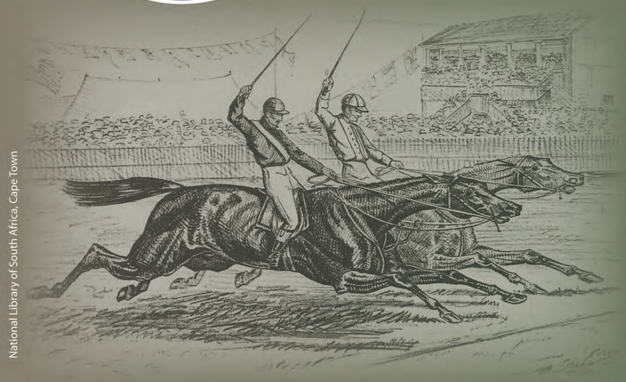
Sport on the Common

CITY OF CAPE TOWN · ISIXEKO SASEKAPA · STAD KAAPSTAD

THIS CITY WORKS FOR YOU

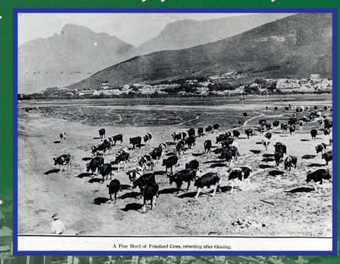


National Library of South Africa, Cape Town

Sports activity on the Common received a tremendous boost with the building of the Green Point Track and sports ground in 1897. This facility soon came to be seen as the home ground for many community-based rugby, cricket and soccer teams, sporting unions and associations.

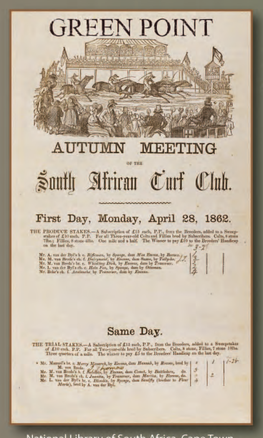
National Library of South Africa, Cape Town

The cows of Mr Denekah's Dairy continued to graze Green Point Common until 1934. While cows may have had the run of the Common in these early years, they made way each weekend for sportsmen. Note the many goalposts in the distance - an indication of just how many sports clubs took to the Common each weekend.



A Fine Herd of Friesland Cows, returning after Grazing.

The history of sport on Green Point Common began during the First British Occupation of the Cape in 1795. Less than six months after their arrival the sport-loving British garrison introduced horse-racing to the Common. For nearly a century the people of Cape Town enthusiastically supported race meetings held here each spring and autumn.



GREEN POINT

AUTUMN MEETING

OF THE

South African Turf Club.

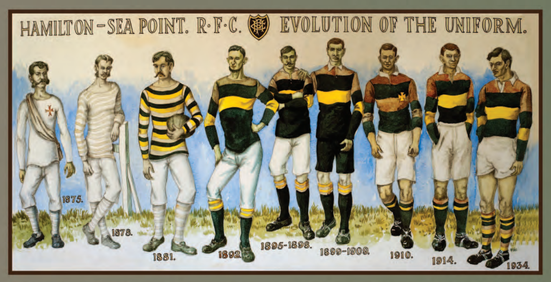
First Day, Monday, April 28, 1862.

Same Day.

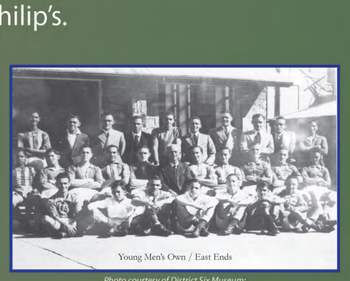
National Library of South Africa, Cape Town

The British are also recognised to have introduced the game of cricket with records of matches played on the Common as early as 1808.

A rugby match between Hamiltons and Schotschekloof/ Walmers, May 2010, continuing a rugby football tradition played out on Green Point Common for nearly a century and a half.



The first official rugby match in South Africa was played on Green Point Common in 1862 between a team of Army officers and 'a like number of gentlemen in the Civil Service'. Then in the early 1900s such local clubs as Stephanians and Young Men's Own (YMO) began to stake out their own playing fields on the Common. There was also the Tramways Football Club from Sea Point and other community-based clubs such as Sea Point Swifts, Aerials and even church-based clubs such as St Luke's and St Philip's.

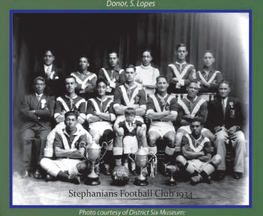


Young Men's Own / East Ends

Photo courtesy of District Six Museum: Donor, Derek Kloppers

Photo courtesy of District Six Museum: Donor, S. Lopes

Photo courtesy of District Six Museum: Donor, Unknown



Stephanians Football Club 1934

Photo courtesy of District Six Museum: Donor, Pedro Meyer

Moroka Swallows team (1950s)

CAPE RAMBLERS

Photo and clippings courtesy of District Six Museum: Donors - Photograph of Cape Ramblers: Henry Lackey, Moroka Swallows: Scan from Laduma by Peter Alegi - Clippings: Valda Cousins

Ramblers defeat Swallows

THE Cape Town Ramblers, playing the champions from the start, bombarded the Moroka Swallows' goal during the first five minutes of their professional soccer match at Green Point this afternoon.

First passes, then crosses, sent in some accurate shots which Meyer did well to save.

But it was only after ten minutes that Ramblers scored when Beljums gained a penalty for obstruction.

Beljums scored again from a full-time movement. Meyer had no answer to his shot.

Swallows tried hard to score but Clark, in goal for Ramblers, saved. Half-time:

C.T. Ramblers 2; Moroka Swallows 0

Midway in the second half Ramblers went further ahead when Johnson scored.

Final score:

CAPE RAMBLERS ... 4

MOROKO SWALLOWS ... 0

Given its close proximity to Cape Town, sporting events on the Common were avidly followed by sports enthusiasts from surrounding communities and it was not long before their own teams took to the field. Early rugby clubs such as Roslyns from District Six (founded before 1882), Arabian College from the Bo-Kaap (founded 1883), Hamediahs also from District Six (founded1885), Good Hopes (1889) and Violets (1890), regularly competed here - drawing thousands of ardent supporters.

Professional soccer at the Cape was pioneered on Green Point Common by the Cape Ramblers - formed in 1960. As part of the non-racial South African Soccer League, the Cape Ramblers did much to not only pave the way for professional soccer in South Africa and Cape Town but also to put an end to racially segregated sport under apartheid.

Soweto's Orlando Pirates versus Cape Town's Hanover Park at Green Point Stadium ABSA Cup final 2006
photos: *Bruce Sutherland*
City of Cape Town

Construction of the Green Point Stadium began in the late 1940s and given the larger number of fans this facility could accommodate, it soon became the main venue on the Common for major sporting, cultural events and concerts such as the Nelson Mandela 46664 Concert in 2003.

With the building of the new Cape Town 2010 World Cup Stadium (below) the Green Point Stadium has been converted to a soccer and athletics field with grandstand.