

Read of the Week

Reverse Sweep: A Story of South African Cricket Since Apartheid
Ashwin Desai
Fanele
Review: John Harvey

To be clear, sociology professor Ashwin Desai is one of apartheid's many victims.

Growing up in Durban, he occasionally joined his father at Kingsmead Stadium, the "cathedral of white cricket", to witness legends like Barry Richards and Mike Proctor taming the world's best cricketers in the pre-isolation years.

Kingsmead's immaculate setting was a far cry from the dusty plains of Springfield on Durban's outskirts, where six or seven cricket matches were played simultaneously on surfaces spare of grass but heavy with stone.

More significantly, taking his place alongside his father in the non-white section of the ground would leave an indelible mark on the young Desai, one that entrenched the notion that in South African sport, politics is king.

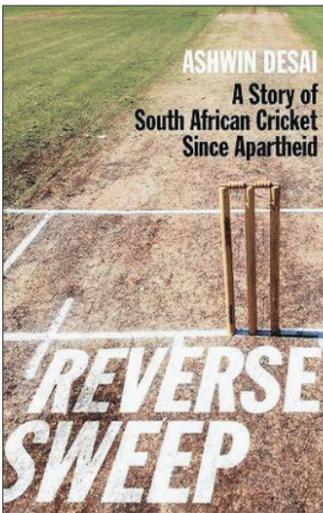
When reading *Reverse Sweep*, it is important to juxtapose what the author posits with that experience of Kingsmead in the late 1960s.

The trauma of being "othered" while watching a game you love will never be easily overcome, nor should it.

Unfortunately, there are times when he allows that pain to skew certain events.

Makhaya Ntini will undoubtedly go down in history as South Africa's first black African player. In the chapter "Black skin, white helmets", Desai references a piece by journalist Patrick Compton, quoting then South African coach Eric Simons: "I believe Makhaya's real growth this year has been his hunger and desire to learn cricket... During the past year it is as if he has set himself a goal of learning and understanding more and more about the game he plays."

Desai points out that in the previous year Ntini had been the leading wicket-taker in Tests, but



believes for white coaches like Simons he would always be trying to "understand cricket".

Anyone who knows enough about sport will tell you that almost all coaches are prone to such observations, irrespective of the colour of the player. Indeed, such statements are deemed high praise as they are indicative of that player ascending to a level beyond the capabilities of most.

Where he does excel is in his documentation of the role played by Dr Ali Bacher in South African cricket.

In the 1980s, Bacher worked with the National Party government to bring so-called "rebel" cricket tours to the country, including West Indian, English and Australian teams comprised of players still in their prime.

Exorbitant sums of money changed hands, with Bacher undoubtedly handsomely rewarded for his efforts (he argued that rebel players were taking cricket to the townships through a development programme).

Yet in the post-isolation years, it was the same Bacher who was named head of the newly-established United Cricket Board of South Africa. "The present-day defence of Bacher as a naive South African liberal is difficult to maintain when one reads his rationale for the rogue tours. He was clear that the tours were good for white South African morale, 'a bright ray of hope'. Bacher knew he was doing his bit for apartheid, even to the extent of creating impressions that were patently false," Desai writes.

Reverse Sweep is heavily slanted towards the political shenanigans in cricket, and does not address the playing aspect adequately enough. Too often, Desai becomes embroiled in off-field skirmishes and ignores the fact that in 26 years, there have also been many positives.

■ *A Night Of Talented Womxn*, a celebration of women in the alternative South African music and design industry and the people who support them, will take place at Bob's Bar District Six in Canterbury Street on Tuesday August 8, from 6pm till late. The line-up includes Lucy Kruger and The Lost Boys, Floors, Diamond Thug, Tzara, Moonchild Sanelly, Hi, I'm K-\$, JNN KPN and Rose Bonic. Tickets cost between R130 and R150 and are available through Quicket. For more information, find the event on Facebook. Ten percent of proceeds will be donated to The Red Wing Project, an NGO which aims to help pupils in disadvantaged communities by instilling a sense of self-worth and self-love; guide pupils through menstruation and collect feminine sanitary products. Pictured is Lucy Kruger who will be performing with her band as Lucy Kruger and The Lost Boys.



PICTURE: CALVIN SIDERFIN



■ Bay Harbour Market will hold a dance party, PartyRepublica, on Tuesday August 8, with a line-up that includes The Rudimentals and Ottoman Slap, Pascal and Pearce and Richard Marshall. The customary roaring fires as well as several of the market's food and beverage traders and various bars will add to the festivities. A percentage of the ticket sales will go towards Little Angels Childcare Centre in Hangberg, a community centre that looks after children and youth in the Hangberg community. Tickets are available for R150 from Quicket.

From page 2 Answers

1. About 1 billion

2. False

3. The point at which small changes become significant

enough to cause drastic change.

4. Pollution, depleted resources, and destruction of ecosystems.

5. World Wildlife Fund

6. True

7. The Earth gets warmer leading to climate change.

8. CO₂

9. Electricity and transport

10. Around 2.25kgs of CO₂



■ **Left:** Oranjekloof principal Mkhululi Qaba with prefects Siyabonga Kolisi, left, and Liyema Sonandi at the launch of the library.

■ **Right:** The Oranjekloof Moravian Primary School library is stocked with 4 500 books.



Library gives pupils a solid foundation

JOHN HARVEY

Oranjekloof Moravian Primary School principal Mkhululi Qaba suggested that the new library, launched last week, signified the "rebirth" of the Hout Bay institution.

In the past few years, the school has faced an uncertain future with high staff turnover and questionable structures.

However, a collaboration project with Breadline Africa, the Common Good Foundation and the Western Cape Education Department initiated a year ago is now reaping handsome rewards.

Mr Qaba is also credited with turning around the school's fortunes, having implemented workable structures and instilling a new

found pride in the pupils.

At the launch of the library on Friday July 28, Mr Qaba said according to the United Nations, a library contributed 22.5% to a school's performance.

"I believe with the introduction of the library, our children will be able to perform at their full potential. It also gives the children a sense of belonging and a sense of new energy."

He likened the library to an athlete's starting blocks. "If you get a good start from a solid platform, you can launch yourself properly which sets you up for the rest of the race."

Master of ceremonies and Grade 6 teacher Lizeka Rantsane emphasises that the children's circumstances should not define their future, and the library would open

doors as well as their minds.

"Our children often say they can't go to the Hout Bay library because they are scared of the skollies on the streets.

"Now they have a library on the premises, a safe space for them. Everything is starting to shine here. Can you see the glitter?" she joked with the audience.

A full-time librarian, Kuhle Mlanjana, who was trained and worked at The Bookery, has been appointed to the library.

"This is so exciting. To see the development of the children through the library is wonderful," she said. The Bookery has donated 4 500 books to the new library. Funding for the school's latest addition was raised in part by pupils at the UK's Benenden School, the alma mater of Princess

Anne.

Breadline Africa director Marion Wagner said the organisation had written to the school, the UK's last remaining school for borders, to assist, and its pupils had immediately "fallen in love" with the project.

"On World Book Day (March 3) the girls dressed as their favourite literary characters and the teachers and girls also ran on treadmills for 24 hours to raise funds for the library.

"They are going to be thrilled when they see the library," Ms Wagner said.

Library committee chairperson Davidine Rhoda paid tribute to her team, which had gone above and beyond the call of duty to ensure the library became a reality. "This library will be the heartbeat of the

school," she said.

Common Good Foundation director also paid tribute to the tireless work of the library committee as well as the commitment of the school's governing body.

"We wanted to monitor literacy rates at the school, which is also why there was the need for a centralised library. Previously, we had tables of books in each classroom, which we still have, but now we also have this facility," she said.

"Oranjekloof is Quintile 1, but Quintile 1 children also deserve to have the best. Our big philosophy is to entrench a love of storytelling in the children, as storytelling is part of each of our lives. For this reason we have to have books."