

# Varsity sports facilities paralysed

By Tom Indimuli

The University of Nairobi is unable to run its games department which is slowly grinding to a halt.

The once vibrant sports power house can no longer boast of top athletes or footballers.

According to John Ngugi, the sports tutor, the woes started with the cost-sharing system introduced four years ago, when each of the various campuses became semi-autonomous in operation.

Many of the facilities at the main campus are under-utilised or totally neglected.

A visit to the games facilities reveals the contempt with which the department is treated. A casual look at the head of the university's games department secretary's desk reveals a telephone set. Alas! The facility has been non-operational for two years. With such an attitude, is this department really relevant at all to the University's goals?

The University of Nairobi is renowned for its great sportsmen in the past two decades. Some of the sports greats include, Edward Rombo who starred for *Mean Machine*, football stars Joe Masiga and William Obwaka, who turned out for the national team *Harambee Stars* and Alfred Khangati who starred in volleyball, among others.

The inter-university games which provided a forum for the students to exhibit their skills collapsed a decade ago.

In the past, students toured various parts of the country to take part in tournaments, this is no more. "We can no longer afford this! The modalities of taking teams out for competitions have changed greatly," he observes.

Consequently, students have to pay Ksh. 500 for extra-curricular activities.

The monies are paid at the constituent colleges. Consequently the activities are controlled from the colleges leaving the University's games department bare.

The Pay-As-You-Eat (PAYE) system has also affected the games department. The games tutor complains that students now have little or no time left to think about sporting activities. "The students are busy thinking about survival. How do you expect them to have time-off for extra-curricula activities?" Ngugi says adding that the hard economic times have made talented students to turn out for corporate teams with the aim of getting some allowances as a means of survival.

Though the issue of finance has been key to low morale, frequent closures and the semester system has also taken its share. The recent



Picture by Amimo Patrick

**Sports: On the verge of collapse. Students fine tune their act using the few facilities at the university sports ground**

closure following the Karura forest saga is a case in point.

Ngugi regrets that the Inter-Campus sports event which was just around the corner has had to be shelved indefinitely. He complains that the irregular semester system has made it difficult for his department to assemble a University team at the hour of need.

The team currently featuring in the Kenya League has over the years registered impressive results. Credit must also go to the men's basketball side, the *Terrorists*, who were promoted last year to the country's first division league.

Is all lost in the struggle to revive the games department?

"Certainly not," quips Ngugi exuding confidence. "Just like all other Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) taking place in all the country's sectors, we are also in the re-engineering process."

Currently, the university has adopted a decentralised system to oversee the operations of games activities in all constituent colleges.

All colleges have formed teams in various disciplines with the best players being enlisted to the university team. Games at the college level have received a new lease of life with the requirement that each student pays an annual activity levy of Shs. 500.

To reactivate interest among the students, the university has established a department of physical education. The department, to be based at Kikuyu Campus, will be enrolling its pioneer students soon. "The trick here is to stimulate interest as well as to accord sports the seriousness it deserves," Ngugi explains.

ENTERTAINMENT

Poems

Rags

A friend quipped "but for a twist of fate, there lies Kenyankind" and I silently wept and reached a shaking hand for the inhuman cent.

A twisted smile of gratitude like a grimace of pain followed a moan and the rags moved for the inhuman cent.

"A nation at peril," my friend intoned as we crossed a damning pothole the huge bus twisted and moaned filthy water spewed from the hole Ooh! motherland - battered, tattered, patched.

By Morris Odhiambo

SCHOLARS OF SUB(-)STANCE

I thought they were great  
But they have proved not  
They are just like you  
(C)rude  
Ethnic  
Ludic  
And phobic  
About knowledge  
And the papers they give  
As certificates of knowledge

By Evan Mwangi

Titbits Titbits

Writers with long tails

Kenyan journalists are like rats. They will chase away new comers if the latter look like they have longer tails. I hear it is dangerous to graduate with a distinction from the School of Journalism because media houses will think you are too hot to touch and reserve jobs for people not as overly bright. Alternatively, they will have you work in very humbling positions if you are lucky to get a job on a short contract. This is why my (very few genuine) friends and I have made a compact to avoid that poison called a distinction by sleeping in the classroom with our eyes open like rattled snakes. And come exam time, we should all not miss a chance to prove to our lecturers that our heads are just for carrying our hair on.

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Tall and long big wig

There are people who think they are too tall, long and big to queue with in the university cafeteria. There is a reminder on the wall in white on black that the cafeteria is self-service.

I don't want to complain against these long, tall and big people yet, lest I be unfair. Maybe they are illiterate tribesmen brought to the university when their tribal 'chiefs' still had a say on campus. But for the cafeteria workers who pander to the patronage of these tribal nitwits instead of serving the customers in the queue, a sack from the management is what they deserve. May that be. Amen.

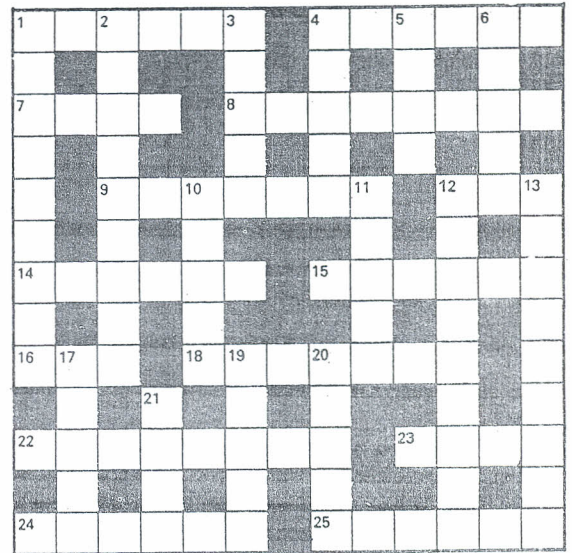
By Evan Mwangi

"Society is now one polished horde, formed of two mighty tribes, the bores and the bored"

Lord Byron (1788 - 1824)

"An intellectual is someone whose mind watches itself"

Albert Camus (1913 - 60)



COFFEE-TIME ACROSS

- 1 Proletariat (6)
- 4 Person always complaining (6)
- 7 Snare (4)
- 8 Women's under-garments (8)
- 9 Eternal (7)
- 12 Taxi (3)
- 14 Cricket team (6)
- 15 Gloomy (6)
- 16 Knight's title (3)
- 18 Verify again (7)
- 22 Married person marrying again (8)
- 23 Ruffian (4)
- 24 Pure (6)
- 25 Young cow (6)

DOWN

- 1 Unsurpassed (9)
- 2 Something that matters little (5, 4)
- 3 Cleft (5)
- 4 Kind of saw (5)
- 5 Ship's company (4)
- 6 Girl's name (5)
- 10 Guide (5)
- 11 Wood (5)
- 12 Putting game (5-4)
- 13 Tower warden (9)
- 17 Cork people (5)
- 19 Select few (5)
- 20 Produce young chicks (5)
- 21 Raised platform (4)