

Murray & Roberts | Back in Business

Here at the Murray & Roberts Running Club, we are celebrating the fact that road running (proper) is back!



You can find more info on the Murray & Roberts Running Club via our Facebook page.

In Gauteng, the Alberton 10km was run on the first weekend of November and despite strict COVID-19 controls, it was a superb success and meant that almost 300 athletes, including 50 elites, had the chance to lace up their racing flats for the first time in almost eight months. As it was, it produced a great result for the 'black & yellow,' with three men in the top 10 and four women cracking the top 10.

Murray & Roberts club manager Dana Coetzee says: "The Alberton race was the first return of road running since COVID-19 closed down our sport. We are back on the road... literally and figuratively. The race was a barometer for the whole sport and controls were superb. If all the race organisers can operate like this, then we will be able to get the sport going again and keep it going. Race director Anton Ferreira and his team from the Alberton Athletic Club set the bar very high, and it should be something that all races will try to emulate."

"So, the men and women's records on the fast route in Alberton were broken. Does that mean that the lack of racing translates into the elites that came being rested and really ready to race? It's an interesting debate, isn't it? It was clear from before the start that the athletes could not contain their enthusiasm for racing, and could not wait to start and tie one on. It's also worth thinking about that the winner broke thirty minutes at medium altitude (29:45). That is impressive. Our own very talented **Dylan van der Merwe** secured the runner-up spot for the second year in a row in Alberton, in 30:20, which translates to a 3:02 pace."



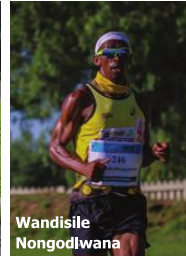
Dylan van der Merwe



Philani Buthelezi



Megan Dempster



Wandisile Nongodwana



Wida de Klerk

Satisfied With The Results

Says Dylan: "I loved racing again. I found great joy in being able to measure myself against the best in Gauteng, and it is my favourite distance to race at present. Just the vibe at the start and then grabbing second spot again for the second time in a row was a very enjoyable way to get back to racing. The route was a fast one, and judging by my time, the training is yielding the right results. That was my fastest time at altitude and it was so close to breaking the magical 30-minute mark."

"Do I think not racing for a while has helped? Well, my legs felt fresh, I was eager to up the ante all the way, and it was just superb to have the racing aspect again. It's what I live for, to be honest. During lockdown I changed coaches, and former marathon great, three-time Olympian and New York Marathon winner Hendrick Ramaala has been just unbelievable. He focuses on distance a lot, and this has without any doubt helped me immensely. The Ramaala group, who run Zoo Lake flat, includes several national champions. That means they're speedy as well as inspirational, all at the same time. This is an aspect that I've not experienced before, and I am truly grateful for the opportunity."

Third placer **Philani Buthelezi** said he could still feel the effects of the Sanlam Cape Town Marathon Virtual Run, which took place just three weeks earlier in Pretoria. "I am grateful that I got an entry in a quality field, and that road running is now officially back. For me, I could still feel that the 42.2km race, where I finished third overall and virtually in 2:17, was in my legs. My coach Lindsey Parry and I have big plans and I believe I can go a lot faster."

Stick to the Rules

Looking ahead, Coetzee says: "For me, the racing season in 2021 will be very interesting, depending on all the races that will already have been run in 2020, so it is imperative that race organisers, runners, administrators, marshals and officials all strictly stick to what is now necessary by law. Our sport depends on it. So, from the whole Murray & Roberts team, this is actually a plea for everyone to ensure that we all operate within the requirements, so that we can all continue running, particularly in the new year."

Dana concludes: "The goody bag and the medal in Alberton were superb, and it was made even better by the fact that the AAC did not have an official sponsor for the race. They obviously do things right in that part of the world."

So, start planning for those 2021 races ... because, as Arnie said, "I'll be back." So will road running. /A



Benedict Moeng



Danie van Tonder

Images: SMacPix & courtesy Murray & Roberts Running Club