

Press Release

For immediate release

4 April 2019



South African Institute of Race Relations

The power of ideas

Media contact: Marius Roodt, Head of Campaigns Tel: 063-694-2611 Email: marius@irr.org.za

Media enquiries: Michael Morris Tel: 066 302 1968 Email: michael@irr.org.za;
Kelebogile Leepile Tel: 011 482 7221 ext: 2018 Email: kelebogile@irr.org.za

Decision against racial targets for SA's World Cup cricket squad to be welcomed - IRR

The announcement by Cricket South Africa chief executive officer Thabang Moroe that there will be no racial 'targets' in selecting the national squad for the Cricket World Cup to be held in England later this year is to be welcomed.

The Institute of Race Relations (IRR) has long argued that merit should be the primary basis of selecting sportsmen and women to represent South Africa at national level.

While a case can be made for initiatives to promote inclusivity at lower levels, they should not be considered in top-flight international sport. Players of colour who are good enough to be noticed by national selectors through performances in franchise cricket are unlikely to need an additional leg-up in any case.

Furthermore, even without any sort of racial target, based on their merits, close to half of the squad for the 2019 Cricket World Cup will likely be 'players of colour' in any event. The likes of Kagiso Rabada, Imran Tahir, and JP Duminy, among others, will be among the first names jotted down on any selector's team sheet for a South African ODI XI.

And this is the way most South Africans want their national teams to be selected. A new IRR poll, which is to be released later this year, shows that 83% of South Africans (and 82% of black South Africans) believe that the only criteria for selecting national sports teams should be merit.

Most South Africans are more concerned about the performance of the national side than the skin colour of individual players.

Rather than focusing on the racial make-up of our national sports teams, we must strive as far as possible to ensure that everyone who wants to play a sport, and excel in it, has the opportunity to do so. But it is telling that fewer than 1 500 of our 23 500 public schools even have a cricket pitch. Ensuring that a certain proportion of the Proteas are black won't change this.

Ends