

Life: Weekender

All the way to the village in my good old 'Beast'

My cousin is getting married so I take the opportunity to journey upcountry where I will make a grand entrance in my new automobile

OFFICE DANDY

MAN - ABOUT - TOWN

There are moments when I feel that the pain of my car loan repayments are worth it; the beast is truly worth it.

I am cruising at 140 kph as I head upcountry for my cousin's wedding and the Beast is delivering on power and speed. I took great pains to ensure that I would not be giving any of my relatives a ride to the countryside.

There are times when I feel that my relations are quite a pain when they receive the generosity of a lift upcountry. To begin with, they are very elastic about their exact travel needs.

You will usually get a request from one relative but on the material day you will end up with two more showing up. To make matters worse, they will have with them all manner of stuff that they want to transport to the village — everything from empty juice bottles, paper bags and all manner of paraphernalia for use in the village.

This translates into quite a heavy load and makes it virtually impossible

for me to cruise as fast as I would like. When they get into the car, they have set minds about what they consider to be the ideal music and entertainment for the journey.

They even come with tapes from their private collection and demand that I play them.

What they do not know is that I consider listening to upmarket radio stations as my way to move up the social ladder.

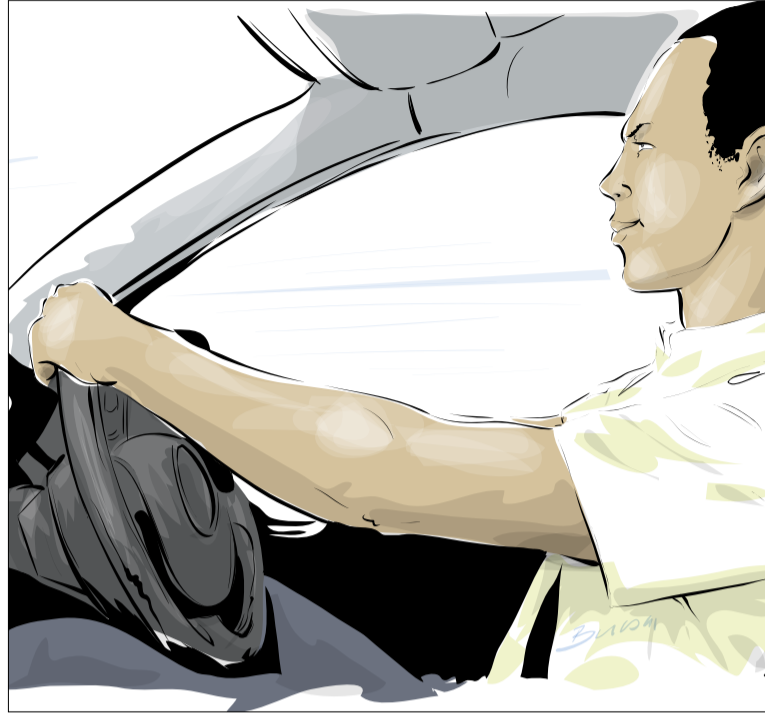
The endless car conversations about who is marrying who or who stole what in the village no longer fascinate me. Today, I am giddy with joy since I am all by myself to enjoy my car.

Bracing myself

As I drive home, I am already bracing myself mentally and verbally for all the questions that will come my way from my relatives.

My mother is especially not too happy about my still single status and I am sure she will grill me endlessly about why I haven't found a good girl.

I have never told her about what happened between Peris because she



would lecture me till my heart stops. On the other hand, the village has its own female attractions and who knows what I could find.

Now that we are in thought mode, I take some time to think about things at the office. Just as I had expected my appraisal didn't translate into any pay rise. I was informed by my usual source Peninah that managers were told to en-

sure that nobody in the entire organisation gets a pay rise as a means of cost saving—hence the pathetic ratings.

On a more positive note, I have received some news from the interview panel. I have been invited to attend a second interview with them to evaluate my suitability for the role.

I was also told that we are now down to two candidates and the CEO of the

company will be conducting the interview. That is already making me sweat but at least it is very positive news. Now I have to buy a new shirt and read the Harvard Business Reviews some more to find out what I must do to nail the job.

Within no time, I arrive at our local shopping centre. Whenever I get to the bumps near the bus stop, I always make sure that I put on my shades and roll down my window.

I may not be much in city but here, I must show the people that I have arrived. I even turn up the music so that folks can notice how I moved up in life—never mind the fact that I am a hand to mouth Kenyan.

Same function

By end of the day, I know people will be talking about how well I am doing in the city. Before I know it, I see two cousins of mine hop off from a matatu and come leaping in the way of the Beast.

Before I can think of how to stop them, they are already making attempts at opening the doors as they say hallo and declare that since we are going to the same function they can save on fare. It appears that cost saving has gotten to the village.

I have no choice but to let them in and behave delighted to see them. There goes my plan for a grand entrance!

Isn't it time stakeholders adopted a long-term view of rugby?



RICKY'S MYTHS

RICHARD GITONGA



It is that time of the year again when the rugby season is in full swing. The recent sterling performance of the country's sevens rugby team provides a great back drop to the increasing popularity of the game as it becomes synonymous with the country's basket of positive attributes.

Not too long ago, Kenyans perceived rugby as an elitist sport primarily because very few schools actually offered the game in their sports curriculum. However, following the increasing popularity and appeal of the game, many schools have started investing in the sport by hiring coaches and allocating a budget for the sports development.

However, the extremely popular Safari Sevens annual rugby tournament that is run by the Kenya Rugby Union scheduled this weekend gives an insight into the status of the game in the country. A legendary coach of the New Zealand's sevens team will be the guest of honour and I personally will be looking forward to listening to the speech he will make regarding his vision for

the games development in the country. The event will be characterized by the usual cheering, fancy dress, boozing, eating and entertainment that makes it such a compelling outing.

Big corporate brands will be highly visible with their gigantic branded banners and billboards. Other companies will have corporate hospitality tents where they will wine and dine their guests in the festive environment. Popular local musicians will be there to entertain the crowds with the latest and most popular hits. Playing on their home turf with all this festivity around them will put our local rugby squad under immense pressure to perform and not disappoint.

From a slightly different perspective angle, all this activity appears really great for the game and know-one can doubt that rugby has come of age in Kenya. However, one cannot but ponder on the long term prospects of the game. The short term appears primarily focused on the IRB Sevens Series and the annual Safari Sevens event.



It is probably time those who govern rugby seriously considered establishing a vision that will result in investment from institutions and other platforms. MOHAMMED AMIN

These events are generously sponsored by companies that want to give their corporate brands some positive association and positioning with target consumers. Beyond this however, there does not appear to be some definitive long term focused agenda to develop the sport in the country to take it to the next level.

The consistently high performing teams of New Zealand and South Africa have one particular advantage over our local team. They are members of a

Rugby Academy whose main focus is to provide an inspirational and independent high performance avenue for their players and coaches to develop and enhance their expertise and skills.

Players' course curriculum includes subjects such as rugby intelligence, injury prevention, career planning and body conditioning programs. Coaches' courses on the other hand include subjects such as preparation of team structure and motivation, cross-pollination of ideas and styles, and designing strat-

egies and game plans.

With access to such a quality institution such as the rugby academy, there is no doubt that the New Zealand and South Africa rugby teams will grow from strength to strength and continue to be a major challenge to our local team.

In this regard, it is probably about time that the leaders who govern the sport of rugby in this country seriously consider establishing a vision that will result in the investment of institutions and other platforms that will enable Kenya to develop a much more competitive and sustainable position in the world of rugby. Failure to do this will result in an unpredictable future for the game which may end up depending primarily on the individual skills of existing players rather than the collective momentum of the sport as a whole.

Is it no wonder that our Kenya football team continues to flounder against other African teams for the simple reason that they have developed grassroots football to a very sophisticated level unlike ourselves?

Is it no wonder that the Cote d'Ivoire football team is one of the best in Africa for the simple reason that they have a football academy that has been in place for over 20 years? It is high time that we presented our local corporates with a challenge to bank roll and support the development of a world class Rugby Academy here in Kenya.