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Motshidisi Mogopodi's Journey to Comrades Marathon

Congratulations to our BOL Champion Motshidisi Mogopodi
Comrades Marathon 2023 #TheUltimateHumanRace.



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You challenged yourself for the first time at this year's Comrades Marathon. (Who is Tshidi and why did you find it fit to run 90km in one day?).

Tshidi is an enthusiastic, dedicated and ambitious individual who mainly strives for excellence in all ventures. A wife and mother of two, a boy and a girl. Born and raised in the mining town of Jwaneng, I am the last-born child of the family. I am an Economist by profession. Running is my happy place, it gives me immense joy and pushes me to exceed my own limits. It is through running that I have discovered my inner strength and realized my true potential. Every kilometer I cover on the road reinforces this belief, which is why I challenged myself to run the Comrades Marathon, to pursue something bigger than me, running 90kms in one day! It always seems impossible until it is done.

When did you start running and what was your motivation?

I began my running journey late in 2019, just before the outbreak of Covid-19 in 2020, and just as I was gaining momentum from doing 5kms without walking, then the pandemic happened, causing disruptions. So, I found my stride and made significant progress during Covid in 2020. I would run around my yard, driven by the motivation to combat the sedentary lifestyle imposed by the pandemic.

Tell us more about Comrades Marathon.

Comrades Marathon is an incredibly beautiful race according to me. It embodies the spirit of focus and attributes of humanity, selflessness, dedication, perseverance and all other aspects bigger than life. I want to believe that is why it is dubbed "The Ultimate Human Race." It is additionally the world's largest and oldest ultramarathon race ran by participants from all over the world with runners covering approximately ninety kilometers between the cities of Durban to Pietermaritzburg or vice versa depending on whether it's an up or down run. This year it was a down run that I partook in and ran a total of 88.87kilometers from Pietermaritzburg to Durban. The entire journey was a magnificent and delightful experience for me. I cherished every moment, starting from the lively atmosphere on the road, the encouragement from supporters, the vibrant energy surrounding the event, the picturesque scenery, the refreshing vibrant water stations and moving from what's comfortable to the uncomfortable difficult parts

of the routes; the hills! What initially seemed unbearable became manageable and endurable as the race unfolded.

Given a chance would you do it again?

Oh yes! I would do it again and again. I love the methodical and organized structure aspect that comes with preparing for The Ultimate Human Race and these months of training leading up to the gruesome 90kms gives me just that. I put so much discipline, time and sacrifices in the structured training and I find a lot of comfort in following the process and expecting the results on race day.

How do you see running beneficial?

Running helps me a great deal in all aspects of life, it truly is beneficial. It reminds me of my capabilities and to push through the self-imposed limits. This I apply in all aspects of my life be it career, work, family or social and just on the way I do things. I do not give up. I dub myself a Punisher, Finisher and a Superstar. Running has truly demonstrated to me that there are no obstacles in life that I cannot conquer or accomplish. Running puts every emotion to the test, leaving no feeling untouched. However, the ultimate objective always remains the same: crossing the finish line. I step out of my comfort zone and face my fears to stay positive, stay fighting, stay ambitious and focused on my work. Additionally, it clears my head, grounds my soul, always lifting my spirits hence I say its my happy place. As for the people I meet and places I get to explore through running, it's a bonus. Running is truly an adventure.

Are you doing the next Comrades marathon?

Without a doubt! God willing and my health permitting, I am fully committed to participating in the Comrades Marathon again next year. I am definitely going back for my back-to-back medal next year June. The Comrades Back-to-Back medal is an honorary medal given to Comrades Novices going back for their second comrades marathon race. One needs to complete two consecutive Comrades Marathons to earn this medal and I am going for it next year. Years from now I want to be able to look back at my life and say "Yes ma'am, you really believed in yourself and it worked." With the resounding support of my employer, husband, family and running coach as well as my running friends, I shall indeed conquer again. I remain grateful to God and all my support structure and enablers.



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