

We are writing to voice our opposition to the forthcoming Davis Cup tennis match between the United States and South Africa to be held in Newport Beach this weekend on the ground that the South African team has been selected on a racial basis.

This match presents a painful dilemma for American sportsmen. As a general rule, we believe that politics should not be allowed to intrude into sports. Ideally South African sportsmen should not be penalized because their government happens to be guilty of racist and dictatorial policies.

But South Africa presents a special case because of its elaborate system of racial discrimination. In that country politics and sports are inseparable as the government has gone to great lengths to insure that its doctrine of racial separation is imposed on all facets of South African life, including sporting competitions. Sportsmen of different races and colors are not allowed to compete freely against each other without the expressed permission of the government. Both black and white sportsmen suffer because of these restrictions. And Those who have spoken out against discrimination in sport have been harassed and restricted by the state.

Racism cannot be tolerated in sport. There can be no compromise on this question. Either South Africa should end its racist sports policies and allow its athletes to meet in open competition at all levels of play or it should not be allowed to enter international competitions. The charters of virtually all international sporting associations,

including that of the International Lawn Tennis Federation, specifically forbid racist practices by their member countries. South Africa has been expelled from most international sportsing bodies because of its violation of this principle. Yet South Africa is allowed to remain in Davis Cup competition.

As witnessed by the recent visit of a South Dakota basketball team to Cuba, sporting exchanges can be a constructive tool in opening channels of communication and breaking down the barriers between the peoples of two countries. The Davis Cup, too, has long symbolized the spirit of friendship and sportsmanship which should exist among athletes of the world. But we fail to see what will be gained by an American team welcoming a team whose national sports policies are avowedly racist.

Neither the Davis Cup nor our country's commitment to justice and equality for all our people will be served by this spectacle.