

## SA to get sports journalists' association

 By Richard Ferraris 16 Sep 2010

An exciting initiative is gaining momentum amongst South Africa's sports scribes, who are set to come together and form the Sports Journalists' Association of South Africa. The *City Press's* sports editor, S'Busiso Mseleku, is the man co-ordinating the project. Read on to find out what he hopes to achieve when local sports journalists meet in Johannesburg on Saturday, 25 September 2010\*, for the fledgling association's founding congress.



Unlike other media specialisations, those plying their trade in the local sports media are not represented by any organisation and this is something Mseleku wants to change at the upcoming congress, being held at SAB World of Beer in Newtown, sponsored by South African Breweries.

### On the agenda

On the agenda are a raft of talking points, including what to name the association and whether it will affiliate itself to global bodies such as the International Sports Press Association (AIPS).

In an interview, Mseleku explains how the 2010 FIFA World Cup acted as the catalyst for the association, once again demonstrating the power the tournament wielded in the host nation.

"The idea has existed for quite some time but it has always turned out to be a matter of: 'Who will bell the cat?' Last year, we received an invitation from the FIFA media in conjunction with the International Sports Media Association (AIPS) to attend a meeting at Sun City," Mseleku says.

"I was one of the few who attended which fell right in the middle of the World Cup Coaches workshop at Sun City. The meeting was chaired by veteran British soccer scribe Mr Keir Radnedge.

### "Who will bell the cat?"

"He insisted on the importance of forming such an association. However, the old question: 'Who will bell the cat?' as the meeting was not conclusive on who would co-ordinate the formation. I eventually took it upon myself to co-ordinate the formation of the association and am looking forward to the founding congress being a success."

Often marginalised by mainstream media, sports writers will be able to use the association to prove that they too should be respected as serious contributors to the media industry as a whole. To this end, after its genesis, the organisation will strive to promote and maintain a high professional standard among journalists who specialise in sport and ensure reporting is reliable, speedy and accurate.

In order to be eligible to join the association, Mseleku sets out an inclusive criterion. "Any journalist whose bulk of work is in sport, be it the written press, electronic, new media and photographers, qualify to be members. Even freelancers, whose main bit is sport, qualify to be members," he explains.

### **Over 130 practitioners have expressed an interest**

So far over 130 practitioners have expressed an interest in becoming members, including big-name columnists and reporters from the major newspapers and online portals. But Mseleku believes "there might be more out there" who would like to join.

"We have sent word out that people must add names of colleagues either from within their organisations or other organisations that they might spot missing," he says.

Although the FIFA World Cup ended months ago, it continues to change the landscape of the South African media. And unlike the ongoing debate over the viability of world cup infrastructure, the Sports Journalists' Association's objective is to offer tangible benefits to those writing on the back pages.

"The main aim of the association is to unite sports journalists so that they can speak in one voice and tackle the challenges that they face as a united front, rather than as individuals," says Mseleku.

~~The congress starts at 9am on Saturday morning, 25 September\*, at the SAB World of Beer in Newtown, Johannesburg.~~

**\*Update: due to unforeseen circumstances, the congress has been postponed until Saturday 30 October. Mseleku apologies for any inconveniences.**

If you would like to learn more about the association or sign up, then email S'Busiso Mseleku at [Lumumba@mweb.co.za](mailto:Lumumba@mweb.co.za) or give him a call on cell +27 (0)82 743 5965.

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### **ABOUT RICHARD FERRARIS**

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