numbers of African players to Europe and the acquisition of European football technique, tactical awareness and discipline, it has also served to underdevelop and de-skill African football and thus a decline in gate receipts, media interest, and opportunities for sponsorship. He also argues that rather than boost the fortunes of African national teams, player migration can mitigate against putting together a cohesive, well prepared, and successful national squad. In this case, these football players are just like other raw materials that are exported out of Africa for use by Europeans. Therefore these practices end up further impoverishing the African continent and enriching Europe.<sup>14</sup>

Paul Darby argues that the world football governing body Fédération Internationale de Football Association, (FIFA)<sup>15</sup> has played an active role in the post-colonial exploitation and manipulation of emergent nations in Africa. He is of the opinion that the world body has failed to articulate the interest of the third world countries and provide a forum on which to resist or challenge Europe. The

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<sup>13</sup> Rupert Emerson, “Colonialism,” *Journal of Contemporary History*, 4, No. 1 (1969): 14.

<sup>14</sup> Paul Darby, “African Football Labour Migration to Portugal: Colonial and Neo-Colonial Resource,” *Soccer & Society* 8, No. 4, (2007): 495–509.

<sup>15</sup> Fédération Internationale de Football Association, that is, The International Federation of Association Football (FIFA). This organisation is responsible for organising and regulating football throughout the world.

fact that Europe contributes almost half of the 32 nations that play at the world cup finals while Africa has only 5, is proof of this fact.<sup>16</sup>

Remi Clignet and Maureen Stark however look at the ways in which some Africans have taken advantage of the opportunities created by football in Cameroon. They argue that football aided the mobilisation of economic energies and cite as examples the fact that even matchboxes carry pictures of local players. Over 2,000 copies of *Le Football Camerounais* by Sauter Tsanga were sold in the year following its publication in 1969. The football federation was not left out of taking advantage of the economic advantages of the value of football, as the yearly budget of the National Federation exceeds \$100,000, with an annual profit of around ten percent. Thus, football can be a big revenue stream even for non-players as business people and the associations also stand to make huge economic gains from it.<sup>17</sup>

There are also those who see the study of sport or football as a way of gaining insight into the political history of Africa. Frederick Cooper contends that by looking at colonial history in terms of the binaries colonizer/colonized, western/ non-western and domination / resistance, historians may end up constraining the search for the precise ways in which power was engaged, contested, deflected and appropriated.<sup>18</sup> Sports history could therefore be one way of finding out how the engagement, contestation, deflection and

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<sup>16</sup> Paul Darby, *Africa, Football and FIFA: Politics, Colonialism and Resistance*, Frank Cass, London, 2002.

<sup>17</sup> Remi Clignet and Maureen Stark, "Modernisation and Football in Cameroun," *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 12, No. 3 (1974): 409-421

<sup>18</sup> Frederick Cooper, "Conflict and Connection: Rethinking Colonial African History" *The American Historical Review* 99, No. 5. (1994): 1517.

appropriation by Africans of the new power system (Colonial rule) introduced by the Europeans took place.

Peter Alegi captures Cooper's argument through a narrative of the history of men's football in South Africa—from the formation of the nation to the Soweto uprising of 1976. He examines the relationship between football and the broader struggle for space and time in South Africa. He argues that football in South Africa served as an avenue where political power was negotiated and contested in apartheid South Africa. During the period, those who were able to use football to increase their status in society and thus gain political influence played a vital role in the anti-apartheid struggle. Football therefore became a major player in the nationalist struggle of South Africa.<sup>19</sup>

Paul Darby in his article based on research on colonies controlled by three of Europe's primary imperial powers, that is, Britain, France and Belgium, argues that even though football was introduced by the Europeans as a past time, during the later stages of colonialism in Africa it became an instrument for protest and resistance to colonial rule and economic and cultural imperialism.<sup>20</sup> To him, football afforded the people an avenue to unite and fight the injustices of colonial rule. Darby argues that even after independence, the administrative structures of football had been appropriated by these newly independent states for the purpose of constructing national identity. Example of this is seen in Clignet and Starks article when they explore the interdependency of football and politics in Cameroon,

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<sup>19</sup> Peter Alegi, *Laduna! Soccer, Politics and Society in South Africa*, (Pietermaritzburg: University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, 2004.)

<sup>20</sup> Paul Darby, "Football, Colonial Doctrine and Indigenous Resistance: Mapping the Political Persona of FIFA's African Constituency," *Culture, Sport, Society*, 3 No. 1 (2000): 61.

...in Cameroun, as apparently elsewhere in French-speaking Africa, club presidents and league officials were often chosen as political candidates...<sup>21</sup>.

Africans were therefore able to use their social and economic currency to gain political power and thus became instrumental in the decolonization processes in their various countries.

It is further argued by Remi Clignet and Maureen Stark in their article “Modernisation and Football in Cameroun” that

In the arena of social participation, free competition was only allowed by the colonial administration when the outcome systematically confirms the pre-eminence of the colonizers, or when lack of numbers makes their involvement in this activity dependent upon the collaboration of the colonized.<sup>22</sup>

They therefore give the African great credit for the manner in which they overcame this obvious barrier and turn this potentially racist and discriminating act of the colonial government into avenues of gaining public acceptance through sports as well as its associated political power.

James Riordan contends that the ‘influence of politics on sport is particularly evident today in relation to foreign policy, where sporting success is seen by some as a measure of national vitality and prestige; it can therefore serve as an unobtrusive form of propaganda.’ He cites the division of much of the world into the United States and Soviet Union camps in the fifties, with the nuclear stalemate and the intensifying ‘battle for men's minds’, when sport

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<sup>21</sup> Remi Clignet and Maureen Stark, “Modernisation and Football in Cameroun,” *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, Vol. 12, No. 3 (1974): 419.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 410.

became an area of considerable social significance. Riordan argues that by its nature, sport is suited to the task because it excites nationalist instincts and encourages group identification; it is superficially apolitical and readily understandable.<sup>23</sup>

Thus he expresses the conviction that in a communist state like the USSR, the dependence of sport on politics has always been clear; the administration of sport came under the aegis of the state immediately after the October 1917 revolution, and has since been used to pursue specific socio-political objectives.<sup>24</sup> Similar situations existed in most of the communist states including China and East Germany.

This study falls in the same category described by James Riordan in examining ways in which Ghana's first president, Dr. Kwame Nkrumah set out to use football as a way of instilling national pride and national unity as well as in the pursuit of various international relation policies.

### **1.3 Theoretical framework**

This study falls into the general theoretical framework of sports and nation building, sports and identity, and sports as a marketing tool. Benedict Anderson defines the nation as: "... an imagined political community – and imagined both as inherently limited and sovereign."<sup>25</sup> He argues that it is

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<sup>23</sup> James Riordan, "Soviet Society and Soviet Foreign Policy," *Soviet Studies*, 26, No. 3 (1974): 322-343.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 323.

<sup>25</sup> Benedict Anderson, *Imagined communities: reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism* (Revised and extended). London: Verso, 6.

imagined because even in the smallest nation, most members will never meet each other but in the minds of each lives the image of their communion. Nation is finite because regardless of the population and size of the land it has a boundary and it is sovereign because the concept was conceived during the age enlightenment and revolution when the ideas of freedom was predominant.

Finally it is imagined as a *community*, because, regardless of the actual inequality and exploitation that may prevail in each, the nation is always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship. Ultimately it is this fraternity that makes it possible, over the past two centuries, for so many millions of people, not so much to kill, as willing to die for such limited imaginings.<sup>26</sup>

The relationship between sports and the idea of nation as defined by Anderson is expressed by Bogdanov who sees the study of sports as an avenue for understanding how people create identity by equating sports to one of the images of their communion.

In a sporting context distant people throughout the country can be united through this communal nature, as followers of a national sports team.<sup>27</sup>

Riordan's theories on sport and politics in the communist nations like the USSR were important theoretical insights which enabled this study to have a basis for exploring how sports was used by the Convention People's Party (CPP) to advance various agenda. At the time of Ghana's independence, communist states including USSR and China used sports as an avenue for dominating the world. James Riordan asserts in his article "Soviet Sports and

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<sup>26</sup> Benedict Anderson, *Imagined communities: reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism* (London: Verso), 9.

<sup>27</sup> Bogdanov, Dusko, "Influence of National Sport Team Identity on National Identity" (PhD Diss., Florida State University, 2011), 4.

Soviet Foreign Policy” that “with the division of much of the world into two camps in the fifties, with the nuclear stalemate and the intensifying 'battle for men's minds', sport became an area of considerable social significance.”<sup>28</sup>

Riodan’s contention is that by nature, sport is suited to the political task as it excites nationalist instincts and encourages group identification; it is superficially apolitical and readily understandable. Thus sports for communist states was used as a tool for state patriotism.<sup>29</sup>

In the USSR, the dependence of sport on politics has always been clear; the administration of sport came under the aegis of the state immediately after the October 1917 revolution, and has since been used to pursue specific socio-political objectives.<sup>30</sup> Riodan further argues that the first major party resolution on sport set the trend for future use of sports in Communist countries:

Physical culture should be seen not simply from the viewpoint of public health and physical education, not simply as one aspect of the cultural, economic and military training of young people, not simply as a means of socializing the masses . . . but as a means of rallying the great mass of workers and peasants to the various party, Soviet and trade-union organizations, through which they can be drawn into social and political activity.<sup>31</sup>

Other communist states apart from the Soviet Union that adopted similar uses for sport included China and East Germany.

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<sup>28</sup> James Riodan, “Soviet Sports and Soviet Foreign Policy,” *Soviet Studies* 26, No. 3 (1974): 322.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 322.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 323.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 323.

Robert Edelman also supports the notion that Communist Party authorities after Second World War were now far more interested in the possible political uses of sport. With increased attention came greater responsibility. The political goals of big-time sport became more important, and the drive for success ever more intense. A 1948 Party resolution decreed that sport should strive not simply for sporting equality with other states but for Soviet dominance.<sup>32</sup> This formed the basis of which the Moscow Dynamo Team embarked on a goodwill tour of the United Kingdom. The team played three games against Cardiff, Chelsea and Arsenal. They won two games and drew the other one.

James Riordan points out some of the vital uses of sports to communist states especially the USSR and China. These included state building and international recognition and prestige. The relationship between nation building and sports is explained as the use of sports to inculcate political loyalties to the nation as a whole, transcending the bounds of kinship, race, language, religion and geographical location. International recognition and prestige is explained as added responsibility on athletes from communist states in that they were seen by political leaders as encouraging a sense of pride in their team, state and even political system.<sup>33</sup>

Riordan further contends that where other channels have been closed, it does seem that success in sport helped countries such as the USSR, China, Cuba and the German Democratic Republic (GDR), as well as many other states in

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<sup>32</sup> Robert Edelman, "Stalin and his Soccer Soldiers," *History Today* 43, No. 2 (1993): 2.

<sup>33</sup> James Riordan, "The Impact of Communism on Sports," *Historical Social Research* 32, No. 1 (2007): 111.

the developing world, to attain a measure of recognition and prestige at home and abroad. Sport here is unique in that for all communist countries, including the USSR and China, it was one of the few mediums through which they were able to take on and beat the economically advanced capitalist nations. Riordan also contends that some non-aligned nations adopted some of the communist practices in order to achieve similar aims.

The relationship between football and marketing a nation is expressed by Black and Van der Westhuizen<sup>34</sup> who give an insight into the reasons why countries are keen on hosting international sports competitions. They argue that the reasons why nations invest millions of money into hosting major international sporting events, such as the Olympics and the FIFA World Cup is because these competitions have the potential to generate emotional experiences. These events are socio-cultural touchstones that have the capacity to:

“...cause otherwise sober people to suspend their critical faculties on a mass basis, point to both the appeal and elusiveness of sport as a political force.”<sup>35</sup>

This is to say that during the hosting and participation of nations in sporting competitions, political and economic disagreements take the back seat while people bask in the pride of a successful nation, either as host or participant.

During the hosting of the World Cup in South Africa in 2010, there was a lot of criticism of the government of misplaced priorities in spending so much

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<sup>34</sup> Black, D. R., & van der Westhuizen, J. (2004). “The Allure of Global Games for 'Semiperipheral' Polities and Spaces: A Research Agenda,” *Third World Quarterly* 25, No. 7 (2004) 1195-1214.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 1195.

on hosting a single tournament but Black and Westhuizen argue that the costs and risks involved in hosting these international sports competitions are that these events bring major developmental, political and socio-cultural benefits to the host. The opportunity to host a high profile international event in authoritarian or weak democratic regimes promises a double reward: both a chance to showcase the country and an opportunity to demonstrate its 'acceptability' to the international community.<sup>36</sup> Here mention can be made of the Beijing Olympics and the Sochi winter Olympics in Russia. In both cases no cost was spared in making sure that the games became a showcase of what the countries are capable of.

Black and Westhuizen also argue in support of sports and identity building. They contend that international sporting events create an intense “we feeling” among supporters and community, whether it be in a city, region, ethnic group or nationality. They are, in short, moments of intensive identity formation and projection.<sup>37</sup>

This study falls more into the theoretical framework adopted by James Riordan with regards to sports and nation building. It examines the extent to which football was used by the Convention People’s Party government, headed by Nkrumah for various ends including the ones discussed in Riordan’s articles in his nation building efforts.

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<sup>36</sup> Black, D. R., & van der Westhuizen, J. (2004). “The Allure of Global Games for 'Semiperipheral' Polities and Spaces: A Research Agenda,” *Third World Quarterly*, 25, No 7 (2004): 1200.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, 1205.

## **1.4 Significance and Justification of the Study**

Earliest writers of Ghana's history largely focused on development of nationalism as well as individuals who played various roles in the struggle for independence. Immediate post-independence writers focused on Dr. Kwame Nkrumah: his administration, the positive action campaign, foreign policy as well as his political ideologies. Recently there has been increased interest in women's activism. The effect of sports on Dr. Kwame Nkrumah's administration is however either largely ignored or clouded under the narratives of mass involvement in nationalist activities.

This study will thus explore the extent to which sports was used as a tool under Dr. Nkrumah's to build the nation.

## **1.5 Research Questions**

In undertaking this research there are a couple of questions that I hope to have answered by the end of the thesis. These questions include:

- Why football became popular amongst the various sports introduced into the country?
- What was the motivation for establishing the Central Organization of Sports in 1960?
- In what ways did football contribute to the building of the new state?
- How did football contribute to Ghana's foreign Affairs?

## 1.6 Methodology

This study adopts the qualitative approach by combining archival research with oral interviews and supporting secondary literature. It uses these various sources to achieve a comprehensive study of how football was used for nation building.

Primary sources used in this study include archival records from the RG9/1/14 (Ghana Amateur Sports Council), RG 9/1/18 (GFA Secretary/Secretary Assistant), RG9/1/63 Ghana Super Republikans of the Public Records and Archives Administration Department (PRAAD) of Ghana. These records are on sports in Ghana and information gathered from these sources were important in gaining insight into the Republikan Sporting Club, administration of sports in Ghana during the period under study and the relationship with nation building.

Other archival documents from PRAAAD included ADM 13/1/19 (cabinet minutes) which was useful for this research because it gives insight into the discussions that went on before some of the football policies of were implemented.

This study also utilizes newspaper publications and articles, especially the *Daily Graphic*. The *Daily Graphic* was chosen because it was one of the official newspapers of government and their reportage is expected to represent the official position on issues pertaining to government policies.

Another primary source used in writing this thesis was the *Ghana Year book*, which was a yearly publication by the *Daily Graphic*. It contained a summary of the year's main activities. It fills some of the gaps that were in the other sources.

The thesis also consulted Legislative Assembly and parliamentary minutes from the Balme library of the University of Ghana. They contain the discussions that took place among members on issues of sports and other related topics relevant to this study.

Oral sources were also be used in the form of interviews with various personalities including former government officials like Mr. K.B Asante. Other personalities interviewed included Rev. Osei Kofi, Rev. Kofi Pare, and Coach Osam Duodu. Rev. Kofi Pare and Rev. Osei Kofi played for the Republikan Sporting Club and the Black Stars in the 1960s and offered personal experiences of their involvement in the use of football for nation building.

This thesis also made use of secondary sources including articles and books. These were especially crucial for the understanding of the chosen area and the theoretical framework of which this thesis contributes to or departs from.

### **1.6.1 Chapter Structure**

This thesis is made up of five chapters which are organised thematically. Chapter one deals with the general introduction to the study. It contains the background to this study, historiography, significance, and justification of the study, research questions, and methodology.

Chapter two is titled “From Indigenous Games to Organised Sports.” It deals with the development of football in Ghana up to start date of the founding of the Central Organisation of Sports. It explores how football was introduced into the country and the processes that it went through up to 1960. It is further argued in this chapter that football endeared itself to Ghanaians because it was easily accessible, cheap and as a team sport, had places for multiple people from

different backgrounds. This chapter also includes the theoretical framework for the thesis.

Chapter three is titled “Football and National Integration.” It covers how Nkrumah took over and used football at home, exploring how he made it official, organized it, and promoted it to the masses. The chapter argues that Nkrumah controlled it to promote his politics but more importantly, to promote the idea of one nation to the population. The emphasis of this chapter will be the domestic scene.

The title for Chapter four which is “Football and the National Image.” This chapter is about how Nkrumah used football abroad. It explores how he used the game to promote Ghana as a brand. It argues that he used football as a vehicle for his international politics and more importantly to promote Ghana as a country to the world. The African Nation’s Cup, tour of the UK, invitations of foreign teams to Ghana were all ways in which football was used to advertise Ghana.

Chapter Five concludes this study by summarizing the main arguments and pointing out significant sign posts in this work.

### **1.6.2 Limitations**

Finding sources for this study has been difficult at times. This is because most of the main actors in the administration of football during the time under study are either dead or too old to give an accurate account of events in the 1960s. Others too are also largely unwilling to grant interviews. The research therefore relied heavily on the *Daily Graphic* newspaper since it was the official

government mouthpiece at the time and the few interviews that the researcher was able to secure.

Research at PRAAD was also a very difficult task as it became clear that some of the documents pertaining to the research area were nowhere to be found even though they appeared in the catalogue. Therefore long hours and patience were required to track down these sources and in certain times find other ways to get the information like referring to other sources like the Ghana Year books published by the *Daily Graphic*.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **FROM INDIGENOUS GAMES TO ORGANISED SPORT**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter explores the development of sports in Ghana and the extent to which that authorities saw it as a cross-ethnic and cross-language medium to communicate with the entire colony and later, country. The chapter argues that sports has always been a tool for successive governments since colonial administration, who used it to keep the masses happy. Even though a lot of other sporting disciplines as well as many local ones existed in the Gold Coast, football had become arguably the most popular sport in the colony by the time of independence. Thus it became the idealistic choice as a tool to achieve Nkrumah's vision of nation building.

#### **2.2 Development of Sports in the Gold Coast**

Before the introduction of foreign sports by the Europeans into the Gold Coast, there were some indigenous sports including *asafo atwele* of the Ga, and *Atentam* and *osibir* of the Fante, to name a few. Some of these traditional sports had entertainment value as well as serving as an important avenue through which strong men in society were identified to serve the community.

The *asafo atwele* was a kind of indigenous wrestling game that was organized in age grades from the age of about 12 years, mainly between the Accra towns of James Town and Usher Fort under the supervision of the *asafoatsemei* (Asafo Captains). The *asafo atwele* involves exchange of blows

and kicks with emphasis on winning with style. It was also the avenue in which bravado was displayed.<sup>38</sup>

Among the Fantes there was an indigenous game known as the “*atentam*”. This game was the sole preserve of the men and was played in order to select strong and brave men to serve as the frontier fighters during war. The game took place at the beach and a prospective *atentam* fighter had to be able to fight seven strong men who already belonged to the *atentam* group, defeating a minimum of four in order to be considered a member of the *atentam* group. In order to win one must be able to put the back of his opponent to the ground.

The game was a way to show a man’s bravado and strength. It was also an avenue for social advancement as these men held high standing on the social ladder of the community. Due to their importance in times of war and also due to the fact that they were usually few, they became an elite group and thus were accorded some level of respect in by the society including the chiefs who lavished them with gifts. Another function of these *atentam* men was the fact that they were those that carried goods from the European ships to the shore.<sup>39</sup>

The Fantes also had another game known as *Osibir*. This game was played with musical accompaniment and was usually played during the full moon and on Tuesdays when it was considered a taboo for fishermen to go fishing. It was also played solely by men. Two groups of people line up facing each other and take turns to jump together while facing each other. While

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<sup>38</sup> Emmanuel Akyeampong, “Bukom and the Social History of Boxing in Accra: Warfare and Citizenship in Precolonial Ga Society,” *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* 35, No. 1 (2002): 51.

<sup>39</sup> Kwamena Pra Odomankoma-Kyerema, Traditional and Contemporary music and dance teacher at the Cape Coast Castle, interview by author, Tape recording, Cape Coast, February 2, 2012.

descending they hit each other on the chest to see who falls and who remains standing. Whether a person won or not was dependent more on who your opponent was at the time. This game was played purely for recreational purposes and had little or no effect on social standing.<sup>40</sup>

Various sporting disciplines were introduced into the Gold Coast by the Europeans, including cricket, football, golf, horse racing, hockey and lawn tennis. All these sports disciplines have undergone various levels of transformations since its introduction.

Initially sporting associations were organized on regional basis and were used as a form of entertainment, mostly played at a non-competitive level. For instance in order to deepen friendship ties between two communities, the Europeans may organise a series of sporting activities amongst themselves. Once these European sports had gained popularity in the communities, the youth may come together to play a number of games to entertain themselves. However, as interest in a particular sport increased, participants in the games came together to form associations to cater for their peculiar needs. For instance, football was introduced in the Central Province, present day Central Region in 1909, but there was no real organization of football in the Gold Coast until 1922 when Sir Gordon Guggisberg, then Governor of the Gold Coast, in order to organize the first league competition for clubs in Accra placed all the clubs in Accra under the body known as “Accra Football League Committee.”<sup>41</sup> This

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<sup>40</sup> Kwamena Pra Odomankoma-Kyerema, Traditional and Contemporary music and dance teacher at the Cape Coast Castle, interview by author, Tape recording, Cape Coast, February 2, 2012.

<sup>41</sup> DP/DT 507.4 G38, Gold Coast Year Book (1953) Balme Library, University of Ghana: 118.

committee was responsible for the organisation of all the clubs in Accra in order to ensure a successful Accra league competition. Guggisberg's intervention in football in Accra marks the first high level government intervention in football in the colony. Football had gained wide acceptance in Accra and thus the governor's decision to organise the league competition as part of his social responsibility to the people.

In 1935 organised "amateurism"<sup>42</sup> was introduced into football throughout the Gold Coast. The name of the Accra Football League Committee was therefore changed to "Accra Amateur Football Association" Kumasi, Cape Coast, Sekondi, Winneba and Saltpond also formed similar associations. These football associations were formed to cater for the evolving needs of football in the Gold Coast, it was also to enable the organizers of the various amateur leagues throughout the colony to better organize the game in their various localities.

By the 1950s onwards, some of the sport disciplines had outgrown their localities. This is to say that these sporting disciplines were no longer limited to the few places where they were introduced but had spread to other parts of the colony. It therefore became necessary to organize themselves into national associations. The reasons for this development included the aim of generating nationwide interest, as well as to better coordinate activities of a particular sport. In other words, by organizing the sports beyond a particular community, it became easy to attract a greater fan base and standardize the rules and regulations governing a particular game. On August 29, 1950 for instance, the

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<sup>42</sup> Amateurism here is meant that football was played for the fun of it and not necessarily to make money. Football was thus mainly played part-time and the players had other jobs from which they make money.

United Gold Coast Amateur Football Association was formed in Kumasi which incorporated all the regional and city based associations. As at 1952, the number of regional or city based football clubs in the Gold Coast totalled over 200.<sup>43</sup>

The Ghana Golfing Association was also formed consisting of member associations from Kumasi and Takoradi, while Accra had two representatives consisting of the Achimota and Tema Golf Clubs. There was also the Ghana Horse Racing Board of control which had membership from only the Accra Turf Club and the Ashanti Turf Club. The Gold Coast Amateur Boxing Association (G.C.A.B.A) was also established in Accra on 9<sup>th</sup> August 1952.<sup>44</sup>

All these national associations had members from more than one province which meant that they were gaining increasing popularity and acceptance amongst the Gold Coast population. Subsequently, this proliferation of national associations caused the colonial government to set up the National Sports Council.

In order to have a single entity responsible for the various amateur sporting disciplines in the colony, the colonial administration passed the Gold Coast Amateur Sports Council Ordinance of 1952. This Ordinance gave statutory recognition to a body that had been acting in an unofficial capacity since 1949. The Ordinance was passed with the intention of enabling the Gold Coast Amateur Sports Council to play an active part together with recognized bodies in regulating the various amateur sports disciplines. The council was also to oversee the arrangement of inter-territorial amateur sports and in the

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<sup>43</sup> DP/DT 507.4 G38, Gold Coast Year Book (1953) Balme Library, University of Ghana: 118.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., 120.

sponsorship of the Gold Coast athletes engaged in contests in other countries. It was therefore responsible for the administration of all sports disciplines in the country.<sup>45</sup>

The motives of the colonial administration in setting up the Sports Council could be said to go beyond sports. In 1952 when the Sports Council was set up, there was increased agitation for self-government in the Gold Coast and thus the formation of the Gold Coast Amateur Sports Council by the colonial administration under Arden Clark, can be seen as another effort by the administration to exercise complete control over the activities of the various sports disciplines in the colony. It could also be said that the colonial administration saw it as an opportunity to make it seem as though the colonial government was making further concessions. This is because it was thought that the Gold Coast Amateur Sports Council was to be an independent body in charge of sporting activities in the colony without government interference.

Also at the time (early 1950s) the main political party in the colony, the Convention People's Party, formed by Kwame Nkrumah in 1949 had majority of its support base from the youth, including the middle school leavers who had graduated and moved to the big cities in search of non-existent jobs.<sup>46</sup> For this group of people sports became one avenue which brought them all together. Furthermore sports became a good avenue to mobilize these group of people for political activities.

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<sup>45</sup> RG 9/1/18, GFA Secretary / secretary assistant, PRAAD, 16.

<sup>46</sup> Dennis Austin, *Politics in Ghana, 1948-1960*, (London: Oxford University Press, 1970): 49.

Others could also advertise themselves as good leaders and organisers by taking active part in organising sports, which were the needed tools for entering the political scene in the Gold Coast. It could thus be said that the colonial administration took control of the organisation of sports with the hope of ensuring that sports does not become another medium through which people cut their “political teeth.” The government also hoped that nationalists like Nkrumah did not use it to gather followers or supporters towards the push for independence.

The change in the country’s name from Gold Coast to Ghana resulted in a change in the council’s name from the Gold Coast Amateur Sports Council to the Ghana Amateur Sports Council. This change was however in name only and had little effect on the function and organisation of the Council.

Kwame Nkrumah and his government identified sports as an important tool, in the building of the new nation, as well as its ability to unify people from different places. On the international scene, sports was also used as a tool for promoting Ghana outside the country. Consequently, in July 1960 the entire body of the Ghana Amateur Sports Council was replaced with the Central Organisation of Sports. This was however different in function and organisation from the body it had replaced. The change was necessitated by the fact that Nkrumah wanted an accelerated sports development program as well as the ability to fully harness the advantages that sports has to offer him in his effort to build the nation.

### 2.3 Reasons for the Success of Football

Of the various sports disciplines introduced into the Gold Coast, football and athletics were among the few to gain nationwide interest and thus become largely successful. A number of factors account for this including amateurism, high expense, and individuality as well as the fact that some of these sports were considered too colonial and elitist.

Sports like swimming, horse racing, and golf were considered expensive sports because of the costs of the facilities and equipment needed to organise and play these games. It required a considerable amount of money to build and maintain a swimming pool or a golf course. Thus the facilities for playing these games were only located in the three big cities in the country, namely Accra, Kumasi and Takoradi. Mr. K. B. Asante summarizes the fact that football was less expensive when he claimed that:

Cricket you need your bat, you need your pavilion, hockey you need the hockey sticks, you got to polish it now and again, the goalkeeper should be dressed in a certain way. Even look carefully tennis the racket is not cheap. Football in those days we used tennis balls for football and there were many parks, as soon as you see an empty space you start playing so very cheap.[sic]<sup>47</sup>

Another reason why some of the other sports failed was the individuality of some of these sports. With the exception of boxing which, according to Acheampong, has deep connections to the Ga people – from the traditional game of *asafo twele* - and hence its popularity among the Ga, other individual sports

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<sup>47</sup> K.B. Asante, interview by author, Tape recording, Labadi, February 27, 2014.

did not have that many following due to the fact that they were individual sports. For instance, people support a particular sport to show support for their relations and friends. A lawn tennis game, which is between two people, would not attract too many relations and friends. The number of people with access to a tennis court is also limited and thus those coming to watch will also include few who have any experience of the game. On the other hand, team sports like football could attract support for the 22 players based on relations and friendship alone. Also, most of the football teams were community-based and thus the sport held attraction for the entire community. For example Kumasi Asante Kotoko and Accra Great Olympics.

During the late 1950s and all the way through the 1960s, sports was organised on an amateur level and thus income from sports alone was limited. Most of these sportsmen had jobs from which they fed their families. This therefore had an effect on the choice of sports as a game like football required little training or no training in order to play and therefore easy to combine with one's main employment.

Another reason why some of the European introduced sports did not gain wide popularity was because some of them were considered elitist and colonial. They represented a part of the elements of the colonial period that Ghanaians wanted to get rid of. During the colonial period, games like football and boxing were usually played by the local people while European participation was usually limited to spectatorship, but the Colonial officials and their families, preferred to play games like squash, golf, and polo, while African participation in games like cricket was limited to a few elite secondary schools like Mfantsipim and Achimota schools. These games thus came to be associated

with colonial rule. After the attainment of independence, these sports were considered colonial by the people and by extension, became one of the elements that they did not want to be associated with. Those who played these games after independence were sometimes looked upon with contempt.<sup>48</sup>

At the time of independence there were only a handful of sports disciplines that could be used to aid Nkrumah in instilling patriotism and pride in the people, as well as to be used as a marker of how far the new country has come. Football therefore became a good choice by virtue of being arguably the most popular sport patronized by majority of the population.

## 2.4 Development of Football

Since its introduction by British merchants along the coast of the Gold Coast, football gained widespread popularity all over the country. When Ghana gained independence in 1957, it had in place proper administrative structure, with the formation of the Ghana Amateur Football Association in 1953.

The British government at the time also needed to highlight the “good work” they thought they were doing in the Gold Coast because during the period there was a lot of agitation both internally and externally for an end to colonial rule. The Charter of the United Nation formed in 1945 included among others:

...faith in fundamental human rights, in the  
dignity and worth of the human person, in the

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<sup>48</sup> Joe Lartey, interview by author, tape recording, Lartebiokorshie, March 20, 2012.

equal rights of men and women and of nations  
large and small...<sup>49</sup>

Thus per the Charter of the United Nation of which Britain was a member, the British no longer had justification for their continued hold on the colonies. They therefore saw the tour by the Gold Coast 11 of Britain as an opportunity to show the world the good things they were doing in the colonies and bringing players from the Gold Coast to play against teams in Britain would serve that purpose perfectly. To the Gold Coast colonial administration, the tour of Britain was too important an opportunity to pass up even if it meant having to stretch its limited resources to take the tour. Unfortunately, the players had to endure some level of discomfort by playing barefooted in very cold conditions during the tour.

When Ghana attained independence, the name of the national team also changed to Ghana Eleven (11) to reflect the new name of the country. One of the policies of Nkrumah after independence was the Africanization policy. This policy was based on Nkrumah's belief that Africans could take care of their own resources and thus their own future without relying solely on foreigners. He therefore started an elaborate campaign from 1958 to promote Ghanaians into very important positions in the Civil Service and other government institutions. Africanization also included changes in the names of institutions and national buildings to African or Ghanaian names. Therefore numerous cabinet meetings and parliamentary discussions centred on the mechanics of the Africanization

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<sup>49</sup> Charter of the United Nation and the Statute of the International Court of Justice, San Francisco 1945: 1.

policy. For instance, at the cabinet meetings held on the 5<sup>th</sup> of July 1951, chaired by Dr. Kwame Nkrumah, it was discussed that:

[T]he human resource of the printing Press should be developed in line with the Africanizations of the printing press so as to make it possible to have qualified Ghanaians in administrative positions within the Printing Press.<sup>50</sup>

There was also discussions in parliament where it was agreed that the:

...authorities of the University College should be made aware of governments desire that Ghanaians should be appointed to the staff of the college as rapidly as possible consistent with the maintenance of academic standards.”<sup>51</sup>

Cabinet also criticised some of the measures by the University College in regard to increasing the number of Africans on the staff. They were concerned that it would slow down the rate of Africanization at the college. They were especially displeased with the “implied inferior” status of the position of Associate lectureship which was mainly offered to Africans.

The cabinet felt that the Associate lectureship scheme was not entirely satisfactory. It did not appear that it would necessarily increase the rate of africanisation [*sic*]. Moreover, Candidates who were appointed to these “Lectureship” would feel dissatisfied with their implied inferior status.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> ADM/13/1/19, Cabinet meeting, July 5, 1951, PRAAD, Accra.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

The Africanization Policy of government was therefore not limited to only paper but practical action were taken to make sure that the policy was implemented.

The national football team was thus not left out of the Africanization process. In line with this policy, the name of the national football team was changed from Ghana 11 to the Ghana Blackstars in 1959 by Dr. Kwame Nkrumah.

On 28 March 1959, delegates from over eighteen West African countries met in Accra to form the West African Soccer Federation with Dr. Kwame Nkrumah as the Life Patron. At the launch of the Federation, Dr. Kwame Nkrumah presented a 1000 guinea Gold Cup for a West African soccer competition and was of the hope that the tournament will become the foundation upon which African unity was achieved.

[A]s a symbol of a sound foundation upon which the unity of West Africa could be built I can think of no furer [*sic*] basis for international goodwill and understanding than the friendly comradeship which exists in the world of sport.<sup>53</sup>

I hope the visiting teams have enjoyed their stay in Ghana and that from their association here in the field of sports, they will take back with them the seed of unity between our countries. I hope that they will scatter this seed among the youth and tend to growth with care, so that sportsmen may make their special contributions to the unity which we all cherish.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> DP/DT 507.4 G38, Ghana Year Book 1960, "Birth of West African Soccer Federation," Balme Library, University of Ghana, 117.

<sup>54</sup> Samuel Obeng, *Selected Speeches of Kwame Nkrumah*, (Ghana, Afram Publication, 2009), 24.

Nkrumah identified sports as an important component in the quest for West African regional unity as well as placing West Africa firmly on the world map. Again, sports men and women could become ambassadors for their various countries by observing and reporting back their experiences from playing and competing across the continent.

Around 1960 Nkrumah publicly declared his reasons for promoting sports in the country: which is to develop the African personality. In one of his speeches to delegates of the West African Soccer Federation at the Ambassador Hotel in Accra, he noted that,

Knowing the tremendous part that sports can play in the development of the African personality, I propose to encourage its promotion here in Ghana.<sup>55</sup>

Sports was thus one of the areas in which Nkrumah felt the African could compete with others and possibly win, and in the process bring honour to one's nation. From 1960 onwards, the Convention People's Party paid a lot of attention to sports in an effort to put Ghana on the world football map and in the process get more Ghanaians to take physical training and education more seriously.

## **2.5 Conclusion**

Chapter two looked at the theoretical framework into which this study falls into, that is sports and nation building. It looked at the discussion of the use

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<sup>55</sup> Samuel Obeng, *Selected Speeches of Kwame Nkrumah*, (Ghana, Afram Publication, 2009), 24.

of sports by various nations over the years by scholars. This study falls in line with James Riordan's argument of the use of sports to inculcate political loyalties, as well as international recognition and prestige.

The chapter has also explored selected indigenous games like *asafo atwele*, *Atentam* and *osibir*. Even though these games were played for entertainment purposes, they also had political functions by helping to identify strong men for the defence of the community. The introduction and development of various sports disciplines was also discussed as well as attempt by the colonial government to regulate sports in the country with the formation of the Gold Coast Amateur Sports Council in 1952.

Additionally, the chapter looked at the development of football in the Gold Coast by the colonial government. The chapter has argued that the colonial government took control of football and used it to advertise their achievements in the Gold Coast at the time when there was increased agitation for independence in Ghana.

Finally this chapter also looked at the factors that contributed to the popularity of football especially after independence. It has also been argued that the Convention People's Party identified football as a tool for measuring the African personality and thus viable tool for nation building.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **FOOTBALL AND NATIONAL INTEGRATION**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

In the period immediately after independence there was the need to identify things that would unify the country and instil in the people a sense of pride in the country. Mass participation in sports presented an arena where a sense of camaraderie could easily develop. Football was by far the most popular of the sports in Ghana and naturally presented a nationwide platform on which a sense of 'oneness' could be promoted. Using interviews, newspaper accounts, cabinet and parliamentary minutes, this chapter argues that Dr. Kwame Nkrumah used football to promote national identity and thus foster national pride. It will also discuss the reasons why football became so popular and why it became ideal as a tool for the purpose of national identity, national integration, and national pride.

#### **3.2 Central Organisation of Sports**

The Central Organisation of Sports (COS) was set up by Kwame Nkrumah on 1<sup>st</sup> July 1960 with Mr. Abraham Ohene Djan, who was at the time the Chairman of the Ghana Amateur Football Association (GAFA), as the director of sports. The main aim for setting up the Central Organisation of Sports was to promote, encourage, develop and control sports in the country. It was also to exercise final control over the external relations of all forms of sports in Ghana,

arrange and promote competitions between Ghanaians and international teams.<sup>56</sup> The Organisation was responsible for the hiring of coaches, building and maintaining of playing fields, and taking care of the various national teams in the country. Before the establishment of the Central Organisation of Sports, the administration of sports in the country was under the control of the Sports Council.

The appointment of Abraham Ohene Djan as Director of the Central Organisation of Sports was no coincidence. According to K.B. Asante, Nkrumah did not necessarily care about party affiliations when appointing people to important situations. He was rather more concerned with a person's ability to do whatever assignment that he had for the individual.

When he founds that you are good, when he calls you he doesn't first ask you whether you are a CPP member.

I have personal experience. I was in his office when I went he didn't ask me whether I was CPP member. He was told by somebody that I was good, I could do this so he said come. He didn't ask me do you have a CPP card.

So that if he found out that Ohene Djan was good at organisation, either from his own observation or from others, so he made him the head. So that's how he operated and he gave him all the necessary help.<sup>57</sup>

Ohene Djan had a good record of accomplishments, which showed that he could handle the demands of the position. In 1960, the Ghana Amateur Football Association was one of the few sports managing institutions that had in

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<sup>56</sup> DP/DT 507.4 G38, Ghana Year Book 1960, "Central Organisation of Sports," Balme Library, University of Ghana, 158.

<sup>57</sup> K.B. Asante, interview by author, tape recording, Labadi, February 27, 2014.

place proper administrative structures. They had a national chairman and national executives in charge of the affairs of football in the country. The Association also had been able to organise regional associations with various regional executives, as well as a successful national league competition in the country. Ohene Djan was therefore a suitable choice for the development of sports in the country. He was appointed as the director of the Central Organisation of Sports, regardless of his political affiliation.

K.B Asante also outlined the reasons why he thinks Nkrumah paid so much attention to sports, especially football in his administration. According to this former secretary of Nkrumah (attached to the office of African Affairs), Nkrumah inherited a nation that had serious self-esteem inhibitions due to years of segregation brought about by the slave trade and colonialism.

In some we did not at independence really feel that we were the equals of any other peoples. If you lived in a system whereby everybody in a position of authority or leadership was of different colour from you, where he lived in a separate area...<sup>58</sup>

Nkrumah therefore preached the African Personality after Ghana's independence. According to Ama Biney The term "African Personality" was coined by Edward Wilmot Blyden in one of his famous lectures on "Race and Study" given in May 1893 to members of the Young Men's Literary Association of Sierra Leone. Blyden is described as a staunch believer in building African institutions and in cultivating racial pride and unity among West Africans. Nkrumah thus adopted this Blydenesque notion of an African genius and

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<sup>58</sup> K.B. Asante, interview by author, tape recording, Labadi, February 27, 2014.

similarly asserted dignity and celebration of African clothing, languages, ceremony, custom, and history.<sup>59</sup>

In his speech at the Conference of Independent African States (CIAS), held in Accra in April 1958, Nkrumah proclaimed:

For too long in our history, Africa has spoken through the voices of others. Now, what I have called an African Personality in international affairs will have a chance of making its proper impact and will let the world know it through the voices of Africa's own sons.<sup>60</sup>

Sports was one of the ways through which the impact of the African Personality could be seen. At the opening ceremony of the West African Soccer Federation cup Nkrumah stressed the important role that sports could play in the promotion of this African personality.

Knowing the tremendous part that sports can play in the development of the African Personality, I propose to encourage its promotion here in Ghana. I hope to arrange at the earliest moment, a special sports contest to be held here in which prominent sportsmen of African descent in America, West Indies and other parts of the world will be invited to participate. This will inspire and encourage us in our efforts to establish the African personality in its entirety.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> Ama Biney, *The Political and Social Thought of Kwame Nkrumah*, (United States of America, Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 120.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, 120.

<sup>61</sup> Samuel Obeng, *Selected Speeches of Kwame Nkrumah*, (Ghana, Afram Publication, 2009), 24.

K. B Asante further stresses that Nkrumah believed the idea that the African was as good as any other people, using the achievements of Ethiopia, Egypt and ancient Ghana as proof of the capabilities of the African.

So at independence Nkrumah tried to preach what he called the African personality. That the African was as good as anybody else. What Egypt, Ethiopia and the Ancient Ghana Empire had done in the past and others and that the black man was as good as anybody else.<sup>62</sup>

There was therefore the need to find something that would confirm the capabilities of the African Personality to Ghanaians themselves as well as to the world. Mr. Asante is of the opinion that even though Nkrumah realized that factories, industries, and education was good means of showing the capabilities of the African, they were all long term endeavours. He, however, needed immediate testimony of the capabilities of the African and in that sense sports and football in particular seemed to be the right platform.

Kwame Nkrumah said that he was going to make Ghana establish a metropolis of learning, industries and culture in order to recapture our ancient. But he realize that he must go deeper and get the Ghanaian to believe that he was the equal of others and therefore you had to use all the various activities, all the things which were happening to establish African personality and equality. Games and sports were one and he realized that it was in many ways an important and relatively easy way of impressing the Ghanaian and at the same time making the Europeans believe that the African was their coequal. And that to do this you have to target the ordinary people both in the Europe, in other countries and in Ghana, and how do the ordinary people judge others? – Football, games and so on were the

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<sup>62</sup> K.B. Asante, interview by author, tape recording, Labadi, February 27, 2014.

coupled expression of competence and expertise.<sup>63</sup>

Thus, football was the obvious choice due to its popularity as the main sports and that fact that it could make Ghanaians believe in their own abilities. Also, a good result will earn respect from peer countries as well as Ghana's former colonial masters.

The news of Ohene Djan's appointment was positively received due to his earlier work with the Ghana Amateur Football Association (GAFA) but more importantly, there was also the desire to see him replicate the same success that he had achieved with football with other sporting disciplines, which were not performing so well in terms of patronage and popularity. For example sports disciplines like horse racing, cricket, and tennis. This public expectation of Ohene Djan is seen in a comment from a member of the general public published by the *Daily Graphic* under the heading: "*HELP THE OTHER SPORTS AS WELL*"

...Now please, Mr. Ohene Djan, all the other sports except your football are not making progress. You know it yourself. May I ask you to concentrate on plans to save the other sports. And don't forget that you are no more the soccer boss alone but boss of all sports.<sup>64</sup>

The mandate from the president and the expectation of the general public was therefore very clear for the new Director of Sports – accelerated development of sports in the country and the equal development of less popular sports.

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<sup>63</sup> K.B. Asante, interview by author, tape recording, Labadi, February 27, 2014.

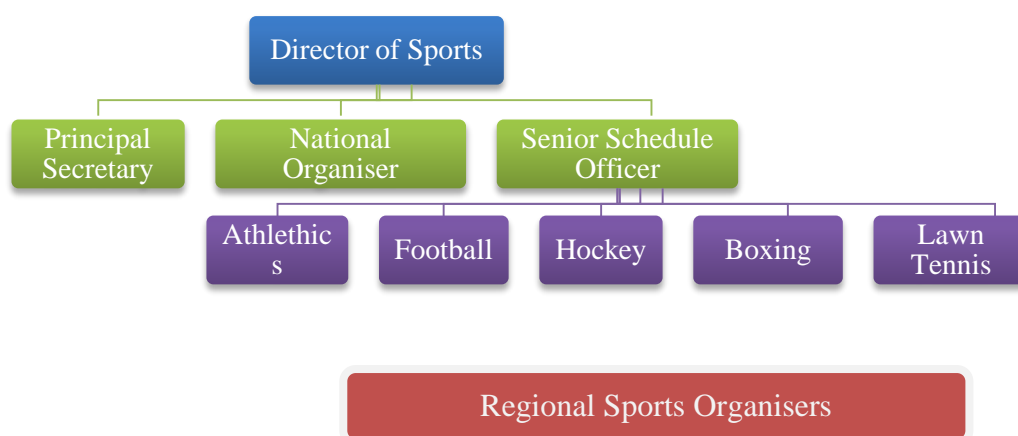
<sup>64</sup> *Daily Graphic*, "Help the Other Sports as Well," July 2, 1960, 11.

The Ministry of Education had oversight responsibility over the activities of the Central Organisation of Sports, but Ohene Djan reported directly to the office the President. This meant that he did away with a lot of the bureaucratic systems that had hindered the work of the Sports Council. The mandate that set up the Sports Council gave it autonomy from government interference. Even though such a move was done in good faith, the council relied heavily on government funding and decisions had to be discussed with members of the council before it was accepted and implemented. This meant that the decision making process was cumbersome and in some regards, made the Council less effective in the discharge of their mandate.

Such practice was however non-existent in the setup of the Central Organisation of Sports. The salary of the director was paid directly by the office of the president and thus he answered directly to the president. He was also in a salary bracket that was almost the same as the ministers of state, indicating the importance of the position of the Director of the Central Organisation of Sport. Thus for all intent and purposes, the position of the Director of Sports was as important to the plans of the Convention People's Party as that of the cabinet ministers. The salary structure of the Organisation was further proof of the importance of the director and also that his allegiance and priorities should be to the President. His salary was paid by the office of the President while all other officials of the Central Organisation for Sports were paid by the ministry of finance. Details of his contract was revealed by the Deputy Minister of Education, Mr. J Benibengor Blay, when he admitted in parliament the amount and the source of that the salary of the director:

The Salary of the Director is £1,950, and this salary is actually paid by the president's office.<sup>65</sup>

The Central Organisation of Sports was well structured. At the head of the organisation was the Director of Sports. Directly under him, the Principal Secretary, National Organiser, and Senior Schedule Officers. Each Senior Schedule Officer had responsibility over one of the following disciplines: Athletics, Football, Hockey, Boxing, and Lawn Tennis. At the regional level were Regional Sports Organisers who with various committees supervised the implementation of policies originating from headquarters in Accra. The offices of the Central Organisation for Sports were located at the Accra Sports Stadium.



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In order to make sure that the Central Organisation of Sports had the needed resources to function, the government made available funds and other logistics to the organisation as soon as possible. Therefore, one of the first acts of Ohene Djan as was to prepare a memorandum which was first circulated to

<sup>65</sup> Dp/J744.H2 G5, Parliamentary Debates, African Studies Library, University of Ghana: 233.

<sup>66</sup> The chart is a self-made chart to give a graphical understanding of the administrative structure of the Central Organisation of Sport.

cabinet members on 16<sup>th</sup> August 1960 and approval was given for a £58,580 supplementary grant for the year 1960/1961 to the Sports Authority. Also the minister of Education was to approach the standing committee of cabinet by the Minister of Education for the sum of £82,000 from the development fund to meet the commitment of the Sports Authority in respect of its Developmental projects.<sup>67</sup> The submission of the memorandum and its approval took only three days, suggesting the importance and urgency with which Nkrumah attached to the new Central Organisation of Sports. Of equal importance was how the memorandum was delivered straight to cabinet and not to the ministry or to parliament. This demonstrates the chain of command at the Central Organisation for Sport, that is, it reported directly to the president and not to the ministry or to parliament.

After the formation of the Central Organisation of Sports, officials of the organisation as well as government functionaries began a campaign to create awareness of the importance of sports to the development of the country. Thus from 1961 onwards, there was a campaign to inculcate the idea of sports as a necessary tool for the development of the citizens and by extension the nation. For instance, the Accra Regional Sports Organiser of the Central Organisation of Sports, Sam Boohene, explains the value of physical training to the economic reconstruction of Ghana in an interview with the *Daily Graphic*

A general topic nowadays is the economic reconstruction to which Osagyefo the President has dedicated himself, and I think that the necessary materials for the foundation of building a country is in the ways of economic reconstruction are all embodied in physical training.

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<sup>67</sup> ADM 13/1/29, Cabinet minutes, August 19, 1960, PRAAD, Accra.

...According to his<sup>68</sup> [*sic*] there will be no cease fire until the whole country know and appreciate the usefulness of physical training and until men became sports conscious.<sup>69</sup>

Similar sentiments were expressed by Ohene Djan when he addressed the National Association of Local Councils at the Ambassador Hotel, Accra, in February 1961. Among other things, he stressed the capability of Sports to break barriers and recounted how the Rome Olympics had successfully achieved that.

...it was interesting to see men with completely different political ideologies mixing freely and forgetting their political cares and worries.<sup>70</sup>

Mr. Ohene Djan finished his address with a clarion call to all to help in their own way to develop sports in the country so as to achieve the aim of projecting the African personality through sports.

Mr. Ohene Djan said amid cheers that the challenge that of projecting the African personality through sports has been met by the Central Organisation of Sport and that all men and women and to a greater extent local councils are to contribute towards this end.<sup>71</sup>

Thus through Ohene Djan, the main aim for the government's interest in sports is revealed - projecting the African personality.

Kwame Nkrumah also took part in the public education of Ghanaians about the merits of taking sports seriously when sports featured in his

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<sup>68</sup> This refers to Mr. Ohene Djan who was the Director of Sports at the Central Organisation of Sports.

<sup>69</sup> *Daily Graphic*, "Physical Fitness is Vital to Sports," February 4th 1961, 13.

<sup>70</sup> *Daily Graphic*, "Address to the Association of Local Council," February 25, 1961, 23.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, 23.

Independence Day address of 1961. In the address he told the children of Ghana that sports development was a vital part of their education and a good preparatory tool for the challenges of the future.

He implored Ghana's young people to combine class-room work with physical fitness so that they might be equipped in body and mind to face the challenge of the future.<sup>72</sup>

It could therefore be said that government saw physical development as a vital part of human resource development and adopted an effective campaign to get the message to people of diverse backgrounds. It could also be said that the government had adopted the Latin proverb of a sound mind in a healthy body.<sup>73</sup>

Sam Boohene made use of the wide distribution of the "Graphic" to explain the importance of physical training and exercise to the general public. Ohene Djan also decided to educate the Association of Local Council because they had the respect of the rural communities and their understanding of this important policy would make it easier to get this message down to the rural communities.

The biggest stage for educating the nation about the merits of physical education for the development of the nation was the Independence Day address, when all attention is on the president's address to the nation. Thus Nkrumah's choice of using the independence Day 1961 address to speak of the benefits of sports to the nation suggests that the Convention People's Party was serious

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<sup>72</sup> *Daily Graphic*, "Kwame: Be Fit and Play Your Part," 7th March 1961, front page.

<sup>73</sup> The phrase comes from Satire X of the Roman poet Juvenal. It is the first in a list of what he considers as desirable in life.

about harnessing the advantages of sports for their development agenda and sought every opportunity to make this intention known to the whole nation.

### 3.3 Sports and Education

In order to successfully execute the mandate given to the Central Organisation of Sports, a number of measures were put in place to ensure the development of football in the country. One of such measures was to train former football players as coaches to help train players from the various regions. Thus in January, 1961 Ohene Djan announced that eight former international players would be sent to Prague for a four month coaching course. The players included Timothy Darbah, Ben Sissuh, Asebi Boakye, Ben Kwofie, A. K. Ekudi, Solomon Grey and Baba Yipa.<sup>74</sup>

...in early April, eight ex-international and distinguished footballers and four experienced athletes including two ladies would proceed to Prague to undergo a four month special coaching course. On their return, they would be posted to the regions to assist in the great task of sports reconstruction.<sup>75</sup>

Public reaction to the move by the Central Organisation of Sports to send these men to Prague highlighted the expectations of the nation to the potential of football in placing Ghana on the world map. The *Daily Graphic's* columnist, Dribbler, described the job description of the eight men once their training was done. They were to be posted to the various regions to aid the development of the game:

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<sup>74</sup> Dribbler, "Well done C.O.S." *Daily Graphic*, January 10, 1961, 10.

<sup>75</sup> *Daily Graphic*, "Coaching scheme," January 27, 1961, 14.

The men are to be employed by the C.O.S after the course to arouse more interest in soccer in the regions.

This is really magnificent and I say well done to the C.O.S. I hope the eight men will take their lessons seriously to help put Ghana on the world soccer map.<sup>76</sup>

The Central Organisation of Sports also granted vacation jobs to sports men and women of the various universities in Ghana. It was the responsibility of these interns to go to the various primary and secondary schools in the country to educate students about the merits of physical education and sports.

These internships also allowed the selected young athletes to train with the established national athletes and thus gain valuable experience. As Professor Irene Odotei<sup>77</sup> puts it:

... [S]ome of these associations was toxic considering the profane and other immoral acts that the older athletes engaged in but to a large extent it was considered a necessary step for their development and to sustain a steady production of future personnel for the various national teams.<sup>78</sup>

The Winneba Advanced Teacher Training College<sup>79</sup> also introduced Physical education certificate and diploma courses for interested professional teachers. This was to increase the number of Physical Education teachers in the country who would help develop grassroots sports in the schools. Coach Osam

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<sup>76</sup> *Daily Graphic*, "Coaching scheme," January 27, 1961, 14.

<sup>77</sup> Professor Irene Odotei is the former director of the Institute of Africa Studies and a former athlete for the University of Ghana during the 1960s.

<sup>78</sup> Prof. Irene Odotei, History Department Seminar, University of Ghana, April 9, 2014.

<sup>79</sup> The Winneba Advanced Teacher Training College was dedicated to the training of teachers for the various elementary and secondary schools in Ghana. It is now the University of Education, Winneba.

Duodu,<sup>80</sup> one of the most successful Ghanaian coaches was trained at the college from 1961-1963 and posted to Osei Kyeretwie in Kumasi as the Physical Education teacher of the school. The success of Osam Duodu in various capacities for Ghana sports is testament to the good training that he was given at the Winneba Training College. Ghana continues to benefit from the structures that were put in place by the Central Organisation of Sports for the development of sports in the country, even after the organization was dissolved after the overthrow of Nkrumah.

All this interest in the development of sports was to ensure that there was early discovery and development of talent from all over the country. Additionally, it was for the national teams to have a constant supply of sports men and women. The government also setup the Schools Federation to cater for all secondary schools and colleges without distinction in October 1961.<sup>81</sup> The federation was meant to get schools and colleges to train to the national level. The effect of these administrative changes was the creation of competitive inter-collegiate sporting events in the various regions in the country which attracted entire communities and the nation as a whole. The friendly sporting rivalries that developed between secondary schools have persisted until today. Achimota School and Mfantshipim became cricket rivals and an athletics rivalry was developed between Adisadal College, Augustines College, and Mfantshipin School in Cape Coast.

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<sup>80</sup> Osam Duodu was the coach of the Black Stars of Ghana when Ghana won the 1978 and 1982 CAF African Cup of Nations and has held various position in the Black Stars and Sports Council since then including General Secretary of the Schools and Colleges Sports federation (1972), Coach of Academicals (1974), Technical Director of Ghana Football Association (1993), General Secretary, Ghana Football Association (1995-1997), etc.

<sup>81</sup> *Daily Graphic*, "Schools Federation to be Set Up," October 11, 1961, 13.

The implementation of Nkrumah's vision of using football as a tool for nation building required a lot of preparation to ensure that the investment made would not go waste. The training of coaches for primary and secondary schools, the setup of the Schools Federation and the sending of coaches abroad were all important preparatory tools to ensure that the dream became a reality.

### 3.4 The Republikan Sporting Club

One of the first acts of the Central Organisation of Sports was to setup the Republikan Sporting Club. This was announced by Ohene Djan on January 23<sup>rd</sup> 1961 on behalf of the president. The new club, according to the director, was to be at the forefront of the reconstruction of sports in the country, and was to be involved in all aspects of sports in Ghana.

...the club which is definitely destined to play a leading role in the exercise of sports reconstruction in Ghana will participate fully in all activities arranged by the Central Organisation of Sport for the league clubs starting this year.<sup>82</sup>

“The director explained that the club was formed on the instructions of Osagyefo President Kwame Nkrumah.”<sup>83</sup> In a letter to Ohene Djan, President Nkrumah explained his reasons for insisting that the club was formed. He also wanted the club to be so named to commemorate the three year development plan of the Central Organisation of Sports which was launched in 1960, the year Ghana became a republic.

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<sup>82</sup> *Daily Graphic*, “Osagyefo’s Sports Club is Formed,” January 24<sup>th</sup> 1961, 13.

<sup>83</sup> *Daily Graphic*, “I’m Surprised – Says Djan,” March 13, 1961, 14

My interest in soccer is so keen that I propose in the near future to encourage the formation of a 'model club' which will offer leadership and inspiration to football clubs in the country.

The club shall be known as 'Ghana Republikans to commemorate the launch of your three year development plan in the year of our Republic.'<sup>84</sup>

The Republikan team was established, among other things, to act as a standing football team for the nation that could be ready to play any nation at a moment's notice. It was also supposed to be a demonstration to the already existing football clubs in Ghana on how to manage their teams better both administratively and technically.<sup>85</sup>

The model club will through dedicated training, discipline of the highest order, loyalty actuated by genuine sense of patriotism and sound and efficient club administration set the pattern for club development in Ghana.<sup>86</sup>

The sporting club was thus to be the example club from which all other sporting disciplines in the country could learn. It included sports disciplines like football, athletics, hockey, boxing, table tennis,

...the Republikan Sporting Club shall have the following active departments: Football, Athletics, Hockey, Boxing and Table Tennis.<sup>87</sup>

Apart from the team, the individual players were also charged with the responsibility of being model sportsmen and an example to other football

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<sup>84</sup> *Daily Graphic*, "I'm Surprised – Says Djan," March 13, 1961, 14.

<sup>85</sup> Osei Kofi, interview by author, tape recording, Tesano, September 20, 2012.

<sup>86</sup> RG 9/1/63, Ghana Super Republikans, PRAAD, Accra, 1.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, 1.

players. This was made clear to them by the chairman of the club, Mr. Martin Appiah Danquah during the inauguration match of the Republikan team.

As members of the club, your actions both on and off the field of play must be modelled in such a way as to serve as a guiding light to all other sportsmen in Ghana.

You have a mission to fulfil, you have a charge to keep and an obligation to uphold – that of keeping the Ghana flag flying high in all sporting activities.<sup>88</sup>

Football occupied most of the attention of the Central Organisation of Sports. Due to its popularity, the first team to be developed after the formation of the Republikan Sporting Club was the football team, known as the Ghana Republikan Club. The club was formed to partake in all activities of the Central Organisation of Sports.

The setting up of the football team was made easy by the availability of structures that the Central Organisation of Sports could appropriate for the quick realisation of their mandate. For instance, there already existed a football league, as well as abundant interest and talent in football. Therefore the Central Organisation of Sports only had to set up the team and have it join an already existing league instead of having to develop a whole new league system to accommodate the new club.

The concept of the formation of the Republikan club was, however, not clear to everybody. There was some confusion as to whether or not the Republikan team was to replace the Black Stars. Once again, the Central Organisation of Sports had to do intense public education to clarify the

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<sup>88</sup> *Daily Graphic*, “Republikans Win First Match,” March 17, 1961, 12.

differences between the teams. The Republikan team was supposed to be a club team just like Hearts of Oak and Kotoko while the Black Stars remained the national team of Ghana. Therefore the Republikan team could compete in the league, but the Black Stars team could not.

Now, the Black Star group is the national soccer group. The Ghana Republikans on the other hand is a model league club founded by Osagyefo Himself.

...Like all other first division clubs in Ghana today, players will be selected to from the Republikans to camp with the others as Black Star group anytime the nation is faced with an international soccer assignment.<sup>89</sup>

The majority of the Black Star players indeed came from the Republikan team, but the plan was not to close the team completely off to good players in other teams who could make valuable contributions to the nations quest for football dominance in Africa.

Thus a player like Wilberforce Mfum, who played for Kumasi Asante Kotoko, but never played for the Ghana Republikan Club consistently found himself selected to play for the Black Stars. A foot injury suffered by Mfum in the build up to the 1965 African Cup of Nations prevented him from captaining the Black Stars to the tournament in Tunisia, where they won the nation's second African Nations' Cup trophy.

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<sup>89</sup> *Daily Graphic*, "Republikans are a League Club," March 1, 1961, 15.

### 3.5 Composition of the Republikan Football Team

The selection of players into the various teams of the Republikan sporting club was open to all individuals who were deemed capable, regardless of where they worked. Selection was also open to players who were still in school, especially the secondary schools. In cases where the players were engaged in academic work or in active employment, the Central Organisation of Sports made provision to either seek permission for their release for a couple of days or sought to transfer such players to one of the government institutions that was closer to the training places of the team.

In the case of the students, the Central Organisation of Sports would officially write to the head teacher of the school to seek their release to partake in the activities of the Republikan football team. The players were returned immediately after the match. Players who were still in school were usually selected into the Academics team, which had annual home and away matches with their Nigerian counterparts. Below is an extract of a letter written to the headmaster of Achimota School for the release of Masters Ansah Aboagye and Edusei.

I should be grateful to you if you would be kind enough to release Masters Ansah Aboagye and Edusei of your school to play for the Republikan Club on Sunday the 18<sup>th</sup> of June, at Swedru. They would be collected on Sunday morning for the journey and brought back to the School immediately after the match.<sup>90</sup>

Similar efforts were made for workers of the various government institutions when talented players were identified and selected for the

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<sup>90</sup> RG 9/1/63, Ghana Super Republikans, PRAAD, Accra, 69.

Republikan team. The Director of the Central Organisation of Sports would request for the release of a player for a few days or in certain cases, request the transfer to another state institution. An example is the case of Mr. David Asante who gained transfer to Accra in order to enable him train with the Republikans in Accra.

In view of the need to encourage and develop Mr. Asante's talent in football in the national interest, it is considered necessary to place him in an establishment which is close to the centre of training so that the call on his time may not cause any embarrassment to his employers. Consequently, I am arranging to give him an alternative employment and shall be grateful if he may be released to enable me to place him accordingly.<sup>91</sup>

Interestingly, Ohene Djan uses the phrase "in the national interest" while requesting the transfer of Mr. Asante. The phrase was used to let the recipient of the letter know that failure to honour the request of the Central Organisation of Sports will be equal to working against the national interest. The needs of the Central Organisation of Sports were thus expected to take precedence over that of government institutions because it was considered that Ohene Djan was acting in the interest the nation.

The organisation was given broad powers to do whatever needed to be done in the interest of the nation. Measures were put in place to ensure that the Republikan team was given all the resources it needed to be successful. State institutions had little or no say about personnel who were deemed important to the Republikan Club. Other institutions like the Workers' Brigade and Farmers Council became partners of the Central Organisation of Sports by readily

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<sup>91</sup> RG 9/1/63, Ghana Super Republikans, PRAAD, Accra, 83.

offering alternative employment to football players of the Republikan club so they could be close to training areas. In instances when they were far from Accra, company heads agreed to allow their company buses to carry players to Accra in order for the players to honour their call ups.<sup>92</sup>

According to K. B. Asante, the period after independence was characterized by the willingness of many people in Ghana to indulge people working for the president. It was felt that to refuse agents of the president was to refuse the president. Even private institutions were eager to be in the good books of the president and so were willing to indulge the Director of Sports either in agreeing to release players or accept players on transfer.<sup>93</sup>

The decision to use football as a tool for nation building was not without its challenges. In order to attain an international reputation within the shortest time, the decision was made that the Republikan Sporting Club was to consist of two top players from the existing league clubs in the country. This decision however did not go down well with the existing teams in the league.

This initiative by the Central Organisation of Sports became the catalyst for the first form of conflict between the Organisation and the various league clubs who felt that the move would weaken their clubs and unfairly strengthen the Republikan Sporting Club.<sup>94</sup> The clubs also felt that it will deny them the opportunity to recoup the investments they had made in these players if they

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<sup>92</sup> During the time football in Ghana was considered amateur and thus players also had to find other employment to make ends meet. There was however instances where clubs were said to pay players inducement fees to have them move from one team to another.

<sup>93</sup> K.B. Asante, interview by author, tape recording, Labadi, February 27, 2014.

<sup>94</sup> Considering that the Republikan club would be competing in the same league as the teams they were poaching from, the teams considered it as giving the Republikans unfair advantage.

allowed their free transfer to the Republican Sporting Club. Kumasi Asante Kotoko led this protest.

This brought to the fore the issue of club interest and national interest in the pursuit of nation building. To Nkrumah and his agents, all national resources should be made available in order to achieve a great nation but this notion did not sit very well with individuals and clubs who were to suffer losses in order to make some of these resources available to the state.

Nkrumah and Ohene Djan, however, were not ready to have their plans derailed by the interest of a few groups. Difficult decisions had to be taken in the interest of the nation and they were ready to make those decisions. The Central Organisation of Sports thus decided to outlaw Kumasi Asante Kotoko from the 1961 league season with their place in the team falling to the newly created Kumapim Club. Ohene Djan admitted that it was a difficult decision, but one that had to be taken in the interest of the nation.

Personally, it was a painful decision but in the interest of the nation, I couldn't sacrifice vital principles for my personal love for an individual club.<sup>95</sup>

In 1961, Kumasi Asante Kotoko was one of the oldest clubs in the country with many followers and at the time of their ban, were the Ghana Football Association (GFA) cup holders. For all intent and purposes, their inclusion in the league would make the league season more competitive and they would be able to provide at least two good preparatory games for the Republican team.

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<sup>95</sup> *Daily Graphic*, "Kotoko is 'Outlawed': New Kumapim team to play," March 18, 1961, back page.

The Central Organisation of Sports, however, needed to show leadership and authority as well as demonstrate to the other teams that the needs of the nation superseded that of the clubs. Therefore Ohene Djan was ready to sacrifice Kotoko in the interest of the program that had been put in place at the insistence of the President, an accelerated development of football in Ghana.

Some people did not take kindly to the protest by the clubs and felt that a few people were working against the interests of the entire nation. Such people gave the Central Organisation support when it decided to suspend Kumasi Asanti Kotoko after Kotoko had protested against what they termed the poaching of the club's star players to form the Ghana Republikans Club.<sup>96</sup> For instance the *Daily Graphic* had a publication by one Sojah Obodai that shows how some people felt about Kotoko's reaction to the formation of the Republikan Club

I cannot understand why the so-called pioneer clubs in Ghana are against the progressive formation of the Ghana Republikan Club. Is it not these very clubs who persuaded good players like C. K Gyamfi, Aggrey Fynn, Dogo Moro, Kwaw Baffoe, Joe Mensah, B. Oteng, Tettey Akrong and Gyimah to leave their mother clubs to join the black Star group? Are the original teams of these players not now functioning? Let sleeping dogs lie. It is high time that club interest give way to the national interest.<sup>97</sup>

The public had bought into the idea of sports for national development and thus actions by the management of Kotoko not to release their players for national duty was seen as working against the national interest.

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<sup>96</sup> *Daily Graphic* "Big Match is off," March 20, 1961, back page.

<sup>97</sup> *Daily Graphic*, "Club Interest Not Enough," March 22, 1961, 23.

This was an issue that had to be resolved quickly as each side's intransigence affected the very nation Nkrumah was hoping to build. Ohene Djan was therefore invited to a cabinet meeting to explain the misunderstanding and to find a proper solution to the issue that would satisfy Kotoko's need to protect their interest and the Central Organisations of Sports' need to honour the wishes of the President. Ohene Djan outlined the reasons for adopting this seemingly drastic measure in poaching the players from other clubs, arguing that it was in the interest of Ghana football that the nation stick to the new measures in order to achieve accelerated football development. His reasons were:

1. In our efforts towards world class within the shortest possible time, it has become essential to adopt the methods which have guaranteed accelerated progress and yielded rich dividends in the field of sports in certain European countries.
2. The grouping of star players has the obvious advantage of alerting a formidable national team under the guise of a model club for the defence of Ghana at any emergency
3. The method gives the players an opportunity to know and understand themselves better and more effectively by playing together throughout the league season. It ensures an opportunity of training for our national team.
4. It has been predicted that Ghana by her present methods in sports organisation may belong to world class soccer within the next four years. The formation of the Republikan Club, as present constituted, is a vital step towards our goal and any alteration in its membership shall only serve to delay the dawn of Ghana's emergence into world class soccer.
5. The Republikan Sporting Club, as at present constituted is in a position to defend, with dignity, the soccer name of Ghana at club level international matches and thus save our national team from the humiliation of pitching itself against touring clubs.<sup>98</sup>

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<sup>98</sup> RG 9/1/63, Ghana Super Republikans, PRAAD, Accra, 32.

In the end government accepted the recommendations of the Central Organisation of Sports that the formation of the Republikan club was a necessity in the football development of the country, but compromises were needed in order to minimise disaffection for the government and the Central Organisation of Sports.

One of the compromises with the league clubs was that in order to dispel any fear of the Republikan team being too strong for the others, it was agreed that the team would compete on a non-scoring basis. The focus of the formation of the team was not to win indigenous leagues, but to help build a formidable national team for the country in a short period. Selected players of the Republikan team were also free to return to their original clubs if they wanted:

The government has accepted the view that the formation of the republican Sporting Club is an essential step in the soccer development of Ghana and it should therefore continue to play in the league. However the Republikan club will participate in the league on a non-competitive basis.

...members of the Republican club who desire to revert to their former clubs are free to do so.<sup>99</sup>

The government's active involvement in the matter between the clubs and Central Organisation of Sports is also indicative of how important football was to the country's development. Thus an issue that was supposed to be a matter between the league clubs and the Central Organisation for Sports became an issue that merited cabinet discussion. It could also be said that it was important that in an effort to build the nation, the government did not create

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<sup>99</sup> RG9/1/63/ Ghana Super Republikans, PRAAD, Accra, 33.

conditions that would rather facilitate the breakdown of the nation. Kumasi Asante Kotoko, with its large following across the length and breadth of the country, was capable of causing discontent among the populace for the new government.

Even though the disagreement between the clubs and the Central Organisation of Sports was resolved after government's intervention, the situation created long standing hostility towards the Republikan club by supporters of the other teams. Thus the team sometimes received hostile treatments at some league centres. This hostility towards the players of the Republikan team was sometimes so intense that some members of the team felt that it created a situation where they could not perform to the best of their ability and therefore sought to vacate their place on the team. For instance, after the 1961 league season, Joe Aikins resigned from the Republikan by citing threat to his career among others as his reasons for such action.

...he had resigned from the Republikan Sporting Club because "I fear my career may be ruined. He explained that members of the club had been booed whenever and wherever they played. Aikins claimed that "in fact the situation is such that it is hard for a player of the Republikan team to play with the efficiency and zeal expected of him"<sup>100</sup>

The formation and constitution of the Republikan club was therefore a very difficult task which came with its own set of problems. It became a test of the president's resolve to use football as an important tool for nation building and the manner in which this very difficult situation was diffused is a testament to the leadership quality of Kwame Nkrumah. A situation that could have derailed the plan altogether was masterfully handled to ensure the viability of the plan.

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<sup>100</sup> *Daily Graphic*, "Aikins and the Model Club," October 20, 1961, back page.

### 3.6 Internal Use of Football

Included in nation building efforts are the creation of opportunities through which individuals could seek personal advancement and prestige. Once again, football provided government with an opportunity to have individuals to serve this need. To some of these individuals, being part of the Republikan club was more personal than any notion of serving the nation. However they had the talent to help Nkrumah in his nation building efforts and thus a situation was created where they helped Nkrumah achieve his aim and in return, they could also achieve their individual aim. For example Mr. J. K. Nunoo, 3<sup>rd</sup> Year trainee at the Agricultural Training Centre at Kwadaso left his post to train with the Republikan team without permission, causing the Principal Agricultural Officer to officially write a letter of complaint to the Central Organisation of Sports. Among other things, it was pointed out to Ohene Djan the following:

I wish to inform you that Mr. Nunoo is under Bond to complete his 3 years of training and to work for the Ministry of Agriculture for a period of not less than 5 years.

As we have no official information from the central Organisation of Sports about him, and as no steps have been taken officially to free him from the terms of the Bond, he is being considered payment of the at the moment to have absconded from his station and the usual official steps will be taken to enforce the BOND.<sup>101</sup>

Mr. Nonoo saw an opportunity to join the Republikan Sporting Club regardless of his earlier commitment to the Ministry of Agriculture and the

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<sup>101</sup> RG9/1/13/63, Ghana Super Republikans PRAAD, Accra, 51.

obvious penalty that such action would attract. He had the chance of a lifetime to achieve a personal ambition and he decided to take it.

Another example of people trying to appropriate the Republikan Sporting Club for their own gains was seen with the formation of supporter clubs and football teams. These had some sort of affiliation to the Republikan team either by name or by offering positions to the Director of Sports. For example Republikan Babies and Republikan Supporters Clubs.

I take this opportunity to write to you in respect of the above-named Club which was formed by me on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of March 1961. The Club consists of both boys and girls at the heights [*sic*] of ranging from 4feet 5inches to 4feet 11 ins. At its inaugural meeting on the 6<sup>th</sup> of March, it was decided by the Executives that you be appointed as our Life President, subject to your approval and all the Executive members of the Republikan Sporting Club in Accra be appointed as our Patron.<sup>102</sup>

To the founder of the Republikan Babies Sporting Club, he could force himself into the setup of the Republikan Sporting Club by forming a juvenile team which bore similar name to the one founded by the state and in the process make himself an important member of the national football setup. Another example is the setup of a supporters' club for the Republikan team. After a friendly match between the Republikan Sporting Club and Kumasi Asante Kotoko in Kumasi some individuals came together to propose the formation of a supporting club. They therefore wrote a letter to Ohene Djan to make their intentions known to the Director of Sports:

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<sup>102</sup> RG9/1/13/63 Ghana Super Republikans, PRAAD, Accra, 36.

Having considered in view of the recent football match between the Asante Kotoko and Ghana Republikans, we the undersigned have found that Ghana Republikans needs effective supporting club all over the country. We have come to the conclusion that this matter be put before you for immediate consideration.

Already organisation and campaign have started and some people are anxious to join hands with us...<sup>103</sup>

The efforts to reorganise football in order to make it play a vital role in the nation building efforts thus opened up various opportunities for individuals to benefit. Even non-football playing individuals found ways of serving their various personal ambitions by forming supporter groups and forming teams that had some kind of relationship to the Republikan Club.

The issue of ethnicity was also very much present in Ghanaian society in the period after independence. As Yakubu Saaka puts it:

The issue of ethnicity (or what for lack of a better term is usually referred to as tribalism), has always been central to any discussion of nation building in developing countries. The challenge for political leaders in these countries is how to get the distinct and usually numerous ethnic groups to move from perceiving themselves primarily as parochial and exclusive entities, to viewing themselves as members of a larger and more open group-the nation-state.<sup>104</sup>

“Tribalism” was a problem that Kwame Nkrumah also faced as the first president of Ghana. Even though he always advocated the need for unity and for Ghanaians to see themselves as one nation by encouraging the setup of a model

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<sup>103</sup> RG9/1/13/63 Ghana Super Republikans, PRAAD, Accra, 81.

<sup>104</sup> Yakubu Saaka, “Recurrent Themes in Ghanaian Politics: Kwame Nkrumah’s Legacy,” *Journal of Black Studies* 24, No. 3 (1994): 265.

club. Nkrumah came up with a way to de-ethnicize the local amateur football league and to use it as one of the basis for discouraging tribalism in Ghana. By setting up the Republican club, Nkrumah found a way to use football to unify the nation.

Prior to the formation of the Real Republican Sporting Club, the football clubs competing in the existing amateur league were regional or community based teams. There was Kumasi Asante Kotoko and Cornerstone from Kumasi, Hearts of Oak and Great Olympics from Accra, Vipers and Ebusua Dwarfs from Cape Coast, Hasaacas and Eleven Wise from Sekondi-Takoradi and All Blacks from Swedru.

This kind of system had the tendency to promote tribalism or ethnicity, where people support teams that were based in their communities. For a new country, this type of situation can be very dangerous in the sense that a football related misunderstanding could degenerate into conflict. The formation of the Republican team however gave the nation a league club that did not have any affiliation to any region or community or ethnicity. It also gave the public another team besides the regional team which they could support.

The Republican Club was made up about 80% of players of the Black Stars which meant that by supporting the Republican club, fans were essentially supporting the Black Stars. This made it easy for people to change alliance from their community or hometown team to the Republikans. Not long after its formation, a number of supporter's unions were set up to offer support to the Republican team.

Imbedded in the idea of a new state and nation building is the need to find things that the nation could rally around and be proud of. Ghana had a high

illiteracy level at the time of independence and thus most people had little or no comprehension of issues of local or international politics. Football for this group of Ghanaians therefore was a physical manifestation of the abilities of the new nation and something that brought pride to them.

Also, football gave the nation an opportunity to have individuals who represent the African personality that Nkrumah preached about. Individuals who can demonstrate the abilities of the African to perform at the highest level. One such individual was Charles Kumi Gyamfi,<sup>105</sup>(from here on C. K. Gyamfi). In 1963, due to financial constraints facing the Central Organisation of Sports, Joseph Ember, the Hungarian coach of the Black Stars was laid off and replaced by his assistant C. K. Gyamfi. Even though the organisation was forced into giving the position to C. K Gyamfi, it turned out to fit perfectly into the bigger plan of projecting the African personality. When C.K Gyamfi won the 1963 Gold cup, almost immediately after becoming head coach, Ohene Djan was quick to praise him and the feat he had just achieved.

On this momentous occasion, we salute national coach Gyamfi who has amply justified the confidence placed in him by the C.O.S. and abundantly demonstrated that the Ghanaian African when given the opportunity is capable of achieving wonders.<sup>106</sup>

C.K Gyamfi would go on to lead the team to win the African Nations Cup in 1963 and 1965 as well as lead the team to the 1964 Tokyo Olympic Games and to win the Azikwe Cup for keeps in 1965. Therefore he proved to be

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<sup>105</sup> C. K Gyamfi was former attacker for the Black Stars and the coach of the Black Stars from 1963. As a player, Mr. Gyamfi excelled in various international matches including the Gold Coast 11 trip to Britain in 1951.

<sup>106</sup> *Daily Graphic*, "Coach Gyamfi is Praised," March 5, 1963, 11.

an intelligent choice as it helped reaffirm Nkrumah's trust in Ghanaians as having the potential to succeed when given the support.

For various reasons, including the capacity of the national stadia, proximity to the stadia and other commitments, most people were unable to attend Black Stars matches. Filling the Republikan Sporting Club with a lot of the Black Stars players gave more people an opportunity to see the players who represented them in international matches and in the process increased their pride in the team and in the country. The Central Organisation of Sport also sometimes made provisions to have the team train for major tournaments by playing friendly matches with community teams so that the nation could see their heroes up close before they went away for the tournament. For example, the team played friendly matches at Akwatia and Akim Oda prior to their departure for the 1964 Tokyo Olympic Games.<sup>107</sup>

The Black Stars players gained a reputation as international soccer ambassadors of the country and became heroes to many people, as well as sources of inspiration to many Ghanaians. The Republikan club therefore gave many Ghanaians an opportunity to see their heroes up close and be proud of their successes.

Additionally, representing the Real Republikans also became an avenue for individuals to realise their dreams and aspirations. Thus football players were able to rise in the social ladder and become prominent people in society. Playing for the Republikan team was the stepping stone to being selected for the Black Stars and playing for the Black Stars gave football players prestige and

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<sup>107</sup> *Daily Graphic*, "Black Stars at Akwatia," September 22, 1964, 10.

popularity in their communities. Kofi Pare gives an insight into what it meant to be selected to the Republikan team and what it meant to both the individual and the family.

Being selected to play for the Republikan team was a proud moment for the player and the family. Family members would sit down with the player and advise him about things to do and things not to do because if you go and disgrace yourself, you disgrace the family too. Also to be called once and not called again was considered a disgrace so we all worked hard so that we would be called again.<sup>108</sup>

Playing for the Republikan club also was an opportunity to play a role for the country and in the process get noticed by the president and the people. For instance, after the game against Real Madrid in Accra in 1962, “Osagyefo described Edward Acquah as “Ghana’s greatest match winner.”<sup>109</sup> That was after Acquah had scored twice for the Black Stars against reigning European Champions, Real Madrid of Spain.

Such a statement from Nkrumah would have been considered high commendation indeed for any Ghanaian player and had the potential to make players instant celebrities. Thus through football, Edward Acquah had the opportunity to make a valuable contribution to the development of Ghana when Ghana played one of the best teams in the world at the time, and through that make personal, social as well as economic advancement.

Football also gave Ghanaians another thing to be proud of especially when the Black Stars, who were considered amateur players, were able to hold

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<sup>108</sup> Kofi Pare, interview by author, tape recording, Abossey Okai, 4th April 2014.

<sup>109</sup> *Daily Graphic*, “Stars to Play Real Madrid Again,” August 21, 1962, front page.

their own against semi-professional and professional sides coming from outside Africa. A respectable result against a team like East Germany was considered as a demonstration of the African personality and something to be proud of.

...the tourists had a successful tour of Asia. And this week in Cairo, they gave a colourful exhibition of modern soccer to beat the national team of the UAR by the generous margin of six goals to one!

What is more in store for Ghana's Black Star Eleven tomorrow at Accra Stadium? The Black Stars are not afraid of international reputation of the tourists. They are resolved to rise to the occasion in defence of Africa.<sup>110</sup>

The Black Stars won the game against East Germany by three goals to nothing. This East German team had beaten Czechoslovakia, who were the 1962 World Cup silver medallists but had no answers to the Ghanaian onslaught. A result like this had the capability of filling the team with pride. Also when the Black Stars played visiting international teams, it included players from different parts of the country and thus could be considered as a representation of the nation and not a particular place in the country. Sending a boxer from Ghana would mean sending one person from one place, such as Accra. Even though a representative of Ghana, he would have limited effect on the pride that people from places other than his community would feel. The success of the Black Stars however was shared by different people from different parts of the country.

The Central Organisation of Sports thus sent the Black Stars to play international friendly matches with other African countries. For instance in

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<sup>110</sup> *Daily Graphic*, "The Stars Face a Big Test," February 22, 1964, back page.

1961, the country played friendly matches with Mali, Morocco, and Nigeria between March 5<sup>th</sup> and end of April.<sup>111</sup>

Another issue that the Central Organisation of Sport faced in its implementation of football as a tool for national development was the incidence of hooliganism. Allowing hooliganism to creep into football worked against the notion of using football as something that the nation could rally around and be proud of. Hooligans in Ghana football would only succeed in bringing division into the game and in the process hamper the development of football in Ghana. For example, after a game between Kumasi Asante Kotoko and Real Republikans in Kumasi had turned to a free for all fight in the 70<sup>th</sup> minute because a Kotoko player was fouled. The “*Daily Graphic*” was harsh with its criticism of the incident, describing it as disgraceful:

No doubt Ghana was greatly disgraced in the presence of many visitors including the neutral match officials who handled the game.

... I would prefer Ghana to lose good players from our national team rather than keeping thugs who keep on disgracing the country. It is shocking...it is fantastic...it is a shame.<sup>112</sup>

To some people, a good name for the country was more important than a good result and they did not mind if some good players were sacrificed in the interest of the nation. However to the hooligans, the defence of the national interest was their justification for such rowdy behaviour. This was their way of showing patriotism to the national cause. To this group, they were defending the

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<sup>111</sup> *Daily Graphic*, “Ghana to Play 3 Big Games,” February 11, 1961, 13.

<sup>112</sup> *Daily Graphic*, “This Was Our Day of Shame,” October 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1961, 14.

interest of the nation when they made it impossible for a referee to cheat the nation or retaliate in defence of a player brawl. Such explanations, however, were considered unacceptable as it was thought that allowing it to fester would be counterproductive to the aims and objectives that had been set for the Central Organisation of Sports by Kwame Nkrumah. Ohene Djan therefore insisted that it should cease immediately and issued a strong warning to perpetrators of such acts:

Mr. Ohene Djan deplored the attitude of some of the fans. He said “some call it misdirected enthusiasm, others cunningly refer to it as burning nationalism or sentimental patriotism”, adding that whatever it was “it is all the same unbecoming”<sup>113</sup>

In the pursuit of the use of football as something that the nation Ghana could rally around and instil patriotism, it would be counterproductive if people turned against each other over the very thing that was supposed to unify them. Hooliganism was therefore a threat to all the investments that the government through the Central Organisation of Sports had made into football. Thus the Central Organisation of Sports took a very hard stance against hooliganism. Harsh punishment for players and supporters engaged in hooliganism was instituted to protect the government policy, investment and the game that had become very important tool in the nation building efforts of the Convention People’s Party.

...in future any player who grossly misconducts himself will NEVER qualify for membership of the Black Star Group. Drastic restrictions will also be imposed upon his participation in matches or

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<sup>113</sup> *Daily Graphic*, “Djan Gets Tough with the Stars,” May 11, 1961, 13.

competition organised by the Central Organisation of Sports.

Any player who strikes another player or official on or off the field will be suspended for THREE YEARS”.<sup>114</sup>

The government was also concerned that incidents of hooliganism could tarnish the international image of the nation, especially in situations where the Black Stars were engaged in international matches. The Minister of Education thus proposed the setting up of a committee to deal with incidence of hooliganism in order to ensure that they were uprooted from football in Ghana.

The minister said: “Such ugly and unsportsmanlike incidents cannot be allowed to continue, since they could degenerate into unpleasant situations involving visiting teams.”<sup>115</sup>

Unfortunately Ghana’s efforts to use football to instil the African personality and to promote national unity had a number of flaws in its implementation. The implementation of the policy excluded the Northern and Upper Regions of Ghana. For instance despite several calls by the public including members of parliament, the Central Organisation of Sport could not organise football league matches in those places. The Republican team or the Black Stars or any of the visiting national and club teams never played there. Mr S.I. Idrissu, Member of Parliament for Gushegu moved a motion in Parliament to compel the Director of Sports to include the Northern, and Upper Regions in the National Football League:

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<sup>114</sup> *Daily Graphic*, “Ohene Warns Soccer Thugs,” October 4, 1961: back page.

<sup>115</sup> *Daily Graphic*, “We will Appoint Special Men to Deal with Hooligans,” December 14, 1961, back page.

I beg to move, That this House requests the Director of Sports to allow football clubs from the Northern and Upper Regions to participate in the National League.

...sports is another channel through which unity can be achieved and so I am urging this House through you, Sir, to help in getting the clubs in the Northern and Upper Regions to take part in the league.<sup>116</sup>

For a policy that was supposed to unify the nation, more effort should have been put into making it possible for people in the Northern and Upper Regions to be included in the league. Even without proper football infrastructure, those regions produced players like Baba Yara, Mohammed Salisu and Dogo Moro.

There also seem to be some contradictions with the use of the Black Stars to promote the African personality. This is because even though Ohene Djan had a preference for the Kente Cloth, the Black Stars were known to usually wear suit and ties for their travels around the world. Surely if they had worn any of the indigenous clothes, it would have been a further confirmation in the ability of the African personality than the suit. For instance after winning the 1965 African Nations Cup in Tunisia, the Black Stars arrived in Ghana wearing suit and tie, just like the European teams that visited Ghana.<sup>117</sup>

### **3.7 Conclusion**

Chapter three has examined the process through which the Central Organisation of Sport was established and given broad powers in order to

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<sup>116</sup> Dp/J 744.H2 G5, Parliamentary Debates, September 9, 1962, African Studies Library, University of Ghana.

<sup>117</sup> *Daily Graphic*, "Big Welcome for Black Stars," November 25, 1965, 14.

achieve sporting success within a short time. This chapter has argued that through the setup of the Republikan Sporting Club, the development of football was fast tracked to play a vital role in the nation building efforts of the government. The end result was that the Black Stars became stronger and won many laurels for the nation including the West African Soccer Federation Gold Cup and the Azikiwe Cup.

The chapter also explored some of the advantages that the nation derived from football, including creation of national heroes and instilling national pride into Ghanaians. The new organised sports also provided an avenue for self-advancement and prestige, as seen in the career of C. K. Gyamfi. Challenges faced by the Central Organisation of Sports, like the disagreement with the clubs and incidence of hooliganism in football were also examined.

The chapter has also looked at some of the limitations with the implementation of the policy as the Northern and Upper regions were excluded from the league and other Central Organisation of Sports programs. The research questions below have thus been answered:

- What was the motivation for establishing the Central Organization of Sports in 1960?
- In what ways did football contribute to the building of the new state?

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **FOOTBALL AND THE NATIONAL IMAGE**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

This chapter has an international focus and deals with how Nkrumah used football to execute his plans abroad. It explores how he utilized the game as a tool to promote Ghana as a brand and to pursue his agenda of African Unity. Nkrumah used football as a vehicle for his international politics and more importantly to promote Ghana as a country to the world. The tour of Britain in 1951 by the Gold Coast 11, the West African Football Federation, Black Stars' continental successes in the African Nation's Cup, invitation of various foreign national and club teams to play in Ghana and the donation of the trophy for the formation of the African Club Championship were some of the ways in which he used football to pursue his foreign affairs programs through football.<sup>118</sup>

#### **4.2 Black Stars' Continental Successes**

Kwame Nkrumah's reasons for taking a keen interest in sports could be said to have been as a result of his vision to use sports as a tool to project the nation beyond the borders of Ghana. To the president, sports was one of the few avenues through which Ghana could rub shoulders with other countries and possibly even defeat them. A feat like defeating one of the more developed

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<sup>118</sup> The African club championship is what exists now as the Confederation of African Football (CAF) Champions League. The completion is therefore one of the legacies of Nkrumah.

countries would indeed make many Ghanaians take pride in their nationality especially if that country happens to be Ghana's former colonial master. Such an achievement would also make the world take notice of the existence of this relatively small and new country. It was thus due to the immense potential of sports as an international relations tool that Nkrumah and his government adopted keen interest in its development.

He stated that on July 1 last year it dawned upon him that a more positive attitude should be adopted towards the development of sports in Ghana to ensure that within the shortest possible time, the young nation took her rightful place among the great sports nations of the world.<sup>119</sup>

In order to achieve this international prestige through sports, it was important to have a sport that has national appeal and abounds in talents. In this sense football became the leading candidate due to the fact that it had arguably become the national sport and Ohene Djan admitted as much in an interview with the Ghana News Agency that appeared in the *Daily Graphic*.

I need not remind you that football is now in the forefront of Ghana. It is in fact our national game.<sup>120</sup>

The Central Organisation of Sports therefore used the organisation of various international matches, including Ghana's annual two-legged matches with Nigeria, and invitations to various countries both in and out of Africa, tours by recognised club teams to Ghana and the country's membership of FIFA to pursue this agenda.

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<sup>119</sup> *Daily Graphic*, "Train Hard, Sportsmen Are Told," April 5, 1961, 1.

<sup>120</sup> *Daily Graphic*, "Am Surprised – Says Ohene Djan," March 13, 1961, 14.

As early as 1951, when Nkrumah was leader of government business, the importance of football as a tool for advertising the Gold Coast to the rest of the world and for building national pride was not lost on the colonial administration. Thus, when the United Gold Coast Amateur Football Association was invited to tour Britain in 1951, the colonial government saw the invitation as an opportunity to market the Gold Coast and how failure to honour it would potentially harm the reputation of the Gold Coast. Approval of cabinet was thus sought for a loan of between £1500 and £2000 on 19<sup>th</sup> July 1951, due to financial constraints facing the Gold Coast Amateur football Association which almost caused a cancellation of the tour. The question as to whether a loan should be given to the association from government funds was thus raised:

On the other hand it was maintained that the team could not fulfil its engagement without a grant or loan of £1500 and £2000 and that if the team did not carry out tour the reputation of the Gold Coast would suffer<sup>121</sup>

Cabinet was however conscious of the fact that sponsoring the team to tour Britain could also be interpreted by the general public as an attempt by government to interfere in the activities of the sports council:

It was observed that the grant of such a loan might seem to imply a repudiation of the sports council by the government and be regarded as undesirable intervention by the government in a dispute in the field of sport.<sup>122</sup>

However the need to avoid embarrassment was greater than the fear of perceived interference and thus the finance committee was invited to authorise

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<sup>121</sup> ADM/13/1/19 Cabinet Minutes, July 19, 1951, PRAAD, Accra: Item I.

<sup>122</sup> Ibid., Item I.

a loan not exceeding £2000, repayable from the gate proceeds of the Football Association in order for the Gold Coast 11 to honour the tour.<sup>123</sup>

As leader of government business, Kwame Nkrumah would no doubt be involved in discussing the merits and demerits of such a trip by the national football team, especially considering the fact that government had to sponsor the trip due to the financial limitations of the Ghana Amateur Football Association. This can thus be considered as Nkrumah's first opportunity to use of football to gain international exposure for the country.

There is no reference in the cabinet minutes of 19th July 1951 of Nkrumah objecting to government's decision to sponsor the team to make the trip possible. This suggests that he probably was in agreement as to the benefits that the country would derive from such a trip even though his reasons may not necessarily have been be the same as those of the colonial administration. To Nkrumah, a good performance against teams in Britain would have highlighted the abilities of the Black man to achieve success even with limited resources and only help strengthen his case of immediate self-government for the Gold Coast.

The team played ten matches and won only two with their heaviest defeat coming against Isthmian League XI who beat the Gold Coast team 10-1.<sup>124</sup> However, even though the Gold Coast team won only two matches out of ten, this tour by the Gold Coast Eleven earned the Gold Coast a lot of admirers especially for their entertaining way of play, considering the fact that most of the players preferred to play the matches barefoot.

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<sup>123</sup> ADM/13/1/19 Cabinet Minutes, July 19, 1951, PRAAD, Accra: Item II.

<sup>124</sup> The Times, The (Manchester) Guardian, FAI Yearbook & Diary 1996, accessed on April 19, 2014, (<http://www.modernghana.com/sports/117525/2/profile-of-ck-gyamfi.html>)

Nkrumah thus had first-hand appreciation of the effectiveness of using football as an international relation tool. This tool could give Ghana international exposure, as well as further instilling pride in Ghanaians. It is no surprise therefore that he introduced it in his administration of the First Republic.

To the CPP Government, Football was one of the ways in which to demonstrate to both African and Europeans what the African is capable of. It was one of the few and quickest ways of showing to the world that indeed the African was capable of great thing with limited resources. In that sense football players were thus considered ambassadors not only of Ghana, but also of the whole African continent. The Black Stars were thus a representation of the notion of the African personality and not just a bunch of people playing and enjoying themselves.

At a ceremony at the Ambassador Hotel in Accra to welcome the Black Stars from their successful eight weeks tour of Europe which included countries like the USSR, Hungary, West Germany, East Germany, and Czechoslovakia from 1st June to July 1961, Ohene Djan outlined the reasons for the tour while emphasizing the achievements of the team on the tour. The team played twelve matches, lost three, drew one and won eight

...we left Ghana for Europe to represent Ghana in particular and Africa in general as the uncontroversial ambassadors of Africa. He added that, they went to Europe, saw Europe and conquered Europe.<sup>125</sup>

The Director of Sports also paid a glowing commendation to the President for the achievements of the Black Stars on the tour when he credited

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<sup>125</sup> *Daily Graphic*, "We Are Back With New Ideas," July 18, 1961, 14.

the team's success, especially their victory in the last match against Czechoslovakia to the motivational words of the president:

...the Czech players, not satisfied with our previous victories over them, fortified their team against us, but our players, remembering the last words of the patron of the C.O.S Osagyefo Dr. Kwame Nkrumah, founder of the C.O.S., that they should either come with the shield or on it, threw their fatigue to the winds, and rose to the occasion, turning a probable defeat into a glorious victory.<sup>126</sup>

The magnitude of the task that was ahead of the football players was not lost on the general public considering that once on tour, these players had to play in difficult conditions and also the fact that the European teams were better resourced than the Black Stars. These made the victories of the Black Stars more worthy of praise.

This is quite a good record. We little expected on this maiden visit of players, none of whom was at home in the chilly and benumbing climate of Europe that such successes would result.

Bravo!! Black Stars. May your fortunes increase. Not only have our great players demonstrated their worthiness as good Ghana's ambassadors of soccer but also they have shown how good the African is anywhere and in any sphere of life in which he finds himself.<sup>127</sup>

The general consensus was that the players had braced hard conditions to bring honour and prestige to their country. This is the kind of character trait that were needed when building the nation. This character of the players would

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<sup>126</sup> *Daily Graphic*, "We Are Back With New Ideas," July 18, 1961, 14.

<sup>127</sup> *Daily Graphic*, "Welcome Home, Black Star Boys" July 18, 1961, 13.

also serve as inspiration to future generations who will find themselves in difficult situations in fulfilling their duties to the state.

The Director of Sports was quick to highlight the importance of Nkrumah to the success of the Black Stars. This is further proof of Nkrumah's involvement in the progress that the team was making both in and outside the continent. Football was therefore key in the effort of Kwame Nkrumah to project the new nation to the world, and to prove to the world that even though Ghana was a young nation, the people are very capable of taking up big challenges and prevailing in those challenges.

The quotation above is also testament to the fact that failure to succeed was not an option for the Black Stars. As much as success was expected to give the new nation much needed positive exposure, failure would have also impacted negatively on the image of the nation and on the notion of the African personality.<sup>128</sup> Failure would have also confirmed the negative stereotype that had been drummed into the African through years of slavery and colonialism that indeed the African was inferior to other groups of people. Thus the responsibility that the players carried as ambassadors of the nation was indeed a big one. They had the capability to either exalt the African Personality or bring it down. The team was therefore consistently reminded of this responsibility.

There was a sense of accomplishment as well as entitlement among many Ghanaians as well as sports administrators that Ghana had arrived in the big leagues of world football. This was based on the fact that Ghana had won the West African Gold Cup a number of times, and also had a successful European

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<sup>128</sup> *Daily Graphic*, "Welcome Home, Black Star Boys" July 18, 1961,13.

tour in 1961. Ghana also held Real Madrid to a 2 all draw in Accra in 1962 and won the African Championship in 1963. These successes gave the nation the feeling that indeed Ghana has earned the right to be considered as one of the powerhouses of world football. This feeling of international repute even gave the nation a sense of arrogance and pride in the ability of the team to defeat any nation ahead of the 1964 Olympic Games in Tokyo:

Under the banner of the C.O.S., Ghana has said goodbye to the days when she remained a mere glorified spectator at international sports arena.

Although the rule of reticence which forbids sportsmen to make pre games claims prevents us from showing buoyant optimism, we modestly believe that our sportsmen will perform with credit

The Black Stars, official soccer champions of Africa, qualified for the games this year to earn the distinction of being the first African nation south of the Sahara to compete in the finals of the soccer division of the Olympic Games.

These Stars go to Tokyo fully resolved to place Ghana on the world soccer map. They are seasoned, and a happy combination of youth and experience.<sup>129</sup>

To many Ghanaians, the Tokyo Olympics was seen as the biggest stage to exhibit the ability of the team to the entire world and in the process be considered in the same breath as soccer teams like Brazil and Argentina. For all intent and purposes failure was not a consideration. Generally the team did not perform badly. The Black Stars drew the first match with Argentina and defeated the host, Japan, 3-2 in their second match to reach the quarter finals. However, the Black Stars lost 5-1 to United Arab Republic (UAR) which many felt was unacceptable since UAR was an African country and Ghana at the time were

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<sup>129</sup> *Daily Graphic*, "Our Ambassadors Hopeful," September 30, 1964, 15.

African Champions. Regardless of this setback of the soccer team, there was a lot of pride in the team and the belief that indeed they had successfully portrayed the African Personality in Tokyo. Mr. William Baidoe-Ansah, Ghanaian Ambassador to Japan, summed up the feeling of the nation when he credited the success of the team to the president:

He proposed a toast to the health of Osagyefo the President through whose enthusiasm and encouragement for organised sports, the team's participation in the Olympics had been made possible.

...quite apart from winning medals, the African personality, as represented by the Ghanaians, had been well projected in Japan to the admiration of other nationalities present at the Ghana.<sup>130</sup>

Another international use of football for building the nation was the use of football to build good friendly cooperation with other countries, especially other African countries. The Black Stars were invited by other countries to various engagements including as a side show for Independence Day celebrations. For example, in September 1962, the Black Stars took part in the Uganda Special Independence Football competition to mark the Independence Day celebrations of Uganda. They beat Kenya 6-3 in their first match and defeated the host nation 4-1 in the final to lift the cup.

Eighteen players (forming the Black Star Group) will leave Accra today for Kampala, Uganda, on the first stage of their tour of East Africa. The Black Stars will take part in a special football competition to mark the independence celebration of Uganda.<sup>131</sup>

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<sup>130</sup> *Daily Graphic*, "Our Men Are Back," November 2, 1964, 13.

<sup>131</sup> *Daily Graphic*, "Black Stars Off Today," September 24, 1962, 10.

The Black Stars were also invited by the government of Kenya for their second independence day celebration in 1965 where they played two games against the national team of Kenya, winning the first one 13-2 and drawing the second one 3-3.

Ghana also had a long history of international football friendly matches with Nigeria dating back to the colonial period with the Jalco Cup which was donated by the Nigerian company Joe Allen & Co. From 1960 onwards the Jalco Cup was replaced by the Azikiwe cup which was donated by the then president of Nigeria, Nnamdi Azikiwe. In 1960, the federal President of the Republic of Nigeria, Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe, donated the imposing 3-foot tall trophy to replace the Jalco Cup which Ghana won for keeps in 1959.<sup>132</sup>

Two games were played every year on a home and away basis. The last one played under Nkrumah ended with Ghana retaining the trophy for keeps on a 7-0 aggregate win over Nigeria. These games were meant to enhance relations between both nations and even though Ghana won most of the games, the defeats inspired Nigeria to also find better ways of improving their team in order to match their Ghanaian counterparts. There was therefore suggestion of Nigeria also setting up a model club in the likeness of the Republikan Sporting Club.

Impressed by the role of the Republikan club in Ghana's international soccer, Nigeria is contemplating the formation of a similar model club to improve the standard of soccer.

The Nigerian Football Association has been told to consider the creation of such a model club as a matter of urgency.<sup>133</sup>

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<sup>132</sup> *Daily Graphic*, "Ghana Retains Azikiwe Trophy," November 8, 1965, back page.

<sup>133</sup> *Daily Graphic*, "Nigeria To Form Model Club," March 15, 1963, 11.

By the success that the Black Stars chalked within a very short time, the team became an actual representation to the entire continent of the African Personality that Nkrumah constantly preached. They were thus required to play demonstration matches in various countries and hence their invitation to other countries' Independence Day celebrations. Sometimes the comfort and condition of the players was of little concern to the government and officials of the central organisation of sports because the players were a part of a mechanisation that was more important than their personal comfort or pleasure. For instance the Black Stars arrived in Ghana after their 1965 African Cup triumph in Tunisia on November 24, 1965 and were on a plane to Kenya on December 8, 1965 to play on the occasion of Kenya's independence anniversary. Rev. Kofi Pare sums the feeling of the players when he concluded that:

We the players sometimes felt tired and would prefer not to honour some of these matches but once Nkrumah ordered it, the players had no choice but to honour it. I always had my passport and 100 dollars in my black Stars suit ironed and ready to go in my bedroom.<sup>134</sup>

These players therefore had to brace physical exhaustion and personal discomfort in order to play their part in the broader scheme of Kwame Nkrumah in using them as important tools in the government's effort to build friendly ties and cooperation with other African countries.

Rev. Osei Kofi also recounts how the national team usually went on these international competitions and friendly matches with the accompaniment of a

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<sup>134</sup> Kofi Pare, interview by author, tape recording, Abossey Okai, April 4, 2014.

Minister of State or a Member of Parliament who sometimes used the opportunity to hold informal talks with their counterparts of the host country.<sup>135</sup>

From all indications, Nkrumah's donation of a 1000 guinea Gold Cup for a West African soccer competition had been very successful in contributing positively to the friendly cooperation among West African states. The annual competition was in its third edition in 1963 and the success that it had played was not lost on the parliamentarians who admitted as much. Mr. A. Casely Hayford, Convention People's Party Member of Parliament for South Birim, in his submission to Parliament on the motion of "Accra Stadium facilities," acknowledged the role that the donation of the Gold Cup had played in bringing nations together:

...Great tribute should be paid to Osagyefo Dr. Kwame Nkrumah, President of the Republic of Ghana, for the interest that he has shown in sporting activities. He must be congratulated on the donation of a gold cup to be competed for by West African countries. The donation of this cup has helped to bring about the coming together of African countries in furtherance of African unity.<sup>136</sup>

When Nkrumah began to advocate for a united Africa and for a political and economic unity on the continent. Sports in general and football in particular became one of the tools that was used to convince his fellow African leaders of the viability of his idea. Even though the idea of a united Africa failed to materialize before his overthrow in February 1966, football was heavily used to deliver his message of the benefits of a united continent. Football had been used

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<sup>135</sup> Osei Kofi, interview by author, tape recording, Tesano, September 20, 2012.

<sup>136</sup> Dp/J 744.H2 G5, Parliamentary debates, July 5, 1963, African Studies Library, University of Ghana, 357.

successfully by the colonial government for various reasons and had achieved relative success and thus Nkrumah was ready to use it to achieve success in the attainment of a united Africa.

One of the ways that Nkrumah used football to further his African Unity agenda was to utilize the platform that football competitions gave him to make statements in support of the united Africa idea. For instance in July 1963 when Kumasi Asante Kotoko and Real Republikans played in Kumasi for the Unity Cup, Nkrumah used the occasion to suggest the formation of a Pan-African Sports Organisation that will think and plan in terms of the continent. He went on to highlight the advantages that the entire continent stood to gain from such an organisation.

Through travel and observation, and through hospitality provided by host nations such bonds of brotherhood and understanding are constantly being strengthened.

The importance of sports, especially in a developing continent like Africa, cannot be over-emphasised. Africa needs healthy and strong men and women steadfastly dedicated to the highest ideals of sportsmanship and discipline.

It is only in such an environment that the sporting youth of Africa can become alive to their civic responsibilities.

But now that African are their own masters, and now that the end of colonialism in Africa is in sight, the world would show us little sympathy if we made no endeavour to project the African personality into the field of sports too.<sup>137</sup>

Nkrumah also donated trophies as well as gold and silver medals for various African football competitions, in the hope of helping build cooperation

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<sup>137</sup> *Daily Graphic*, "Give Africa One Sporting Body – Kwame," July 29, 1963. front page.

among African countries. He gave a 150-guinea cup for the annual continental club championship in January 1963 to replicate the European Cup Competition in Africa for clubs sides.<sup>138</sup> He also donated gold and silver medals for the fourth edition of the African Cup competition, which was hosted and won by Ghana. After the success of the Central Organisation of Sport in the development of sports, especially football, it makes sense that Nkrumah will attempt to extend the policy to his pursuit of African Unity. He thus missed no opportunity to make full use of the avenues that football provided him through its various competitions to promote his ideas on a variety of issues.

Nkrumah also used football to advocate some of his political stances including his opposition to apartheid in South Africa. Football became one of the means to oppose the oppressive behaviour of the South African government. As the call for the end of Apartheid intensified, football was one of the ways in which other independent African countries led by Ghana brought pressure to bear on the South African government. For instance, South Africa was excluded from the maiden edition of the African Club Championship that was hosted in Ghana in 1964.

Association football on the continent will take a new positive step towards maturity in 1964, when for the first time in African Soccer history national champion clubs from all parts of Africa, except South Africa, will compete for a magnificent trophy.<sup>139</sup>

Also in January 1963, Ohene Djan tabled a motion at an African Football Federation meeting in Cairo, to have the South African Football Federation

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<sup>138</sup> *Daily Graphic*, "Osagyefo Gives Cup For Big Soccer League," January 30, 1963, 11

<sup>139</sup> *Ibid.*, 11.

suspended from all its activities in an effort to have Apartheid abolished in South Africa.

The African Football Federation have unanimously decided in Cairo to have nothing to do with the South African Football Federation until such a time as its apartheid policy is totally eliminated from its set up.<sup>140</sup>

This action by the African Football Federation had become necessitated because the world governing body FIFA had lifted the original ban which had been imposed on South Africa for discrimination since 1961. The African countries led by Ghana however decided not to allow foreigners to dictate to them by keeping the ban imposed on South Africa. Therefore through Ohene Djan, football became one of the avenues through which Ghana voiced her opposition to the practice of apartheid in South Africa.

Another use of football for international purposes was the invitation of Real Madrid to Ghana by the Central Organisation of Sports as part of Madrid's pre-season tour before the 1962/1963 league season. The trip by Madrid was expensive for the government, but it was decided that the benefits of such a trip outweigh the financial setback that the government would suffer, therefore payment was made to secure a tour of Ghana by Real Madrid. Mr. Ohene Djan said:

...it was because of the advantage to be derived from the visit that the C.O.S. had agreed to contribute £15,000 towards the overall cost of £65,000 for the tour of three nations by Real Madrid.<sup>141</sup>

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<sup>140</sup> *Daily Graphic*, "South Africa Must Be Banned," January 23, 1963, 10.

<sup>141</sup> *Daily Graphic*, "Real Madrid Due Here On August 17," July 19, 1962, 11.

The Madrid tour was one of the first manifestations that the organisation was on course to fulfil its mandate, that is, to achieve sports success within a short time. To many Ghanaians, this was a real test of whether the methods adopted by the Central Organisation of Sports over the two years of its existence had been working. It was considered that the result against a team of Real Madrid's stature would be a measurement of whether or not Ghana football had indeed reached international level. Real Madrid were five times European Champions between 1956 and 1960.

How far is Ghana away from the top of the world's soccer ladder? Tomorrow is the day of judgement, a day to determine Ghana's greatness in the field of international soccer.

For Real Madrid, the acclaimed champion club of Spain, to beat Ghana is definitely no news but for Ghana to draw or even suffer a close defeat from the soccer wizards of Real Madrid will positively push us towards a new soccer horizon.<sup>142</sup>

The arrival of Real Madrid was met with glee from the public who saw it as an opportunity to show what Ghana can do against a team that was considered the best team in Europe. There was also a sense of pride that a team of Real Madrid's calibre will be sharing the pitch with the Black Stars of Ghana:

To us in Ghana, it is a great honour that Europe's No. 1 club, the super club of the world, should accept our invitation to visit our young republic. We acknowledge your class and have respect for your enormous reputation. But the Black Stars will fight determinedly and may even surprise you!<sup>143</sup>

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<sup>142</sup> Dribbler, "Stars Must Go In For Goals," *Daily Graphic*, August 18, 1962, 10.

<sup>143</sup> *Daily Graphic*, "Welcome, The Soccer 'Wizards': Happy Stay in Ghana," August 17, 1962, 10.

Even though there was modest expectation from many people, the game ended 3-3 and the fanfare that followed this result throughout the country was remarkable. There was the general understanding that the nation had arrived at world class status. Commentaries from officials and the public together gave the impression that indeed Ghana had arrived on the international soccer scene after what was considered a respectable draw against a team with star players like Puskas and Di Stefana.

Ghana is now world class. That was the experts' view after the Black Star Boys had held the world's renowned club – REAL MADRID – to a 3-3 draw in their international match at the Accra Sports Stadium.<sup>144</sup>

This training tour of Ghana by Real Madrid is significant on two levels. The first level is that it was confirmation that indeed Ghana was considered one of the leading football nations in Africa and thus the acceptance by Real Madrid of the training tour offer. Ghana was considered at the time as one of the best teams in Africa, having won the West African Soccer Federation Cup multiple times and also having won a number of matches against other national and club sides both in and outside Africa.

Secondly, the fact that Ghana was one of three countries on the continent that Real Madrid chose for their training tour of Africa in 1962 was testament of how far the nation building efforts of Nkrumah had progressed. Ghana thus had an international exposure due to Nkrumah's efforts in the Non-Aligned movement and the independence struggle of other African countries. Therefore

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<sup>144</sup> *Daily Graphic*, "Black Stars Just Missed Victory," August 20, 1962, back page.

if Real Madrid wanted to make an international statement with this tour of Africa, then Ghana would be a good candidate.

Another benefit to the country of Madrid's tour was that it threw the spotlight of the international community on Ghana. Therefore the tour was a good opportunity to advertise the country since the results of Real Madrid matches were of interest to many people throughout Europe.

Football also became one of the few avenues through which Africa could stand up to the bullying tactics of the rest of the world. In addition to standing firm and maintaining the ban on the South African Football Association, the African Football Confederation also decided to pull out of the 1966 World Cup finals. This was because the world governing body, FIFA, had allocated only 1 of the 16 places at the finals of the competition to both Africa and Asia combined. Once again Ghana set the ball rolling by appealing to the other African countries to withdraw from the competition if the allocation wasn't changed. Mr. Ohene Djan described the allocation to Africa and Asia as inadequate and insulting. He said he had appealed to the headquarters of the African Football Confederation in Cairo to convene an emergency meeting to discuss the appalling and humiliating treatment of Africa and Asia.<sup>145</sup>

The rest of the members of the African football confederation agreed with the stance of the Central Organisation of Sports and voted unanimously to withdraw from the 1966 world cup unless FIFA made changes to the allocation.

The African Soccer Confederation have decided to withdraw from the 1966 World Cup tournament in protest against their not being allocated a place in the final 16 teams.

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<sup>145</sup> *Daily Graphic*, "Ghana May Quit World Soccer Contest," February 7, 1964, back page.

The confederation, comprising 26 countries, said they were entitled to an automatic place – one or two places – in the finals to be played in England.<sup>146</sup>

Thus through the prompting of Ghana, the African Football Federation was able to stand up to what they felt were insulting to the continent. FIFA was not taking the African continent seriously enough and the African Football Federation was strong enough to stand up against the bullying and unfair tactics of the governing football body.

Football was therefore an important tool in the international relations of the Convention People's Party government and to an extent a very successful one which gave Nkrumah the platform to articulate his position on many international dealings including apartheid.

### **4.3 Conclusion**

Chapter four has argued that football became one of the avenues by which the new nation was branded and advertised to the rest of the world. Thus the national team played against established international and club sides like Real Madrid, in order to raise the profile of the nation and generate pride in Ghanaians.

This chapter has examined ways in which football was used to build friendly cooperation among various African countries. Nkrumah donated trophies and medals for the organisation of various national and club competitions with the aim of forging national bonds with other countries.

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<sup>146</sup> *Daily Graphic*, "Africa To Quit World Cup," October 9, 1964, 11.

The chapter also argued that in Nkrumah's effort to build a united Africa, football became an important tool for expounding his ideas on the merits of all Africa coming together. The concept of football and international diplomacy was therefore employed by Nkrumah in an effort to gather support for his idea of African Unity.

The use of football to oppose the oppressive rule of the South African government was also discussed. Led by Ghana, the ban was instituted to force the South African government to abolish its oppressive policy of apartheid. When FIFA lifted its ban on South Africa, the African Football Federation maintained its ban on South Africa.

Chapter four of the study has thus explored ways in which football was used in the pursuit of the various international agenda of Nkrumah. It provided Nkrumah with the needed platform to articulate his ideas on international issues. Football therefore become a vital tool in building the national image.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### CONCLUSION

The study set out to explore the extent to which football was used as a tool for nation building under the government of the Convention People's Party, led by Dr. Kwame Nkrumah. It has identified the reasons and motivation for using football and the extent that the government was willing to go to make its development and use a feasible policy. The role and impact of the Black Star players on the success of the policy has also been discussed. The study also examined the impact of football on the foreign affairs of the CPP government. The general literature on the administration of Dr. Kwame Nkrumah is largely inconclusive on his use of leisure activities towards nation building. The study thus set out to investigate how football, which is a leisure activity came to play a vital political role in the government.

The study has highlighted the notion of sports heroes in the early part of independent Africa which has completely changed from what we have today. In the period immediately after independence, playing for the nation was highly esteemed and considered an honour and a sense of duty rather than as a career path. For most players, national pride and a sense of duty was of primary concern instead of playing for monetary gain. Football players like Rev. Osei Kofi who turned down an opportunity to play for Stoke City football Club in England are rare examples.

This study has argued that through football, certain individuals were thrown into the political limelight to become national heroes who would serve to inspire their fellow Ghanaians. These players were thus saddled with the

responsibility of winning various laurels in the name of the nation in order to project the African personality. Having experienced colonialism, many Ghanaians were eager to help prove to the former colonial authority that indeed Africa was capable of managing its own affairs. This study thus revealed the how Nkrumah was able to convince his fellow nationals to become active participants in the building of the nation.

The study has also explored how a lot of individuals became important political actors in the process of nation building. For the footballers who wore the Black Stars jersey, they did this by their commitment to the national team even though sometimes promises made to them were not fulfilled. This study therefore makes contribution to the body of literature on sports and national identity, arguing that football presented the nation and individuals with a platform to create a national and individual identity.

Interest by nations to host or partake in international competitions have always been motivated by the need to advertise their nation. Thus even when faced with other economic hardships, countries are willing to spend millions of dollars to either host or partake in these competitions. For instance in the lead up to the 2010 FIFA World Cup, there were criticisms of the South African government of misplaced priorities due to hardships faced by its citizens. Similar issues were raised in the lead up to the 2014 World Cup in Brazil, but in both cases governments decided that the benefit of hosting the tournament outweighed the cost and inconvenience suffered by its citizens. Similar reasons have been attributed to why Ghana for instance budgeted nine million dollars for the group stages of the 2014 World Cup in Brazil. As long as these international competitions exist, countries will continue to dedicate huge sums

of money to earn participation and the right to partake in the benefits that come from it, including advertising their nations.

This study thus enables us to understand Nkrumah's interest in football and how football was appropriated and developed to play an important role in advertising the new nation. The CPP government also used football to handle a lot of its international relations issues, such as his opposition to apartheid in South Africa. The study argues that at a time when all resources were needed in the development of the country, football became one of the key tools for showcasing the ability of the new nation. To Nkrumah, successfully defeating well known football national teams and clubs put Ghana on the world football map as well as caused people to notice the capability of the African.

This study, however, discovered some flaws in the implementation of the policy of using football to aid in nation building. The study discovered that the Northern and Upper Regions of Ghana were largely ignored in the development that came with the use of football for nation building. League matches were not organised in those regions, neither were the Black Stars playing there nor any of the visiting teams. For a policy that was to help promote national pride and unity, it was unfortunate that it did not extend to the entire country. Calls by the public including parliamentarians failed to convince the Central Organisation of Sports to find lasting solutions to this limitation. Thus even though to a large extent the policy was successful, the inability to extend it to the entire country is a blemish on the achievement of football in the country under Kwame Nkrumah.

Another flaw discovered in the study is the contradiction exhibited by the choice of team attire for travelling. In most of their trips outside Ghana, the

national team, the Black Stars usually wore suits and ties. It was indeed ironic that a team that was supposed to be a representation of African capability was consistently clothed in an attire that was not African. It is telling of how Africans continue to advocate for the use and patronage of African products as a demonstration of the ability of the African, but constantly saw things like clothes as not important elements of the African identity. Nkrumah was also guilty of this as he sometimes wore suit and tie to travel as opposed to any of the local dresses that could have been an expression of the African personality that he preached about.

This study has made contributions to the social and political history of Ghana. It has demonstrated that the CPP government used sports to create national identity, national pride and national unity. Football which is a leisure activity was used as a political tool by Nkrumah in his effort to build and unify the nation. Football also became a vehicle for articulating some of his political stance and ideologies. This study will thus broaden our understanding of the various dimensions of the social history of Ghana. The study has demonstrated that a look into the social history of Ghana can become an important point of departure into the political history of the country and in the process help to understand the contributions that many people have made towards the development of the country.

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