

**THE TRANSFORMATION OF SPORTS CULTURE AMONG THE KEIYO  
AND MARAKWET OF ELGEYO-MARAKWET COUNTY,  
KENYA, c. 1850-1964**

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## DECLARATION

This research thesis is my original work and has not been presented for a degree in any other university.

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## **DEDICATION**

To my parents, Peter Kimaiyo and Ann Cheptoo; my brothers Wesley, Edwin, and Noah; and my sisters Faith and Edna. This is for you!

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>DECLARATION.....</b>	<b>ii</b>
<b>DEDICATION.....</b>	<b>iii</b>
<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENT.....</b>	<b>iv</b>
<b>TABLE OF CONTENTS .....</b>	<b>vi</b>
<b>LIST OF TABLES .....</b>	<b>ix</b>
<b>LIST OF FIGURES .....</b>	<b>x</b>
<b>GLOSSARY.....</b>	<b>xi</b>
<b>OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF TERMS.....</b>	<b>xii</b>
<b>ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS.....</b>	<b>xiv</b>
<b>ABSTRACT.....</b>	<b>xv</b>
<b>CHAPTER ONE .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>INTRODUCTION.....</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1 Background to the study .....	1
1.2 Statement of the Problem.....	4
1.3 Research Objectives.....	5
1.4 Research Premises .....	5
1.5 Research Questions.....	6
1.6 Justification and Significance of the Study.....	6
1.7 Scope and Limitation of the Study.....	7
1.8 Literature Review and Theoretical Framework .....	8
1.8.1 Introduction.....	8
1.8.2 Literature on Indigenous sports among the Keiyo and Marakwet.....	8
1.8.3 Colonial Transformation of Sports Culture among the Keiyo and Marakwet. ....	12
1.8.4 Theoretical framework.....	16
1.9 Research Methodology .....	19
1.9.1 Introduction.....	19
1.9.2 Research Design.....	20
1.9.3 Locale of the Study .....	20
1.9.4 Population of the Study.....	21

1.9.5 Sampling Technique .....	21
1.9.6 Research Instruments .....	21
1.9.7 Data Collection .....	22
1.9.8 Data Recording .....	23
1.9.9 Data Analysis and Presentation .....	23
1.9.10 Research Validity.....	23
1.9.11 Research Reliability.....	24
1.9.12 Ethical Consideration.....	24
<b>CHAPTER TWO .....</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>INDIGENOUS SPORTING ACTIVITIES AMONG THE KEIYO AND MARAKWET, TO 1894.....</b>	<b>25</b>
2.1 Introduction.....	25
2.2 Migration, Settlement, and Early History .....	25
2.3 The Keiyo and the Marakwet Pre-Colonial Sporting Activities to 1894.....	29
2.3.1. Running in the Pre-colonial Keiyo and Marakwet Society. ....	30
2.3.2. Hunting in the Pre-colonial Keiyo and Marakwet Society. ....	36
2.3.3 Wrestling or <i>Kiptagat</i> .....	41
2.3.4 Arrow Shooting.....	43
2.3.5 Stick Fights .....	44
2.3.6 Jumping.....	44
2.3.7 Spear Throwing.....	46
2.4 Conclusion .....	47
<b>CHAPTER THREE .....</b>	<b>49</b>
<b>THE COLONIAL TRANSFORMATION OF THE INDIGENOUS SPORTS CULTURE AMONG THE KEIYO AND MARAKWET, 1895-1945.....</b>	<b>49</b>
3.1 Introduction.....	49
3.2 Establishment of Colonial Rule in Elgeyo-Marakwet District. ....	49
3.2.1. Colonial Administrators and the Introduction of Sports in Elgeyo- Marakwet.....	54
3.3 The Government African School and the Introduction of Modern Sports. ....	59
3.3.1 Rift Valley provincial Games at G.A.S Tambach.....	71

3.4. Colonial Settlers and the transformation of sports in Elgeyo- Marakwet.....	75
3.6. The missionaries and the transformation of sports in Elgeyo-Marakwet .....	78
3.5 Military service and the transformation of sports in Elgeyo- Marakwet .....	84
3.6 Conclusion .....	89
<b>CHAPTER FOUR.....</b>	<b>91</b>
<b>THE ADOPTION OF MODERN SPORTS AND ITS IMPACT ON THE</b>	
<b>KEIYO AND MARAKWET SPORTING HISTORY, 1946-1964.....</b>	<b>91</b>
4.1: Introduction.....	91
4.2: The formation of the Arab and African Sports Association. ....	91
4.3. Olympic Games .....	97
4.4. British Empire and Commonwealth Games .....	100
4.5 Elgeyo-Marakwet district sports in July 1951. ....	114
4.6 Sports course in Tambach in 1952.....	117
4.7 Kalenjin Games in 1956.....	120
4.8 Provincial Games in Kamarin Stadium, (Elgeyo-Marakwet), 1959 .....	123
4.9 Conclusion .....	127
<b>CHAPTER FIVE .....</b>	<b>129</b>
<b>SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS .....</b>	<b>129</b>
5.1 Introduction.....	129
5.2 Summary .....	129
5.3 Conclusion .....	134
5.4 Recommendations.....	135
<b>REFERENCES.....</b>	<b>136</b>
Primary sources.....	136
Appendix I: Map of the study area .....	154
Appendix II: Research Permit.....	155

## LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: The District Commissioners and District Officers for Elgeyo-Marakwet.....	56
Table 2: List of Keiyo and Marakwet Chiefs from 1927 to 1928.....	58
Table 3: List of students who participated in the King's birthday celebration sports.....	64
Table 4: Government African School, Tambach former Headmasters.....	67
Table 5: African teachers and their role in sports.....	68
Table 6: Government African School Timetable in 1938.....	68
Table 7: Sports Activities from Monday to Saturday during the week.....	69
Table 8: Entries of sports during the Empire Day.....	71
Table 9: Winners of the G.A.S Tambach athletics team.....	72
Table 10: The Arab and African Sports Association of Kenya.....	94
Table 11: Elgeyo and Marakwet Divisional sports prize list.....	96
Table 12: Elgeyo and Marakwet District sports prize list.....	96
Table 13: Kenya's Team to the 1954 British Empire and Commonwealth Games.....	103
Table 14: 1954 Empire Games and Commonwealth results.....	111
Table 15: List of the winners' participants.....	115
Table 16: List of athletes and footballers who attended the course.....	120
Table 17: Provincial games in Kamarin Stadium results.....	125
Table 18: The final placing of the team by points.....	126

## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Elgeyo warriors with war shields. ....	34
Figure 2: Hunters after a rest at Kerio Valley preparing to tackle the highlands .....	40
Figure 3: Marakwet Dancers at Kerio Valley (involved jumping) their dancing style. ....	46
Figure 4: King's Birthday games in Kabarnet in 1933 .....	65
Figure 5: Rift Valley sports day at G.A.S Tambach in 1943 .....	73
Figure 6: Elgeyo-Marakwet elders at A.I.M Sports Day at Kapsawor in 1938.....	83
Figure 7: The Empire Games Organizing Committee of the Kenya Athletic Association.....	101
Figure 8: Kenya's Team to the 1954 British Empire and Commonwealth Games .....	103
Figure 9 Lazaro Chepkwony ahead of D.A. Pirie of England .....	106
Figure 10: Elgeyo-Marakwet District Sports in 1951.....	115
Figure 11: Kalenjin games in Tambach 1956 .....	122
Figure 12: Rift Valley sports team winning the provincial shield for the second year ...	127

## GLOSSARY

<i>Askari</i>	A Swahili word that means a soldier.
<i>Kiptagat</i>	A Keiyo and Marakwet word that means wrestling.
<i>Labatet</i>	A Kalenjin word that means running.
<i>Maiso</i>	A Keiyo and Marakwet word that means stick fighting.
<i>Sakas/Lokot</i>	A Kalenjin name that means hunting.
<i>Utwo/Tilisiet</i>	A term used by the Keiyo and Marakwet that means running.

## OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF TERMS

**Athletics:** According to Bale and Sang (1996), athletics is a group of sporting activities that involves throwing, jumping, running, and walking. In this study the term will be used to refer to long-and middle-distance running events largely consisting of 800m, 1500m, 3000m, 5000m, steeplechase and marathon.

**Indigenous sports:** Wanderi (1999) defines indigenous sports as traditional games which were found in Africa during the pre-colonial period. In this study the term will be used to refer to body of cultures associated with work, play, and games among the Keiyo and Marakwet in the pre-colonial period.

**Sports:** According to Daniels (2012), sport is a physical activity which involves exertion of skills whereby a team or an individual competes against one another for entertainment. In this study the term sports will be used to refer to body culture or movement culture. This movement or body culture was part of the social, economic, and political organization of the Keiyo and Marakwet people.

**Sports culture:** Boit (2004) defines sports culture as the way of life that is found in the sporting activities of a people. In this study the term will be used to refer to the day-to-day social life of the Keiyo and Marakwet people associated with their various sporting activities.

**Track and Field:** According to Bale and Sang (1996), track and field events includes athletics, contests based on running, jumping, and throwing skills. In this study, the term will be used to refer to long- and middle-distance running events largely consisting of

800m, 1500m, 5000m, 3000m, marathon and steeplechase. The term 'athletics' and 'track and field' will be used interchangeably in this study.

## **ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS**

**A.I.M**-Africa Inland Mission

**A.K**-Athletics Kenya

**D.C**-District Commissioner

**E.M.C**-Elgeyo Marakwet County

**K.A.A.A**-Kenya Amateur Athletics Association

**K.A.R**-King's African Rifles

**K.N.A**-Kenya National Archives

**KNA**- Kenya National Archives

**KRA**- King's Africa Rifles

**L.N.C** -Local Native Council

**N.I.T.D**- Native Industrial Training Depot

**NACOSTI**- National Commission for Science and Innovation

**NMK**- National Museums of Kenya

**P.C**- Provincial Commissioner

## ABSTRACT

Sport is an integral part of human culture that is deeply embedded in the social values of societies across the world. As an aspect of social life, sport is entrenched within the matrix of culture and shares in the general trends of cultural change. Since time immemorial, Africa's indigenous populations have incorporated different forms of sporting activities into many facets of their daily lives. These included running, wrestling, climbing trees, high jumping and shooting range. The Keiyo and Marakwet, just like other communities, had developed elaborate indigenous forms of sports which not only promoted the physical and mental growth of the youth but served as worthwhile pastime activities. With the establishment of British colonial rule, however, these indigenous sporting activities were significantly transformed. This change is what concerns this study. It examines the historical development of the sports culture among the Keiyo and Marakwet in the period between 1850 and 1964. This study is based on three objectives; that is, to describe the indigenous sporting activities of the Keiyo and Marakwet from 1850 to 1894, to examine the colonial transformation of the indigenous sporting culture of the Keiyo and Marakwet from 1895 to 1945 and lastly to demonstrate how the adoption of modern sports between 1945 to 1964 marked a watershed in the transformation of the Keiyo and Marakwet sporting history. The study is premised on the view that the indigenous sporting culture of the Keiyo and Marakwet was significantly changed by Western cultural intrusion. The indigenous Kalenjin warrior spirit embodied in African sporting activities was harnessed by the British and channeled into Western sports, mainly athletics. This study was guided by two theoretical frameworks; functionalism and antidualogical action theory. The former was used to analyze how sports were an integral part of the cultural structure of the Keiyo and Marakwet during the pre-colonial period. While the theory of antidualogical action was used to analyze the contact between Western sports culture among the Keiyo and Marakwet during the British colonial rule. In terms of methodology, this study utilized primary sources of data, mainly archival material and oral sources, and secondary sources to construct the history of sports in Elgeyo Marakwet County. In short, this study was an attempt to tell the story of the encounter and interaction between the Keiyo and Marakwet and European sporting culture. Our findings indicated that during the colonial period the Keiyo and Marakwet warrior spirit was channeled to the field and track which led to the emergence of modern athletics. This study is significant as it makes a case for the important contributions the topic of sport can make to understanding of history of colonialism in Africa.

# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background to the study

Sport as a cultural entity is not a fixed category. It is a fluid phenomenon that, like all the other aspects of culture, changes over time and space because of external cultural influences (Ndee 2010: 3; Sikes 2019: 273-280). Efforts by scholars to understand and appreciate the changing nature of sports culture across the globe have produced some interesting pieces of work including Mandle (1973:226), Stoddart (1987: 318) and Baker and Mangan (1987). Most of these studies have examined how the indigenous sporting culture of communities was transformed by contact with Western sporting cultures. In Africa, for example, studies of this nature have shown the transformation of traditional sports in various parts of Africa during the colonial period (Bale and Sang 1996:56; Sikes 2014:13; Alegi 2010: 2; Fair 2001:203; Martin 1995: 123; Cleveland, Kaur and Akindes 2020).

The foregoing works emphasized that the changing nature of sports in Africa is in most part associated with the cultural influence of colonialism. Following the Berlin conference of 1884-1885, the African continent was carved up into colonies for different European imperial powers, for example, Germany, Britain, Spain, France and Belgium. These European powers, as part of the "civilizing mission", introduced Western sports to the native populations. The main agents of the diffusion of European sporting culture were missionaries, colonial administrators and the military, and settlers. Missionaries however were the principal agents of Western culture generally and sports in particular. These colonial agents had a great love for British culture and sports and saw it as part of

the 'civilization' which accompanied *Pax Britannica*. With the penetration of colonial rule, Western sporting activities and cultures began to spread from Port cities and colonial forts, and missionary stations to the African reserves (Bale and Sang 1996:45).

The Western sporting culture was part and parcel of the European self-arrogated feeling of superiority. The colonial agents, therefore, intended to use modern sports to 'civilize' and 'pacify' African indigenous populations as part of the larger program of 'physical education', and 'muscular Christianity', whose aim was to enlighten the bodies of the Africans. Therefore, Western sports were intended to subdue, discipline, inculcate Victorian values and upgrade the degraded Africans (Cleveland 2019:19). These modern sports, therefore, were introduced in an exploitative and oppressive manner that demonstrated European superiority and African subjugation (Sikes 2019:285).

The colonial settings where modern sports were introduced were characterised by segregation, inequality, and institutionalized racism. Thus, modern sports constituted 'more than just a game.' The colonialists used them as a way to establish and deepen both psychological and physical control over their African subjects (Bale and Sang 1996). Domingo (2007) suggests that in colonial Mozambique, football was a tool used to infuse discipline, socialization and respect for political and racial hierarchies. Hence, if the Europeans colonized the African continent, as the saying goes, with the bible in one hand and a gun in the other, we can say that they were also prepared with football, rugby and athletics, as their third imperial hegemonic tool.

Despite the racist and exploitative manner in which these Western games were introduced, the African *persona* was hardly unreceptive. They fashioned new meanings

and contested various aspects and meanings of these sports. For Africans, therefore, these sporting endeavours were 'more than just games.' They transformed them into metaphors which symbolized domination and resistance. Martin (1991: 56-71) and Fair (1997: 224-251), for example, have identified the emergence of nationalist and proto-nationalist dimensions in Africa in football. They have shown the connection between leisure and British control and analyzed football as a terrain of struggle. Africans appropriated the new games and infused them with new meaning that was intended by the British (Ranger 1980:56). As part of the ongoing process of cultural synthesis, the African indigenous population formed unique, often 'creolized' styles that imitated the pre-colonial artistic values (Cleveland, Kaur & Akindes 2020: 1-16). And because Africans were also not allowed to participate in the European settlers' sports clubs and league associations; African players responded by forming their teams and sports leagues (Njororai 2009:866-882). These self-governing endeavours of Africans in some cases enhanced the process of institution-building in an imagined independent African nation (Amusa and Toriola 2009: xv).

In the examination of the Africans' initial interest in Western sports, researchers have underscored the relationship and linkage between Western sports and pre-colonial sports. Bale & Sang (1996:53) and Sikes (2019: 273-287) for example, have argued that pre-colonial notions and customs of manliness provided the fertile soils into which the seed of Western sport was planted. Indigenous African sporting values interrogated Western sports and negotiated their own spaces in the new and evolving sports cultural arena (Sikes 2019).

The foregoing discussion, therefore, highlights that in the adoption of sporting culture, the Africans were not passive recipients of culture. They interrogated Western sporting culture in the light of their past and adopted and adapted it to their cultural framework. With the establishment of British colonial rule in Elgeyo- Marakwet, social, political and economic changes were ushered. These changes impacted the indigenous cultural life of the Keiyo and Marakwet, and sport was not an exception. The various forms of sports were introduced to the Keiyo and Marakwet people by the missionaries, colonial administrators, the military personnel. This study, therefore, seeks to demonstrate how the indigenous sporting culture of the Keiyo and Marakwet was transformed by the intruding sporting cultures.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

Sport as an aspect of culture is dynamic. It is continuously transformed over time and space. Changes in the sporting culture of a community are the product of interactions with different cultural systems. In Keiyo and Marakwet, for example, before British colonial rule, the indigenous African population had developed elaborate forms of sports and physical exercises, which were important aspects of the deeply patriarchal culture. These physical activities were not only used to educate the youth but also to socialize them with the communal value systems. With the establishment of British colonial rule in Kenya, however, this indigenous sporting culture was brought into formal contact with the Western sporting culture. The natural outcome of this interaction was that the Africans had to make meaning of new forms of culture before incorporating them as part of their culture. Which meaning did they give to Western culture? In which ways did they conform to the new sporting culture? This is the problem which orients this study as

it examines the contact between two social value systems. The study set out to explain the encounter, interaction and articulation of indigenous sporting activities and Western sporting activities during the precolonial and colonial period among the Keiyo and Marakwet people.

### **1.3 Research Objectives**

This study seeks to achieve the following objectives.

- i. To analyze the various indigenous sporting activities among the Keiyo and Marakwet from 1850 to 1894.
- ii. To examine the colonial transformation of indigenous sports culture among the Keiyo and Marakwet, c. 1895-1945.
- iii. To demonstrate how the adoption of modern sports transformed the sporting culture of the Keiyo and Marakwet, c. 1945-1964.

### **1.4 Research Premises**

- i. The Keiyo and Marakwet had various types of indigenous sporting activities by c. 1894.
- ii. The introduction of Western sports during colonialism led to the transformation of indigenous Keiyo and Marakwet sporting culture between c. 1895-1945.
- iii. The Keiyo and Marakwet adoption of modern sports marked a watershed in the transformation and adaptations of indigenous and Western sports between, c. 1945-1964.

## **1.5 Research Questions**

- i.** How did the various indigenous sporting activities among the Keiyo and Marakwet lead to their cultural history by c. 1894?
- ii.** How did colonialism transform the indigenous sporting culture among the Keiyo and Marakwet between c. 1895 to 1945?
- iii.** In which ways did the Keiyo and Marakwet adoption of modern sports between c.1945-1964 mark a great point of departure in their sporting history?

## **1.6 Justification and Significance of the Study**

The study of the emergence of modern sports especially in Africa has not received adequate historical attention. Most of the studies in history have been centred on understanding other aspects of human cultures, like economics, religion and politics. The few studies which have been written on the subject of sports have been written by sports scientists (Onywera 2006). There is, therefore, “an urgent need to research the history of sports in Africa” (Baker and Mangan 1987:2). This is the reason that justifies this study.

This study aims to explore how different types of sporting activities were incorporated into the everyday life of the Keiyo and Marakwet during the pre-colonial period. Therefore, this study yielded data that was useful in understanding and appreciating indigenous African sporting culture which is essential in understanding the social life of the African colonial past compressively.

This study adopted 1850 as the starting point because by then the Keiyo and Marakwet indigenous sporting culture was still largely intact (Chepyator-Thomson 1990:34). We

choose 1964 as the upper limit of the study because it was the first time Kenya participated in the Tokyo Olympic Games as an independent nation. The study uses 1964 as a vantage point to look back and examine how the process of encounter and interaction between indigenous and Western sports eventually crystallised the internationalization of sports culture among the Keiyo and Marakwet. I choose Keiyo and Marakwet because of their success in athletics during the colonial period. The majority of the winners in various athletics sports meetings came from the Elgeyo-Marakwet district.

### **1.7 Scope and Limitation of the Study**

The scope of this study is defined in three aspects geographically, thematically and periodically. Geographically, the study was conducted in Elgeyo-Marakwet County. The region is mainly inhabited by the Marakwet and the Keiyo; the Marakwet live in the Northern part of the county and the Keiyo in the southern part. This area covers parts of the Western Rift Valley highland. The rationale for choosing this area is because of the contribution of these communities to the global history of sports. The region is well-known for the success of its sportsmen and women in major global, national and local competitions. In the thematic scope, this study was limited to the historical analysis of the transformation of sports among the Keiyo and Marakwet people, with a special focus on the introduction and development of athletics.

Temporally, the study was limited to the historical analysis of the Keiyo and Marakwet sporting activities from 1850 to 1964. This long span enables this study to capture the transformation of sports in the region. The consideration of the pre-colonial period

allowed the study to demonstrate the linkage between indigenous traditions and Western sporting culture.

During this study, there were insecurity challenges in some parts of Elgeyo-Marakwet County; especially in the Northern part of Kerio Valley, having to explain her mission to the local leaders and requesting their support before commencing the research to gain confidence and acceptability while doing the research.

## **1.8 Literature Review and Theoretical Framework**

### **1.8.1 Introduction**

This section contains a review of existing works that are related to the study of sports. This literature review has been done thematically corresponding with the study objectives. This study has done it in that manner to give it a chronological flow. The review begins by examining literature focusing on indigenous pre-colonial sports and physical activities, then, followed by literature on sports during the colonial period. The main aim of this literature review is to identify gaps that other scholars have left to anchor this study within the existing body of documented knowledge on sports. This part also contains information on the theoretical framework used to interrogate the data.

### **1.8.2 Literature on Indigenous sports among the Keiyo and Marakwet**

Anthropologists, travelers, missionaries and explorers who charted through Africa from the end of the 19th century onwards were the first to make references to the indigenous sporting. Within the field of anthropology, pioneering scholars such as Sir Edward Burnett and Stewart Cullin were the first to produce classical works that gave attention to indigenous sports as worthy subjects for investigation (Blanchard 1995). Since then, the

study of indigenous sports invited the attention of anthropological works and ethnographers such as Avedon and Sutton-Smith (1979), Cheska (1987), Sands (2002), and Van Mele and Renson (1990).

The main attention of anthropologists was, however, drawn to children's games. The reason behind this was to create an image of an African as an immature person who engages in childish play (Manhanamm 1990:257). This is evident in the work of Hopley (1912), on the pre-colonial children's games of the Akamba, Leakey (1938) on the children's games of the pre-colonial East African societies, Harrison (1947), on Bolas and Hoop games of the pre-colonial children of Tanganyika and Horell (1937) who writes on the indigenous games of the people of Lake Victoria. These studies by anthropologists, on African traditional physical activity, although informative, are purely descriptive. This descriptive nature from a historian's point of view denies the subject chronology and depth which makes it difficult to demonstrate the transformation they had undergone through time and space.

For these children, playing activities were portrayed as passive, aimless and static. It is because of this reason that Daniels (2012) used the participant observation method in his anthropological study of the indigenous sporting culture of the Nandi. These studies, though, like most anthropological studies, however rich in thoughts, lacked chronological dimension. This study, however, used a historical perspective to examine the various indigenous sporting activities among the Keiyo and Marakwet community of Kenya and investigate how they changed over space and time.

Some of the earliest ethnographic accounts of African games were written by Dodley Kidd (1904) and George Stow (1906). They covered a variety of indigenous games among the Bantu-speaking people in the South East part of Africa, from Cape to Zambezi, and they were later concerned with the so-called Bushmen and Hottentots as well as the Nguni and Sotho Twana societies. Other ethnographic researchers, for example, Henri Junod (1912), followed suit. Junod describes the indigenous games of the Shangana Tsonga of Mozambique which included cattle raiding and stick fighting. The description of these games is not in detailed as one could wish while at the same time, there is no chronology.

Other ethnographers, for example, Levine (1996) regarded sporting activities as an important aspect of African culture. In his study on the physical activity of the pre-colonial society of East Africa, he only mentions children's play briefly. Sutton-Smith (1978) agrees with him that children in other African communities were not allowed to play because their strength was needed elsewhere. This is highly likely to be true because African children participated in games even though they were often required to offer labour on farms. This assumption was 19<sup>th</sup> century European common way of judging other cultures from their point of view.

Other types of writing on African sports were European travel reports and diaries. One of the earliest writings was written by Lord Cranworth (1911) who noted that hunting and shooting was a highly acclaimed sport in pre-colonial East Africa. This was also evident in the work of Carlos (1910) who reports that physical activity was taking place in pre-colonial African societies. The reason for this kind of writing was to attract settlers (Mannham 1988:153). Other travel accounts include that of Dane (1921), Lord Hindlip

(1906) and Hindlip (1906) who have described African games like hunting, shooting, running, swimming and wrestling. This kind of writing was descriptive and ethnocentric. And it is against this backdrop that, African researchers started to compile their own stories of pre-colonial sporting culture. This started with Kenyatta (1938:55). He has shown that running was a highly competitive sport practised by boys. Running competition was also present among the Meru as described by Wanderi (2001)

Running among the Kalenjin traditional setting of western Kenya has also received attention (Lewis, 1973). They have shown that running (*labatet*), served a practical function. It was meant to prepare warriors for cattle raiding which required travelling over long distances (Manners 1997). Warriors were supposed to travel long distances at a fast pace for over hundreds of kilometres. If successful in their raid, the owners of the cattle would often counterattack. As a result, warriors had to drive their prizes as fast as possible over long distances to beat their pursuers (Matson, 1993). Running fast, therefore, mattered for successful cattle raiding activity (Manners 1997).

Post-colonial researchers went further to demonstrate that the function of indigenous sports was complex. They had an educative dimension on the political, economic and social, values of the society. This idea is shared by Callois (2001), Sands (2002), Cheska (1987), Hart (1976), Mandell (1984) and Wanderi (1999). These studies inform the present study in terms of analysis of various aspects of the traditional sport, and their function in African society. While these works have examined the social, political and economic importance of indigenous sporting activity in Kenya, very few have studied indigenous sporting activities among the Keiyo and Marakwet. The few that have mentioned, for example, Kipkorir and Ssenyonga (1986), Massam (1968), and Chebet

and Dietz (2000) have mentioned the sporting activity in one page or two and described the indigenous sporting activity of the Keiyo and Marakwet as being static and unchanging, which is not true. This study, however, described how the indigenous sporting culture of the Keiyo and Marakwet changed over time and space.

### **1.8.3 Colonial Transformation of Sports Culture among the Keiyo and Marakwet.**

The partitioning of Africa in the Berlin Conference of 1884-1885 led to the subdivision of the African continent into different European imperial powers including Germany, Britain, Spain, France and Belgium. With Africa under colonial rule, western sports were introduced. Missionaries, colonial administrators, military service, the army and the police official were the main agents who diffused modern sports across the continent.

Missionaries were the first to introduce Western sporting culture to Africa (Baker and Magan, 1987). Although they played a big part in the abolition of slavery in Africa in the latter part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, they were the main agents of pushing Africans into the slavery of Western culture (Urch 1968:45). The introduction of Western sports like athletics and football by missionaries was one of the numerous means of subjugating Africans culturally (Bale and Sang 1996:75). This was part of the 'muscular Christianity' which characterised missionization where Western sports were introduced to African people through mission institutions. African pupils were compelled to participate in physical education in mission schools. Physical training, games, and drill were all part of the mission school curriculum. It typified the hygienist way of body culture, which contrasted with the carefree life of the indigenous peoples.

Missionaries also organized 'sports day' where people undertook activities like climbing greasy poles, running, sack races, and tug of war among other events (Bale and Sang 1996). On the surface, they seemed to represent a culture of humour rather than the world of seriousness that would characterize the arrival of Western sports. However, such an affair was built on a grave doctrinal foundation, that by the early 1920s, missionaries were holding more formal and serious-looking sporting events. The events were highly attended and closely supervised, even though they were not yet under the auspices of any regional or governing authority (Bale and Sang 1996).

Missionaries had ideological agenda in encouraging the adoption of Western sports among young African men. John W. Arthur of the church of Scotland Mission at Thogoto, Kenya, the teacher in charge of physical education and sport, felt that the values of the English public schools were to be disseminated to indigenes (Murray-Brown 1972:47). Baron Pierre de Coubertin (2000:704) also believed that African citizens were supposed to be introduced to the benefits of "sports civilization". The African was supposed to enter into the world of the Western sports system as part of civilization. Western sports would thus serve as an alternative to native dancing which was deemed sexually explicit and luscious, hence undesirable (Bale and Sang 1996).

The British military also played a major role in the introduction of sports to Africa. In Kenya, for example, the King's Africa Rifles (KRA), was constituted as a regiment in 1902. From then it played an important role in spreading Western sports to African recruits (Bale and Sang 1996: 75). An attempt to teach the Africans about race was made as early as 1902 by Captain Richard Meinertzhagen and by the end of the second decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the KAR had begun to hold its own athletics championships. The

police force also served as an avenue for diffusing sports ideas. The arrival of R.G. B. Spencer as commissioner of police in Kenya in 1925 stimulated the development of Western sports in the Police. Spicer emphasized the 'games ethic' and included physical fitness in the force's regular curriculum. This led to the introduction of football and athletics (Foran 1962:82).

Africanist historians have augmented these descriptive narratives on the introduction of Western sports to Africans, by exploring how people on the continent responded to the arrival of colonial sport. Pioneering work in this category of literature is African football (soccer) by R.G. B. in colonial Brazzaville and Laura Fair (2001) in colonial Zanzibar. They show that Western sport became a central social experience and site of contest and struggle between the colonized and the colonizer. Peter Alegi's (1999, 2002, 2004, 2010), works on South Africa have similarly demonstrated how football in that country emerged as a product of imported imperial practice and local responses.

The early literature focused on how Europeans introduced sports to Africa while saying very little about pre-colonial African games. It is because of this lopsided nature that Cunningham (2016) critiques early claims by Bale and Sang (1996) that, 'Europeans brought their sports' to Kenya, which began the 'Europeanization of African movement culture'. Pointing to the vibrant games and recreation culture that existed among the Kikuyu children before the arrival of the missionary (Wanderi 2006:5). Cunningham argues that local people participated in sports for a variety of reasons, not simply because it 'flowed' from Britain. Instead, he says that colonial sports in Kenya were accepted and adapted depending on the interests of native Africans. Other scholars have also evaluated colonial sports by putting Africans at the centre of the debate. These include Emmanuel

Akyeampong (2002), Ranger (1987), Carontenuto (2010), Deets (2017) and Njororai (2010). They have insisted that Western sports culture was not imported and inscribed on people's lives, but rather, they developed within the context of existing indigenous sporting ideas. This study, therefore, sought to find out, in which way sport in the Elgeyo-Marakwet district during the colonial period was mutually influenced by both the colonized and the colonizer.

In Kenya, Bale and Sang (1996) is the only work which takes sports as its central focus. The authors give a detailed explanation of sports during the colonial period. The authors argue that the British brought their sports to Kenya, thus beginning the 'Europeanization of African movement culture' as Africans adopted Western sporting activities. Colonial administrators and missionaries used sports as means of spreading civilization to Africans. Their attempt however emphasized the growth of sports from a global perspective. They say that the history of athletics in Kenya can only be expressed from what they call a 'global' perspective. This, therefore, is the concern of this study, because by placing the Kenyan athletics history on a global perspective, they elevated their analysis above the level of the local actor. Such kind of exegesis prevented them from penetrating the struggles, contests, actions and emotions, of real people. This was an important lacuna that this study sought to fill, by focusing on and scaling down the analysis to specific primary actors in the area of Elgeyo-Marakwet County, to explain this historical transition of sports from indigenous to Western sports.

#### **1.8.4 Theoretical framework**

Several theories have been used by scholars to explain the transformation of sports across the globe. Most of them, however, have been undertaken from various disciplines, which include anthropology, sociology, economics, and psychology. Krasilnikov (2006), for example, has used symbolic interactionism theory in his attempt to discuss the change in the games and competition of the indigenous population of Siberia. Schapera (1996) has examined the evolution of cultural games in the South African context using the theory of syncretism. And Njororai (2009) used patriarchal ideology to explain the underlying causes of the low visibility of women in Kenyan sporting history.

This study, on its part, employs the two theoretical formulations of functionalism and Antidialogical Action theory to examine the transformation of sports among the Keiyo and Marakwet people of Kenya. The Functionalism theory which has been borrowed from social anthropology mainly deals with how certain parts of culture or social life contribute to the maintenance of a cultural system (Ember et al. 2012). This theory is said to have emerged from the works of Bronislaw Malinowski. According to Malinowski culture plays a very important function in society, including sustenance, reproduction, physiological comfort, safety, rest, mobility, and progress. Furthermore, Radcliffe-Brown contends that some characteristics of behaviour serve to sustain the framework of society rather than to assist the individual. His school of thought used the analogy of body organs to analyse the various aspects of society and their relationships. The organic analogy compares the organs of a human being to the various aspects of society. Concerning sports, functionalism interrogates the role sports plays in society Akuno (2005:160).

The functional idea of culture is the most essential principle of functionalism. Culture, according to the functionalist, is the entire body of instruments, the personality of social groups, human ideas, beliefs, and habits (Malinowski 1945). It is a large apparatus that puts man in a better position to deal with the actual and specific challenges that he faces in his adaptation to his environment. This idea is relevant to current research because it acknowledges that indigenous athletic activities such as hunting, jogging, and arrow shooting were functional for the Keiyo and Marakwet. During the pre-colonial period, indigenous sports were important for an orderly social existence and the transmission and maintenance of desirable cultural attitudes. This theory therefore will be employed to reconstruct the indigenous sporting culture of the Keiyo and Marakwet in objective one.

This study also employed the theoretical formulation of antidualogical action to explain the transformation of sports among the Keiyo and Marakwet during the colonial period. Antidualogical action theory emerged from the ideas of Paulo Freire (1864-1920), a German sociologist, to explain the transformation of culture in colonial Africa. The chief characteristic of Antidualogical action is cultural invasion by a powerful invader. The cultural invasion was, arguably, the main tool for introducing social change in colonial Kenya with missionaries, colonial administrators, the military, and the police playing a vital role. This cultural invasion automatically leads to an Anti-dialogue reaction from the Africans to preserve their culture and institutions. Cultural invasion thus serves as the end of manipulation, which in turn serves as the end of defeat, and defeat the end of domination. It is a theoretical framework in which,

The invaders penetrate the cultural context of another group in disrespect of the latter's potentialities, they impose their views of the world upon those they invade and inhibit the creativity of the invaded by curbing their expression (Fierre 1970:143).

In Antidialogical Action, therefore, the invader's world became the beginning point from which they invaded. Cultural invasion logically assumes the superiority of the invaders and the inferiority of the invaded since the invaders draw the thematic content of their activity from their values and ideologies. A cultural invasion is thus an act of hostility, if not outright violence, against the people of the invaded culture, who lose or are threatened with losing their originality.

Domination was the logical outcome of colonial conquest. The military, missionaries, colonial administration, army, and police were the principal agents of this invasion in the development of sports in Kenya. Their professed intentions, though, not identical shared a common ideal of spreading European hegemony (Bale and Sang 1996:74). Therefore, the introduction of colonial sports changed the socio-cultural role of sports and play activities that were integral to the life of African people (Ndee, 2010). Colonialism was essential in introducing new forms of sports. As a result of that, football became the most popular and most developed sporting activity on the African continent (Ojeme, 1989). The British employed sports as an effective instrument in the subjugation of African people and the symbols of the power of Europeans. Refereeing, for example, cultivated and reinforced an inferiority complex on the part of the colonized (Mählmann, 1992).

The introduction of western sports was an example of the many ways that oppressed Africans assisted and abetted the presence of imperial rule. One of the dominant forces in the British colonial enterprise was the acquisition of cultural power and sport was one of

the ways of acquiring power from the African people (Stoddart, 1988). Stoddart argues that through sport domination British cultural forms were transferred to the colonies with “considerable consequences for the postcolonial order (Stoddart 1988: 651). The twin agencies of schools and colonial administration were predominant avenues through which British cultural forms became entrenched in the colonies. These institutions used sport as a means of promoting discipline and control, and in addition, the missionaries appropriated the role of sports in recruiting African boys into their institutions and as a means of evangelizing the young Africans while providing formal schooling.

The Antidialogical Action theory is applicable in explaining the transformation of sports during the colonial period because it helps us to explain the process of European cultural invasion of Africa which led to change in the landscape of their sporting culture. In our case the British invaded Elgeyo-Marakwet and introduced new sporting cultures through the agency of missionaries, military services, and colonial administrators. This invasion significantly altered the way the Marakwet and Keiyo conceived sports and physical activities.

## **1.9 Research Methodology**

### **1.9.1 Introduction**

This section contains the methods that were used to conduct the study. Accordingly, it describes the research design, study locale, sampling population, sampling techniques, research instruments, data collection, data analysis and ethical considerations.

### **1.9.2 Research Design**

The study employed a qualitative research design, and it makes use of the historical approach in presenting its data. This research design was relevant because it provided the historical occurrence of events as a narrative, chronologically as they unfolded over time and space.

### **1.9.3 Locale of the Study**

This study was undertaken in Elgeyo Marakwet County, which is located in the former Rift Valley Province of Kenya. The region is inhabited by the Marakwet and the Keiyo, and it covers a total area of 3,050 square kilometres, with an approximate population of 454,480 (KHPC, 2019). The administrative headquarter of the region is in Iten town. The County is bordered by West Pokot County to the North, Uasin Gishu County to the West, and Trans Nzoia County to the Northwest. The Kerio Valley River forms the natural boundary of the County with Baringo County to the East.

Elgeyo-Marakwet County is notable for its long-standing tradition of producing world-renowned athletics champions, who have represented Kenya in many international athletics events. Notable among them are Edna Kiplangat, Lornah Kiplangat, Moses Kiptanui, Ezekiel Kemboi, and Vivian Cheruiyot among others. Economically the County has benefited from its athletics achievements with many successful athletes investing heavily in local enterprises. High-altitude training camps in Kaptagat, Kapsait, and Iten are increasingly becoming a feature too, offering a new dimension to Kenyan tourism as well as widening the training possibilities for future generations of Kenyan athletes.

#### **1.9.4 Population of the Study**

The study selected key informants, athletes, and the elders, that were interviewed, to collect data to explain the transformation of sports in Elgeyo Marakwet County. It selected respondents from the Keiyo and Marakwet community. This is a historical study; therefore, not all members of this community were included in the sampling frame. Thus, the study included only those respondents with historical knowledge of sports. The sampled respondents were, therefore, regarded to be very instrumental because they had vital information that was valuable to this study.

#### **1.9.5 Sampling Technique**

The study used purposive and snowballing sampling techniques. Purposive sampling was relevant because this study required men and women with adequate knowledge of sports history in the pre-colonial and colonial periods. The choice of respondents was informed mainly by their historical knowledge of sports rather than their age. The snowballing technique was also employed in the study by identifying several knowledgeable informants, who, in turn, provided other informants who have similar or different information concerning sports. These resulted in a chain of informants made familiar to the informant by their previous interviewees.

#### **1.9.6 Research Instruments**

The study used oral interview guide sheets as the chief research tool during the study. The oral interview schedule was administered to a sample of men and women from the selected areas of Elgeyo-Marakwet County. The interview guide sheet was developed based on the objectives of the study, with the interview schedule having guiding

questions. We had questions about the indigenous sporting culture among the Keiyo and Marakwet, and about the modern sporting culture that was being introduced by the British during the colonial period.

### **1.9.7 Data Collection**

Primary data was acquired through oral interviews as the chief method of collecting data in the field. Since this study intended to interview old men and women, who are non-literate, the interview enabled them to express themselves freely in their language. Moreover, oral interviews enabled measuring the validity of the data provided and gauging whether the data was true or not.

The researcher also visited the Kenya National Archives (KNA), Athletics Kenya (AK) Museum, National Museums of Kenya (NMK), and County Archives of Elgeyo-Marakwet County. Particular attention was paid to provincial and district annual reports, colonial proceedings, records from the Department of Education, sports and culture, government reports, photos, videos, and YouTube videos, among others. The researcher also consulted, through consent, the personal archives of prominent Kenyan athletes and sports administrators like Kipchoge Keino, and Isaiah Kiplagat, among others. Sourced information from the archives included memoirs, personal papers, newspapers, correspondences and colonial sports reports.

Secondary materials found from major private and public libraries were utilized. Library materials such as articles, journals, books, published and unpublished theses, and dissertations were closely examined. They were obtained from the Post-Modern Library of Kenyatta University, Margaret Thatcher Library at Moi University, Catholic

University GABA in Eldoret, University of Eldoret Library, and McMillan Library in Nairobi. Also, sources from the Kenya National Library Services (KNLS) at Nairobi, Eldoret, and Kapsabet were consulted.

### **1.9.8 Data Recording**

Data from respondents were documented by taking notes using a notebook and recorded using a digital voice recorder. A camera was also used to get snapshots of important past physical events from the archive. Secondary data from various libraries were collected through note-taking.

### **1.9.9 Data Analysis and Presentation**

Data analysis was done simultaneously following the objectives under study. The first analysis was mainly transcription, content collation, and thematic classification. The second part of the analysis began immediately after fieldwork was completed to avoid the loss of vital information. All data recorded by the use of a tape recorder was transcribed and sought out into various themes. The three themes guided the thematic arrangement of data. The process of writing chapters commences. Secondary sources were critically examined and compared with primary data to ensure the authenticity of the information. Being qualitative research, the data was then presented and discussed in a narrative form. However, several tables and photographs were also used to buttress our narration.

### **1.9.10 Research Validity**

Research validity is the degree to which the research tool being selected is truly measuring what it was intended to measure. The study measured the validity of the research tools by conducting a pilot study before commencing the research. The

researcher gave out oral interview guide sheets to a few respondents in the selected locations of the neighbouring Uasin Gishu County, which had similar characteristics to Elgeyo-Marakwet County. The oral interview guide sheets gave out information as expected from the respondents, then the researcher considered these research tools to be valid.

### **1.9.11 Research Reliability**

The reliability of an instrument is the degree to which assessment tools produce consistent results after repeated trials. If the research instrument produces consistent results, it is considered to be reliable. Therefore, to ascertain the reliability of the research instruments, they were tested by conducting a pilot study with a few respondents in the selected locations in the neighbouring Uasin Gishu County. The exercise was then repeated twice after one week. The results obtained from the two separate interviews were consistent, then the research instruments were regarded as reliable.

### **1.9.12 Ethical Consideration**

Ethical considerations were relevant to this study and the social setting within which the research will be conducted. The research commenced upon receiving a research permit from relevant authorities. An introductory letter from Kenyatta University graduate school and a research permit from National Commission for Science and Innovation (NACOSTI) were further obtained. Also, the study sought permission from the county government of Elgeyo- Marakwet to conduct the research and thereafter informed the respondents of the purpose of the study before commencing with interviews. Respondents' consent was directly requested, and only willing respondents were interviewed.

**CHAPTER TWO**  
**INDIGENOUS SPORTING ACTIVITIES AMONG THE KEIYO AND**  
**MARAKWET, TO 1894.**

**2.1 Introduction**

This chapter examines the various sporting activities among the Keiyo and Marakwet in the pre-colonial era. This analysis serves as a backdrop against which the study examined the transformation of sports during the British colonial era, in the subsequent chapters. Before that, however, the chapter offers a brief history of the origin, migration, and settlement of the Keiyo and Marakwet to their present homeland - Elgeyo-Marakwet County. The outline history provides a background for a better understanding of the ethnicity, culture, and environment of the Keiyo and Marakwet, aspects which had a significant impact on their sporting culture. This chapter was guided by the theory of structural functionalism. According to this theoretical formulation, sports and other physical activities are considered as having been important pillars of the Keiyo and Marakwet cultural structure.

**2.2 Migration, Settlement, and Early History**

The Keiyo and Marakwet people belong to the Highland Nilotic group of speakers. These people are also referred to as the Kalenjin. The other subsets of the Kalenjin group in Kenya are the Kipsigis, Pokot, Nandi, Tugen, Terik and Sabaot (Kipkorir 2009:1). The Kalenjin are members of the Southern Nilotic cluster, which is one of the three groups that make up the Nilotic linguistic phylum (Ehret 1974:156). The other Nilotic groups are the Western (River-Lake Nilotes) and the Eastern (Plain Nilotes). These three Nilotic

groups are members of the Nilo-Saharan super-phylum. The primordial Nilotic group evolved as one unit around the slopes of the Ethiopian highlands, between 1500 BCE and 11000 B.C.E. While still living in their ancestral land, the ancestral Nilotic group separated into three linguistic clusters. The three clusters in the ensuing centuries evolved into the Western Nilotes, Southern Nilotes and Eastern Nilotes (Ehret 1974).

In the centuries which followed, these groups began to disperse from their cradle. The Western Nilotes moved westwards towards the central Nile region (Kipkorir 2009). The Eastern Nilotes, on their part, moved into southern Ethiopia where they evolved into an ethnic group. The Southern Nilotes maintained their hold of the Ethiopian mountains where they evolved as a community while having close contacts and interactions with eastern Cushites (Ehret 1974:157-158). By the end of the first millennium C.E., the ancestors of the Southern Nilotes started moving southwards into Kenya. They entered modern-day Kenya through the western side of Lake Turkana extending their influence westward into the Karamoja plateau of Uganda. This southward advance was a slow penetration of small groups that were spread over several centuries. By 1000 C.E. the Southern Nilotes had settled on the slopes of Mount Elgon (Tarus 1994:33).

At around 1500 C.E., the Southern Nilotes began dispersing from the slopes of Mount Elgon. It is this dispersion which led to the evolution of present Kalenjin subgroups of Kenya, as they settled in present homelands. The evacuation of the slopes of Mount Elgon, by the ancestors of the Kalenjin was a product of the coming of Plain Nilotes. The coming of the plain Nilotes, the Turkana, Karamojong, and the Maasai led to insecurity which forced the ancestors of the Kalenjin to flee. These intruders raided the Kalenjin for

livestock. Left with no alternative, the Southern Nilotes evacuated the plains for the safety of the hills and escarpments (Ehret 1974: 161).

It is at this particular moment that the ancestors of the Marakwet and the Keiyo started settling on the defensible Rift-Valley escarpment and the Cherangany ranges which serve as their present homeland. As they settled, they evolved into autonomous civic territorial units with distinct names and a Kalenjin dialect. The four northern clusters, the Endo, the Markweta, the Almo, the Borokot and the Kiptani were bound together by the British Colonial government to “invent” the Marakwet ethnic group. These groups were known by their neighbours as the Chepleng’ (Kipkorir 2008:1-2). The name Marakwet, however, was a misspelt name of one of the territorial sections of the Chepleng’ cluster – Markweta, which the Waswahili ivory traders thought represented the entire Chepleng’ group. This name Markweta, therefore, was adopted by the British colonial government and misspelt as Marakwet (Kipkorir 2009: 407).

The territorial clusters lying south of river Chebiemit (Kiptani, Irong’, Kapchemutwa, Rokocho, Segu, Maan, Metkei, Cheboror and Marichor Mutei, Chang’ach, Mwen) were bound together, by the British, and given the name Keiyo (Massam 1927:2). This name Keiyo is believed to be a Maasai pejorative term referring to the Kalenjin, living on the escarpment, as the *Ilgeyu*, meaning the cliff dwellers. This name was adopted by the British who used it in the form of *Elgeyo* (Tarus 1994:33). However, the people themselves prefer the appellation Keiyo.

With time, the Keiyo and Marakwet evolved a peculiar land use pattern with a three-tier spatial ecology determined by the physical layout. The valley floor *keu* was the zone of

major economic activities such as grazing, cultivation, bee-keeping and hunting (O.I Rose Chepyator 12/12/2021). The lower escarpment, *Lagam*, was the civic zone where residences were built; it was the centre of cultural life relating to politics, religion and jurial-legal processes. The mountainous ranges, *mosop*, were further subdivided into two sub-zones. The highest and hence coolest range was known as the *mosop* proper; the lower and hence warmer zone above the escarpment was known as the *keiyo*. Altitude within the highlands varies between 2100 and 3600m above the sea level (Kipkorir and Ssenyonga 1980:83). The highland zone offered an additional range of resources such as timber and wild game. Some members preferred to graze and keep their sheep and cows at the cooler altitude (O.I Chesire Philip 10/12/2021).

The Keiyo and Marakwet give a rationale for this zonal ecology. The hillside residential pattern offered them security against the three major hazards found in Kerio Valley; it is relatively cooler than the hot valley, and malaria threats are also remote, lastly, it facilitated defense operations against human enemies especially the Pokot across Kerio River (O.I Busiendich Mursabet 1/12/2021). The location halfway between the valley floor and the summit gave them easy access to the highland resources. Each clan's land was divided into villages which also span the three zones. The families within these villages usually had access to the resources of the three zones. Therefore, the migratory wave from the valley to the highlands demands physical fitness to traverse the three ecological zone.

### **2.3 The Keiyo and the Marakwet Pre-Colonial Sporting Activities to 1894.**

The history of sports in Africa, like elsewhere in the world, is as old as the human race. Sporting culture is hoary with age to the extent that, historians have argued that man's successful evolutionary history has greatly been facilitated by his physical fitness acquired through sports of various kinds (Wanderi 2001:27). It is because of this central role of sports in the history of humankind that scholars have expended their time and resources to understand such a vital component of human cultures. These studies have shown that different communities in different parts of the world had developed games and sports as vital parts of their culture, mostly for the growth and development of talent and skills, and pastime activities. The Keiyo and Marakwet, like humanity elsewhere, had games of various types which characterised their pre-colonial African culture. These activities were products of centuries of cultural innovations and thinking to facilitate the survival of the community in the rugged terrain that is their homeland. (Kipkorir and Ssenyonga 1980:61).

The pre-colonial sporting culture of the Marakwet and the Keiyo, therefore, produced physically fit young men whose athleticism ensured that these communities existed in an environment that was highly vulnerable because of the constant threat of raids from powerful neighbours, the Pokot, Maasai and Karimojong (O.I Peter Kimutai 12/12/2021). Therefore, traditional games among the Keiyo and Marakwet were ultimately aimed at instilling appropriate skills, social cohesion, virtues, and communal responsibility that was required for the survival of the society against human-made hardships and natural calamities. These sporting activities and physical exercises enabled the Keiyo and Marakwet to acquire the necessary skills for offence and defence in their perpetual

struggle against manifold environmental and human challenges. Participation in sporting activities, therefore, helped to promote individual and group adaptation to the natural environment.

The social structure of these Kalenjin was deeply patriarchal and their physical and sporting activities were an integral part in the construction of the hegemonic masculinity which characterised their society. For that reason, the sporting activities were gendered. Women were often viewed as domestic caretakers and a weaker sex, and were, thus, excluded from these activities. Men on the other hand were conceived as the stronger gender and the protectors of the land for that reason, the society had games and sports for all male age groups from the young uninitiated boys (*weri*), youth (*Moran*), and senior warriors. These sports aimed to instil the spirit of competitiveness, the stamina of an athlete, and endurance against hardships. Such that from an early age boys were inculcated into the habit of competition, endurance, athleticism and the passion for success which was to find an outlet in the warrior spirit of valour in the later years of their lives. For this study, we shall examine five sports developed by the Keiyo and Marakwet to construct masculinity and inculcate the warrior-winner attitude in their men, these are running, hunting, wrestling, arrow shooting, stick fights, jumping and spear throwing.

### **2.3.1. Running in the Pre-colonial Keiyo and Marakwet Society.**

Nineteenth-century travellers like F.D Lugard, J. Thomson, Carl Peters, and J.W. Gregory were the first European observers to link the Keiyo and Marakwet with running. Thomson who is regarded as the first traveller in the Elgeyo-Marakwet area at the end of the nineteenth century, observed the Keiyo and the Marakwet covering a long distance, for weeks, or even months moving with their cattle as far as Uasin Gishu plateau to look

for pasture and water (Thomson 1968:256). Lugard on the other hand claimed that in the early twentieth century, 'the (indigenous) Keiyo and Marakwet runner thinks no more of carrying a message several miles a day than it should a three-mile stroll' (Lugard 1893:356). However, the most impressive description was by J. A Massam, District Commissioner among the Keiyo, and R. O. Hennings who was a district officer in Baringo.

Massam on his first journey to Elgeyo as a District Commissioner was impressed by the Elgeyo endurance of covering a long distance, walking on foot with spear and arrow while hunting and herding (Massam 1972:256). Additionally, when Hennings was called by the Rift Valley Provincial Commissioner to help a District Commissioner in Tambach to solve an outbreak of stock theft along the Elgeyo-Marakwet border he sums this best up when he observed the Keiyo and Marakwet headsmen.

The young men of Masop, the High country, spend many days of their lives on long foot journeys, alone or with a young brother or a friend, across the grassland and the hills, between the outstretched arms of the forests, to see the family cattle which have been deposited with friends many miles away. Often enough you meet these young men on the track that run from the end of the country, driving one or two head of cattle to add to the deposit or returning with a beast which had been reclaimed... (Hennings 1951:163).

Apart from this early observation by the travellers and colonial administrators a very competitive form of running was present in the highland region of Iten, Kamariny, Chesoi, Kapsowar, Kapyengo and Kapcherop (O.I Peter Kimutai on 2/1/2021). The competition was held annually during the dry season between December and March. Each clan of the Keiyo and Marakwet communities had to select a member to represent them, often a boy or young man. The selected member had to undergo vigorous training.

This training was mainly done in the morning hours and the competitor had to train through the forested hills of Cherang'any to prepare for the big day. A day was then set by the elders and all the Keiyo and Marakwet clans could meet in a selected grazing field chosen by the elders (O.I Moses Kiptanui on 20/12/2021).

The competition would start with songs and dances and the race will commence thereafter. The race was held over a distance of four miles (O.I Peter Kimutai on 15/12/2021). The Winner of the race would then be selected on his speed in running the set distance. He would then be rewarded thereafter with either a goat or sheep. A person who had won many times was not allowed to participate in the next competition but had to give a chance to other members of the clan. Often the Kapkomora clan of the Marakwet community would emerge winners (O.I Johnah Komora on 16/12/2021).

Another form of competitive running was also present in Metkei, Kapsowar and Arror areas (O.I Rose Chemwetich on 16/12/2021). It occurred on special occasions such as during the initiation ceremony. Such exercise was very critical in contributing to the physical fitness of the initiates: particularly the development of speed, strength, power and endurance and also to select a leader of the age group being initiated. The recovery and training period that followed, were particularly devoted to the preparation of young boys for warriorhood. It also acted as a 'hardening' process whereby the greatly treasured male initiates were trained to become successful hunters. Boys were also taught the basics of spear throwing and archery during the time of seclusion which was a fundamental skill for hunting and warfare (Manners 2007:56).

Features such as trees and shrubs were used to mark the running course. Races of various distances, including modern relay format where they could use sticks as batons were common and the winner was determined by the speed in running the set distance. Traditionally this race had much symbolic value to the Keiyo and Marakwet society. Any competitor failing over during the race was rendered unclean and had to be ritually purified before they could take part in the initiation (O.I Mzee Arap Cheptoo on 12/12/2021). Such competition acted as a means of enhancing social status within society and creating stability as a result of peers not having to fight among themselves to find a leader.

For the Keiyo and Marakwet warriors, running served a practical function; it was an important survival tool for cattle raiding. The tradition of raiding cattle from the neighbouring community was an integral part of their culture (O.I Mike Arab Boit on 2/1/2021). They could travel as far as Tugen, Nandi, Kipsigis and Pokot country to raid cattle. Cattle were of great importance to the Keiyo and Marakwet societies during the pre-colonial period and so remain today. Cattle engendered prestige and were necessary for a man's full participation in the political, economic and social life of the community. A man who had no cattle at all was looked upon as having a very low status in the community. This was also made clear in terms of marriage in which a man could not enter without possessing cattle. According to Massam Keiyo great ambition in raiding was to "acquire as much cattle as possible' (Massam 1968:35).

Raiding cattle from neighbouring communities offered a way to acquire more wealth or to marry many wives, but this demanded physical fitness (O.I Mike Arab Boit on 2/1/2021). When the Keiyo and Marakwet contemplated a raid, an intelligent man was

sent at night to wander in the enemy's country. His mission was to spy out, in the guise of a lunatic, the amount of stock in that neighbourhood (O.I Kipkemei Paul on 3/12/2021). He was also required to calculate the distance that would take to reach that area. When he returned his report was considered and a day was fixed about a month ahead for the raid (O.I Chesir Joseph on 3/12/2021).

Elders would then select a group of about twenty to thirty *murran* (warriors) based on their past raiding success and speed. They would then take a beer to the *orgoy* (prophet) and lay their plans before him (Kipkorir 2008:35). If he prophesied that the raid would be successful, he advised them how to ensure success. The *murran* (warriors) would then arm themselves with a spear, bow or arrow and be ready for the battle. Once the cattle were captured, they, the *murran* (warriors) would drive the cattle home faster. This was because often at times the original owners of the cattle would come in pursuits. As a result, warriors would drive the cattle as fast as possible over long distances to escape the pursuers (Manners 1996:26, O.I Richard Kilimo on 4/1/2021). In short, running mattered for successful cattle raiding.



**Figure 1: Elgeyo warriors with war shields.**

**Source:** Massam J, 1927: iv

During the first half of the twentieth century, colonial officers came to regard the practice of cattle raiding from the neighbouring groups in the Rift Valley as 'endemic' and considered the Kalenjin people to be the most "frequent offenders" (Sikes 2009:273-285). One Rift Valley provincial commissioner noted that 'stock theft is the traditional sport of the young men of many tribes' (KNA/PC/RVP/2/3/1-Rift Valley Annual report 1944 p.23). This is supported by the historian David Anderson who asserts that "if cattle theft in pre-colonial Kenya was thought of as a 'young man sport' by European settlers and administrators, then the young men of the Kalenjin in Kenyan's Western Highlands were undoubtedly the most enthusiastic participants" (Anderson 1986). This was true as most of the Keiyo and Marakwet societies regard cattle raiding as a sport unless they steal from the same member of their 'tribe' (O.I with Mike Arap Boit on 3/2/2021).

Gender was also a social and cultural issue in the Keiyo and Marakwet running. It is through this that running among the Keiyo and Marakwet is best understood in the context of greatly venerated masculinity. Running was mainly undertaken by boys to prepare them to become warriors. Moreover, it should be noted that while boys were perfecting their masculinities, girls especially at around puberty remained at home

engaging in domestic activities such as cooking, fetching firewood and so on (O.I Jenifer Kilimo on 2/2/2021). This owed to the fact that, at that age, they were expected to perfect the ways of being respectable, young women in societies. Meanwhile, their age mates' boys remained outdoors mostly in groups looking after cattle in the fields. This overwhelming outdoor-oriented boyhood lifestyle provided them with plentiful opportunities to meet and compete against each other in combat activities such as running (Kipkorir 2009:34). Running, therefore, took place within male spheres.

It was therefore acceptable in pre-colonial Keiyo and Marakwet societies for men to allocate much of their time to maintain their physical fitness by travelling long distances for reasons not immediately tied to the family's production and consumption (O.I Peter Rono on 2/3/2021). While women's labour though extremely physically intensive, was largely confined to the homestead. Men often travelled long distances for cattle raids and herding animals, and boyhood games predicted 'endurance' to prepare them to become warriors, an exclusively male occupation. Therefore, running was consigned to male spheres and thus counterproductive to a women's responsibilities and social status. Runners were male because the activities that involved running were designated masculine.

### **2.3.2. Hunting in the Pre-colonial Keiyo and Marakwet Society.**

Hunting is the human practice of pursuing or snaring feral and wild animals for food, trophy, recreation or security. It is one of the oldest human practices with a long history stretching back to the Stone-Age period. In Africa, for example, hunting played a significant part in the economy and construction of masculinity through the demanding physicality and athleticism required during hunting. Like other African people, the Keiyo

and the Marakwet also participated in hunting as a necessity which with time became part of their sporting culture due to the contests of the physical skills involved.

They used a variety of hunting techniques. Some of these methods required little energy and more skills and ingenuity like the use of snares, while other methods relied on the physical pursuit of animals. Traps and snares of great ingenuity were used almost universally to secure small animals and even at times larger animals when placed around gardens. Among the Keiyo, for instance, the use of such snares constituted an important part of boyhood training (Massam 1927:254). Another technique used throughout the region was game pits, large trenches dug into game paths, sometimes fitted with sharpened stakes at the bottom, and covered by boughs and leaves. These were designed to catch large games of all sorts and were sufficiently disguised to constitute a considerable hazard to European travellers and hunters, who often used game paths as convenient routes across difficult countries. The traps were sometimes used in conjunction with beating techniques, the animals being driven between long lines of converging hedges formed by cut branches and bushes, often as much as a mile long, into an enamour trap where they could be spared.

Some of these exceptionally hazardous hunting techniques required the participation of a large number of people. They would go for tens of miles and spend several days out hunting such game as deer, gazelle, or elephants. Such large-scale hunting was significant because it provided a way for men to display their running talents, bravery, and strength. The Keiyo and Marakwet favourite sport were elephant hunting. This was mainly done when the elephants attacked their livestock or damaged the crops (Massam 1927:251). The first person to discover the elephant set up a shrill call, which was heard miles

around the area. The call was taken up and repeated by all the warriors hearing it. These hunting men, ever alert for emergencies, would take their spears and shield, and run where the alarm came. When sufficient men assembled, they formed a large circle around the field where the animals were feeding. They then closed in, maintaining a good circle as the thorny trees and scrub permitted (O.I Peter Kimutai on 2//2/2021). When the ring was so small that the elephant had no chance of getting away through an unguarded opening, the people climbed trees. Three or four of them settled in each suitable tree, with spears ready to aim at the elephants as they dashed under the trees (O.I Mzee Silas Kipkorir on 3/5/2021). Those elephants which escaped this first attack sought safety by going straight on.

The meat of the elephant killed was shared by the hunters, and the hide was divided up among the villagers situated near the place of slaughter. The first hunter to kill the elephant received one ivory and one thigh bone. The thrower of the second and third spear to penetrate shared the second ivory, and other thigh bone (O.I Cheserek arap Yano on 24/12/2020). The bone was highly valued because of the quality of marrow obtained from it. The marrow was sufficient to keep their family going for a considerable time. The hide of the elephant was used to make sandals which were worn in the thorny Kerio-valley (O.I Luka Cherop on 2/1/2021). Ivory was usually sold to the Swahili traders who travelled the country at intervals. Any not sold were cut up and made into bracelets worth one goat each. It is the insatiable demand for ivory in the Western world in the nineteenth century, which was an important export from East and Central Africa in the nineteenth century that made elephant hunting significant to historians (Mackenzie 1987: 175).

The Keiyo and Marakwet also considered buffalo as the most lucrative and difficult animal to hunt (O.I Byron Kibet on 3/1/2021). The buffalo was always moving in large herds and continued to flourish despite the repeated outbreaks of rinderpest in the area. Bold warriors hunted buffaloes by standing close to trees. From these defensive positions they hurled spears when the best opportunity offered. However, in the case where they missed the target, they scrambled up the trees for security. Half the hide and one leg of the buffalo were apportioned to the warrior who was first to kill it. The rest of the hide was divided among the other people present and was much desired for making sandals and shields (O.I Tomno Arap Maina on 3/1/2021).

Leopards (*cheplanget*) were hunted with a view of reducing their numbers. Embodied by hunger, they sometimes snatched stock from a kraal at night or seized them from the grazing field (*kaptich*) (O.I Saniako Misoi on 12/12/2020). As soon as the loss was discovered, the owner of the stock or the child herding the goat makes a peculiar call. This call was answered by the warriors, who immediately abandoned their occupations, and seized their weapons to pursue the leopard. The hunting was attended with some risk because there were many instances where indigenes were frequently mounded by cornered carnivores. The skin of the leopard becomes the property of the warrior who hit the first hit. The skins were usually worn as clothing. Sometimes they were stuffed with grass and set up in the fields to frighten monkeys from the crops.



**Figure 2: Hunters after a rest at Kerio Valley preparing to tackle the highlands**  
**Source:** Massam 1927:34

The movement of the animals hunted followed an obvious pattern associated with the rainy season and the consequent water supplies. During the dry season, there is a general concentration of these animals in more permanent swampy areas, and at sources like the Kerio Valley River or Lake Kamnarok. As the rains come, there is a great dispersal of the herds throughout most parts of the district, because of the temporal pools of water. Unfortunately, this season coincides with the growing season of the farms and fruit trees and the animals used to damage the crops. For instance, Moses Tanui (26/12/2021) a resident of Arror, narrated that, elephants practically invaded the area in December when the mangoes were ripe, and people tend to stay indoors at night during the period.

Hunting had a significant role in the Keiyo and Marakwet pre-colonial economy. Through ivory, and a source of skin and meat for them. It also served as a means of enhancing social status, particularly at the end of the nineteenth century when power and

privileges were bestowed to the best hunter (O. I with Peter Kimuren on 3/1/2021). However, hunting would never again appear in great quantities and over the vast areas in which it presented itself during the pre-colonial period. Since the reserves policy turned hunting into a spectacle for tourists and a source of sport for the privileged few.

### **2.3.3 Wrestling or *Kiptagat***

Wrestling was an activity which took place in the Kerio Valley plains as a festive event which involved dancing, beer drinking and drumming (Kipkorir and Ssenyonga 1980:61 2009). Wrestlers were mostly boys between the age of 10-18 years drawn from the same village or different villages in the location. Before the inter-village contest took place, wrestlers were fed liberally while confined to their huts for several days, a period in which they were expected to abstain from sexual intercourse and take beer or tobacco. They were also trained and required to be physically fit to emerge victorious (O.I. with Mzee Kirop on 2/12/2021).

When the day for the competition arrived, the villagers would approach the wrestler's well-decorated hut and they would then engage themselves in songs and dances as a sign of encouragement to him (O.I with Mike Arap Boit on 1/12/2022). They would then lead their wrestler to the field. Before the contest began, both contestants were reminded of the rules of the game. For example, they were not allowed to throw their competitors brutally to the ground. Above all, they were reminded to be magnanimous in victory (O.I. with Peter Kimutai on 3/12/2021).

Spectators would make a circle around the wrestling arena and the combatants were to face one another inside the arena. A horn was blown for the competition to commence.

The competitors would then place one foot in front to invite a challenge (O.I. with Mike Arap Boit on 2/12/2021). To demonstrate courage one wrestler would cross to the other wrestler 'territory'. At this moment both fighters stretched their hand to get hold of each other, as they attempted to throw the opponent to the ground. During this contest, there was an umpire who ensured that all rules were followed. Depending on the regulations of the contest, a wrestler won a contest either by throwing his opponent once to the ground on the flat of his back or by a succession of throws. Spectators would cheer the winner with each successful assault on the opponent (O.I Kiptoo Daniel on 11/12/2021). The winner achieved the honour of the village hero and his fame spread from ridge to ridge like a bushfire.

The prevailing climatic conditions also impacted on the context in which the Keiyo and Marakwet wrestling game were played. This game was mostly played during the dry season when there was smooth sandy or fine grass (O.I Anna Cheptoo on 13/12/2021). This season began with harvesting and ended with preparations for a new agricultural period. During this period people had more leisure time and more food at their disposal. Although the dry season was the main period for public ceremonial and wrestling competitions, youth were also encouraged to wrestle at other times of the year, unless it was feared that heated contests disturbed the spirits. On rare occasions that wrestling occurred during the rainy season there was a special reason for it.

Wrestling had a significant impact on the pre-colonial Keiyo and Marakwet society. It acted as a distinctive process of social selection. The outcome of such contests also determined an individual's status in society (O.I with Mzee Mike Arap Boit 12/12/2021). The winner had to gain respect among his peers, more often than not he became the

leader of his peers' group and a role model for the young ones. He was used to organise, supervise and direct wrestling contests among his peers as an umpire. This man was also treated by elders with respect. Often such champions were earmarked as future leaders of the society. Wrestling, therefore, served the function of endowing a person with prestige, establishing his rank, and ascribing and enhancing his social status. An individual victory brought honour to his age mates (O.I Mike Arap Boit on 1/12/2021). Wrestling reinforced each group's internal solidarity and sense of identity.

#### **2.3.4 Arrow Shooting**

The game mainly took place in Kerio Valley (*keu*), by young men who met to find out the best shooters among them (O.I with Chirchir Kipkirui on 2/12/2021). Bows and arrows were used for shooting and sometimes spears were used. A target pole was fixed in the ground some distance away from the shooters and each man stand at a marked position to aim and shoot. The men took turn shooting, and those who miss the pole were mocked but those who aimed well and shoot right at the pole won points and were praised. The target pole was moved further away from the shooters after every round of shooting to determine which of the boys shoot farthest (O.I. with Chirchir Kipkurui on 2/12/2021). The game was integrated with running for instance a man would throw the arrow as far as possible and others scrambled and run to retrieve it. The men always tried to outrun each other in getting the arrow back to the thrower. Often boys played this game while herding cattle in the grazing field. Arrow shooting was a very important source of fun, recreation and relaxation. It provided the best use of leisure time especially for boys (O.I. with Mzee Arap Lagat on 3/12/2021).

### **2.3.5 Stick Fights**

It was done in the highland regions of Chesoi and Kapsowar in a designated open place chosen by the elders (O.I. with Peter Kipkemboi on 12/1/2021). It was done during the initiation ceremony. The fighters were mainly boys between the age of fifteen and eighteen years old. The game involved two people who used sticks and leather thongs. A circle was formed by the spectators and the competitors had to enter into the arena. Elders would then watch from a distance to prevent serious fights. Each competitor had to hold two thin sticks or leather thongs which were used in hitting one opponent as many times as possible to score points while the second one was used for defending oneself. Occasionally, only one stick or leather thong was used in this game. A boy who was defeated left the ground very sad and disappointed. The skills and knowledge gained from stick fighting equipped the youth to perform activities of defence in their community when confronted with external aggression (O.I. with James Kilimo on 2/1/2021). It also enhanced one's social status in society, the winner was sometimes acknowledged as a leader of a certain age group.

### **2.3.6 Jumping**

The tropical savannah bushes of the Kerio Valley provided a suitable platform for high jumps 'stand and bars' (O.I with Peter Kimutai on 3/12/2021). Older boys as well as younger ones competed in jumping over these 'bars. Sometimes these bushes had prickles which made jumping over them even more challenging. A boy not only had to try to clear the height but also had to think of avoiding the prickles, to be scratched in front of his peers was not only embarrassing but was painful.

More advanced high jump competitions took place on the riverbeds of the Kerio River. During the dry season, most rivers dried up and became ravines with sand beds. The boys erected two trees on the sand beds and a stick which could be raised or lowered at will, was stretched between two slender trees. The competitor had to run up and jump from a small termite heap of feet in height (O.I. with Mzee Kirop on 3/12/2021). The boys could then increase the height to be jumped by raising the stick higher up the trees when all or some had cleared the previous height. The winner was the one who jumped the highest height and was declared a hero. The activity lasted for as long as agreed, depending on the available time (Massam 1968:107, Hennings 1951:223-224).

Jumping was also an integral part of the traditional Marakwet and Keiyo dancing and it also showed an element of traditional indigenous sporting activities (O.I with Mary Chebet on 3/12/2021). The routine of dance involved one's ability to perform low and high jumps which display one's physical prowess. These activities were alleged to make the Keiyo and Marakwet become good runners as much as good jumpers. Hennings sums this up best when he observed the Keiyo and Marakwet dancers in Edo. He asserts that,

To start an ordinary dance in Edo, all men gather around the song leader.... they (then) sail straight up into the air at an amazing height of the ground combined with a graceful and easy style which requires a lot of practice and good physical condition.... This leaping(jumping) style of dancing is common to all the kindred tribes of the Marakwet and Elgeyo, and their cousin the Maasai, Samburu and Rendile.... The expenditure of physical energy is tremendous. As training for jumping the High Jump, it could hardly be bettered, and many excellent athletes have come from these tribes (Hennings 1951: 223).



**Figure 3: Marakwet Dancers at Kerio Valley (involved jumping) their dancing style.**

**Source:** KNA/PC/RVP/2/3/4-Rift Valley Annual Reports 1948

The game was a suitable pastimes pursuit and a form of socialization for the boys while they engaged in the production of work of animal husbandry. Through this activity, basic physical qualities such as competition, strength and power were developed. It was also significant in preparing boys to be good runners and as some could run miles without stopping.

### **2.3.7 Spear Throwing**

It was played mainly by young men using spears between six and ten feet long with the wooden shaft which were iron-shod. The spears were similar to modern javelins but with a pended tail. Each player had a unique one. The game was performed on the Kerio Valley floor (*keu*) on a flat surface or ground with a runway that had scratch lines indicating the throwing point just like the modern javelin (O.I with Mike Arap Boit on 2/12/2021). A maximum of eight and a minimum of two players had to compete in the game. A competitor was not supposed to step in the line when throwing the spear. Each ran from a distance throwing and releasing the spear before stepping on the line. After the

spear had landed the players were to wait for the rest to take turns. The winner was identified by checking who had thrown the longest distance (Bale and Sang 1996: 56; O.I with Chepyator-Thomson on 12/12/2021). There were no trials, only the first attempt was considered but players were to make many attempts.

The game was significant in the pre-colonial Marakwet and Keiyo societies in that it instilled skills that are necessary for hunting and warfare among the youths (O.I with Ismael Kirui on 3/12/2021). These skills and attitudes were also important for success in work and allowed them to enjoy a fuller, happier family and community life. Participants in these games not only develop a wide range of skills but also, gained attitudes such as teamwork, leadership, problem-solving and decision-making.

## **2.4 Conclusion**

This chapter has discussed the emergence of the Keiyo and Marakwet society, their migration and settlement as well as the nature of their pre-colonial sporting activities in the light of structural functionalism theory. It has been noted that during the pre-colonial period, the Keiyo and Marakwet incorporated various types of physical activities into many aspects of their daily life such as running, jumping, arrow shooting, wrestling, and stick fighting. These physical activities were linked to significant cultural activities such as initiation, recreational pastimes, ceremonies and many other aspects of their culture. In line with functionalism theory, these activities had an important function which was part and parcel of their culture such as instilling skills required for all round sustenance for life for all. The pattern of pre-colonial sporting activities also differed regionally according to the harsh climatic condition and topographical surroundings. For instance,

harsh climatic conditions in Kerio Valley made the Keiyo and Marakwet hunt for food in times of famine. Therefore, hunting for them turned into a necessity. Such then was the life of the pre-colonial Keiyo and Marakwet society. However, this indigenous sporting freedom was halted by a more powerful force, the colonial state. The next chapter is devoted to this phenomenon. It examines the establishment of British colonial rule and how colonialism introduced modern sport in the Elgeyo-Marakwet area.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **THE COLONIAL TRANSFORMATION OF INDIGENOUS SPORTS CULTURE AMONG THE KEIYO AND MARAKWET, 1895-1945.**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter seeks to examine the process of the establishment of British colonial rule in the then Elgeyo-Marakwet district and subsequently analyze the role played by the British colonial government in the transformation of sports among the local community of the Keiyo and Marakwet. To achieve this objective, the chapter analyzes the role played by colonial agents in the transformation of indigenous sporting culture. That is the British colonial administration, especially the colonial chiefs, district officials, Christian missionary activities, British military service and the colonial education system through Government African, School Tambach. The chapter shows that through these agents of Western culture, the indigenous Keiyo and Marakwet athlete warrior spirit that was embodied in their indigenous sporting culture was harnessed and transformed to fit into Western sports, mainly athletics. Antidialogical action theory is used in this chapter to show how the indigenous sports system changed as the Keiyo and Marakwet came into contact with Western culture during British colonialism.

#### **3.2 Establishment of Colonial Rule in Elgeyo-Marakwet District.**

Among the Kalenjin-speaking groups, the Kipsigis and the Nandi were the first to encounter British colonial rule followed later by the Tugen, Pokot, Keiyo and Marakwet (Ngesirei 2017:54). The main reason for the last incorporation of the Keiyo and Marakwet into the colonial project of “British East Africa” could be attributed to the

environment occupied by the Keiyo and Marakwet which was so remote. However, early European penetration in Elgeyo-Marakwet country seems to have started in about 1883 when the Keiyo and Marakwet were first visited by Joseph Thompson who crossed the dense Cherangany forest into Kerio valley at Arror, on his way back from Uganda (Kipkorir 2009:389). Thus, he described the Elgeyo-Marakwet area that he saw as:

Further afield are the mountainous which form the opposite side of Kamasia (currently Tugen) hills, a sharp narrow range like a Brobdinagian earthwork striking off at an acute angle from the Mau escarpment, which is seen to extend under the name of Elgeyo, behind Kamasia, till at a certain point, like a huge billow which rears itself up on a shore, it rises into a great range known as Maragwet and Chibcharagnani (Thomson 1885:390).

Other European explorers like Carl Peters also visited Elgeyo-Marakwet country in the 1890s on his way back to the present-day Mutei before ascending the Elgeyo escarpment (Kipkorir 2008; Chebet and Dietz 2000:136).

By 1895, an administrative post was established at Eldama Ravine under the leadership of James Martin (Kipkorir 2009:391). It was from this point that efforts were made to 'open trade' with the neighbouring communities. This slight way of starting it marked the beginning of the ultimate subjection of the Keiyo and Marakwet to British colonial rule (Kipkorir 2009:392).

It is significant to note that among the Keiyo and Marakwet, the Marakwet were the first to encounter British colonial rule starting from Kerio Valley. However, it is only the Marakwet of Kerio Valley who resisted the early colonial administrators. The Highland Marakwet seems to have heeded the advice from the Nandi of not resisting the British colonial rule after their leader Koitalel arap Samoei was killed (Kipkorir 2009:54, O.I

with Peter Rotich on 23/2/2021). Thus, the Endo or Chepleng' segment of Kerio Valley was the only one that resisted the early colonial administrators in Marakwet country.

By then, the Endo were quite prosperous, with their mastery skills of water furrow irrigation (Hennings 1951:201, Thomson 1887:317). Through their skill, they were able to exploit the waters of the rivers cascading down the Kerio Valley Escarpment and it enable them to carry out grain cultivation. Thus, the British station at Eldama Ravine knew that the Endo had plenty of food to spare and they were envious of the plentiful purchases that were being made by the Arabs and Swahili traders (Kipkorir 2009:392). This made the British to sought means by which they can get grains from the Marakwet (Anderson 2004:234, Anderson 1983)

Therefore, on 30th June 1900, Hyde-Baker a colonial administrator from Kampala was sent to establish a post at a place called Ribo, the current township of Kollowa (KNA/DC/ELGM/1/3/4-Annual report on Elgeyo-Marakwet district 1933-1937). The protectorate commissioner of Uganda, Harry Johnstone directed that the post be opened to extend imperial authority against the Swahili traders and forestall Ethiopian incursions (Kipkorir 2009:396). The Marakwet saw this as an incursion on their economic zone.

Thus, when Hyde-Baker sent his Sergeant Major and 42 Nubians with a porter to Endo to gather grains, the stage was set for confrontation. The district annual report of Elgeyo-Marakwet suggests that when these men arrived in a place called Chebilil (between Embobut and Chesogon rivers), there happened to be a marriage feast going on. These *Askaris* (soldiers) were invited for a feast, later when they got drunk, they were massacred by the inhabitants of Endo helped by residents of Sibbo, leaving only one porter

who was fortunate to escape (KNA, DC/ELGM/1/3/4-Annual Report on Elgeyo-Marakwet district 1933-1937).

It is further claimed that the Endo together with indigenes of Sibow and Mukor assisted by Cheptulel Suk, besieged Hyde-Baker in Ribo post for five days taking all government stock and inflicting casualties but eventually, they were driven off by the aid of Njemps from Baringo (KNA/PC/RVP/4/1/2-Intelligence Reports, Kerio Province 1902, Kipkorir 2009:398). This, thereafter, followed a punitive expedition under Captain Gorges, in which the Cheptulel Suk and Endo were punished. Their houses were burned and their livestock was seized. However, the indigenes of Sibow and Mokoro were never touched. This led to the abandonment of the Ribo post (KNA, DC/ELGM/1/3/4-Annual Report on Elgeyo-Marakwet district 1933-1937).

With the abandonment of the Ribo post, the Marakwet were left out of colonial administration briefly but passively administered through Eldama Ravine (Kipkorir 2009:397). While operating from Eldama Ravine, the British administrator would visit the Marakwet clusters and appoint "Headmen" to assist in the collection of taxes. At first, this meant nothing in particular to the person who was appointed and to the rest of the people as well. On the next visit, however, the British administrator asked for evidence, through tax collected. On account that the headman had collected none, he would be publicly reprimanded, and another person appointed to replace him (O.I with Micah Arap Maritim 12/3/2021).

After overpowering the Marakwet, the British proceeded to Keiyo approaching them from the South. According to Chebet and Dietz, (2000: 136), it is held that the Marakwet

were used as mercenaries by the colonialist to extend their rule over the Keiyo, but they resisted since the Keiyo people were determined to protect their land. The Keiyo were also well knowledgeable about their terrain, unlike the British colonial troops who were new in the area. Additionally, the British troops had also not carefully planned for the war as they had underestimated the Keiyo. Hence, this resulted in a war which was known as *Kipkiomat* (long fire) owed to the fact that the British used a gun to kill the Keiyo (O.I with Cheserem on 20.7.2021). On that same day, the British camp was hit by lightning forcing the Marakwet and the British to flee back to Eldama Ravine leaving behind all the cattle they had seized from the Keiyo in an attempt to force them into British colonial rule. It was not however until 1909 after a thorough expedition which was organized all over the Keiyo country that the Elgeyo were suppressed and brought under colonial rule. This expedition was a success because the British colonial officials had previously organized a very exhaustive tour of Keiyo land in Eldama Ravine with the main objective of a possible establishment of colonial rule in Keiyo (Chebet and Dietz 2000:136).

By then, the boundaries of Uasin Gishu had already been gazetted, therefore, the boundary of Elgeyo was confined to the actual slopes of the Escarpment and the Kerio Valley (KNA/ELMG/3/4-political record book 1913-1923). Later on, the Keiyo was granted a strip of grazing land, 30,000 acres, at the top of the Escarpment. In June 1913, Elgeyo was transferred from Ravine to the then Uasin Gishu district with headquarters at Eldoret (KNA/ELMG/3/4-Political record book 1913-1923, Kipkorir 2009).

In 1925, the Keiyo which was half of the Uasin Gishu district was combined with the Marakwet and their headquarters was also shifted to Kamariny near Iten (Kipkorir and

Ssenyonga 1980:12). However, the Keiyo people at that time lived on the ledges and floor of Kerio Valley and Kamariny was considered too far for them. In 1926, Tambach was selected as it was not far (KNA/PC/RV/2/8/1-Elgeyo Marakwet annual report 1912-1928). Later on, Kamariny became an agricultural show centre which is currently renowned as a training centre for World-class Kenyan athletes. Tambach remained the district headquarters for the Elgeyo-Marakwet district for the entire colonial period until 1978 when the administration was shifted to new premises in Iten (Kipkorir and Ssenyonga 1980:12).

### **3.2.1. Colonial Administrators and the Introduction of Sports in Elgeyo-Marakwet.**

The establishment of a district headquarters in Tambach marked the beginning of the process by which the Keiyo and Marakwet began to be administered by a colonial administrative officer. Thus, the kind of person the colonial office was looking for as an administrative officer in the Elgeyo-Marakwet district was not supposed to be an intellectual. Rather he was supposed to have "A kind of Baden- powellism, possessing modest intellectual achievement, athletic prowess and a taste for outdoor life' (Bale and Sang 1996:76). Therefore, the recruitment into the colonial service was first and foremost based on character and personality with an ideal education referred to as 'two and a blue' meaning a good degree with a demonstration of superior athletic ability (Dunae 1983:123).

In examining the link between athletic ability and colonial administrators two prototypes of colonial social history converge. The first one is the role of the Edwardian public and mid-Victorian schools as the athletic nursery of British colonial men on the imperial spot, for training gentlemen who fit up in ruling the empire. The second one is the reputation

of those public schools as deriving from the code of muscular Christianity (Magan 1981:273). These public schools' ideology was based on the athletic imperative, turning boys into men and transforming the generally inconsiderate and irresponsible English graduate into a civilized behaviour as soon as he was put to govern indigenes in Africa. Kirk-Greene sums this up best when asserts that,

They (colonial administrators) were all drawn from British universities (Oxford and Cambridge). They are appointed when young. The commissioner who examined them personally in England makes a point of knowing their athletic record, and their physique is taken into consideration. Many of these civil servants in Africa were in their time... Well-known cricket and football players. (Kirk-Greene, 1987:81-82).

Arguably, then, the experience of public school prefectship and team captaincy led to the successful practice of direct rule of ruling the 'indigenes'. The D.O acted as the housemaster while the chiefs acted as the prefects and chief subjects played the role of the 'lower school' (Kirk-Greene, 1987:82). Because of this, it was easy for them to mirror their educational sporting pursuits to the 'indigenes' (Bale and Sang 1996:77, Kirk-Greene 1987:81). Such too, was the noble vision that Lord Lugard, the most influential African proconsul of the twentieth century when he recalled how he emphasized the merits of the public school when he turns out 'the class which has made and maintained the British Empire': They have produced an English gentleman with an almost passionate conception of fair play, of protection of the weak, and of 'playing the game' (Kirk-Greene 1987:83).

The colonial administrators in colonial East Africa were also required to engage themselves in regular physical exercise, basically to combat what the then Governor of British East Africa, Sir Percy Girourd, once called 'the inevitable feeling of acute

depression resulting from a prolonged residence in isolated areas' (Berman 1990:25). And since some parts of the Elgeyo-Marakwet district was not easily accessible, this made the work of an Administrative Officer in the districts to be physically demanding. The D.C had to spend most of his time trekking, usually on foot in the Elgeyo-Marakwet escarpment and working long hours in a demanding and debilitating climate (O.I with Sila Kibet Boit on 23/10/2021). It was also the duty of colonial administrators in the district to organize sports. This was usually the work of the DC and DO, since one of the qualities looked for at the time of selection was prowess in sports, they were well equipped to do so (Kirk-Greene 1980:81, Ndee 2010:3).

The District Commissioners and District Officers for Elgeyo-Marakwet district from 1926-1958 were as follows:

**Table 1: The District Commissioners and District Officers for Elgeyo-Marakwet district from 1926-1958.**

<b>YEAR</b>	<b>D.C</b>	<b>D.O</b>
1926	Mr Hosking Buxton.	Mr. B.W Bond
1928	Mr. J. G. Hopkins	Mr. D. Stross-Fox
1933	Mr. J.M Silvester	Mr. C.T Lewis
1936	Mr. W.S. Slade	Mr. R.O. Hennings
1938	Mr. R.P Armitage	MR. R.O Hennings
1939	Mr. W.H Hale	Mr. D.B Fernandes
1948	Mr. J.B Carson	Mr. G. M Hector
1949	Mr. J.B Stevents	Mr. A.P Palmer
1950	Mr. J.B Simpson	Mr. W.A Michell
1951	Mr. D. S Fox	Mr. P. H. Jones
1954	Mr.P.G. Tait	Mr. J.B Carson

**Source.** KNA/DC/ELMG/ 3/4-Political record book 1926-1958.

The appointment of District commissioner and District officer in Elgeyo-Marakwet district, as seen in the table above was not only enough to force the indigenes to colonial rule. An additional approach of control was also enforced, through the creation of colonial chiefs to administer their localities. Thus, the District commissioner further required a body of chiefs, who were appointed from among the local elders. This was the basis of direct rule, a way of administering the locality by appointing Keiyo and Marakwet local elders and using them to enforce discipline and control over the local population and in return providing them with generous material rewards.

The colonial chief was always placed at the top of the community hierarchy. The Keiyo and Marakwet did not have chiefs before colonialism. They were governed by a Council of Elders. The new colonial chief system was a phenomenon of colonial rule. They were created by the colonial government, and this was illegitimate in the eyes of ordinary Keiyo and Marakwet people. By accepting the colonial authority, the chiefs were granted a monopoly of power and given authority to exercise it. Their duties included mainly tax collection and the maintenance of law and order together with flushing out those members suspected of possessing ritual power (KNA/DC/ELMG/1/1/4- Elgeyo-Marakwet District Annual report 1927).

The introduction of chiefs brought with it bitter internal conflicts, that deepened with time with the council of elders, who were wielded with a lot of power during the pre-colonial period. Chiefs were appointed by the colonial administration regardless of age and placed at the top of the Keiyo and Marakwet society. The Council of Elders was determined by status in the community and seniority in age. Thus, a younger colonial

chief was caught between great forces, a duty to the colonial government and service and respect to the elders and society.

The chiefs were also instrumental in bringing change among the Keiyo and Marakwet. They were the ones given the mandate of organizing sports in their location. For instance, in the 1927 annual report, the DC noted that:

The district is divided into 11 locations, each with its chief and headmen. The outstanding figure is Kiburur, of Morichor, an old friend of the government and Cheserem of Mutei a progressive young Elgeyo whose experience in Tambach has given him a wider outlook on sports. For the rest, most of them are willing to organize athletics in their location (KNA/DC/ELMG/1/1/4-Elgeyo-Marakwet Annual Report 1927).

**Table 2: List of Keiyo and Marakwet Chiefs from 1927 to 1928**

Name	Location
Kiplesanga Kipturuma	Kapchemutwa
Kipkulei Bartai	Irong
Cheserem Kimoning	Mutei
Chepkurgat Chemisai	Rokocho
Cheptorus Lenja	Morichor
Cherop Chesum	Kibuswa
Cheboi Chesom	Talai
Busiendich Mursabet	Endo
Cheptoo Kipkech	Sambirir
Yego Kapkorat	Mokorro
Cheserem Lesil	Cherangany
Kiburur Cheptorus	Morichor

**Source:** KNA/ DC/ELMG/3/4-political record book 1926-1958

### 3.3 The Government African School and the Introduction of Modern Sports.

The establishment of Government African Schools (G.A.S) in various parts of the colony provided a good example of how modern sports were introduced to the indigenes. These schools were in support of the colony's education system: Shimo la Tewa in Mombasa, Kagumo in Nyeri, Kapsabet in Nandi, Kakamega in North Nyanza, Kapenguria in Suk (currently West Pokot) and Kabianga in Kericho. The schools provided perhaps the only sports entertainment for the British administration in the *Bomas*. Thus, enlivening them, as the D.O. for Baringo observed about G.A.S Kabarnet.

At the end of each term, the boys gave a concert, and it was interesting to note that these performances, which were entirely run by the African teachers and boys, had improved considerably. Since the advent of the school, Kabarnet seems to have come alive and the place throbs with youthful activity-an amazing change for those who remembered what a quiet and secluded place the boma used to be. Games and sports are greeted with much enthusiasm, and when there is a football match there is always a big crowd to cheer on the home side (KNA/PC/RVP/2/3/3 Annual report, Rift Valley Province 1947).

G.A.S Tambach was therefore the first school of any description in Elgeyo-Marakwet district. It was established in 1926 as part of a Kenya-wide response by the colonial authorities to demand by the Local Native Council for non-religious institutions offering primarily literacy as opposed to religious, education to the indigenes. The Tambach Political Records makes this clear:

Thanks to the pertinacity of certain small boys of the Elgeyo tribe, who pestered their elders and betters that the latter appealed to the District Commissioner to start a school locally (KNA/DC/ELMG/3/3, Elgeyo-Marakwet District Annual Report, 1924, p.6).

It is not known who those 'pertinacious' youth were or where they got the idea of formal or school learning. Although the central government initially rejected the request on

account of the lack of European staff housing, the District Commissioner by then, E B Hosking was also pertinacious in his support for the idea. E.W. Biss, the acting Director of Education visited Tambach in 1926 and was shown the proposed site for the school (KNA/DC/ELG/1/3-1927-1932 District annual report). He no doubt satisfied himself with the determination and willingness of the Local Native Council to vote for funds for both development and running costs. The central government thereafter gave in, and work on the new school commenced.

The building was then initiated by Native Industrial Training Depot (NITD) students under the supervision of Mr. Weller. At that time the Marakwet and the Keiyo had separate L.N.Cs both run by the District Commissioner in Tambach. In 1928 each council voted for funds totalling sh. 7000/- and sh.25, 732/- in 1929, which saw in the construction of, dormitories which accommodated thirty students. It was officially opened in July 1929 by the Colony's Director of Education, H.S Scott and named the Government African School, Tambach. The first African teachers were: Kiptiony arap Tum (Kipsigis), Malakwen arap Olmunai (Nandi) and Musyoka wa Mukola (Kamba), and the first principal was C.A Berriage (KNA/DC/ELG/1/3-1927-1932 District annual report).

At its beginning, the school under G.A. Berriage was intended to achieve three objectives. First, the school was intended to provide practical education for thirty Marakwet and Keiyo children. Second, writing and reading had to be looked at as necessary things. The 'indigenes' were to be educated with a view of not being learned clerks capable of signing work tickets but artisans useful both in the colony and in their reserves. And it was finally proposed to transform the society by introducing new

cultures such as Western sports to the 'indigenes' (KNA/DC/TAM/2/3/4-African Sports General 1926-1934). For instance, new games were supposed to be introduced such as football and athletics.

In September 1929 the LNC felt that their objectives would not be fulfilled without a qualified administration and therefore they made plans to engage a European headmaster with experience (Tarus 1994:76). This was common throughout the Kenyan colony, it was British teachers who were mostly recruited to staff the new secondary schools for the indigenes, who were often educated in prestigious British institution such as Harrow and Eton in the UK (Bale and Sang 1996:80). Thus, the colonial government believed that the elite African students of such schools would upon graduating, spread 'western' culture to the rest of the African population by the process of 'downward diffusion' (Bale and Sang 1996:80). Therefore, in December 1929 the new headmaster Mr. Howitt arrived and according to the annual report, "under his energetic direction sports operations had gone ahead in a manner distinctly gratifying." (KNA/DC/ELM/1/2, -Elgeyo-Marakwet district annual report 1927-1932).



**Figure 4: Government African School Students in 1932 Tambach with their Headmaster Howitt**

**SOURCE:** Edwin Arap Korir personal Archives

Howitt was educated at Whitgift Grammar School, Croydon, and Oriel College, Oxford, he had also been a keen athlete while at school and was able to renew his enthusiasm for sports while at Tambach (KNA/DC/TAM/2/3/1-African sports 1926-1934). He believed the kind of man required for the spread of Western sports among the African people,

Should have a good degree and must be a competent teacher. Life adaptability and readiness to help were needed and more important than academic distinction, but work has to be sound and thorough and there is plenty of scope for the use of any powers which a man possesses. He must be a willing member of a team and be prepared to throw himself vigorously into out-of-class activities, valuable lines such as games (KNA/DC/TAM/1/3/3-African sports 1930-1946).

He believed that games play a large part in training and developing character which was an important function of Education (KNA/DC/TAM/1/3/3- 1930-1946 African sports). However, what is even more important about sports is that they fill up the times of leisure. Today with increased leisure time, physical education has new fields in which to work, and its proper usage during this time is vital.

Howitt's ideology permeated the consciousness of teachers and gradually, students, the seed of athletic endeavour which was firmly implanted in Tambach. By 1929, through his administration the school had accurately measured the running field in the Elgeyo-Marakwet district, marked out by engine oil that 'killed' the grass (KNA/DC/TAM/1/3/3 - African sports 1930-1946), a method which is still used in Elgeyo-Marakwet county schools today. And in the same year, the first native sports ever held at Tambach took place. The boys participated in all events and carried off numerous prizes (KNA/DC/TAM/1/3/3- African sports general 1930-1946).

Howitt noted that "This is the first time the school has participated in sports. This event started principally to bring the small boys to the school here so that they might feel that Tambach was not someplace "away up in the clouds and very far from home" (KNA/DC/ELMG/2/4/3-Elgeyo Marakwet district annual report 1929). From there henceforth, football, deck tennis and physical drill became part and parcel of the boy's curriculum with unfailing zest (KNA/DC/TAM/2/3/5- Kings Birthday Celebration 1929-1930).

In June 1930 a group of boys from the school were taken to Eldoret for the King's birthday celebration and they participated in sports. They enjoyed this outing: many of them, indeed had never been beyond the confines of their district before. This is made clear in the district commissioner's annual report in which the DC wrote a letter to the PC Nzoia province and he noted that:

The principal of the Government African School here and I would like to bring in a number, say 30, of the older schoolboys to witness the King's birthday ceremony and to participate in African sports. I will arrange to send them in by lorry early on the morning of the 3<sup>rd</sup> of June,

returning them the same evening. Some of the schoolboys have never been outside of this district in their lives so a visit to Eldoret, upon such an auspicious occasion, should make an enormous impression upon them, (KNA/DC/TAM/2/3/5-King's birthday celebration 1929-1930).

The PC Nzoia replied to the DC noting that 'the sports are for the indigenes' and he hoped that the DC would 'bring in some of his students' (KNA/DC/TAM/2/3/5- Kings birthday celebration 1929-1930).

The following is a list of students who participated in sports during the King's birthday celebration.

**Table 3: list of students who participated in the King's birthday celebration sports.**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Events participated</b>
Emmanuel Kiptoo	Long Jump
Cheruiyot Kiprop	100 Yards
Chepkeitan Chelimo	One mile
Kipkoech Kiplangat	Six miles
Cheruiyot Chebole	Pole vault
Daudi Johna	440 Yards
Chebelio Chemwetich	Five miles

**Source:** KNA/ TAM/ 2/3/5- King's Birthday celebration 1929-1930.

Similarly, in 1933, the students from Tambach attended the King's birthday in Kabarnet and participated in sports. The DC noted that:

I am taking in a party of tribal police as large as can be spared from duty at that time, and also a band of Moran will go in. The government African school Tambach will also send in some athletes (KNA/TAM/3/2/1-King's Birthday celebration-1933-1934).

The teams of pupils from Tambach who were taken to Kabarnet won the King's birthday games. Kandie Arap Kipkulei emerged as the first winner with a total of 9 points and another pupil from GAS Tambach; Cherutich arap chepto became second with eight

points. These two pupils were selected to represent the Nzoia province at the Olympics African sports held in Nairobi in the first week in December (KNA/PC/RVP/2/3/2-Elgeyo-Marakwet District Annual report 1933, page.6).



**Figure 4: King's Birthday games in Kabarnet in 1933**

**Source:** KNA/TAM/3/2/1-King's Birthday celebration-1933-1934.

This, therefore, attracted more students at Tambach who were interested in sports. From only thirty students in 1928 to a hundred in 1933 (KNA/ELMG/3/4-Political record book). According to Peter Chebet an old student at G.A.S, he recalls how:

Howitt motivated Keiyo and Marakwet on the importance of education. He could address the members of LNC on the need to send children to school as was happening among the Kikuyu on the coast. The introduction of soccer, athletics, tennis and basketball took secondary importance. He impressed us with the importance of cleanliness, punctuality and keeping physically fit. More important, he encouraged

all the students to report back at least one student from our village when we report back to school (O, I with Peter Chebet on 21/2/2021).

In the District annual report of 1934, the Director of education assessed the contribution of Tambach School saying that,

The Government African School at Tambach has become a prominent and popular local institution. It makes a useful contribution to the progress of this district. Fortunately, from its inception, it has been under the able control of Mr R.H.Howitt has entirely won the confidence of this conservative people through sports, to the extent that the application for admission is considerably more than the number of vacancies (KNA/DC/ELG/1/3-Annual district report.1933-1937).

By then the A.I.M had established a school at Kapsawor for girls while the Mill Hill Catholic Mission had also begun construction at Tambach and Kamariny thus breaking the L.N.C and government monopoly for the provision of education among the Marakwet and Keiyo. The L.N.C. was reluctant to vote for some of its funds. According to Tarus (1994:209), the L.N.C distrusted mission schools because they discouraged circumcision and demanded the renunciation of some of the society's traditional values like taking beer and participation in traditional sports, as well as dances (KNA/DC/ELMG/1/4-Elgeyo Marakwet annual report, 1938-1939). The L.N.C felt that the missions were encroaching on their cultural rights, however, they did not oppose the introduction of Western sports in the Government African School in Tambach. In their view, western sporting culture did not threaten their cultural tradition.

In a letter to the provincial commission Nzoia, the District Commissioner Tambach in 1938 stated that the community department of sports reported favourable about the school's progress in sports (KNA/DC/ELGM/1/4-Elgeyo Marakwet district annual report 1938-1939, page.9). In particular the students from the school had already made their

mark at an annual sports competition, which had further reinforced the spread of athletics.

Howitt who was headmaster of the school for ten years from 1930-1939 deserves a special place in the establishment of sports in G.A.S in Tambach. Other headmasters also integrated sports as an important component within the curriculum since most of them were graduates from Oxford and Cambridge thus, sports were easily developed. The headmasters of the school up to 1964 included:

**Table 4: Government African School, Tambach former Headmasters**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Period</b>
G.A. Berriage	1928-1929
R.H. Howitt	1930-1936
R.C. Wilson	1936-1936
R.H. Howitt	1936-1939
W.H. Oglemy	1939-1940
J. Macmunn	1940-1944
H.T. Woodhouse	1944-1946
M. Loveland	1946-1946
M. de Lainy	1946-1949
A.J. Baymer	1950-1954
J. Mellin	1954-1954
J. L Crawford	1955-1957
H.P. Smith	1957-1959
J. Flockhart	1961-1964

**Source:** Tambach High School, Administration Block

By 1933 the growth of the school's sporting activities was also reinforced by eight African teachers who promoted sports in the school. These were:

**Table 5: African teachers and their role in sports**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Role</b>
Mathaka Nthonswa	Hockey instructor
Musyoki Mkola	Football instructor
Onyango Onyudi	Tennis instructor
Kibina arap Birech	Athletics instructor
Juspino kiharu	Football instructor
Kigen arap cheptum	Athletics instructor
Alfred Ogola	Hockey instructor

**Source:** KNA/PC 2/4/2- Elgeyo-Marakwet District annual report 1933-1939.

Together with Howitt, they drew a timetable that the students had to follow to the latter.

A day's timetable read as follows:

**Table 6: Government African School Timetable in 1938.**

<b>Time</b>	<b>Activity</b>
6.45 am	Drill and Cleaning
7.30 am	Breakfast
8.30-10.30 am	Reading and writing
10.30-12.30 am	Shamba (farm) work
12,30 pm	Lunch
2.30-5.00 pm	Mansory, tailoring and carpentry
5.00-6.00 pm	Games (Athletics and football)

**Source:** KNA/PC/RVP 2/4/2-Elgeyo-Marakwet District annual report 1933-1939.

The boys participated in games regularly from 5.00-6.00 pm each evening from Monday to Saturday. The sports were participated as follows:

**Table 7: Sports Activities from Monday to Saturday during the week.**

<b>Day</b>	<b>Activity</b>
Monday	Cricket
Tuesday	Football
Wednesday	Track and fieldathletics
Thursday	Tennis
Friday	Track and field athletics
Saturday	Football

**Source:** KNA/PC/RVP 2/4/3- Elgeyo-Marakwet District annual report 1933-1939

Such an organization drew praise from the acting supervisor of technical education Mr. G.J Stroud in 1933. He described the students as "clean and smart at class work, technical work and drill. The boys were cheerful and contended." (KNA/DC/ELMG/1/3/36-1933).

Paul Chelawa an old alumnus of G.A.S narrated that:

Games were compulsory, each afternoon being reserved for a form or groups of forms. We played Athletics in April and Football during the dry season, under the supervision of the appropriate master. Our teacher, Kibina Arap Birech, was Assistant Games Master. There were also competitions for house shields in hockey, football and athletics including cross-country running (O.I with Paul Chelawa Kilowin on 23/12/2021).

On June 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1936, at GAS Tambach there was a public ceremony at 10. am, in which all Government officials stationed in Tambach attended wearing Khaki uniforms. After the ceremony, there was a united baraza of chiefs and Local Native council who came from Elgeyo, Marakwet and Nandi, and the District Commissioner in general accordance with secretariat circular No.94 of 1936 (KNA/TAMB/2/3/1- Ceremonies 1936-1958). The first business on the agenda was to fix times for the discussion of special items with departmental representatives and to arrange African sporting activities to celebrate the Empire Day and the DC noted that:

We are holding an athletic sports meeting at the Government school on Empire Day, tomorrow, and I am inviting all chiefs and a few elders, also all pupils at Government schools. I would ask that you will enquire from other out schools whether they have any athletes and if so invite them to participate. I hope to give small 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> prizes, and there will also be meat and posho for all competitors (KNA/DC/TAM/ 2/3/1-Ceremonies 1936-1958).

Thereafter the DC sent a letter to all chiefs, and he asserted that:

On the 4<sup>th</sup> of this month, on Thursday we will have sports day to celebrate Empire's Day here in Government School Tambach. I hope Kapsabet and Kakamega students will come too. In the evening our students will have a variety of games, to entertain people. I want you all chiefs to come. Bring your 3 or 4 elders with you. We will have food to satisfy you. I also anticipate that a large number of indigenes from this district will be proceeding to Tambach to participate in the festivities. I am not issuing them with passes and I shall be obliged if you will, on this occasion, not demand them of any indigenes who have genuinely attended the Baraza and sports (KNA/TAM/2/3/1-Ceremonies 1936-1958).

The DC thereafter made the following arrangements: First, a detachment of six police constables and three tribal policemen were supposed to proceed to Tambach, arriving there at 2 pm. Some of these, with one another, constitute the Tambach tug-of-war team. Later on, one lorry of headmen and local native councillors proceeded from Keiyo. These were the official visitors for the Empire Day and they arrived in Tambach in the afternoon. Thereafter, various Moran, numbering anything to 100 from Marakwet, proceeded on foot to Tambach and they were to compete in the empire games. And, at 2 pm, the sports meeting started with the marathon race from Tambach to Iten (KNA/TAM/2/3/1-Ceremonies 1936-1958). The following were the entries of sports during Empire Day:

**Table 8: Entries of sports during the Empire Day**

<b>Game</b>	<b>Number of teams</b>
Tug-of war	1
Flat races	9
Jumps	9
Spear	1
Relay race	3 teams of 3
Marathon	5
Sack race	4

**Source:** KNA/DC/TAM/2/3/1-1936-1958-Ceremonies, Queen's Birthday and Empire Day.

From the table above games, it can be deduced that some of the indigenous games such as spear throwing were played on that day.

### **3.3.1 Rift Valley provincial Games at G.A.S Tambach**

In 1943, the Rift Valley provincial school games were held at G.A.S Tambach. The principal, H.T. Woodhouse wrote a letter to the DC Tambach, and he noted that:

There will be a sports competition on Saturday, December 1<sup>st</sup>, 1943, between Tambach G.A.S and the G.A.S of Kabianga, Kapsabet and Kapenguria. The meeting will probably start at 10. am. If there is time, there will be a football match between Tambach and Kabianga in the afternoon. The Pupils, the staff, and I would much appreciate the honour of your company, and of that of any of your friends who would care to come (KNA/PC/RVP/2/3/2-Rift Valley Province annual report-1946).

Thereafter, the DC replied, and he noted that "Thank you very much for your invitation to the inter-school sports meeting to be held on 1<sup>st</sup> of December 1943. I'm hoping to bring along my wife and son (KNA/PC/RVP/2/3/2-Rift Valley Province annual report-1943).

Later the DC wrote a letter to all the chiefs in the district, and he noted that 'on 1<sup>st</sup> December there will be a sports meeting in Tambach, and he urged all chiefs to spread the news in the villages (KNA/DC/TAM/ 2/3/1-Ceremonies 1936-1958).

On that day the sports meeting went off smoothly and it was well organised. About 300 people came including about 100 Moran. There was no shortage of competitors, and the standard was on the whole high (KNA/PC/RVP/2/3/2-Rift Valley Province annual report 1943).

**Table 9: Winners of the G.A.S Tambach athletics team**

Events	Record	Winner
100yards	10.1 secs	Ruto Kimining
220yards	23.25secs	Cherono Kimeli
880yards	60.2 secs	p Cheum
440yards	50.8 secs	Kibor Cheserek
Long jump	20.6'' feet	Caleb Chemai
3 miles	15min 13.4secs	Komen Chepkwony
6 miles	30 min 45secs	Kipkoech Lagat
1 mile	4 min 30.5 secs	Kibet Cheum
Javeline	169'' 10'' feet	Kipkoech Kimutai
High jump	5.8feet	Kibiwot Kiptoo
Pole vault	10ft.6ins	Kibet Kibor

**Source:** KNA/TAMB/1/3/3- African sports 1943

From 1943, African teachers such as Daniel Toroitich arap Moi, Kibor Talai and John Koitie continued to play a critical role in the school sporting activities (O.I with Moses Kiptanui on 24/4/2021). The school continued with its tradition of producing a lot of sportsmen who participated in various districts and provincially games. What was more significant was the 1944 provincial school games in Kabarnet. The school established itself in athletic prowess when the students competed against such other students from G.A.S Kabarnet and G.A.S Kapsabet. It was from this event that some athletes such as Suter Chemweno, Lazaro Chepkwony and Bartonjo Rotich were able to be selected to represent Kenya in the British Empire and Commonwealth games in Vancouver, British Columbia. The occasion marked the first time that the district of Elgeyo-Marakwet

emerged as a potential source of good runners and thereafter it became apparent that athletics was no longer the exclusive preserve of Nandi District.

The principal of the school commented on the event, and he noted that:

The splendid showing by our athletes at Kabarnet last Saturday, August 18<sup>th</sup>, when they defeated Kabarnet for the fourth successive year was the climax to another very successful season. The athletes themselves were magnificent in every respect, and I feel that this reflects great credit to European and African teachers who give up so much of their time to encourage sport. The important of our standard of athletics in Tambach and more important still, the ever-growing enthusiasm, are due in the main to keeping interest shown by the district throughout each season (KNA/DC/TAM/2/3/5-Arab and African sports Association 1943-1946).

The principal of the school further explained to the school committee that he had received a letter from Jeanne school that one of the athletes Kipkoech Arap Lagat had been selected to represent Kenya in the 6 miles Empire games in Vancouver, Canada (KNA/DC/TAMB/2/3/5-Arab and African Sports Association 1943-1955). The DC also noted that sports in the district have ended successfully that year. And the schoolboys had taken part in interschool physical training competitions in district sports and the school athletes did very well (KNA/DC/TAM/2/3/5-Arab and African Sports Association).



**Figure 5: Rift Valley sports day at G.A.S Tambach in 1943**

**Source:** KNA/PC/RVP/2/3/1-Rift Valley Province Annual Report 1943-1945.

Commencing early in 1944, the school published a quarterly sports magazine for the indigenes. This was done in cooperation with the African Information service called "Ngalekab Tambach" (KNA/TAM/2/3/3-1944-1946, African sports general). The main aim of the magazine was to provide districts, schools, clubs, coaches, teachers, athletes, footballers and officials with an up-to-date advice on all aspects of games and sports as well as news and results from all parts of the colony. The headmaster of the school by then Mr. H.T Woodhouse noted that "Each quarter a complete coverage of African modern sport, and the provision of interesting and stimulating features for all classes of active and non-active enthusiasts will be our endeavour" (KNA/TAM/1/3/3-1930-1946 African sports General).

Apart from purely sports news that was covered over time, the magazine also included much feature material such as training and coaching articles, and photographic and

diagrammatic illustrations. A broad picture of the colony's African modern sporting activities in story and illustration was also present (KNA/TAM/1/3/3-1930-1946 African sports).

The African information services, therefore, agreed that, provided there is a demand for such a magazine, to subdue it initially but on the condition that it must eventually become self-supporting (KNA/TAM/1/3/3-1930-1946-African sports). It was estimated that a publication of about 3 pages, written in Swahili cost about 30 cents. Consideration was also given to one column being in English and on a vernacular (O.I with Moses Tanui on 3/5/2021). It was earnestly hoped that this new venture will enhance the urge for sports in the district. The magazine also provided a publication which kept the readers abreast of sports events in every part of the district (KNA/TAM/1/3/3-1930-1946-African sports).

#### **3.4. Colonial Settlers and the transformation of sports in Elgeyo- Marakwet**

In 1900 with the appointment of Sir Charles Eliot as the Commissioner for the East African protectorate, the territory began to acquire new status (Tarus 1994:54). Eliot not only wanted to introduce a crown colony type of administration but also to find a new source of revenue to make the railway pay. Taxation was introduced but it was insufficient. Elliot, therefore, supported the colonization of the western highlands of Kenya by Europeans. His recommendation was further hastened by the decision of the foreign office in London to transfer the Eastern province of Uganda to Kenya in 1902 (Wafula 2000:54). This large area was therefore suitable for European settlement and exploitation.

This land was, however, not a vacuum. Its precolonial inhabitants had to vacate to leave room for white settlers. Settlers therefore started to arrive from as far as Australia, Britain, Canada and South Africa among others (Tarus 1994:54). For the Afrikaner settlers, the Uasin Gishu plateau became the focal point, providing them with an opportunity to found an alternative colony in the highlands that would resemble a homeland. The Keiyo and Marakwet therefore who occupied the highland plateau had the unenviable task of working for the Afrikaners in the Uasin Gishu plateau.

It is important to note that most of the Afrikaner settlers in the Uasin Gishu plateau were not especially well disposed towards athletics (Bale and Sang 1996). 'Sport' was often interpreted as big game hunting rather than athletics and football (Cranworth, 1912:124). This is not to say that the settlers lacked opportunities for competitive-although non-serious sports. Nevertheless, they also had racecourses, polo grounds and gymnastics. These helped to relieve boredom and cement social bonding. It is also worth mentioning that these games were practised by the Afrikaner settlers themselves and were socially distanced from the indigenous African population in the Uasin-Gishu plateau (Cranworth 1912:124-125). The formal layout of the new sports landscapes therefore, contrasted, of course, with the less geometric and more natural pattern of the African sporting culture. They also had segregated spaces with facilities strictly reserved, primarily for the recreational sporting pastimes of white settler communities (Bale and Sang 1996:78).

The sport of a showy nature characterized the idea of one of the settlers in Uasin-Gishu, A.S. Cooper, who in 1925 started what became to be known as 'race weeks' (Bale and Sang 1996:78-79). The double meaning of the word 'race' is not without irony. Since it involved a kind of 'tribal' gathering. According to James Fox, the race weeks of the 1920s

were 'more like a bacchanal orgy than anything resembling any form of modern sport' (James 1996:54). Settlers attended the event and various western games were played in an atmosphere of informality, fun and recklessness. The indigenes were expected to simply observe the action while 'waiting' on settlers for whom the meetings often represented a gathering of old friends. The main sporting activities were horse racing, but cricket, tennis and golf were also part and parcel of those events. Games were often arranged spontaneously and were not taken seriously (Cranworth 1912:123).

Settlers could also sometimes organise races up to ten miles for their workers. In 1933 one of the Keiyo squatters who was working in the Uasin-Gishu plateau took part in (and won) a six-mile race organized by C.D. Cullen a colonial settler based in Uasin-Gishu.

He asserts that:

When I worked for the mzungu, Bwana Cullen we had a race for the workers in a tea plantation. The kip-nyabara announced that the chumbindet (European Employer) would give a prize to the winner. I decided I would run. I was so big by then and all the young men laughed when they heard that old Arap Kurgat was going to run against them. The following morning, I woke up and drank mursik (milk), (which)I had left outdoors to be chilled during the night. Then I took my kirokto (a stick) and went to the house of chumbident. When all runners arrived, the Mzungu blew a whistle, and we started running. They were two men in front of me. The others were like sheep following us. When we had run three miles, we approached the point near Iten when we had to turn around and return. I ran like the wind and went past the two men. Eh! They were angry and tried to catch up with me on the return journey, but their legs were not fast enough. When I reached the starting point all the people cheered, and I was given two debes (large four-gallon tins) of oil. When those who had laughed at me arrived, they were not pleased to see that I had won (O.I with Mzee Arap Kurgat on 23/2/2021)

It is, therefore, evidence that the colonial settlers played a role in introducing Western sports to the Keiyo indigenes in the Uasin-Gishu plateau.

### **3.6. The missionaries and the transformation of sports in Elgeyo-Marakwet**

While the missionary's main objective in Africa was to abolish the slave trade from the middle of the eightieth century to the early nineteenth century, they also paved the way for the enslavement of Africans to Western culture. They introduced assimilation, hence leading to the undermining of African culture (Sikes 2014:274). Schools, hospitals and churches were all established by the missionaries, but they too were vital agents in introducing Africans to the ways of the Western world. Commenting retrospectively on the conduct of missionaries in Africa Urch rightly observed that,

As the leading exponent of the Western way of life the missionary...was often antagonistic toward African culture, for it was accepted by him that Western culture was superior to the indigenous traditional society. The Africans were considered to lack the attribute of civilization and the diffusion of European culture through education together with the propagation of the gospel was considered necessary for the benefit of Africans (Urch 1968:103)

Whether Christian missionaries acted consciously or unconsciously towards the indigenes, by "civilizing" them it meant the destruction of African culture. And it created a blank state on the African mind on which to print a new superior culture (Mtuzze 1999:16). In this "civilizing" enterprise missionaries played an especially prominent role in introducing sports to the indigenes. This formed part of the twentieth-century ethos of 'muscular Christianity' through which sports were introduced to the African population through the work of mission schools (Bale and Sang 1996:72).

Although African children were not compelled to go to school by then, once there were there they were certainly introduced into physical education. Games and drills were also the main aspects of their curriculum (Bale and Sang 1996:75). This, therefore, exemplified the hygienist mode of sporting culture which contrasted with the more

sensuous and fluid sporting culture of the indigenes. While the missionaries were not always interested in teaching athletics, they were, nevertheless, urged to recognize that the spirit of play, traditionally satisfied by indigenous dancing, could be replaced by sports. Whether the spirit of play is denied, 'the thwarted emotions find vent in secret vices and smug hypocrisy' (Leys 1926:225). Thus, sport was used by the missionaries as an alternative to indigenous African dancing which was believed to be "sexually explicit, lascivious and hence undesirable" (Bale and Sang 1996:76).

The missionaries also believed that with the introduction of modern sports, the indigenes will diverge from political discontent. Thus, sports would provide a safety valve for excessive anti-imperialist feelings and would assist in the creation of a fit workforce. These perspectives were encapsulated in the philosophy of Dr John W. Arthur, an athlete and graduate student at Glasgow University (Cunningham 2013:54, Cunningham 2019:45). An enthusiastic opponent of clitoridectomy, Arthur arrived in Thogoto in 1907 and took charge of physical education and games at the Church of Scotland's Mission (Cunningham 2016:3). He believed in spreading the values of the British 'public schools' to the Kikuyu children and saw sport as a necessary part of the African curriculum. He believed that,

The football played in the afternoon was played for moral benefit as much as recreational relief, ...to stiffen the backbone of these boys by teaching them manliness, good temper and unselfishness- qualities among others which have done so much to make a Britisher (Bale and Sang 1996:77).

Therefore, the ethos of muscular Christianity, as applied here to football, was also applied by all missionaries in other parts of the country.

The role of the missionaries in the spread of British games has however been underestimated. It is now time to set the record straight. It was wholly logical that the missionaries' concept of education mirrored the prevalent and fashionable metropolitan ideal of muscular Christianity as ostensibly upheld and implemented in the establishment of schools in England (Mangan 1987:146). The desirable fusion of morality and manliness in the missionary mind is abundantly clear from the following statement and recapitulation associated with one of the most famous high schools in Kenya: Alliance high school.

At Alliance high school, established in 1926, the second headmaster, Carey Francis, in his first annual report asserted that Christianity and games were only part of the life of the school but were indeed its most important element (Kipkorir 2008). And his successor, Lawrence Campbell, on his appointment summarized the history of the school: 'From the first, Alliance has set out to be a Christian family of boys and masters. The heart of everything is our primary loyalty to Jesus Christ. It means that all we do, class work, games, school life, personal relationships, as well as Chapel and the rest- should be the service we offer to our master. Through all these, we seek to serve him and help our boys to become strong, intelligent Christian men' (Mangan 1987:147). This ambition to create strong, intelligent Christians resulted in a belief in games as deeply rooted at Alliance as it was at any English public school.

Carey and Campbell were the admired leaders of Christian Africa, captains in a militant team of late Victorian muscular missionaries who hoped that in providing education they would also be able to form Christian character. "Such missionary schoolmasters provided their boys with a complete way of life: table manners, cricket, church attendance, and

Christian morality (Turner 1971:327). They looked to create Tom Brown in Colonial Africa who is brave, helpful, a gentleman and a Christian (Mangan 1987:148).

In any record of the diffusion of sports and sports ethics throughout Africa, the eccentric, the oddity, and the nonconformist deserve a passing mention. They had their impact. For a variety of motives, missionaries took the game developed in British public schools beyond the coastal fringe and deep into the heart of rural Kenya. Not all the proselytizers were from public schools, nor did they create public schools, nor were they all men (KNA/DC/ELMG/3/4-political book record 1933-1934). For instance, Margaret Halliday (1871-1954) born in Canada, played a small part in the diffusion of soccer and athletics in the interest of discipline and more importantly purity.

Her African Inland Mission (A.I.M) school at Kapsawor in Elgeyo-Marakwet district in colonial Kenya was well stocked with a supply of tennis balls, and when the classes were over, the students had a sport that proved a great asset; exclusion from it was a useful punishment for irregular attendance (KNA/DC/ELM/1/3-District Annual report 1935). However, athletics and football were their favourite pastime and one she fully encouraged as a distraction from licentiousness and as a stimulus of self-denial. For instance, a report published by the AIM mission at Kapsawor noted that,

The best place the Marakwet could find true morality was through the mission school, not only because of Holy communion and confessions but also because they provided 'smart drill... with uniform and banner: where frequently sports competition takes place with prizes and cups, certain as we are that physical training is of great importance (KNA/TAM/2/3/1-Ceremonies 1936-1958).

Her biographer wrote that 'one might wax lyrical over the part that athletics and football has taken in attracting and educating the lads and giving them an outlet for their energies,

in place of fighting and bad dances' (Mangan 1987: 151), and further praised the value those sports in teaching togetherness among the Africans. She was also not alone in her attempt to create a restrained aesthetic. In her antipathy to suggestive rhythmical contortions, she had a strong affinity, for instance, to the Reverend Geoffrey Twistleton Wykeham -Fiennes, who was a teacher in Zimbabwe at St. Mark's College, who introduced modern dancing to his African boys and thus brought a new experience and enjoyment to the young Africans (Mangan 1987: 153). G.L. Pilkington who joined the Church Missionary Society in 1889 was also another missionary who used football as an early moral purgative and distraction. He was a schoolmaster at Harrow School. Pilkington was a muscular missionary who was much admired by the church romancers of the period (Mangan 1987:153).

Various mission stations in colonial Kenya also had sports meetings. The main aim was to introduce modern sports to the indigenes. For example, in the Elgeyo-Marakwet district in 1938 A.I.M also held sports day at Kapsawor on the occasion of the consecration of the Right Reverend C. Reign (KNA/TAM/2/3/1-Ceremonies 1936-1958). It was reported that 'each A.I.M station competed with its team, and the show offered by that disciplined multitude of black boys is the unforgettable thing for those who had the good fortune to attend it' (KNA/TAM/2/3/1-Ceremonies 1936-1958). In this event, the Marakwet indigenes were being able to take part in Western sporting activities such as football and Athletics.



**Figure 6: Elgeyo-Marakwet elders at A.I.M Sports Day at Kapsawor in 1938.**

**Source:** KNA/PC/RVP/2/3/2-Rift Valley Annual Report 1938

Later, the Marakwet land was invaded by the Fathers of the Mill Hill Society of the Roman Catholic Church at Nerkwō (Kipkorir 2009:345, Armarda 2001:20). Through them, western mode of education was introduced in Elgeyo-Marakwet district. They built mission schools such as Sing'ore Girls, Kapropita Girls and St Patrick's High School in Iten. Of crucial importance in terms of introducing sports to the indigenes was at St Patrick's High School in Iten. The first head teacher, Brother Simon, had a keen interest in sports and coached the school athletic team himself. Under Brother Simon, all first-year boys at the school were supposed to take part in athletics. This ensured that those who had talent could be readily identified. Those students were put through a rigorous program of training, which culminated in competition from July to August. Among those influenced by Brother Simon in the early days of St Patrick's was Professor Mike Boit.

From the 1950s, the school continued to attract other foreign teachers to build on the tradition of mission schools. Among those teachers were Peter Foster, brother of the

famous British Long-distance runner, Bredan Foster and Brother Colm O'Connell from Ireland. During this period athletes such as Olympic champion Peter Rono, Kip Cheruiyot, Matthew Birir and Charles Cheruiyot from St Patrick's were able to represent Kenya at the All-African Games in Ghana. It is also interesting to note that, the school has never possessed a running track and most training is done on the cross-country route, up and down the Kerio Valley. Yet it has been suggested that the school provides an 'ideal situation for a favourable attitude towards sports' with its English tradition, its Christian asceticism, its boarding school ethos and its moderate climate at a high altitude (Mahlmann 1989:141).

### **3.5 Military service and the transformation of sports in Elgeyo- Marakwet**

Military service has generally played a critical role in the transformation of sports, especially those trained in Britain. A casual glance at any past or present British Army regimental journal will at once show the importance and honour belonging to the regiment's sporting achievement (Clayton 1980:106). It is also worth mentioning that the first athletic meetings held in England were at the old Royal Military Academy, Woolwich in 1894, a fact recorded by Woolwich's historian, Brig. Gen. Sir Gordon Guggisberg, the famous Governor of Gold Coast (Duckworth 1912:68). There are several reasons for this important attachment to the sport by military service. The first one was because of physical fitness, which was a vital link to the overall well-being and robustness of a soldier. Any military commander must have had, well up on his list of training. The second reason was that engaging in sport kept a soldier fit for long hours while marching and carrying heavy loads (Clayton 1980:114). In short, the sport was correctly seen as a vital part of the personal development of a soldier.

The sport was also seen as one of the most important facets of 'manliness' within the British military service (Bale and Sang 1996:75). This concept of 'manliness' contained a concept of Darwinism in that the fittest would survive as the best soldier. 'Manliness' in this pattern of sport was seen as a useful outlet and an energy-consuming substitute for young empire builders in achieving muscular self-discipline. This served to provide an officer with a sense of moral superiority.

These, then were the approaches taken by the British Military, the enormous majority of whose regular officers were from public schools' background (Oxford and Cambridge) to colonial Kenya in the early twentieth century (Sikes 2019:45). These views, along with those on the merits of parliamentary democracy and neoclassical education, were to be donated to Africa as part of the colonial mission. They were brought to the Kenyan society that had previously experienced little or nothing of the Hellenistic concept of an individual athlete or 'nonfunctional sport for sport's sake western team -game concepts' (Clayton 1980:117).

Of crucial importance was the King's African Rifles (KAR) which was constituted as a colonial regiment in 1902 (Gimode 2007: 230). An attempt by KAR to introduce athletics to the native was made in the early twentieth century by Captain Richard Meinertzhagen, who was a soldier and alumni of Harrow School (an elite private institution in England). While he was on duty in colonial Kenya, at festivities for the coronation of King Edward VII, he organized sports for his KAR Company at Muranga (Bale and Sang 1996). The game was not regarded as a success, however, it was recorded that 'the winner of a race of 2.25 miles (3.6 kilometres) covered the race in exactly 14 minutes' (Bale and Sang

1996:75, Clayton 1980:116). The performance was unexceptional but this was certainly the first timed foot race in Kenyan history.

In 1919 the KAR started to hold their athletic championship in various parts of the country. Their First athletic championship was held in Nairobi, and according to F.A.M Webster who participated in the game. He asserts that he 'was beaten into third place in the 100 yards championship....by two men who had been at that station for months' (Webster 1937:341, Bale and Sang 1996:75). It seems unlikely however that the KAR championship by then involved multi-ethnic tradition (Bale and Sang 1996:75).

The military influence was also present in the first athletic meeting involving the whole of Keiyo and Marakwet Reserve in 1936. In a championship which was held at Kamariny stadium as a way to recruit indigenes to the K.R.A (O.I with Micah Serem on 2/3/2021). The DC had before written a letter to the officer commanding the 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion of K.A.R about the recruitment and he noted that:

The indigenes have a conviction for stock theft and they (Elgeyo and Marakwet) are suspected of other stock thefts or being implicated in them. They are stock owners in their own right and quite respectable people. They are quite a good physique and have desires to be enlisted in the K.A.R. I did not say that I will not recommend them to you, but on second thoughts they might make an excellent askari(soldiers), and they would be out of harm's way, so to speak if they could not indulge in his forbidden recreation (KNA/DC/TAM/1/9/18-Military and KAR recruitment 1936-1945)

The event was presided over by the commanding officer of the Northern Brigade of the KAR as well as the commanding officer of the Royal Air Force (RAF) (O.I with Arap Serem on 23.5.201). Keiyo and Marakwet from throughout the reserve took part in events 'honoured' by the performance of the KAR and police band and the presence of the power and majesty of aircraft from the RAF (O.I with Kipruto Kanda on 43/2021 in Eldoret

town). The officer Commanding, Northern Brigade, King's African Rifles by then noted that:

The District Commissioner Elgeyo-Marakwet Reserve informs me that he is most desirous that the K.A.R. should obtain some recruits from the Elgeyo and Marakwet. I understand from the past that one batch was taken from these indigenes and that they were favourably reported on. It would greatly assist the Administration if it was felt that a certain number of these young men could be sent to discipline employment from time to time, and I would be grateful if you will give the matter your serious attention when making your next recruiting arrangements (KNA/DC/TAM/1/9/18-Military and KAR recruitment 1936-1945).

After the event, the District Commissioner (DC) for the Elgeyo-Marakwet district noted that

There is no doubt that if the Marakwet and Keiyo warriors can be allowed to frequently display their physical prowess using sports and games, this will be an important factor in civilizing the youth and in replacing the feast of physical endurance and daring indulged in stock raiding in the past (KNA/DC.TAM/1/9/18-Military and KAR recruitment 1936-1945).

It is therefore evident that the DC was promoting athletics as a surrogate for cattle raiding. Manners (2007:45) also noted the same idea in the 1930s among the Kipsigis, which were encouraged to show their prowess in games and sports, but not in cattle raiding. From this event therefore, Keiyo and Marakwet warriors were heavily recruited into Kenya Africa's Rifles (KAR), during the Second World War. Thus, recruiting warriors into KAR was thought to redirect their martial proclivity as well as their predilection for cattle raiding in ways less troublesome to the colonial state (Sikes 2014:274). And since the criteria for recruitment into KAR was physical prowess, the colonial officers tended to favour the so-called 'warrior communities' as *askari* in the KAR (Greenstein 1975: 72). Kurgat (O.I on 23/5/221) also agreed with this sentiment when he asserts that: 'Unlike the Germans, the British recruited very capable Africans from the African communities that had *murenik*' Therefore, most of the Kalenjin warriors

found employment in the military forces. The ability to run well could also lead to a relatively lucrative army job, with rising social benefits as the colonial authorities strengthened the elite status of the K.A.R.

The police and the army were also among the chief agents in the military service involved in the introduction of sport to the indigenes. The need for a fit force in both sectors was facilitated by the introduction of athletics. The arrival of R.G.B. Spincer as commissioner of police in 1925 stimulated the development of the police force as a major factor in the growth of Kenyan Athletics (Manners 2007:45). He had 'played a good game of golf, played an excellent game of cricket, was a horse-lover, a keen and good polo player, and an amateur jockey on the flat or steeplechase' (Bale and Sang 1996:78). Spincer placed considerable emphasis on the 'games ethics' and included physical fitness in the force's regular curriculum. During his time in the Kenyan police, he strongly supported athletics, among other sports. As a result, the police gained a high sporting reputation over the years.

As early as 1928 the police team were allowed to compete in the All-African Games (Bale and Sang 1996:78). The team was stocked with Kalenjin athletes, resulting from perhaps there were the largest group in the police force. It was upon this that British influence was initially mostly felt. Nevertheless, Spincer's fundamentally racist views of the African's capabilities reflected the prevailing colonialists' ideology. He thought it necessary to push the abject of Africans hard, nothing that physical training needed to be emphasized in the Kenya police 'so that the comatose mind of the raw native may be awakened' (R.G.B. Spicer, police Department Annual report, 1925, page.7).

By 1933 the police and the army began hosting its own athletics championships in various parts of the country (Sikes 2014:276). After races, winners were sometimes approached and offered places in the colony's security forces in the army and the prisons. Once employed, coaching was available for them. For instance, Wilson Kiprugut Chumo, Kenya's first Olympic medalist at the 1964 Tokyo Games, recalled how he found his way into athletics, he said, "Captain Kiptonui from North Rift identified me as a potential athlete and in 1959, he recruited me into K.A.R currently the Kenya Armed Forces" (O.I with Kiprugut Chumo on 23/5/2021). Kenya's also most famous athlete of his era, Kipchoge Keino, was also recruited into the Kenyan police force because he had a promising running talent (O.I with Kipchoge Keino on 23/2/2021 at Nairobi), and by the end of 1963, military men from the Rift Valley, were recognized as the colony's fastest runners.

### **3.6 Conclusion**

This chapter analysed the colonial transformation of sports among the Keiyo and Marakwet, which, clearly illustrates the role of imperialism in spreading the athletic value to the Africans. The unrestricted sporting culture of the Africans during the pre-colonial period had been replaced by modern sports. The principal agents were the colonial administrators who were driven to introduce sports to the indigenes through a reflection of themselves having been educated at elite private schools and universities where the sport was part and parcel of their school curriculum. Missionaries, on the other hand, opened schools for the indigenes in which physical activity, games and drills were introduced in their curriculum. The military service also introduced western sports to the indigenes as a surrogate of cattle raiding, this led to the recruitment of Keiyo and

Marakwet warriors in World War two. The European values inculcated during this period were most visible in the changing cultural landscape. After all, taking land for the cultivation of another culture was the main objective of colonialism.

It is also significant to note that, what attracted the imagination of the Keiyo and Marakwet indigenes was athletics. The impulsive positive adoption of athletics was because 'athletics as competitive, organized, and physical activity was not something new to them. Because, certain norms and values for instance endurance, courage, and physical skill were some of the qualities presented in the pre-colonial Keiyo and Marakwet sporting activities. Therefore, the introduction of athletics among the Keiyo and Marakwet, through various agents, found an enthusiastic and willing indigenous African population whose athleticism fitted perfectly in the new sports.

It can be argued, of course, that gains were obtained from these changes as the adoption and adaptation of athletics marked a watershed in the transformation of the Keiyo and Marakwet sporting history. The county hence became a member of the global sporting community. 1954 witnessed the events at the White City and Vancouver. Cardiff and Rome were to follow, as were the achievements of great Kenyan runners from Elgeyo-Marakwet County, as the next chapter will show. The next chapter is devoted to this spectacle. It examines how the adoption and adaptation of athletics in Elgeyo-Marakwet marked a watershed in the Keiyo and Marakwet sporting history.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **THE ADOPTION OF MODERN SPORTS AND ITS IMPACT ON THE KEIYO AND MARAKWET SPORTING HISTORY, 1946-1964.**

#### **4.1: Introduction.**

In this chapter, we examine how the adoption and adaptation of athletics in Elgeyo-Marakwet marked a watershed in the Keiyo and Marakwet sporting history. This cannot be explained by a single cause. Instead, it requires an understanding of the globalisation of sports and the integration of Kenyan athletics into a global system, which was, a central feature of its transformation. Among the sub-themes discussed here are: The formation of the Arab and African Sports Association, the Olympic Games, the British Empire and Commonwealth Games, sports courses in Tambach, Kalenjin games, locational, district and provincial games.

#### **4.2: The formation of the Arab and African Sports Association.**

The year after 1945 can be described as a period of recovery, rehabilitation, and reabsorption. The set-up was generally accepted in both the European and 'Native' areas as it was inevitably thrown out of gear by six years of war. Therefore, very considerable readjustment was required to meet the changed condition, thus all section of the community was called upon to deal with the post-war problems of reconstruction and development. Sports was therefore one of the invaluable denominators used to pull together various ethnic groups with diverse languages and customs into a single nation to enhance development.

This potential of sport as a unifying factor after the Second World War was nothing new to the African continent. 'Our Administration officers are welding tribes into a nation,' commented a colonial administrator in Elgeyo Marakwet, in 1946, as he observed the political effects of British colonial transport and communication, football and athletics on the colonial Kenya scene (KNA/DC/TAM/2/3/4-African sports general-1946-1953). 'Athletics and Football teams now travelled hundreds of miles by train and streamer to play the teams of other tribes'. (KNA/DC/TAM/2/3/4-African sports general-1946-1953).

Thus, in Elgeyo-Marakwet, every effort was made to encourage Africans to take an interest in some form of physical activity during their spare time in a country which lends itself to open-air games and pastimes. The DC noted that:

I have recently had a note from the chief native commissioner on the subject of encouraging Athletics and football and other sports among Africans. He is most anxious that the departments whenever possible should organize and assist in financing departmental football teams and promote other sports activities. He points out that sports among Africans depend on European leadership and that what is required is not merely the formation of team and officials' patronage but assistance by departmental officers in refereeing and judging and so on (KNA/DC/TAM/2/3/4- 1946-1953-African Sports General).

It was further pointed out by the DC that it was necessary to make an effort, particularly at that time, to occupy the minds and bodies of young Africans. Otherwise, they tend to become involved in undesirable activities which are often termed political but which spring from a lack of suitable spare time activities (KNA/DC/TAM/2/3/4-1946-1953, African Sports General). He points out that, whereas a good deal of attention used to be paid to such activities during the war they have to some extent lapsed owing to circumstances, and he is anxious to revive them (KNA/DC/TAM/2/3/4-1946-1953 African Sports General).

The DC thereafter proposed the formation of the Arab and African Sports Association of Elgeyo Marakwet district association. By then, the DC was very much aware of the existence of such sports associations in the Nyanza province, and he felt that the formation of such sports associations in the district would be beneficial. He suggested that such an association should be formed with the Rift Valley PC or his nominee as chairman and representatives of the district. Matters such as selection for the venue of sports would be in the hands of the Arab and African Sports Association and any matters arising from sports should be discussed by it. The DC understood that Mr. Mandefield the PC for Rift Valley province by then was a member of the Arab and African Sports Association of Kenya and he suggested that his advice on the committee would be valuable. The PC Rift Valley province replied that:

I refer to your letter number CKR.2/9.vol.IV/387 of the 18<sup>th</sup> of August 1946, in which you proposed that an African and Arab Sports Association should be formed. I support your suggestion for the formation. Sports have not been arranged here since the Second World War and we are now trying to get them started. Such an Association would be of considerable help. This suggestion has, as you know, met with general support from District officers and District Commissioners in this province. I welcome the idea but at the same time, I am most loathe to enlarge upon the multiplicity of committees that already beset us. I have therefore discussed this matter with various interested people, and it has been suggested that these matters be dealt with either in full committee of the district commissioners meeting or in a sub-committee of the district (KNA/DC/TAM/2/3/4-1946-1953 African Sports General).

**Table 10: The Arab and African Sports Association of Kenya: Elgeyo-Marakwet District Association**

Chairman	Mr. J.B Carson (DC)
Vice Chairman	Chief Salim
Secretary	Mr. John Kutut
Metkei representative	Mr Edward Chelangat
Rokocho representative	Mr Kimutai Kiplagat
Irong Representative	Mr. Isaih Kibor
Kapchemutwa representative	Mr. Philemon Suter
Kibuswa	Chief Joseph
Endo and Mokoro representative	Mr. Kisang Kirop

**Source:** KNA/DC/TAMB/ 2/3/5- 1946-1955, Minutes of the Arab and African Sports Association page 1.

From the table above it is noticeable that the development of sports in the Elgeyo-Marakwet district was enhanced by the Arab and African Sports Association which comprises both Africans and Europeans.

The first meeting of the sports committee was held on 31<sup>st</sup> March 1946. Representation had been invited from various departments, but several representations were absent.

However, the meeting went on well. The DC first commented that:

While this district is forming a sports committee to view the necessary means of improving the standard of sports, other games and material, it is expected that a joint committee of both the Elgeyo and Marakwet meet once a year to discuss effective ways to encourage the indigenes to take keen interest in sports and other games with a thought of yielding, over time a competent team (KNA/DC/TAMB/ 2/3/5- 1946-1955, Minutes of the Arab and African sports).

The committee decided that every location in the district to have a sports committee which would be responsible for organizing sports for an arranged date. The committee should include the colonial chiefs, elders as well as the morans. It was further agreed that sports tracks should be made at every section centres. Where there are out-schools the

teachers should be made responsible for the maintenance of the track (KNA/PC/NKU/2/32/4 Arab and African athletic association 1946-1957).

The committee further suggested that additional events, such as hurdles and pole vaulting be included at the sports meetings. The committee generally felt that the only way to encourage athletics was to make it more attractive, not so much by prize but by good feeding. The feeding was time and again stressed and it was argued that the local native council should pay for the food. It was suggested that, where there were suitable vacancies, athletes might be employed by the government so that they may be more easily available. The committee further considered that section sports should be held once or twice a year, co-ordinating with section council meetings, District Commissioner's *barazas* or cattle sales, so that the maximum number of people would attend (KNA/PC/NKU/2/32/4 Arab and African athletic Association 1947-1957). Each section was to produce a sports team which would compete at the Elgeyo-Marakwet district sports meeting. Competition between Moran was also to be encouraged (O.I. with Naftali Mutwo on 23/7/2021).

It was further considered that it would be most helpful if the commissioner of social welfare could give a course of instruction to a selected group of sports enthusiasts particularly men who are interested in sports. The arranged dates for section sports meetings should allow for a couple of days of practice before district sports. It was also suggested that a sports league between sections or divisional sports should be started and that competitions were to be arranged with neighbouring districts (KNA/DC/TAM/2/3/4-1946-195 African Sports General). It was felt that the usual prizes were sufficient at section sports meetings provided that food was available for the competitors. But better

prizes must be provided for divisional, district and provincial sports. Below is the suggested prize list for divisional and district sports meetings.

**Table 11: Elgeyo and Marakwet Divisional sports prize list**

EVENTS	1 <sup>ST</sup>	2 <sup>ND</sup>	3 <sup>RD</sup>
100yards	Sufuria	Bowl	Pocket Knife
One Mile	Sufuria	Bowl	Pocket Knife
4 x100	4 mugs	4Pocket knife	Sufuria
High jump	Bowl	Large pocket knife	Panga
3 Miles	Knife	Karai	Sufuria
220 yards	Panga	Bowl	Pocket Knife
880 yards	Bowl Large	Bowl small	Pocket Knife
Long jump	Bowl	Large pocket knife	Small pocket knife
Old men race	Big Bowl	Small Bowl	Pocket Knife
4x440 Yards Relay Race	4 Sufuria	4Pocket knife	Panga

Source: KNA/DC/TAM/2/3/4-1946-1953 African Sports General page.127

**Table 12: Elgeyo and Marakwet District sports prize list**

Event	1 <sup>st</sup>	2 <sup>nd</sup>	3 <sup>rd</sup>
100 Yards	Shirt	Vest	Mug
One Mile	Shirt	Bowl	Mug
120YardsHurdles	Shirt	Sufuria	Mug
Hope, step and jump	Shirt	Bowl	Mug
High Jump	Sufuria	Bowl	Mug
6 miles	Blanket	Karai	Bowl
440 Yards	Shirt	Bowl	Panga
Javelin	Shirt	Bowl	Panga
4x220Yards	4 shirts	Bowl	Sufuria
Long jump	Shirt	Bowl	Mug

Source: KNA/DC/TAM/2/3/4-1946-1953 African Sports General, page 128.

The tables above sought to show that sports in the district were encouraged through prizes which attracted a good turnout of the indigenes in sports meetings. This changed the sporting landscape in the district.

### **4.3. Olympic Games**

The Olympic Games were first organised at London's Wembley Stadium after the Second World War to revive the spirit of Olympism. There was much opposition against holding the game since Britain was still recovering from the war (Bale and Sang 1996). Britons were also still subjected to severe economic hardship, thus, expensive preparation for the sake of mainly foreign athletes was seen as a lesser priority. However, teams from various countries brought their food, and frugal utilization of existing facilities lowered the costs (Cobley 2011:23).

Psychologically, Britons needed a morale booster and, the Olympics fit in what they wanted. One of the athletes, Emil Zatopek, who participated in the game noted that 'After all those dark days of the war, the bombing, the killing, the starvation, the revival of the Olympics was as if the sun had come out...I went into the Olympic Village and suddenly there were no more frontiers, no more barriers. Just the people meeting together. It was wonderfully warm. Men and women who had just lost five years of life were back again' (*Racing Past*, 24<sup>th</sup> June 2011).

Although the world had to wait until the 1952 Olympic Games at Heleniski, Finland, for the post-war emergence of sport as a more global phenomenon. The London Games did illustrate how the geographical margin of Olympism had penetrated the British colonies in Africa. Although by then, most countries in Africa did not possess a National Olympic

Committee and, therefore some of the African athletes had to compete under the flag of their 'mother countries' notably Britain and France (Bale and Sang 1996). However, the 1952 Olympic Games pushed the Olympic margins further as they pitted the USA against the USSR and readmitted Germany, cold war in Spike's shoes, but this clearly illustrated the seemingly inexorable colonisation of the continent by the spirit of the Olympic ideal (Bale and Sang 1996). In these, post-war spectacles, the presence of African athletes from British colonies started to emerge.

By the 1950s, the African athletes from the British Empire, although, not achieving Olympic success were attaining success worth of inclusion in the world ranking list. For instance, it was recorded that athletes from Nigeria were featured among the best top fifty performances in the world in events such as the long jump, 100 metres and high jump. By then, the only African athlete to be featured in the world's top fifty was Joshua Majekonmi from Nigeria. But athletes of African origin were not noted in their performances in distances above 800 metres. With only a few exceptions of athletes from North Africa: El Mabrouk and Mimoun all running under their 'mother country' France (*Racing past*, 24<sup>th</sup> June 2011). Moreover, athletes from East African countries were only noticeable because of their absence.

One decade after the Second World War most track and field events were still dominated by the Europeans, despite the evident internationalization of the Olympic Games. Yet basing his idea from the 1952 Olympic Games at Helsinki, Ernst Jolk who was a Professor at the University of Kentucky noted that 'Africa harbours a great athletic reserve army which has not yet been fully mobilized for the Olympic contest'. He further continued to note that the African continent is bound to play an increasing role in the

Olympic Games in the future (Jolk 1964:70). Indeed, Jolk's prediction was to come to pass, as years later the track and field events at the various Olympic Games was to be dominated by athletes from Kenya which was one of the Britain's former colonies. In 1956, the Olympic Games in Melbourne witnessed the emergence of Kenyan athletes such as Nyandika Maiyoro. He performed with little success in the heats of the 1500 metres and did not qualify for the final. In the 5000m however, he was placed seventh.

In 1960 the Olympic Games were held in Rome from August 25 to September 11. Kenya entered several athletes. And Maiyoro a pioneer of distance running, and an increasingly well-known figure in Kenya bought his career to a climax with an impressive sixth place in the final of the 5000 metres in a new African record time of 13 minutes, 52.8 seconds (Amin and Moll 1972:5). This was the first time recorded by an African athlete. Seraphino Antao, from the coastal province, was a semi-finalist in the 100 metres and Rotich from the Elgeyo-Marakwet district achieved a similar standard in the 400m hurdles. Kenyans also competed in the 10000 metres and the marathon. From an African perspective, however, the games were most significant because of the signal given to the world from Kenya's East African neighbour, Ethiopia, through the devastating victory of Abebe Bikila who ran the marathon barefoot through the streets of Rome to claim the first gold medal for the African nation (Baker 1987:275).

A year after Kenya's independence in the 1964 Tokyo Olympic Games Kenya gained its first Olympic medal when Wilson Kiprugut won the bronze medal in the 800 metres (Amin and Moll 1972:13). He surprised the world athletic experts since his form was virtually unknown. By then, Kenya's first Olympic medal had been won in an event

between the sprints and the middle distances, thus the country was still not labelled a nation of distance runners.

#### **4.4. British Empire and Commonwealth Games**

The British Empire and Commonwealth Games were one of several sub-Olympic sports meetings which, while subscribing to the ideology of Olympism, were politically and geographically selective in terms of the countries invited to participate. But of course, the Empire and Commonwealth Games were an unashamed glorification of the British imperial ethos and up to 1964 most of the African countries were excluded from participating. Indeed, up to the present day, the British and Commonwealth Games have never been held in any African country. Predominantly no African nation has yet hosted the Olympic Games.

In effect, the British Empire Games served to continue a traditional colonial ideology which had been based on two incompatible principles. The first was the ideal of 'fair play' which presented all colonial subjects, irrespective of colour, with the opportunity of taking part in the game. Alongside it, however, the second principle of the racial superiority of the Anglo -Saxons predicted that the 'lesser breeds' would occupy the minor place and not seriously threaten the supremacy of the whites from the old commonwealth in the rather cosseted world of track and field athletics these principles did not seriously clash until 1954 (Bale and Sang 1996).

The Vancouver Games in 1954, was the first British and Commonwealth Games in which Kenya's track and field athletes participated. This was also the first international sporting event in Kenya's track and field events (Amin and Moll 1972: 3). This was a big step to

take but the K.A.A.A immediately set about the tremendous task of finding the necessary finances to send a representative team to Canada. A way and means committee was formed which investigated the best method of travelling and decided that the team should fly to London and Vancouver, and return by train, ship and plane (East Africa Standard, 14<sup>th</sup> December 1954). The committee also set out an appeal to raise \$3,000, which the Kenyan government promised to support to the extent of \$1 for every \$ 1 collected. Companies, firms, African District Councils, schools, sports associations, clubs and individuals contributed to the fund, and it is a testimony to the work of the Ways and Means Committee and the response by the general public that the target was reached (African Sports Review December 1954:3).



**Figure 7: The Empire Games Organizing Committee of the Kenya Athletic Association.**

**Source:** Colony and Protectorate of Kenya, Sports and Games, 1948-1953: 63

From the figure above the back row consists of, E.P Wilkinson, Major R. Dodington, Derek Q. Erskine (president), E. G. Newton, P.J, Riley and A. Evans. Front row: I.V.M. Davies, Capt. Sharcot, G.A. Slater and G.A. Thomas.

The coaching committee began by drawing up a list of “Empire Games Possibles” comprising of Europeans, Asian and African athletes and also laid down a list of minimum standards required for eventual selection. The committee appreciated the fact that a high standard of performance would be required in Canada and decided that no athlete who did not reach the minimum standard for his event even if he was the best performer in that event would save in exceptional circumstances, be selected to represent his country (African Sports Review December 1954:3). Facilities for coaching and training were naturally extended to the most promising athletes but this did not imply automatic selection which open to athletes of all races justifying consideration (Colony and Protectorate of Kenya, Sports and Games, 1948-1953: 64).

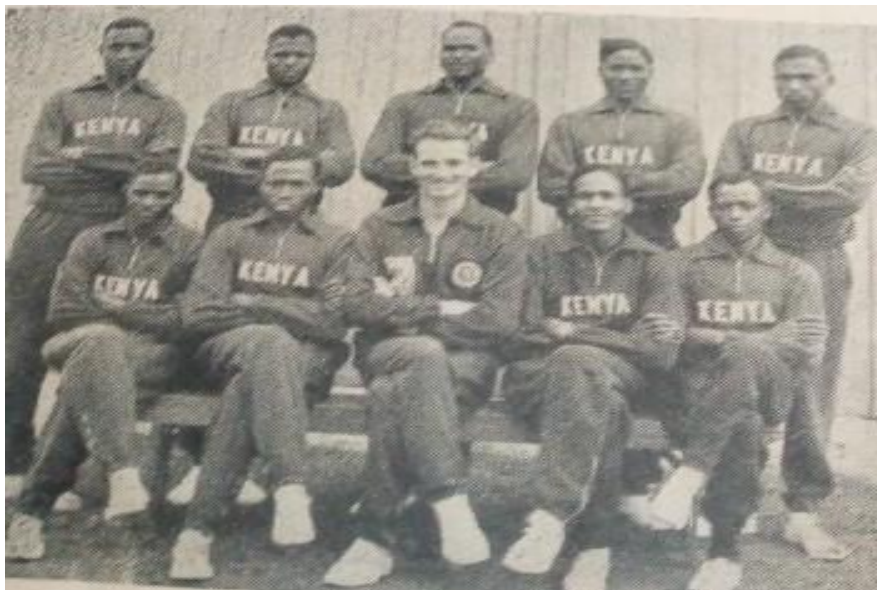
Because of the early date of the Empire Games, it became necessary to advance the Kenya season and locational, district and provincial meetings towards the end of May and early June. On a proposal from the Arab and African Sports Association it was agreed that the Kenya championship should envelop the Kenya African Championships and thus became inter-provincial as well as inter-racial (Colony and Protectorate of Kenya, Sports and Games, 1948-1953: 65). In due course the Kenyan team was selected following the Kenya Championship held on the Service Sports Grounds in Nairobi and the inter-territorial meeting against Uganda held at Kampala. Finance was a limiting factor in team selection and the Association eventually decided upon a team of nine athletes and two officials. The team consisted of middle- and long-distance runners, some sprinters, a javelin thrower and a couple of high jumpers. Kenya's team were as follows.

**Table 13: Kenya’s Team to the 1954 British Empire and Commonwealth Games**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Profession</b>	<b>Ethnic group</b>	<b>Province</b>
Nyandika Maiyoro	Vet, scout (Kisii)	Kisii	Northern Nyanza
Maboria Tesot	Soldier (156 HAA)	Keiyo	R.V. P
Lazaro Chepkwony	Teacher (Kapsabet)	Nandi	R.V. P
Korigo Barno	Solder (K.R.A)	Marakwet	R.V. P
Kiptalam Keter	Orderly (D. Cs office)	Nandi	R.V. P
Musembi Mbathi	Teacher (Kapsabet)	Mkamba	Southern
Kiprono Maratim	Soldier (7 <sup>th</sup> K.A.R)	Marakwet	R.V. P
Jonathan Lenemiria	Teacher (G.A.S)	Samburu	R.V. P
Kipkorir Boit (Capt)	Teacher (G.A.S)	Keiyo	R.V. P

**Source:** African Sports Review of December 1954:4

From the table, all these athletes were placed on the "Empire Games Possibles” list.



**Figure 8: Kenya’s Team to the 1954 British Empire and Commonwealth Games**

**Source:** African Sports Review of December 1954:4.

The front row from left consists of Kiptalam Keter, Kipkorir Boit, Archie Evans, Jonathan Lenemiria and Lazaro Chepkwony. Back row from the left: Koringo Barno, Nyandika Maiyoro, Maboria Tesot, Kiprono Maritim and Musembi Mbathi.

With the nine athletes for the Empire Games selected, the general committee of the K.A.A.A had a great deal of work to do in a short period. First, the athletes attended a two-week course at Jeanes school. Practical coaching, and training lectures supplemented by films and literature enabled the athletes to study their respective events in detail. Second, the K.A.A.A had to give attention to athletes' passports, vaccination, luggage, insurance, clothing and dress (Colony and Protectorate of Kenya, Sports and Games, 1948-1953: 65).

By the end of July however, the team had been issued with their general clothing which consisted of underwear, socks, shoes, shirts, tie, blazer and hat. They, thereafter attended a farewell party invited by Mr.G. W. Raymond, Branch manager of Tho, Cook and Son (South Africa), ltd in the New Stanley Hotel. In attendance were, his worship the Mayor Councillor R.S. Alexander, Mrs. Alexander, members of the general Committee of the K.A.A.A, staff of the Community Development Association and other friends (African Sports Review of December 1954:4). In the course of the farewell party, Mr. Derek Erskine, President of the K.A.A.A presented a lion to Kipkorir Boit who was the captain of the team on behalf of the Community Development Organization. The following afternoon, according to Lazaro Chepkwony (O.I, 10/11/2021), the team together with the president and members of the K.A.A.A was invited to the Governor's house where they were entertained with tea by His Excellency the Governor, Sir Evelyn Baring.

On Monday, July 5<sup>th</sup> 1954 at 1.30 pm the Kenya team left from Eastleigh airport arriving in London the following day. The team thereafter went by bus to the British Council hostel in Bayswater. The following morning, with the kind assistance of Mr. Jack Crump, Honorary Secretary of the British Amateur Athletic Board, arrangements for training were quickly made. During a stay of two weeks in England the Kenya athletes competed in the Amateur Athletic Association Championships, and they were also invited to the international sports meeting between England and Wales, Scotland and Ireland, both of which were held at the White City Stadium, London and also the Darlington Coronation Trophy Sports in the North of England (Bale and Sang 1996: :3. African sports review, December 1954:2).

At the time of the 1954 Amateur Athletic Association championships, the news that most concerned the public in Kenya was the Mau uprisings. This was raging at that time more than anything concerned with sports. It was not surprising that the press built up to the championships hardly heralded a Kenyan running presence. For instance, athletic correspondent, Larry Montague, in his preview in the *Manchester Guardian*, failed to mention that some of the colony's runners would be competing (Manchester Guardian, 9<sup>th</sup> July 1954:3).

The first race to be featured in the 1954 Amateur Athletic Association meeting was the six miles championship. On this occasion, the assembled crowd was ready to cheer the English athlete, Gordon Pirie. However, spectators were somewhat surprised to find out an unknown and barefooted Kenyan athlete named Lazaro Chepkwony lining up for this event, during which he contributed an erratic series of fast laps and in doing so confused some of the British athletes. He ran with the leading group, during which time he saw

'taken to heart by spectators' until pulling a muscle in the last laps and the fifteenth lap and dropped out. *The times* described the race as follows: 'The race was enlivened and also robbed of its customary rhythm and stately order by Lazaro Chepkwony, a runner from Kenya who, lap after lap and half-mile after half-mile, persisted in challenging anyone who tried to set up a reasonable comfortable lead, (The Times, July 10, 1954). From a Eurocentric perspective, his 'unscientific' approach, whereby fast bursts were interspersed with laps of a slower pace, and the fact that he was unable to compete in the race, was exactly what would be expected of the African novice and it was formally confirmed the prevailing view that African runners were unsophisticated. If they were runners at all they were sprinters.



**Figure 9: Lazaro Chepkwony ahead of D.A. Pirie of England in the 6 Miles at the White City during the AAA six-mile championship**

**Source:** Colony and Protectorate of Kenya, Sports and Games, 1948-1953: 65.

From the figure, we can see Lazaro Chepkwony, leading the great British runner Gordon Pirie, during the AAA six miles championship, on the Friday evening of 9 July 1954. This was the first occasion that a Kenyan distance runner had raced in Europe.

The following day, the three-mile event featured another Kenyan athlete who lined up in alongside the Kenyan Oxford University graduate and member of the elite Achilles Club, Chris Chataway. Assembled with him were a coterie of British middle-distance runners including Chataway's adversary, Fred Green of Birchfield Harriers (Bale and Sang 1996:5). The Kenyan competitor was Nyandika Maiyoro, the national champion from Kisii District in Nyanza province. By then, his best time was over half a minute slower than the existing world record. As the gun signalled the start of the race Maiyoro sped into the lead and opened up an enormous gap, at times amounting to about forty metres ahead of the British athletes. At the mile mark, he led his pursuers by over four seconds, a feat met by the British crowd with a combination of amazement and amusement. He hung on to the field, however, and in competition with Green and Chataway, both broke the world record and finished in third place, beating the Kenyan record with a time of 13 minutes 54.8 seconds (African Sports review, December 1954:2).

Although less visible, arguably more important, were the performances of the Kenyan athletes in field events. The javelin thrower, Kiragu, like Maiyoro, finished third. The same position was occupied by Lemuria in the high jump, using the Western roll style, and another Kenyan jumper from the Elgeyo-Marakwet district named Maritim was in fifth place. In this event, two Kenyan jumpers outperformed all of the British entries. Maboria Tesot of Elgeyo-Marakwet district failed to win an A.A.A title on his first

appearance at the White City Stadium by only ten inches (African sports review, December 1954:2).

The reaction to the performances of Chepkwony and Maiyoro can be illustrated by some comments about the championship in the African sports review magazine. The six-mile event was said to have been 'bedevilled' by Chepkony's sudden burst: the first half of the three miles was 'made confusing' by Maiyoro's ludicrously fast pace' (African sports review, December 1954:3). The reporter in *The times* stated that it was 'inevitable' that Maiyoro would eventually be overtaken by Green and Chataway (The Times, 9<sup>th</sup> July 1954:6). These comments reflected not only the athletic and social prejudices of the period but also the lack of seriousness with which the British public, at least, perceived the African runners. They also reflected on the problem of how Western scholars could coherently represent the strange reality of the African runner.

A much more sympathetic attitude towards Kenyan distance running was evidenced by the editor of *Athletic Weekly*, P.W. Green, who noted that:

It was an unusual and unexpected form by some of the coloured runners in the distance races which provided much food for thought. Never again shall we nurse the idea that the coloured races are good at anything beyond a mile. Maiyoro and Chepkwony of Kenya, with a near-the-perfect action, as I have seen, would, with the right training and competition, be a match for any runner in the world (Athletics Weekly 1954:3).

The event at the White City in London had projected Kenya's track and field athletes into global, as opposed to a national or continental, stage but the A.A.A championships were only the prelude of what was to happen in Vancouver.

In August 1954, the Kenyan team arrived at Vancouver airport together with the Uganda athletes. They were welcomed by music from the Vancouver police Pipe Band, and then a Vancouver businessman who served during the war in the King's African Rifles stepped forward and said 'Tunawakaribisha Canada' (O.I with Korigo Barno on 23/11/2021). The team was then officially welcomed by the Organizing Committee with Major Jack Davies, president of the British Empire and Commonwealth Games Association of Canada and Mrs. Stanley Smith, General Chairman of the executive committee wishing them a pleasant stay and success in the games.

The team was then driven to the Empire Games Village on the grounds of the University of British Columbia. The following day at the opening ceremony the flags of Kenya, Uganda, Jamaica and British Guinea were hosted in the Empire village. In reply to speeches of welcome, Brigadier Sir Godfrey Rhodes commandant of the Kenya team said:

For a long time, we have been making great efforts to send a team to the Games. It looks at one time as if we were not going to make it, but we are delighted the difficulties were overcome and we can be here today. We are overwhelmed by the warmth of our welcome on arrival yesterday and again today. We are going to do all in our power in a little way to help make the game a success. We are most grateful to you for allowing us to come (African sports review, December 1954:9).

During the week the remaining team began to arrive until more than 800 athletes and teams from 24 members of the commonwealth were in residence in the Empire village. The Kenyan team also paid a visit to the University of British Columbia stadium and saw many athletes working hard on the training track. Kipkorir Boit who remembered the event, asserted that: 'It was indeed a family meeting of friends, bound together by common ties of understanding and sportsmanship, all speaking the same language and proud to compete in the British Empire Games' (O.I with Kipkorir Boit on 12/11/2021).

The 1954 British Empire and Commonwealth Games are best remembered for two things. First, it was in Vancouver that the first four-miler Englishman Roger Bannister, defeat John Landy, the Australian who had improved on Bannister's world record. The second reason for remembering Vancouver is for the collapse of the English marathon runner, Jim Peters, while in sight of the finishing line and a considerable distance ahead of the next runner (Bale and Sang 1996). Buried beneath these headlines were the performance of Kenyan athletes. Maiyoro was again the most prominent, achieving fourth place in the three miles. He did not dash to the front, as in the London race, but stayed with the pack, taking the lead with one lap to go but being outsprinted by an English trio led by Chataway, again setting a new Kenyan record. His time was 13 minutes 43.8 seconds.

Subsequently, Maiyoro was patronising and dubbed 'the popular Black Jack from Kenya' by one of the athletic reporters of the day. But other Kenyans did not go unnoticed. Chepkwony was seventh in the six miles and twelfth in three miles, Maboria was sixth in the javelin, Maritim and Lemuria finished eighth and tenth respectively in the high jump, and the national team finished fourth in the 4 times 400 yards relay. Other Kenyans competed in the heats of the half-mile and the 120 yards hurdles. The Kenyan team was certainly not made solely of distance runners. The results were as follows:

**Table 14: 1954 Empire Games and Commonwealth results**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Event</b>	<b>Performances</b>	<b>Position</b>
Nyandika Maiyoro	3 miles	13min 43.8 sec	4 <sup>th</sup>
Maboria Tesot	Javelin	203 feet ½ inches	6 <sup>th</sup>
Lazaro Chepkwony	6 miles	30mins. 16.2 secs	7 <sup>th</sup>
	3 miles	14 min. 27.0 secs	12 <sup>th</sup>
Jonathan Lenemiria	High jump	6 feet	8 <sup>th</sup>
Kiprono Maritim	High jump	6 feet 2 inches	10 <sup>th</sup>
Musembi Mbathi	440 yards	49.4 secs	Eliminated in the heat
Kipkorir Boit	440 yards	49.0 secs	Semi-final
Kiptalam Keter	880 yards	2 mins, 0.1 secs	Eliminated in the heat
Koringi Barno	120yards Hurdles	16.3 secs	Eliminated in the heat
	440yards Hurdles	57.2 secs	Eliminated in the heat
Musembi Mbathi Kipkorir Boit Kiptalam Keter Korigo Barno	4 by 440 yards relay	3 mins, 17.6 secs	4 <sup>th</sup>

**Source:** Colony and Protectorate of Kenya, Sports and Games, 1948-1953: 65

From the table, Kenya's performances in the Empire games coincided with the biggest and greatest games to date when the competition was more severe than ever before. No less than four Kenya performances would have won the gold medal in 1950 when the games were held in Auckland, New Zealand.

The most significant item was the appearance of the great distance runners from Kenya, Lazaro Chepkwony and Nyandika Maiyoro, who impressed the big crowd. They revealed inexperience, but much natural ability. This was a good sign that great things will happen in the future in Kenyan athletics. Commenting on the game Mr. Archie Evans said:

On the whole, the team was more successful than had been expected. The whole team were a good advertisement for the colony and they were

popular and well-behaved wherever they went. They have, admittedly, a long way to go before they can hold their own in top-class international athletics. But they have made a good start and have put the colony on the world athletics map to an extent that could not, before their departure, have been fully visualised ((African sports review, December 1954:10).

However, Kenyans did not win any medals in Vancouver. They were noted by dedicated track fans but not by the world's sporting public. Kenyan athletes did not appear, therefore, to be born natural athletic marvels who could emerge out of Africa and easily defeat what the Empire had to offer. Nor can it be said that Kenya was the most successful African nation at the Games, given the success of the Nigerian and Uganda athletes who, between them, occupied the first three places in the high jump. Kenya was not, therefore, projected into the medal table -that is, the list of nations and their medal tallies published in most national daily newspapers throughout the Commonwealth. Commenting upon the fine Kenya performances in London and Vancouver, the African Sports Review which was published in Great Britain noted that:

It will certainly be interesting to see what progress is made in the next two years, for the game has always revealed future Olympic champions. They may well do so this time in greater profusion than previously and some of the Melbourne champions could emanate from the smaller commonwealth countries.... Progress over the next two years could bring Kenya an Olympic title. This will however not be achieved by any athlete on the amount of training done for the Empire Games. Only hard work will bring faster running, higher jumping and longer throwing. A good start has been made and Kenya is now on the world athletic map but there must be a great deal of progress during the next two years if the intended visit to Australia is to prove worthwhile (African Sports Review of December 1954:2).

Four years later, after the Vancouver Games, Kenya's athletes again went on to compete at the Empire and Commonwealth Games in Cardiff. Before going to Cardiff, they paid another visit to London White City Stadium to compete in the Amateur Athletic

Association championship event (Amin and Moll 1972:4, Bale and Sang 1996). This time Maiyoro followed the leader and became second, yet with another Kenyan record this time 13 minutes and 34.8 seconds. Other Kenyans enhanced their nation's visibility, Arere Anentia, won another three miles events with Kainuti Sum placing third. Joseph Leresae was third in the high jump, Kiptalam Keter was seventh in the half-mile, and Bartonjo Rotich qualified for the final of the 440 yards hurdles (East African Standard, 7<sup>th</sup> July 1958: 6).

At Cardiff, the Kenyan team improved significantly on their Vancouver achievements. Although Maiyoro did not run particularly well thus, he failed to qualify for the final mile and fell behind the field after 2.25 miles in the three miles. However, some of the Kenyan athletes showed that Kenya was developing a group of serious athletes who could compete in a variety of events in the international competition. These were Anentia and Sum who were third and sixth respectively in the six miles, Rotich from Elgeyo-Marakwet district was third in the 440 yards hurdles, and Leresae fourth in the high jump (Bale and Sang 1996). From these performances, it became clear that Kenya was turning out an assembly line of distance runners. The bronze medals of Anentia and Rotich signalled a landmark in Kenya's athletic history since they were the first medals won by Kenyan athletes in major international competitions.

In between the Rome and Tokyo Olympics were the 1962 Commonwealth Games in Perth, Australia. Kenya was now entering athletes in a wider range of events than ever before, from 100 yards to six miles and 440 hurdles to the triple jump (Amin and Moll 1972:5). From a Kenyan perspective the Perth Games witnessed the first Kenyan Commonwealth gold medals, not from a distance runner but from a sprinter Antao who

won both in the 100 and 220 yards. Kimaru Songok won a silver medal in the 440 hurdles. It is also significant to note that it was at the 1962 Commonwealth Games that the first really 'global' Kenyan athlete made his initial major appearance (Bale and Sang 1996). Buried in the results of the heats of the mile, and finishing well down the field in the three miles, was a Nandi runner called Kipchoge Keino. Like Maiyoro at the White City, he opened up a huge lead over the rest of the field only to be caught on the last lap and finish eleventh. Years later he was to be described as 'the world's most exciting athlete' and, won various Olympic golds and break many world records.

#### **4.5 Elgeyo-Marakwet district sports in July 1951.**

District sports meeting was held at Tambach on 29<sup>th</sup> July, 1951. Both attendance and results were the good. However, most of the Morans, who were placed in the various events did not attend (KNA/PC/NKU/2/32/2 Native Athletic Sports 1949-1956). According to an informant Serem (O.I on 23/7/2021) he stated that:

As usual, most of the finalists selected for the district sports were either school teachers or ex-school boys. This was made more noticeable by the reluctance and in some instances the refusal of the ordinary Keiyo and Marakwet morans to come to Tambach for sports. Of the ordinary Keiyo and Marakwet, many did not exert themselves when they did come. Their attitude was that they were not prepared to run against school boys and school teachers who were trained in athletics whereas they were not (Serem, O.I, 23/7/2021).

However, the district sports produced some fairly good runners and jumpers. The long jump was won by Suter Chemweno with a jump of 20 feet and 9 inches. The victor Lurorum was won by J. Keringai of Keiyo who was given a prize of a heifer.



**Figure 10: Elgeyo-Marakwet District Sports in 1951.**

**Source:** KNA/PC/NKU/2/32/2 Native athletic sports 1949-1956

The stopwatch that was being used was so reliable and so, the times of the various events could be recorded. The outstanding performance of the day was undoubtedly that of Komen Chemweno clearing 5'.11" in the high jump. A short exhibition of pole vaulting and races concluded the sports. Below is a list of the winners' participants.

**Table 15: List of the winners' participants**

<b>Event</b>	<b>Winner</b>	<b>Division</b>	<b>Time/Distance</b>
100 yards	mutwo Chemweno	School	10.3
One mile	Cheruiyot Ngetich	Marakwet	4/31.1
120yards Hurdle	Kiptum Chebiego	School	15.9
Javelin	Kipkoech Mutwet	Keiyo	16.5
3 miles	Cheruiyot Kigen	Marakwet	15 minutes14.6sec
440 yards	Kibet Cheum	Keiyo	52.6 secs
High Jump	Komen Chemweno	Elgeyo	5'.11''
4x100yards relay	School team	School	46.55ses
880 yards	Kibet Kutto	Marakwet	2min 4.4 sec
6miles	Kibelio Chemwetich	Keiyo	32min 44.2 sec
Long jump	Suter Chemweno	School	20'' 9''
4x440yards relay	Marakwet team	Marakwet	3 min 42.8 secs
Arrow shooting	Elgeyo team	Keiyo	4''
Pole vault	Kiptum Chebiego	School	10'' 7''

**Source:** KNA/DC/TAM/2/3/4 African sports general 1951-1953, page 2

From the table above the indigenous form of arrow shooting coexisted with modern sports, graphically revealing the limen between pre-modern and modern sports.

Presenting the prizes, the DC by then Mr. Tait, who was making his first sports presentation since his arrival in the district, said he knew it was difficult to organize sports in the district because of long distances. However, he praises those who had gone a long way to cheer their team (KNA/DC/TAM/2/3/4 African sports general 1951-1953). The DC then made his final speech as the chairman of the association, said that he was very pleased with what had been done in the past years since the association was formed. He felt that the divisional representatives had done enough towards the advancements of the district sports, in their capacity as representatives of respective areas. He congratulated the executive on the magnificent piece of work it had done during the period in question. Reviewing the progress of sports, he felt that they had reached such a position as to make one feel that a spirit of sportsmanship was being attained. Consequently, the new association and its committees would find their work easier, and thus they would be able to do a more worthwhile job (KNA/DC/TAM/2/3/4 African sports general 1951-1953).

The DC concluded by appreciating Chief Salim who was the vice chairman of the sports committee in the district and he noted that:

I am most grateful for the assistance, and that the evident enjoyment of the teams and spectators was adequate appreciation of the time and effort expended. I hope this meeting is but the beginning of a successful sports and game movement in Elgeyo-Marakwet, and hope you will continue to support and help the association in all its various efforts. I wish to thank you all for your efforts in making the district sports such a considerable success. It was a fitting climax to your years in office, and I was greatly pleased with your efforts at the organisation. It was obvious that your experience of the last four years had been put to the best possible

account. In previous years the people of the district have shown little interest in sports, but many young men are now practising and looking forward to beating other teams from outside their district shortly (KNA/DC/TAM/2/3/4 African sports general 1951-1953 page 322).

#### **4.6 Sports course in Tambach in 1952**

In 1952 the PC organized a sports course for Rift Valley with Mr. A. Evans, the colony sports officer. The one-week's course was to take place at Kapsabet, Kabarnet and Tambach. The course at Kabarnet and Tambach could follow one upon the other during the Easter holiday. For Kapsabet, the sports meeting was to take place at a later date (KNA/DC/TAM/2/3/4 African sports general 1951-1953). The PC suggested that those attending the course should be potential and actual athletes and leading Africans, to be taught how to organize meetings in their locations, and train athletes (KNA/PC/NKU/2/32/6 Native athletic sports -African sports 1932-1955).

Thus, an athletic course for Tambach was conducted by Mr. A. Evans, the colony sports officer from February 6<sup>th</sup> to February 20<sup>th</sup> 1952 (O.I. with Mzee Cherono arap yano on 24/7/2021). The purpose of the course was to provide coaching assistance for those athletes whose names have been placed on the Empire Games possible list to bring their performances up to international standards. It was also designed to give specialized coaching and encouragement to outstanding athletes in the district and to enable them to carry out their training on the correct lines during the next few months. It was also pointed out that, this course whilst primarily intended as a beginning of the Empire Games special coaching scheme is by no means restricted to those named. There was little doubt that there was several other athletes who benefited from the instruction and

might well justify consideration by the Kenya Amateur Athletics Association for inclusion in the team (KNA/PC/NKU/2/32/13 Native athletic sports 1950-1956).

The DC also arranged, with the colony sports officer and they agreed that those attending the courses should be taught how to organize meetings in their locations, and to train athletes. The fact that the colony sports officer visited Tambach was gratifying although hardly surprising since it is common knowledge that the winner of the majority of the track events in the inter-territorial sports are provided by the district (KNA/DC/TAM/2/3/4 African sports general 1951-1953). On the other hand, this did not merit the exclusion of Nandi, West Suk, Samburu, and Baringo districts from the attention of the colony sports officer especially as the winners of most of the field and jumping events in Rift Valley province were drawn from these districts. The course started with those attending laying out their track under the supervision of the colony sports officer, and going on to training in the various events. It might also include football training (KNA/DC/TAM/2/3/4 African sports general 1951-1953).

Thus, the DC wrote a letter to all the chiefs to remind the indigenes of the course, he noted that:

Last year it was suggested, that, given the extension of interest in sports and games throughout the district. A short course sports and games course will be conducted in Tambach for the benefit of Africans likely to assist in the organization of athletics and football competitions. The idea was shelved due to the emergence of the district in athletics. But I am willing to arrange such a course this year if you consider it desirable. The suggested course would not replace similar courses conducted by the colony sports officer at Jeanne's school, but would rather cater for Africans who would not normally be considered as suitable for this more advanced training. I consider that one week would be sufficient for the course. I am, therefore providing Africans with this course for them to improve their performances. As there is a natural rivalry between the Elgeyo-Marakwet, Tugen

and Nandi. I am approaching you to remind the indigenes (KNA/DC/TAMB/2/3/4 African sports general 1951-1953 page.10).

It is also significant to note that, the only effective training schedule was the one which concentrates on a gradual build-up in the amount and intensity of training leading to continuous and sustainable improvement (O.I with Mike Arap Boit on 2/8/2021). It was imperative therefore that on their return from Tambach, the athletes were to be put in touch with respective coaches near their location, who will instruct, encouraged and advised where required (Kipkoech Mutai O.I on 3/8/2021). The Members of the courses arrived at midday bringing with them vests, shorts and plenty of warm clothing- long trousers, jerseys and at least three blankets. It was however noted that some athletes found it difficult to attend especially the army, police and educational department personnel who found it impossible to come for the one week. A certificate of attendance was later awarded to all who attended the course. The chief for Metkei noted that:

My two African clerks whom I sent on the above course recently have both told me how much they enjoyed it. I have seen a copy of the syllabus and I am glad that they were able to do so much in the space of a single week. If Mr. Evans gives another similar course at Tambach sometime in future, I hope that two or three candidates from my location will be able to take advantage of it (KNA/DC/TAMB/2/3/4- African Sports General 1951-1953)

The following is a list of athletes and footballers who attended the course:

**Table 16: List of athletes and footballers who attended the course.**

Name	Location
S.B.Koitie	Metkei
Komen chepkwony	Tumeiywo
Kibet Cheum	Marichor
Kipkoech Kimutai	Rokocho
Tongil Samoei	Mutei
Kigen Cheruguny	Irong
Ruto Kimining	Kapchemutwa
Chirchir Tomno	Kibuswa
Chelimo Rotich	Talai
Luka Kingen	Mokoro
Henry Ongoi	Cherangany
Cheruiyot kimwetich	Sengwer

**Source:** KNA/DC/TAM/2/3/4 African sports general 1951-1953 p.147

#### **4.7 Kalenjin Games in 1956**

The enthusiasm for promoting sports by colonial administrative officials is also clearly demonstrated by DC, Mr.G.M.Bebb from Elgeyo-Marakwet district in 1956. He presented a proposal entitled “The Kalenjin Games” to the Rift Valley Provincial Commissioner Rift Valley and Nyanza and he noted that,

Athletics results throughout the colony identify the Kalenjin as the best athletes in Kenya (however) their full potential has not been realized and developed. I am in favour of anything which brings the Kipsigis into contact with the Kalenjin group away from Nyanza. They have a great deal to offer to the Northern tribes in the matter of sports. The burden of the arrangement would fall on Tambach as the only possible centre. If the indigenes are enthusiastic, I consider that the proposals are certainly worth a trial. Many of the best trained Kalenjin athletes are in the army and police and these should be invited. The west Suk people should also be included (KNA/PC/NKU/2/23/3, Native Athletic sports 1956-1957, page.206).

The ‘Kalenjin Games’ purpose was therefore popularized athletics among the Keiyo, Marakwet, Kipsigis, Tugen and Nandi (in a later correspondence also the Suk (O.I with Naftali Mutwo on 25/7/2021). Whereby Tambach would lay a host of the game with the

hope that its success might lead to a general Kalenjin festival with tribal dancing and other activities (KNA/PC/NKU/2/23/3 Native Athletic sports 1956-1957).

The DC for Kericho later wrote a letter to PC Nyanza province and he noted that:

The 1956 athletic season will presumably include another meeting at Tambach. It is greatly felt by the Kipsigis that a full meeting, bringing all tribes of the Kalenjin group rather than a Kipsigis/Nandi battle, would invoke a great deal more interest. An effort was made by us, last year, to interest the various District Commissioners involved but we were unsuccessful. The obvious advantage of increasing the size of the meeting is many, apart from easing the financial burden of overhead expenses now borne by the Nandi and ourselves (KNA/NZA/ 3/1/53 Athletics and sports page.177)

These District officers' ambitious plan and idealism was to 'be able to build a village, on the lines of Olympic village without excessive expenditure' (KNA/PC/NKU/2/23/3 Native athletic sports 1956-1957).

The 'Kalenjin Games' was later discussed by Provincial Commissioners from Rift Valley and Nyanza, and District Commissioners from Tambach, Kabarnet, Kericho and Kapsabet together with colonial sports officer Archie Evans. They were all in general agreement that the 'Kalenjin game' should take place (KNA/PC/NKU/2/23/2 Native athletics sports 1949-1956). While welcoming this idea to D.C for Elgeyo- Marakwet, Mr. Tait emphasized that they were already five levels of sports taking place in the district; locational, divisional, district, provincial and colony sports occupying two months each (KNA/PC/NKU/2/32/7 African sports Association 1956-1958). His main concern however was the lack of finance and surfeit of sports as obstacles to the games going ahead. Nevertheless the 'Kalenjin game' took place in Tambach, with most participants being drawn from the Keiyo, Marakwet, Nandi and Kipsigis. While

commenting on the success of the event the District Commissioner for Elgeyo-Marakwet noted that:

a good deal of energy was evinced if not much skill, and attendances were quite good, particularly at Tambach. It is felt that the promotion of sports is worth a great deal of attention. It provides recreation, entertainment and diversion and it is an antidote to those local channels of youthful activity such as stock theft and beer drinking (KNA/DC/EMG/2/1/1-1956).



**Figure 11: Kalenjin games in Tambach 1956: Kiprop arap Mitei winning the long jump**

**Source:** KNA/PC/NKU/2/32/7 African Sports Association 1956-1958

The presence of ‘Kalenjin games’ in the Elgeyo-Marakwet district, therefore, exposed the freedom colonial officials had in promoting sports locally. It further promoted athleticism in the hope of establishing a more structured 'festival' of athletics in the district, thus encouraging competition among the indigenes.

#### **4.8 Provincial Games in Kamarin Stadium, (Elgeyo-Marakwet), 1959**

By 1959, athletics had become a very integral part of the Keiyo and Marakwet social life. With the encouragement from colonial administration, the indigenes had turned away from taking pride in the warlike qualities of their young men to taking pride in their athletic prowess (O.I with Naftali Mutwo on 23/7/2021 at Iten). And so, when the provincial sports meeting for Rift Valley was held on 1<sup>st</sup> August 1959, every colonial chief attended the provincial sports at Kamarin and locational councillors came from all locations (KNA/PC/NKU/2/32/13-Native athletics provisional sports, 1950-1959).

According to Naftali Mutwo (O.I. on 23/7/2021), many schools in the district also sent contingents because the provincial sports were a great tribal occasion for the keiyo and Marakwet. The spectators also spent considerable sums of their own money on transport and entrance fees. The game started early in the morning with the band of the 4<sup>th</sup> Battalion of the King's African Rifles, providing music throughout the day (KNA/PC/NKU/2/32/13-Native athletics provisional sports, 1950-1959). The sports were well attended and thoroughly enjoyed by all and outstanding performances were recorded. The outstanding event was the breaking of the Rift Valley record by athletes. The first record was by Bartonjo Rotich, Kenya's Olympic quarter-mile runner who knocked 0.5 secs off the 440 yards hurdles to set a new Kenya record of 54 seconds. This was the first time Rotich had competed in this event (KNA/PC/NKU/2/32/13 Native athletics provisional sports, 1950-1959).

Four of the eight African Olympic athletes who went to Melbourne took part in Kamarin sports. They were: Bartonjo Rotich, Sila Kibet Boit, Kainuti Sum and Kiptalam Keter.

Kibet Boit won the victor Ludorum cup; the runner-up was J. von Landsberg, a well-known Kenya athlete and a farmer from Ol Joro Orok (O.I with Wilson Kipketer on 23/7/2021). The 100 yards was won by Suter Chemweno of Elgeyo-Marakwet, in 9.8 seconds. Although this was the best time to put up, and it was the best performance for the event, it was not allowed as a record as there was a downhill start to the race. However, his win in the 220 yards in 21.8 seconds was recognised as a provisional sports record (O.I with Titus Suter 4/8/2021).

The marathon was won by Cherongony Belyon of Elgeyo-Marakwet in 2 hours 53 minutes and 13 seconds. The runner-up was a popular marathon runner from Nandi, Kimorsi arap Koske, and one of the highlights of the sports meeting was the steeplechase, which was won by Kiptoo Toroitich, of Elgeyo-Marakwet, in 10 minutes 5.2 seconds. The provincial record was broken in the following event: 220 yards, 880 yards, three miles, hop step and jump, throwing the hammer and marathon (KNA/PC/NKU/2/32/13 Native athletics provisional sports, 1950-1959).

The present was presented by the member of the legislative council for Rift Valley, Mr. Daniel Toroitich Arap Moi (O.I. with Kiptanui Koech on 5/8/2021). After the presentation, the P.C. for Rift Valley province, Mr. R.E.Wainwright, noted that all districts had taken a keener interest in athletics during that year. He congratulated the Elgeyo-Marakwet district on the hard work they had put into organizing the sports. He later on wrote a letter to the DC and he assert that:

I am writing to congratulate you on the outstanding success of the first provisional sports meeting to be held in your district. The Kamarin stadium was in wonderful condition considering the track is a new one and I know to what extent this is due to the large amount of time and hard work which you have personally put into the

project. Will you please give thanks to all your numerous officers who took part in the organization and running of the sports and also to those kind people who helped with the accommodation of visitors? I will like to give my particular thanks to Gillespie who I understand not only did such a sterling job of work on the sports days but who also was closely concerned with preparation (KNA/PC/NKU/2/32/13 Native athletics provisional sports 1950-1959).

Detailed results were as follows:

**Table 17: Provincial games in Kamarin Stadium results**

<b>Event</b>	<b>Winner</b>	<b>Record</b>	<b>District</b>
100 yards	Suter Chemweno	9.8(RVP record)	Elgeyo-Marakwet
3 miles	Kiprono Kigen	14.38	Elgeyo-Marakwet
6 miles	Isaac Chemirmir	30.48	Baringo
220 yards	Suter Chemweno	21.8	Elgeyo-Marakwet
440 yards flat	Kirwa Leting	49.6	Nandi
1mile	Stephen Chelimo	4.16(RVP record)	West Pokot
120 hurdles	Naftali Keter	14.8 (RVP record)	Nandi
Javelin	Chesasio	200.55’’ (RVP record)	Nakuru
880yards	Kiptalam Keter	1.53.8 (RVP record)	Nandi
440 yards flat	Kirwa Leting	49.6	Nandi
440 Hurdles	Raphael Too	52.7	Elgeyo-Marakwet
Pole Vault	William Chebiego	12.5	Elgeyo-Marakwet
Hope, step and jump	Naftali Mutwa	46’ 1’(RVP record)	Nandi

**Source:** KNA/PC/NKU/2/32/13 Native Athletics provincial Sports, 1950-1959, page 190

From the table above, the provincial record was broken in the 100 yards, I mile, 220 yards, 880 yards, 3 miles, hop, step and jump, 120 yards hurdles and javelin.

The final placing of the district team by points was as follows:

**Table 18: The final placing of the team by points**

<b>District</b>	<b>Points</b>
Elgeyo-Marakwet	132
Nandi	96
Baringo	82
Nakuru	64
Naivasha	34
West Pokot	26
Samburu	15
Trans-Nzoia	12
Laikipia	1
Uasin-Gishu	Nil

**Source:** KNA/PC/NKU/2/32/13 Native athletics provisional Sports, 1950-1959 page 198.

From the table above the provincial athletics cup was won comfortably by Elgeyo-Marakwet district, Nandi was second with 96 points, Baringo, Nakuru, Naivasha, West Suk, Samburu, Trans-Nzoia, Laikipia and finally Uasin-Gishu.

Later on, the DC wrote a letter to the colonial sports officer and he noted that:

I must put on record my sincerest thank you for all the help you gave us over our provincial sports at Kamarin last week. I felt it was a creditable effort., considering it was the first time these sports have been held in Elgeyo, but your presence and expert guidance was a tremendous help. I am most grateful for you having come up from Nairobi to be on the spot and hope that our performance in the colony sports will not disappoint you. (KNA/PC/NKU/2/32/13-Native athletics provisional sports 1950-1959 page.192).

The colonial sports officer replied to the letter and he noted that:

I would like to congratulate you all and those concerned very warmly on the great success of your team at the recent provisional sports...I should imagine that some of the sophisticated parts of the country got a bit shock that this backward district could produce such athletes The native tradition of athletic prowess should be preserved.... the handwork put in annually by a great people is well worthwhile and its ultimate value cannot be displayed by a fine display of cups alone (KNA/PC/NKU/2/32/13 Native athletics provincial sports 1950-1959).



**Figure 12: Rift Valley sports team winning the provincial shield for the second year with 41 points, Nairobi 2nd with 31 points**

**Source:** KNA/PC/NGO/1/1/31 Colony and protectorate 1952-1959.

#### **4.9 Conclusion**

From the foregoing discussion, we described the emerged occidental awareness of the modern Keiyo and Marakwet athlete after the Second World War. It also explained some of the issues surrounding the Keiyo and Marakwet sporting history on the global scene, for instance, the participation of the British Empire and Commonwealth Games. This chapter also showed how the athletic body, as well as the cultural landscape of the Keiyo and Marakwet, had changed. The relatively free movement of the pre-colonial period had been replaced by the corset of running as racing with its starting and finishing lines and its geometrically arranged lane markings. The bodies of the Keiyo and Marakwet athletic populace were ‘captured’ in these new spaces. There was also the associated temporal tyranny of the stopwatch with races timed to a tenth of a second and a clear programme of hierarchical competitions nearly broken down into specialised events. There was a sign of 'asportation', evidence of course, by the formation of a de facto national bureaucracy to

govern athletics in the form of Arab and African sports Associations. But in the composition of athletic events, the modern versions co-existed with more traditional forms.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **5.1 Introduction**

This chapter provides a summary of the main findings of the study and the conclusions derived from the findings as well as the recommendations. The summary provided here covers the previous chapters and the conclusions are given about research objectives outlined in chapter one. In the recommendations, the areas that we felt are not fully studied in this study were suggested for further research.

#### **5.2 Summary**

An in-depth analysis of the transformation of sports culture among the Keiyo and Marakwet from 1850 to 1964 has been attempted in this study. The main purpose was to examine how different types of sporting activities were incorporated into the everyday life of the pre-colonial, Keiyo and Marakwet societies, and from there trace, the introduction and diffusion of western sport into Keiyo and Marakwet society during the colonial period.

The study sought to achieve the following objectives. To analyze various types of indigenous sporting activities of the Keiyo and Marakwet by 1894. To examine the colonial transformation of indigenous sporting culture of the Keiyo and Marakwet 1895-1945 and lastly to investigate how the adoption and adaptation of athletics in Elgeyo-Marakwet marked a watershed in the Keiyo and Marakwet sporting history (1946-1964).

The study has been undertaken within the theory of structural functionalism and anti-dialogical action theory. The former was used to analyze how sports functioned as an integral part of the cultural structure of the Keiyo and Marakwet during the pre-colonial period. While the theory of anti-dialogical action was used to examine how the indigenous sports system changed as the Keiyo and Marakwet came into contact with Western culture during British colonialism.

This study was mainly qualitative. It sought to shed light on the historical contexts that have informed the transformation of sports over time. This approach was justified by the understanding that whereas considerable research has been conducted on Keiyo and Marakwet runners by sports scientists, hardly any research has been conducted on the transformation of sports in the area.

Out of the population of about 133,189 people in Elgeyo-Marakwet County (KNBS Population and Housing 2013), a sample size of about 50 members was selected for this study. This is a historical study; therefore, not all members of this community were included in the sample. The study thus, includes only those elders with historical knowledge of sports. The respondents were therefore regarded to be very instrumental because they had vital information that was valuable to this study.

Primary data was collected using open-ended oral interviews and archival materials. The secondary sources from various libraries were also utilized to throw light on the knowledge gaps on the subjects of the study and to prepare topics, themes and questions for further discussion with the respondent from the field. These sources were subjected in general to content analysis and provided updates and theoretical aspects being studied.

The first chapter introduced the detailed procedures employed during the time of research which aimed at achieving the following objectives; to investigate the various indigenous sporting activities among the Keiyo and Marakwet during the pre-colonial period, to interrogate the transformation of sports among the keiyo and Marakwet during the colonial period and finally to investigate the issue of continuity and change of the Keiyo and Marakwet sporting activities.

The second chapter of the study highlights the pre-colonial sporting activities of the Keiyo and Marakwet as a background for subsequent transformation under colonial rule. It argued that the traditional sporting culture of the Keiyo and Marakwet was closely connected with the daily routine and had many aspects of their daily to day work activities. For instance, throwing and running were required for hunting, fighting and defence. Additionally, such sporting activities were associated with ceremonies. In such cases jumping and running were often combined in the form of dance.

A wide variety of indigenous sporting activities existed such as throwing, running, hunting, arrow shooting, wrestling and jumping. While this would have been performed in the spirit of joy and adventure, they would also have assisted in training for fighting and self-defence, thus, it was regarded as partly utilitarian in the Keiyo and Marakwet sporting culture. The traditional sporting activities were also to a large degree differentiated, specialized and institutionalized according to age groups and gender.

Thus, the boys in the Keiyo and Marakwet society developed a rich indigenous sporting culture as they found enough time for playing within the institutional frame of herding cattle. By contrast, girls had to work more within the homestead. However, the physical activities of Keiyo and Marakwet women were mainly restricted to those connected with

securing food. If they had a chance to express themselves through sports, then they rather participated in rhythmical dance than in direct competitions often preferred by their male counterparts.

On the other hand, the male felt a strong moral obligation to prove himself in practice and combatant games especially when preparing for initiation. Additionally, they took on their new role as warriors where virtues like courage, bravery and endurance were being stressed. Thus, in the Keiyo and Marakwet society, a man could not marry until he had proved himself successful in major hunting or cattle raiding.

The patterns of pre-colonial sporting activities also differed regionally according to the topographical surroundings or climatic conditions. The Elgeyo escarpment, highland and the Kerio Valley landscape and the form of economy influenced the moulding of the movement patterns. For example, the Kerio Valley helped to develop hunting in the form of tiring the prey through outrunning while highlands areas probably hindered the development of ball games. Additionally, most of these games were also done during the dry season between December and May.

The Keiyo and Marakwet pre-colonial sporting culture was also dominated by the demand for high performance, and it mirrored such characteristics of traditional life as fight, rivalry and ambitions. In this context, physical activities engaged in the Keiyo and Marakwet society were vigorous and carried a strong competitive element, and direct combat was encouraged. The winners received public honour, prizes and respect and were regarded as heroes in society. All in all, physical prowess and physical beauty were of importance for the position of a man in the Keiyo and Marakwet society.

Also, the study has detailed the colonial encounter which is supposed to have led to a major transformation in the sporting culture of the Keiyo and Marakwet during the colonial period. This has been dealt with in chapter 3 where the colonization of Keiyo and Marakwet people by the British was seen as the cause for the introduction of modern sports such as athletics and football in the area. Thus, the British exported 'their' sports, through colonial administrators, military officers, colonial teachers, settlers and missionaries. These varied groups brought along different understandings of sport. The colonial administrators and educators allowed those sports to diffuse to the Africans which they regarded as 'fit for the indigenes', and these were mainly games. Many of the former had internalized the British values expected from playing games, especially personality values when they passed through the English Public School system; they were, furthermore, influenced by Puritanism, and tried to live up to such ideals in the colony.

An important legitimation for the introduction of sports for the Keiyo and Marakwet people was their use as an instrument to instil discipline and order. This idea is found expression through the introduction of drills. In mission schools, physical training was also often synonymous with drills. These were other physical exercises such as marching, group gymnastics and the construction of pyramids, all performed on command and in uniformity. The colonial administrators also organized sports in various divisions, districts and provinces and through the use of the colonial chief to organize various locational sports for the indigenes. This, therefore, acts as a way in which it deliberately breaks up such traditional social units as the clan. The British colonialists thus used sport as an effective instrument of domination. Everything was done to reinforce an inferiority

complex on the part of the colonized. This attempt had a strong impact on the traditional sporting culture of the Keiyo and Marakwet society.

In the last chapter, we examine how the adoption and adaptation of athletics in Elgeyo-Marakwet marked a watershed in the Keiyo and Marakwet sporting history between 1946 and 1964. This led to the internationalization of sports in the district. Sports in the interwar years in the Elgeyo-Marakwet district also showed both its traditional antecedents and those of modern characteristics, having a limited number of the features of both its past and future state. Sports that were being done exhibited both pre-colonial and modern characteristics.

### **5.3 Conclusion**

In brief, this thesis has revealed that colonialism brought about significant transformations in the Keiyo and Marakwet sporting culture. This transformation was for the benefit of both the colonized and the colonizers. The conclusion that can be drawn from this study is that the emergence of athletics in Elgeyo-Marakwet cannot be properly understood and addressed without prior consideration of the effects of colonialism on their pre-colonial sporting activities. In addition, for the prosperity of the sports sector, the government should always ensure continuous changes in terms of the inclusivity of women in sports. This is done through legislation and outreach campaigns promoting women's athletes. Against this backdrop, Keiyo and Marakwet women athletes will forge their path within changing social dynamics by gaining greater financial independence and proving themselves to be capable of succeeding at the highest levels of competition. This will undoubtedly change local attitudes to the point where women's social and family roles - whilst still defined patriarchally - are perhaps less restricted and limited in scope.

#### **5.4 Recommendations**

Subsequent research should be carried out to examine the transformation of sports more widely within the other Kalenjin group. By comparing and contrasting the Keiyo and Marakwet British colonial experiences in sports with those of the Nandi, Kipsigis, Tugen and Pokot. These other ethnic groups are linguistically and culturally related to the Keiyo and Marakwet and have also contributed a good number of professional athletes to the world history of sports over the years. Research should also be carried out on the history of Keiyo and Marakwet women in sports in a bid to explore African women's motivations for participation in organized sports, decades after their male counterparts. There is a need to move beyond simple dichotomies of local resistance to colonial oppression. It is, important to also consider how pre-colonial cultural practices interacted with colonialism, especially in terms of gender relations. This will provide a more nuanced understanding of this under-examined pattern of women's marginalization in Kenyan athletics to convey a sense of change over time and space.

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S.NO	NAME	Age	Gender	Date Of Interview
1	Rose Chepyator Jepkorir	65	Female	23/12/2021
2	Cheshire Philip	54	Male	24/12/2021
3	Kipkemei Paul	63	Male	24/12/2021
4	Ismael Kirui	65	Male	26/12/2021
5	Paul Kiptanui	57	Male	28/12/2021
6	mo Kimutai	52	Male	4/12/2021
7	Jonah Komora	80	Male	1/12/2021
8	Rose Chemwetich	78	Female	3/12/2021
9	Ann Chebet	55	Female	5/12/2021
10	Mzee Arap Yator	70	Male	6/12/2021
11	Peter Rono	72	Male	6/12/2021
12	Salina kibet	62	Female	6/12/2021
13	Misoi Towett	65	Male	8/12/2021
14	Paul Chelewa	73	Male	9/12/2021
15	Susan Chelanga	57	Female	9/12/2021
16	Murrey Ketter	54	Male	9/12/2021
17	Lazaro Chepkwony	84	Male	11/12/2021
18	Joel Kiprop	68	Male	13/12/2021
19	Pius Cheserek	76	Male	13/12/2021
20	Kobilo Yatich	81	Female	13/12/2021
21	Daniel Kiptoo	56	Male	14/12/2021
22	Regina Sang	61	Female	14/12/2021
23	Agness Rotich	74	Female	15/4/2021
24	Cherop Kipkeo	65	Male	16/4/2021
25	Yego Kipkeo	72	Male	16/4/2021
26	Toroitich Limo	65	Male	17/4/2021
27	Lilian Boit	68	Female	19/4/2021
28	Kibutit Kimaigut	78	Male	20/4/2021
29	Busiendich Mursabet	58	Male	23/4/2021
30	Kimoi Labechum	82	Male	24/4/2021
31	Jenifer Chepkemoi	67	Female	25/4/2021
32	Linda Tarus	83	Female	26/4/2021
33	Cheserem kimoning	89	Male	26/4/2021
34	Kipkulei Bartai	57	Male	27/4/2021
35	Chepkoech Kanda	61	Female	27/4/2021
36	Ruto Komen	70	Male	28/4/2021
37	Mike arap Boit	75	Male	28/4/2021
38	Chelimo Chepkwony	63	Female	29/4/2021

39	Kaino Komen	76	Male	29/4/2021
40	Chesir Rotich	73	Male	1/5/2021
41	Chepkirui Kipseswa	64	Female	1/5/2021
42	Chemitei Kandie	70	Female	2/5/2021
43	Cherutich chepkirui	81	Female	2/5/2021
44	Kibiego Kitum	76	Male	3/5/2021
45	Chebet Kisang	64	Male	3/5/2021
46	Kiprugut Chumo	82	Male	3/5/2021
47	Komen Chepkurui	76	Male	4/5/2021
48	Kipchoge Keino	82	Male	4/5/2021
49	Toroitich arap Kiboriot	75	Male	4/5/2021
50	Mzee Paul arap Tanui	91	Male	5/5/2021

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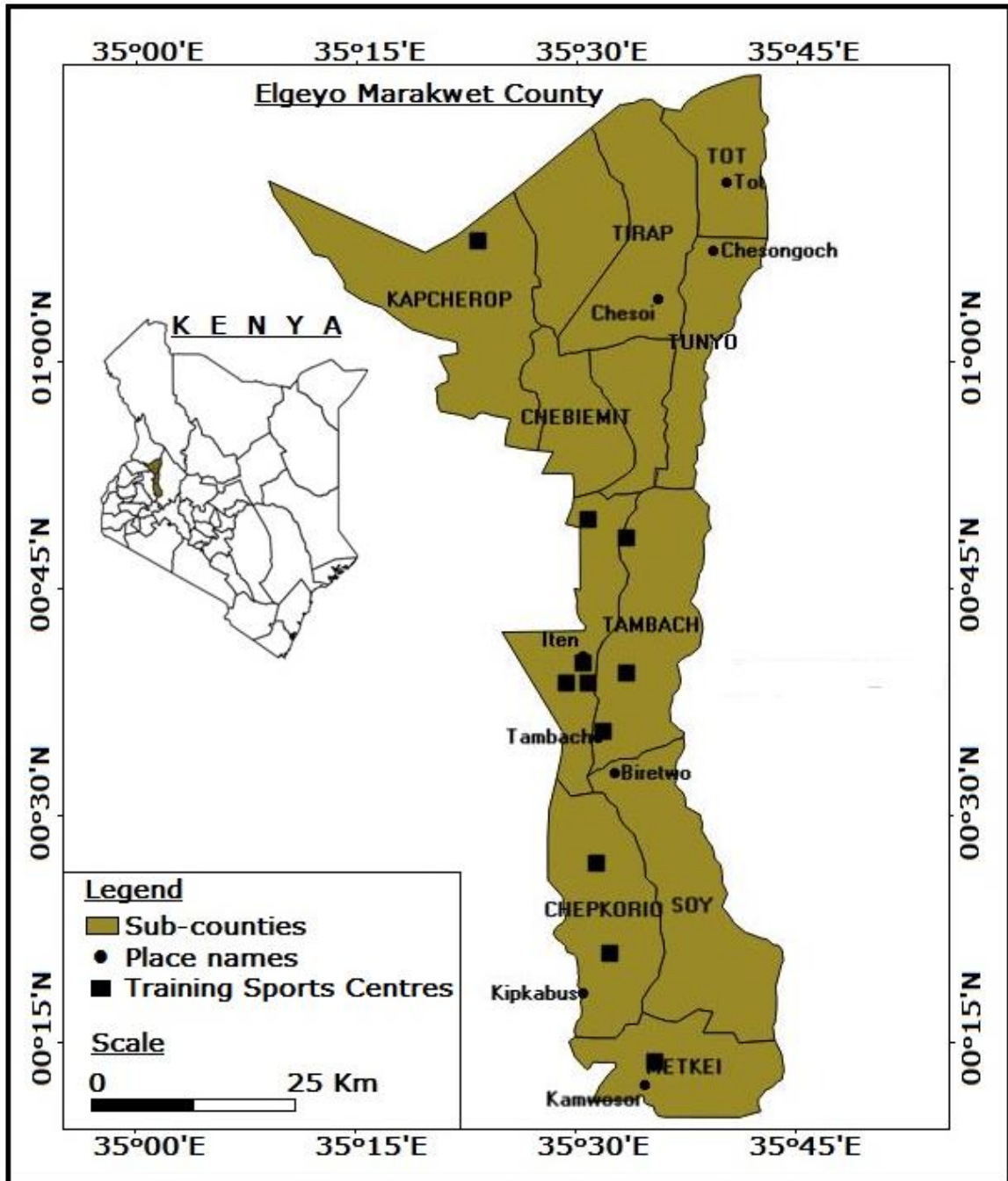
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Appendix I: Map of the study area



**Appendix II: Research Permit**

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