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Next week

PERMANENTLY BACK and Soberg's got these melodramatic red racers for 12 hours of room. Another Italian marquis, Alfa Romeo, is going to be the principal opposition.

THE AUGUSTA everybody forgets: in a preview of the Masters, Dan Jenkins tears the tricky front nine that never lost the light of TV but often proves to play harder than the back.

A STAMPED OF SWEDEN, well fueled by pride and blueberry soup, sweeps across Sweden in a spectacular 53-mile race reported from the sidelines by William Johnson.

Zululand, on the eastern coast of the Republic of South Africa, is a giant Noah's ark on the emerging flood tides of modern Africa, a last sanctuary against the onslaught of industrialization. The latter-day Noah who guards the flora and fauna of this 10,500-square-mile section of the province of Natal is Ian Player, brother of the famous golfer and a man of remarkable accomplishments in his own right. Under Player's jurisdiction are Zululand's half-million acres of game reserves and parks, some 300 miles of coastline, 445 wildlife management officers, game guards and other personnel, and more than a million game creatures. It is a formidable trust. But for Ian Player it is only part of a much broader trust, for his concern extends

Ian Cedric Audley Player was born 45 years ago, not in the African bush but in the highly urbanized city of Johannesburg, near the gold mines where his father worked. From childhood he was plagued by a series of injuries to his right knee that put him in and out of hospitals for months at a time and forced him to wear a leg brace. But he refused to give in to the knee trouble. Instead he launched himself on an exhausting program of physical rehabilitation, which, to the astonishment of his doctors, eventually crumbled him to shed the brace and talk his way into the army during World War II. He saw action—bad leg and all—with an armored division in Italy.

"Failure does not exist in Ian's vo-

He has saved the white rhino from man. Now, in Zululand, Ian Player is devoted to the task of saving man from himself by VIRGINIA KRAFT

A PLAYER IN THE GAME OF LIFE

far beyond the boundaries of Zululand. It encompasses all wilderness and wildlife everywhere.

Player's Operation Rhino, the subject of films, books, television shows and countless articles, has been acclaimed as the classic conservation success story. The World Wildlife Fund has called him the savior of the white rhino. Game Conservation International (Game Coin) once named him its Conservationist of the Year.

In the U.S., Player has been called a visionary, but in South Africa he is considered a radical. At home he has had to fight not only the apathy of an unenlightened and indifferent public but the opposition of the very agencies that should be working to charge such apathy. This uphill battle is the kind Player has come to know best.

cabulary," says Gary Player of his older brother. "Whatever he takes on he has to do better than anyone. I remember as kids, Ian was always pushing me, making me do endless push-ups, forcing me to run when I was too tired to walk. In spite of his bad knee, I couldn't keep up with him. One time, when I was about eight, we were running this five-mile course. My lungs were bursting. Finally I just collapsed on the side of the road. I told Ian I couldn't make it. He pulled me to my feet and cuffed me across the ear. 'What do you mean, you can't make it, man?' he shouted. His face was red and he was furious. 'You can make anything you set out to do. Just remember that, man, anything. There is no reason for can't in this life.' I don't know how, but I finished the five miles."

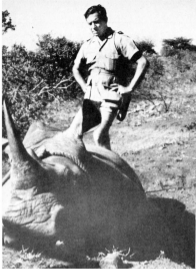
Gary Player credits much of his later

success to the perseverance taught him by Ian, who fashioned his younger brother's first golf club out of a stick and taught him how to use it.

When Ian left school at 16 to join the army he was only months away from graduation. His friends and family were shocked that he did not wait for his diploma. Player, characteristically, was shocked that anyone would consider staying in school when a war of such magnitude was being fought.

Player did not return to school after the war, but worked at a series of unrelated jobs—as a commercial fisherman, a shipping clerk and a miner—drifting from one to the next with neither interest nor direction. It was while he was working in an aluminum company in Pietermaritzburg, Natal that the idea of canoeing from that city to Durban, a





port on the Indian Ocean, began first as a fanciful dream and then materialized into an adventure that has become part of the modern folklore of South Africa.

Today the annual Pietermaritzburg-Durban Canoe Race, which grew out of Pleyer's exploit, is one of the best-known sporting events in the country, attracting hundreds of entries and thousands of spectators. But in 1950 the Umsunduzi and Umgeni rivers, which loosely connect the two cities via 110 obstacle-strewn miles of rapids, falls, log-jams and weirs, had never been successfully navigated. The challenge of conquering these waters became Pleyer's all-consuming ambition.

Years later he wrote in his book *Men, Rivers and Canoes* of the efforts that went into realizing this ambition. His account of repeated brushes with disaster in the form of waterfalls, whirlpools, capstans, crocodiles and snakes reads like a script for an old Hollywood serial. He reached Durban finally, delirious

and close to death from the poisonous bite of a night adder and suffering from dysentery, sarban and a dislocated shoulder. But the accomplishment proved worth the price, for it was this challenge that awoke him to the greater ones that lay before him. It was on the river that he made his decision to become a game ranger.

Later, he wrote: "I was suddenly filled with an overwhelming loathing at the thought of going to the streets and nosed houses of the city. I had come to hate every aspect of town life. I was filled with an insatiable mental hunger for the sight of dry, twigged acacias and the green grass underneath, the smell of a raw native kraal and subumbrella wood smoke, and to see birds wheeling in a sky that was not hazy with smog."

When Pleyer joined the Natal Parks Board as a ranger in 1952, the vast game herds had in most places already become legend. More than 40 species indigenous to South Africa had been re-

placed by cattle, sheep and goats. Cities stood where wildebeest once roamed. Factories smoked where streams once bubbled. Man had proclaimed his priority and in so doing, Pleyer felt, had forecast his doom. Pleyer saw in wilderness man's single hope of survival, and in game reserves the last strongholds of true wilderness.

The concept of game reserves is not a new one in South Africa. As long ago as the early 1800s the Zulu kings set aside areas on which game was protected for their private hunting. The pits of the great King Shaka, dug in 1820, are still visible today in Zululand's Umfolozi Game Reserve.

Hunting was also the major impetus behind the white man's reserves, which came later in the century. By then the pioneers had completed their Great Trek across the highveld, and had consolidated for greed and profit virtually all wildlife in what is believed to have been one of the most densely populated game areas in the world. Alarmed by these massacres, the handful of sports hunters in the country negotiated to set aside certain areas in which game would be protected.

President Paul Kruger, a barrier, was thus able in 1898 to set aside the 8,000-square-mile reserve in the Transvaal which today bears his name. The year before, hunters in Zululand had located the last surviving pocket of white rhinoceros in the world, a total of 20 animals—all that remained of the hundreds of thousands that had populated South Africa before the Great Trek—and the major Zululand reserves of Hlabisa, Umfolozi and Lake St. Lucia were proclaimed to protect them.

But the victory of these early conservationists was short-lived. The slaughter that preceded the arrival of the first settlers was followed by the livestock of the west. And as fast as cattle and sheep moved in, nagana, the disease transmitted by the tsetse fly, destroyed them.

continued

Game animals carry the disease but, unlike domestic stock, are immune to it. Soon there was a demand to kill every wild animal in the land. In Umfolosi Game Reserve alone, the last anti-rabies expedition began in the early '40s and lasted six years until virtually every game animal except the white rhino, which was protected by government order, was exterminated. More than 200,000 head of game were destroyed before the drive ended.

By the early '50s, when Payer came to Umfolosi, the cry was to abolish all game reserves. The Natal Parks Board was under sharp attack. Poaching was rife. Farmers and ranchers were hostile and the public was indifferent. In the physical, political and philosophical struggles that followed, many dedicated men fought long and hard to save the Zululand reserves, but in the end it was the white rhinos, prodded along by Payer, that won the battle.

The white, or square-lipped, rhinoceros is not actually white, any more than the black rhinoceros is black. Both are a drab gray, the shade determined to a large extent by the mud in which they wallow. Early Boer hunters likened the tawdiness of the white rhino to that of the white man, and the aggressiveness of the black to the fierce tribes of the interior, and so labeled them.

The white rhino is the second-largest land mammal on earth, sometimes weighing more than four tons. The black is about half this size. The white has a prominent hump on its neck, a straight, wide upper lip and an elongated head. The black has no hump, a pointed prehensile upper lip and a shorter head. It also has a considerably shorter temper. The black's notorious reputation for charging first and reflecting later doubtless helped it survive, just as the white's docility hastened its demise. Shooting a white rhino was about as dangerous as shooting a Jersey cow, and demanded no more skill.

"Every book about the early settlers," Payer says, "tells of individuals killing 18, 20, as many as 100 white rhinos in a day. The slaughter was beyond imagination. It is a miracle that any survived."

When Payer began working with the rhino, its numbers had grown to 300. But even this increase was a poor guarantee of survival. A single disease such as anthrax could wipe out the entire spe-

cies overnight. Payer believed that the animal's future could only be assured by deconcentrating the population and establishing additional breeding nuclei not only on its original ranges but also beyond them.

"The practical difficulties in getting such an operation going were enormous," he says, "but I had a lot of help and if ever a venture was international, this was it. An Englishman discovered the drugs. An American developed the dart gun. A South African worked out the methods of translocation."

Today there are more than 1,800 white rhinos in Zululand, several hundred more in other parts of Africa, countless pairs in zoos throughout the world and sizable breeding herds in England and the U.S. The animal's name has been decisively removed from the list of endangered species.

Payer is embarrassed when he is referred to as the savior of the white rhino, not out of any sense of modesty but because he is so conscious of the debt he owes the people who went before him and who worked with him on the project. His real contribution, he believes, was putting the team together, pushing it forward and keeping it going. He admits that this occasionally required methods somewhat less than ethical. He flagranty planted false news items in the press, misinformed the public, misdirected politicians and suppressed information when he believed it best to do so. His goal was achievement at the expense of all else. He attained it, but not without error.

Animals had been transplanted in many parts of the world before and with great success, but never such a gigantic animal. To quiet the rhinos, numerous drugs and drug combinations were tried before the right one, M99, was discovered. In the process, some rhinos succumbed to the drug; still others charged the horsemen following them or rushed blindly through a herd of buffalo, stampeding them. Some, out on their feet but still moving, plunged over cliffs or drowned in rivers.

Transporting the animals to holding pens where they could be acclimated for their farther journey presented its own problems. Rhinos often broke off their horns as they thrashed about in the truck. Occasionally they became so violent that they actually lunged out through the

roof. They traveled best with their tails toward the engines, but it took much trial and error to determine this. It was better if a familiar ranger went along to feed them. In one celebrated instance, a shipment of 25 rhinos arrived in England during a dock strike. The dock workers were so moved by the plight of the animals stranded in the ship's hold that they tunneled out, in spite of the strike, to unload them. The incident received publicity throughout the world.

Payer has never been shy about such publicity, nor has he always been fussy about its accuracy so long as it served the right purpose. Two years after the first rhinos were reestablished in Kruger Park and Operation Rhino was in full swing, a Hollywood movie company came to Umfolosi to make a film on the subject.

"When they started shooting," recalls James Clarke of the Johannesburg Star who helped write the original script, "the story was perfectly legitimate. By the time they finished, it was something only Hollywood could turn out. There were white rhinos—played by black rhinos, of course—charging all over the lot, leopards leaping out of trees where there had not been leopards for decades, and animals doing all sorts of impossible things. I was outraged, but said, 'Forget it, man! What difference does it make how phony it is as long as it makes people aware of rhinos—and of the game reserves?'"

"The thing is," Clarke adds, "he was right. The film was a bomb but the world found out about the white rhino and the fight to save it, and a lot of people wanted to help."

A lot of people also took another look at the Zululand reserves. Much of what they saw surprised them. Where once rangers referred among themselves to tourists as "terrorists" and made them feel about as welcome, now they actually encouraged visitors. They built new access and interior roads to facilitate travel, set up rest camps throughout the reserves to provide overnight accommodations and constructed cleverly concealed blinds at watering holes to make game-watching easier. The change in attitude toward the public did not go unnoticed. In just 10 years the number of visitors to Umfolosi alone jumped from 2,000 to 34,000 annually.

Once the animal herds were reestablished, Payer faced the problems of keep-

continued

ing them fit. There is a limit to the amount of wildlife any given area can support. Beyond that, disease, starvation and overcrowding create havoc with the herd and the habitat, destroying both. One means of keeping populations in check is by culling with the gun. Another is by transplanting game to areas where it is scarce. The latter is preferable, but for it to be practical there must be a demand for the game. Creating that demand in a society accustomed to systematically slaughtering every wild animal in sight was a difficult goal.

Player was banking on one factor: economics. "Nothing in this world will survive," Julian Huxley once said, "unless you can prove it an economic asset." With the zeal of a pitchman selling patent medicine, Player set out to prove the economic virtues of wildlife. He stamped the countryside, selling game as Africa's "new gold"—a rich, renewable asset capable of utilizing all vegetation in the bush, of producing 15 times more protein and several times more marketable by-products than cattle, of providing unlimited esthetic and recreational returns.

In little more than five years game ranches have sprung up all over Zululand and the idea has spread throughout southern Africa. Economically, they have already proved successful both to the ranchers and to the Natal Parks Board, which last year realized more than \$400,000 from game sales.

"Ten years ago we couldn't give game away. Nobody wanted it," Player says. "Today we can't keep up with the demand. Farmers, once hostile, have become our biggest customers. They now recognize that game offers numerous sources of revenue, with sports hunting a major one. In the end, I believe the recreational value of hunting on these ranches will prove even more important than meat production.

"But that is only part of it," he adds. "Every game ranch means land kept wild, land saved from the scourges of silt and sugarcane. That is what conservation is all about—saving the land, keeping the bush wild, because once it is destroyed there is no way on this God's earth to bring it back again."

Player's all but fanatical fight to keep Zululand's reserves truly wild is responsible for some of the controversy he has stirred in South Africa. He has been called "anti-people" and publicly

criticized in Parliament for "concentrating on conservation to the neglect of tourism."

"Tourists don't come to Africa to look at bloody cows!" he retorts.

Against much opposition he has blocked the establishment of restaurants, shops and any form of entertainment within the reserves. One has only to visit Kruger National Park with its broad paved highways and carnivallike compounds to understand Player's wrath at such commercialization.

Of all the projects Player has undertaken, he is most dedicated to expounding the gospel of wilderness. "Conservation is not a plying, or a luxury, or something new," he says. "It is survival. Before we can develop an ecological conscience about the world in which we live, before we can understand our own relationship to the earth, to wildlife, to God, we must be able to see a strip of land that has not been maltreated by man. We must experience wilderness."

To enable people to do so, Player introduced what are known as Wilderness Trails to the Zululand reserves some years ago. On a trail, small groups hike with a ranger for three to five days into true wilderness, places where every symbol of modern life is barred. Unique in Africa, these Wilderness Trails attract increasing numbers of business and professional people each year. The success of the trails induced Player to start the African Wilderness Leadership School, which in less than 10 years has developed into a powerful force to save the future of wilderness.

The object of AWLS is to make tomorrow's leaders aware today of the ecological facts of life, of the delicate balance between soil, water, animals and plants. Unlike Outward Bound and similar schools, the AWLS offers no direct instruction. Students make their own observations, work out their own problems and draw their own conclusions.

One ranger accompanies each group of seven boys, but he does not teach—he guides. On one day they are taken on a 15-mile hike without water. At its end they are better aware of water's vital link to life than they would be following a dozen lectures. They are taken through virgin bush and through bush that man has spoiled. They learn the critical balances between fresh and salt water by spending three days in canoes on

Lake St. Lucia, which, along with its fish and fauna, is dying of excess salinity brought about by man's greed and ignorance. They observe the complex relationship of hippos to flood control, fish migrations to bird life and predators to population problems.

Originally AWLS was aimed at boys between the ages of 16 and 20. Although boys still comprise the majority of the students, the program has been expanded to include girls, postgraduate students, teachers and young business executives. Where once it involved only South Africans, its students now come from all over the world. But the chief criterion for eligibility remains the same: leadership potential.

The school's revenues from all sources seldom cover its expenses. It operates out of a borrowed office in a converted cow shed on the Stubbins Nature Reserve in Durban, has no full-time administrator, no storage facilities, no organized recruiting, publicity or fund-raising programs. Considering how much AWLS has already achieved and the scope of its potential, such a tenuous existence seems strange. To some extent, Ian Player is to blame. He has tried to handle too many roles at the same time, to be in too many places at once, to serve too many masters. Technically, as an employee of the Natal Parks Board, he can have no official association with the school. In theory, it is administered by a trust. In practice, he runs it. But his efficiency is impeded by his primary responsibility to the parks board and, lately, by growing dissension within the AWLS board. It has been suggested that Player resign from the parks board and concentrate entirely on the school.

Such a move might make his life easier. Player has put so much of himself into his dual roles that there is little time left over for his family. The \$500 a month he earns from the parks board—which is less than AWLS guides earn—is barely enough to keep roof on the table for his sympathetic wife Ann and their three children.

Neither Player nor anyone else can predict what will happen to the reserves when Zululand receives its promised statehood in the next few years. The Zulu, with his goats and cattle and disdain for game, has a long history of abusing the land. For years he has squatted on the edges of the reserves, looking

continued



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JAM PLAYER continued

with envy from his own scared, over-grazed lands into the lush greenery of the reserves, recognizing the differences but not the reasons for them and rejecting the fact that animals live on the good land while he lives on the bad. No one knows how long after independence he will accept this, or whether he can be educated before that to conserve the land. Player is working against time to do this, but it is a slow process.

In Chief Gatsha Buthelesi, the hereditary and elected leader of the four million Zulu people, Player has a powerful ally. The nephew of King Solomon and a direct descendant of 99 generations of Zulu kings, Buthelesi combines a deep feeling for Zulu history and tradition with an intelligent, enlightened approach to what is best for the future of his people. He is keenly aware of the tangible and intangible values of wilderness to his nation, and he is personally committed to preserving them.

"With the recognition that the Zululand reserves have received throughout the world, I do not believe any government would permit them to be destroyed," Player says, but the customary conviction in his voice is missing. He knows that he cannot afford the gamble of leaving the parks board row and possibly losing the reserves during the difficult transition period that lies ahead for Zululand. It makes little sense to save the wilderness school at the expense of the wilderness.

With or without Player, AWLS needs immediate and stable financing—substantial long-range underwriting. "It is only right that industry, which has played such a major role in destroying the environment, should now assume the major burden of restoring it," says South African conservationist-author T.C. Robertson, who is the director of AWLS. "This is a small price to pay to check man's headlong race toward destruction of the ecology that supports him and the few shreds of wilderness that remain."

It would be a small price indeed to ensure that there will always be wild places in the world where square-lipped rhinos browse and hippos roar in the rivers, where chattering monkeys dance in open trees and crocodiles daze on muddy shores, where lions stalk in long grasses and where, if one takes the time to listen, one can hear the sounds of silence. **END**