

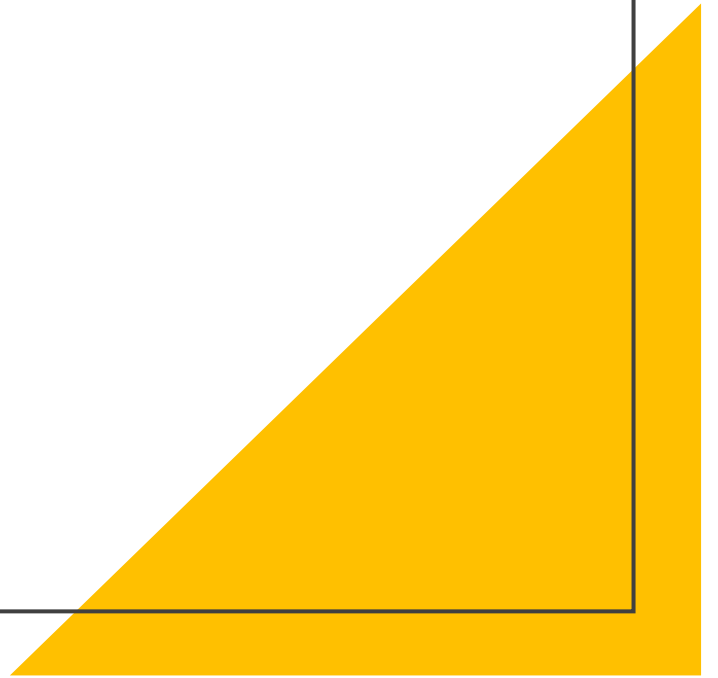
# The Swaraj Football Club Story : 1949- 1992

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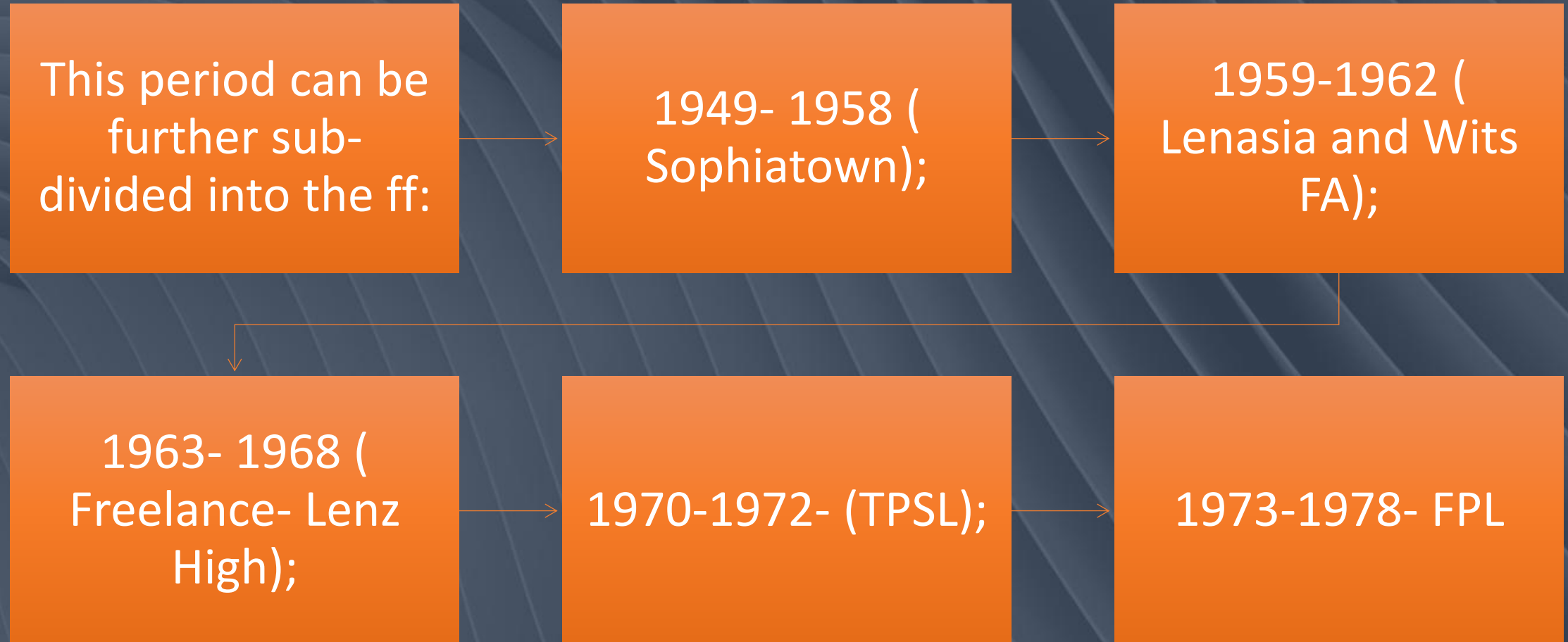
Compiled by Haroon Mahomed and Jivo Singh from information provided by late Bila and Koki Singh, Baboo and Vinod Kalichuran, late Vina Beharie and ShaiK Noorbhai

# Two main periods covered

- 1949- 1977- Swaraj FC
- 1982- 1992 – Swaraj United



# 1949-1977



## The history behind the formation of the Swaraj Football Club- 1949-1958

Formed in the Sophiatown area in the early 1940s in the mix of all the different racial and cultural groups in Johannesburg.

The team was actually formed from 23 Tovey Street, in Sophiatown by the Singh family, in a home with nearly 21 children and 4 adults.

# 1949-1958 (cont)

- ❖ Needing playing space was a priority. The fence between the Singh and Poonee homes were demolished which resulted in a playing area the size of a football field.
- ❖ As the Singh family and friends enjoyed the much-needed playing space, friendly and informal games were held against children from other streets in the area.
  - The brothers, cousins and friends played in a simple white uniform as kits were not affordable .

## 1949-1958( cont)

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A cold drink cap “punnetjie” was used as an emblem to look like a kit...

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The youngsters came to be known as “Spanky Spanks”. Later on the team was called “Naughty boys”.

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Friendly games on the streets later led to more “serious” games at bigger open fields in Sophiatown.

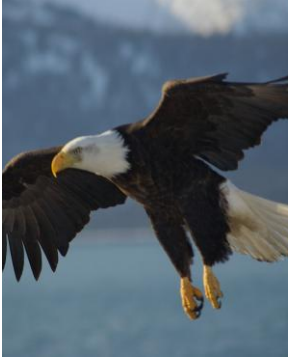
## 1949-1958 (cont)

As the games and teams grew, so did the competition. This led to the requirement of a much needed name...

During the apartheid era in South Africa, India was also struggling against the British Imperial rule, hence the name Swaraj was chosen in 1949.

Swaraj means; Self-government, Independence for India, Freedom fighters.

## The Swaraj emblem and league journey



**The Swaraj emblem of the eagle on a ball has an interesting tale.**

Certain members of the Swaraj team were fixated by the eagle as a specimen.

At almost any sighting of a bird, they would say that it was an eagle, even if it was a sparrow. This fixation led to the birth of the Swaraj emblem...



**During the 1940s and 1950s there were no formal leagues established due to the group areas act and apartheid laws.**



# The League journey :

- **1949- 1958 ( Sophiatown);**
- Swaraj's first affiliation to a league was via the Wits Indian Football Association where they progressed to the ranks of the most senior division.
- In the WIFA league Swaraj won many of the competitions and were always amongst the top finishers.

# The League journey :

## **1959-1962 ( Lenasia and Wits FA);**

- Group areas act: 1959
- When the Group Areas Act moved people, except whites from Sophiatown, people of Indian origin were forced to move to Lenasia
- In 1959, Swaraj were forced to affiliate to the Western Districts Indian Football Association. In the WIFDA, Swaraj finished tops and took all the honors and this by a wide margin.

# The League journey :

## **1962 ( Lenasia and Wits FA);**

- In 1962, poor competition in the W.D.I.F.A led to Swaraj withdrawing from the league and opting to play “freelance” football.
- Freelance football meant playing teams from different areas that did not belong to an affiliated league. These teams comprised of Indian, Coloured and Black football teams. Freelance football was played up until 1970.

# 1963- 1968 ( Freelance- Lenz High);

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- Whilst playing freelance football Swaraj utilized the Lenasia High School grounds as their home grounds.
- In August 1966 Swaraj was reported for playing non-racial soccer. Swaraj were given a stern warning to discontinue the non-racial soccer by the apartheid government and were placed under constant surveillance by the police.
- The warning and banning was defied and Swaraj continued to play non-racial football for 2 more years, until eventually the Lenasia High School grounds were taken away.

# 1973-1978- FPL

- In 1973 Swaraj applied for affiliation to the South African Soccer Federation Professional league.
- This application was met with many challenges, however, Swaraj had a good track record which included league wins accompanied by various tournament wins and runner-up positions.

# 1973-1978- FPL

- ***After 4 years in the recognized professional league, Swaraj became the first Transvaal team to win the the SASFP league...***
- ***It meant a lot for youngsters who came from a humble background of Sophiatown who defied the government by playing non-racial football.***

# 1975- Virgil Padayachee- voted FPL player of the year



bluebells united

lenasia stadium  
18th may 1975

THE LOCAL DERBY  
THAT KEPT LENZ ON  
ITS FEET FOR OVER 20  
YEARS !!!

**BLUEBELLS  
UNITED from .....**

DAN MAISTRY  
RALPH CHAME  
TERRY JEEVANANTHAM  
KENNETH TROMPETTER  
RATTAN PADAYACHEE  
HOOSAIN "FISH" GANNI  
ALAN MOONSAMMY  
"DOUZA" JULIUS  
JEFF MAISTRY  
NANTHAM  
RIVIER  
Trainer: MORGAN

**THE  
TEAMS**

**SWARAJ  
from .....**

BABOO KALLICHURAN  
SAM REDDY  
THAKOR SINGH  
VIRGIL PADAYATCHEE  
KOLA PADAYATCHEE  
GOONA PADAYATCHEE  
LUCAS ARANJE  
VICTOR KOWA

**KICK-OFF:  
3-30 P.M.**

LENASIA FOOTBALL ASS.  
BENEFIT MATCH ~

STANLEY TSHABALALA  
JUNIOR KUMALO  
ROY HARRY  
EDDIE JACKSON  
ENVER NABEE  
J.C.YENDE

Trainer/Coach:  
IVAN NAIDOO



1977 - 1<sup>st</sup> Ex Transvaal FPL League Champions- Jimmy Joubert highest goal-scorer.

*Back row from left, Virgil Padayachee, Victor Kowa, Rodney Pieterse, Desmond van der Lingeveltd, Cheesa Manna. Sam Madoek, Jimmy Joubert and Sam Reddy,*

# Highlights

## Lenasia Soccer Tournament: ( Lenz High)

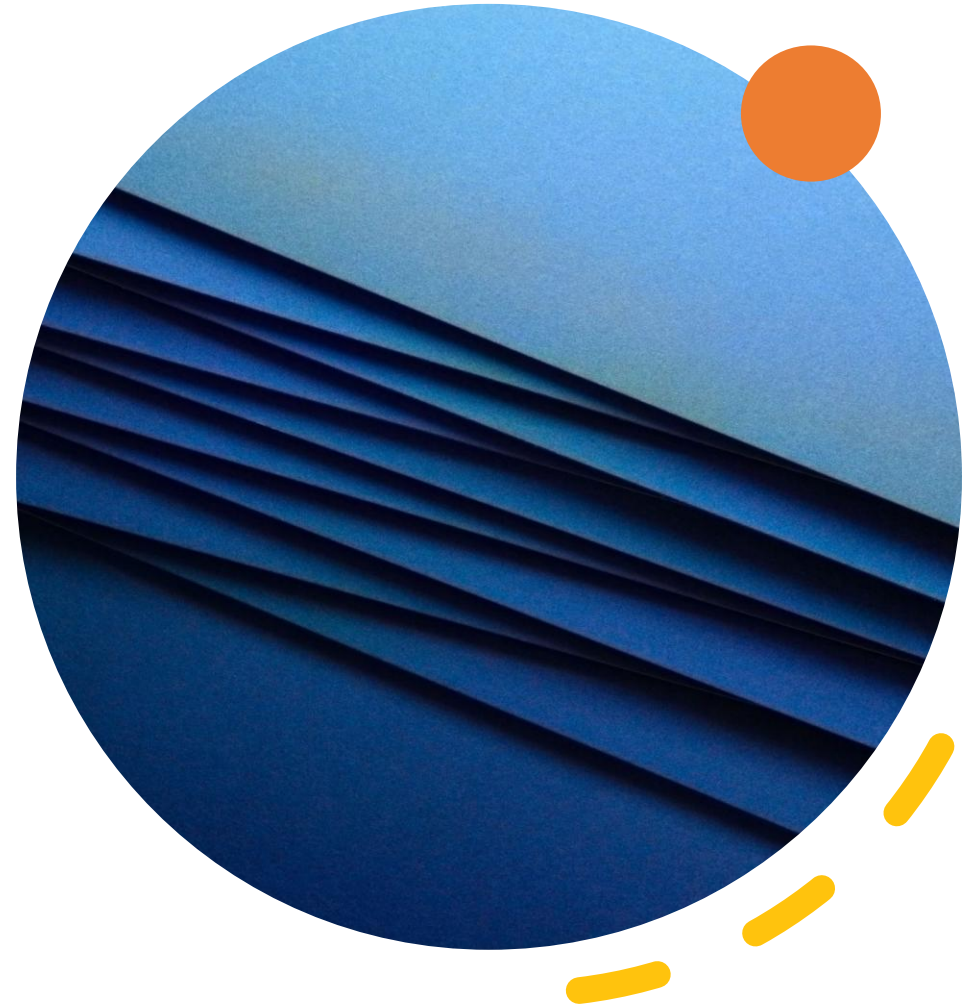
- *Inaugurated in 1965*
- *One of the first tournaments to be held in Transvaal iover a Saturday and Sunday*
- *Invited many non-racial teams to participate in the tournament as well as host these teams in the Lenasia area.*
- *This tournament attracted large crowds who were entertained by the wonderful game and some talented players*



# Highlights

## Other triumphs:

- *Swaraj brought Moroka Swallows Big XV to play in Lenz.*
- *Teams from various backgrounds were brought to Lenasia for a soccer spectacle that left spectators hungry for the next weekend.*



## Tournament performances:

- 1962: Piet Retief tournament winners against Witbank Black Aces which was played in semi-darkness due to the lack of floodlight facilities
- 1963: West Rand Soccer Tournament finalists losing against Young Dynamos 3-2. Naina Moodley from Swaraj was judged as “Best player”
- 1964: the last West Rand tournament: Winners against Grupo Desportivo de Cabral where Swaraj won 1-0. This was one of the best matches watched by fans and was highly spoken about until the 1970s
- 1967: Swaraj annexed the Atlantis Dynamic Soccer Festival, in Benoni, 3-2. Links Padayachee from Swaraj was judged as “Best player”

## More highlights :

- Swaraj defeated Orlando Pirates 3-2 at the Lenasia Stadium in 1972
- Swaraj defeated Moroka Swallows 3-1 at the Lenasia Stadium in 1973
- Lost narrowly to Kaizer Chiefs and Orlando Pirates in 1973

**Swaraj United Football  
Club: 1982- 1992**



# 1982 SWARAJ UNITED



- **Swaraj United sought affiliation to the SASFPL and was accepted.**
- **This was done with the intention to promote soccer at a professional level in Lenasia and surrounding areas.**
- **The rejoining action of Swaraj United meant the revival of Federation Professional League soccer in Lenasia leading to Bluebells also rejoining later.**

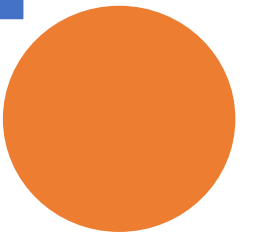
# 1982 SWARAJ UNITED



- **The 1982 squad began with a mix of players from different backgrounds**
  - **Amateur team of 1981**
  - **The acquisition of late Kishore Kara, Haroon Bhera Mahomed , Clive Cope, Derek Eastwood from Vereeniging Old Boys**
  - **Local players, Martin and Harry Patel from Lenasia Athletic, Ismail “ Sugar” Patel from Celtic United, Sathia “ Jacko” Kuni from Atletico,**

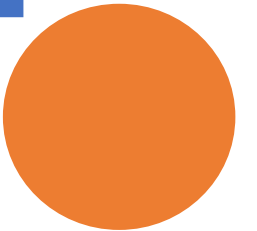
1982 (cont)

- The club had a hard working administration that ensured that registration, travel, practices, publicity matches were organized.



# 1982 (cont)

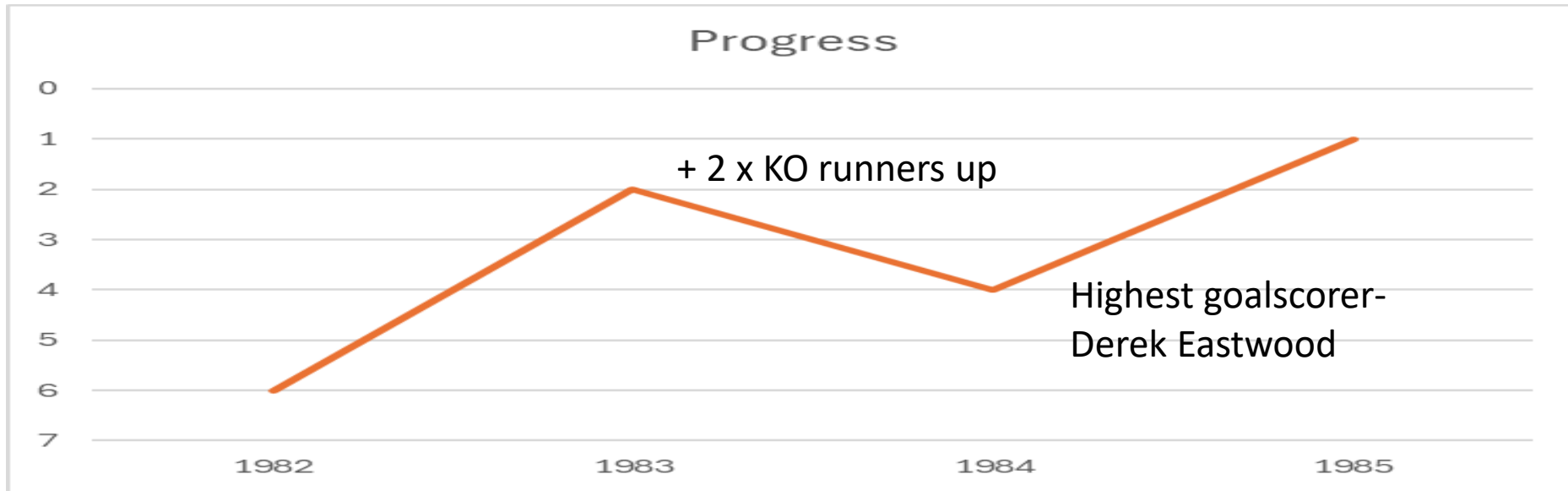
- Administrators like late Veena Beharie Taahir Banoo, Vinod Kalichuran, Ahmed Said Patel, Shaik Noorbhai, AK Adam, Shaik saw to it that players were able to get to practice from all parts of Johannesburg,
- Practices, travel and accommodation were of a good standard, considering the challenges of the time.
- Haroon “ Bhera” Mahomed was appointed player –coach and served until 1984 and then again in 1986 and 1992.





1983 -

# PROGRESS – 1982- 1985



1. 1982- 6<sup>th</sup> on the log
2. 1983- 2<sup>nd</sup> on the log + runners up in 2 finals
3. 1984- 3<sup>rd</sup> on the log ; Highest Goalscorer
4. 1985 – League winners

# Administrators



- Vinod Kalicharran – President and PRO
- Vina Beharie –General Manager
- Duggie Pillay –Team Manager
- Tahir Banoo – Assistant Team Manager
- Sam Bhoola - Finance
- Sheik Noorbhai- Secreatray
- AK Adam – First Aid
- Ahmed Sayed Patel - Management



1983 - Runners –Up in 2 KO finals and 2<sup>nd</sup> on the log

# SWARAJ F.C.

SASFPL COKE CUP FINAL 1983 AT CURRIES FOUNTAIN DURBAN  
MARITZBURG BEAT SWARAJ BY 2 GOALS TO 1



Front l-r Allan Hughes, Haroon Mahomed, Kishore Kara, Wowie Fredericks, Ismail Patel, Sammy Meyers (late), Tony Alexander, Vina Beharie  
Seated l-r Supporter, Craig Davids (late), Martin Patel, Leonard Herbst, Harry Patel, Clive Cope, Aheer Banoo, Supporter  
Standing l-r Supporter, Vinod Kalichuran, Bala Singh, Shaik Noordbhai, Kashief Williams, Johnny Jacobs, Fish Abrahams, Sam Bhoola, Dougie Pillay

JMK Archives

# 1984



- In 1984, the team continued improving on the combination of attractive and winning soccer, ending third on the log.
- Derek Eastwood ending up top league goalscorer.



# 1985



- In 1985, after 3 years of professional football, the team won the FPL league, under Coach AbdurRahman Fredericks



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# Post Team of the Year Swaraj





ESTB **Swaraj United** 1940

ISAFPLI LEAGUE CHAMPIONS 1986



FRONT ROW (SEATED LEFT TO RIGHT):  
 D. KELLY (MANAGER), M. PATEL, K. NANA, L. HERBST, S.H. NDOBHAI (SECRETARY), W. MEYER, H. PATEL, V. BEHARIE (GENERAL MANAGER)  
 MIDDLE ROW (KNEELING LEFT TO RIGHT):  
 A. ABRAHAM, T. ALI, L. ANDER, J. KRUGEL, J. PATEL, D. GEORGE, K. VAN DER MERWE, D. EASTWOOD (VICE CAPTAIN)  
 BACK ROW (STANDING LEFT TO RIGHT):  
 M. DEW, L. ABRAHAM, J. PACKERY, K. KABA (CAPTAIN), W. VAN DER MERWE, J. VALATHAN

PHOTO BY: NARESH HARRIPERSADH  
 EXPOSURE, DURBAN

1987 - 1988

- Joined the NATIONAL SOCCER LEAGUE 2<sup>nd</sup> Division (OK LEAGUE)



# 1988

- Runner up in the OK League and missed the promotion to 1<sup>st</sup> Division NSL.
- 1989- 1992 - Due to unsatisfactory conditions in the NSL League for 3 Years , the Management team decided to leave soccer and transferred the Team to another Swaraj group to continue in the NSL 2<sup>nd</sup> Division.
- The franchise was eventually sold due to a soccer related shooting of owner Basil Singh

# Tribute



- To all the deceased persons involved in the team and its success, their families and all who contributed, your memory in the struggle and contribution will not go forgotten.

# THANK YOU



- The Ex Officios of the Swaraj United FC would like to express our Gratitude to All who supported the club during its campaign to promote Soccer in the abnormal society we existed then and also to the Organizations such as SACOS, Federation professional league and the Lenasia Football association that provided the opportunity to promote Soccer activities.
- We also like to place on record our Thanks to our Main sponsors SAYED MIA, Orient Jewelers, City Funerals and many more who contributed in both kind and financial.
- To the individuals who made up of the SWARAJ United Family, sincere gratitude for the effort and sacrifice you made.

# Swaraj - List of Deceased

- 1. Kishore Kara
- 2. Sammy Meyers
- 3. Kamlesh Nana
- 4. Craig Davids
- 5. Vina Beharie
- 6. Shaik Noorbhai
- 7. James Smith
- 8. James Krool
- 9. Essop Moosa
- 10. Billa Singh
- 11. Koki Singh
- 12. Virgil Padayachee
- 13. Victor Kowa
- 14. Dougie Carelse
- 15. Indrin Packery
- 16. Rosie Francis
- 17. Ronnie Govender
- 18. Lucas Oranje
- 19. Robbie Myburgh
- 20. Jan van Schackvyk
- 21. Elias Banda
- 22. Blessing Ngidi
- 23. Dan Twala
- 24. Samad Bhoola
- 25. Aziz Patel
- 26. Jackie
- 27. Nolan Jacobs (Gillie)
- 28. Ashraf Chiboo