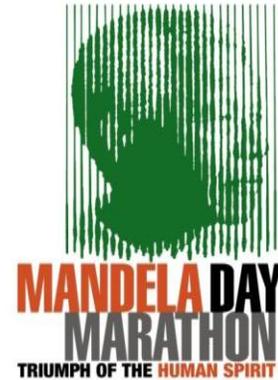




7 JULY 2016



MEDIA STATEMENT: MANDELA DAY MARATHON – TOP ELITE RUNNERS

The Mandela Day Marathon now in its 5th year continues to grow by leaps and bounds and has attracted the 'crème de la crème' in the national athletics scenery. A full component of 60 Elite Athletes will be competing to break the 2 hours 27 minutes and 12 seconds set by Thobani Chagwe. On the chasing pack will be three recent Comrades champions, Bongmusa Mtembu, Gift Kelehe and David Gatebe competing for honours and R 100 000.00 prize money of the 2016 Mandela Day Marathon.

Breathing down their neck will be Moses Njodzi previous winner of Two Oceans marathon and Brighton Chipere, the 2013 Mandela Day Marathon Champion who will give the chasing pack a good run for their money.

The torturous "Struggle Hill" awaits these fine top male athletes who will have to defy the odds of breaking the record or crossing the finish first as they go head to head against each other.

These elite runners represent the following clubs: Arthur Ford Athletics Club, TomTom Athletics Club, Maxed Elite, and Formula 1.

Thobani Chagwe

The former Mandela Day Marathon winner and record holder, finishing the race in 2:27:12, will be participating in the 2016 marathon to try and break his own record and once again claim victory which he tasted in 2014.

Arthur Ford Athletics Club

Bongmusa Mthembu

He was placed 4th at the Zululand Ultra Marathon and 12th at Two Oceans Marathon. Mthembu has won three gold medals since making his Comrades debut in 2006 will be eager to make his mark once again on the Mandela Day Marathon.

TomTom Athletics Club

Gift Kelehe

The policeman from Rustenburg who runs in the TomTom Athletics Club, will eyeing the number one spot as he will running his first ever Mandela Day Marathon. Mr. Kelehe won the 90th Comrades Marathon last year and is aiming to now add the Mandela Day Marathon gold medal to his locker.

Maxed Elite

David Gatebe

The current Comrades Marathon winner and record holder is coming back to the City of Choice to try and do the double. After his coach, John Hamlett successfully broke him into the top ten for the very first time and in record time, David will be eager to claim the number one spot.

F1 Running Club

Moses Njodzi

Former Two Oceans Marathon (2006) winner, Moses Njodzi worked as a pace setter at Comrades 2013. The Zimbabwean's quick start earned him two hot spots but this time round he harbours greater ambitions. He is in good shape and wants to bring home his first gold.

Although there will be no clear favorites in this year's Mandela Day Marathon as some of the athletes will be focusing on the Rio Olympics, organizers are optimistic previous winners will grace the race. Scores of runners have already entered for the 5th edition of renowned race, which is also known as the Triumph of the Human Spirit due to the hilly course.

UMgungundlovu Mayor Yusuf Bhamjee says there is no better way to celebrate this historic day than go through the same trial and tribulations as Nelson Mandela. 21 years into democracy, racism is yet to be cured and the only remedy that seems to work, at least temporarily is the Mandela's sports quotes that 'Sport has the power to break racial barriers and unite the nation.'

The President of Kwa-Zulu Natal Athletics added by saying, "the race also offers foreigners a rare experience of Madiba's struggle and a record number of 15 000 participants are expected at the race!"

The Communications Manager, added: Bongumusa Mthembu, Gift Kelehe and David Gatebe, who won the Comrades Marathon in 2014, 2015 and 2016 respectively, are expected to grace the race. The trio will be joined by former Two Oceans Marathon

winner, Moses Mjodzi, Sowetan Marathon winner Hariet Chebore and Apiwe Gaga. These athletes are among 2 930 entries who have confirmed their entries.

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