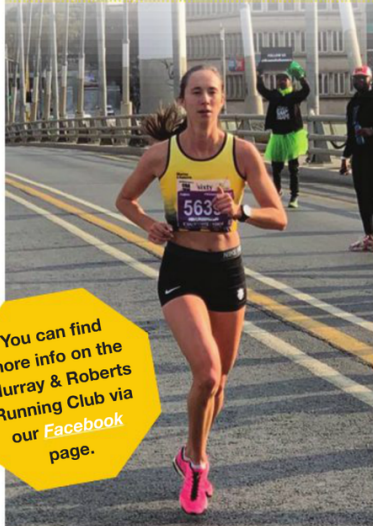


Murray & Roberts | Endless Possibilities

ADVERTORIAL 

This month we feature one of our youngest and brightest stars, **Carina Viljoen**. Just a few weeks ago she took on SA's running sensation Gerda Steyn over 5000m in Potch and was victorious. Now the new year awaits, and so does a glittering career for the 23-year-old.

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



Where do you come from and where do you go to Varsity now?

I am from Randburg, Johannesburg and went to Hoërskool Randburg. I am currently a student athlete at the University of Arkansas in the USA. I finished my undergrad in Accounting in 2020 and am currently pursuing a Masters in Sport Management.

How did you start running?

Both my parents were distance runners, and after watching them run as a kid, growing up, it was something that came naturally to me. I also remember watching the 2008 Olympics and after only the opening ceremony, I knew that was something I wouldn't mind working towards.

What are your PB's?

On the track:
800m – 2:07.80
1500m – 4:13.27
1 mile – 4:33 (indoors)
3000m – 8:56 (indoors)
5000m – 15:54.02

On the road:
10km – 34:32

How did you end up in the USA?

After my race at World Youth Champs in 2013, I was recruited by a lot of American universities. That is when the seed was planted, but it wasn't until my matric year that I went and visited a couple of universities in the States and I made up my mind to sign with the University of Arkansas. We had contacted them after seeing the success that the

coach had had with other South Africans, and he was gracious enough to take me in and give me the opportunity to further my studies and run in the NCAA, one of the biggest and toughest stages in the track world.

Who motivates you and why?

My parents – I wouldn't be anywhere in this sport without them. They have both put in so much work to help me be the best I can be, which inspires me to make them proud in anything I do. The mental side of running gets real tough sometimes. They know its importance, and work with me through all the ups and downs. In that sense, they actively motivate me on a daily basis – still.

Your favourite workout?

Anything "short." I love doing sets of 400m or step-downs on the track.

Best training advice you've ever received?

Just take it one rep at a time.

Your running icons and why?

When thinking of a running icon, I usually gravitate towards some of the incredible runners I know personally. There are many who I've met or have some kind of connection to in the US now. And yet the most iconic people in my eyes are still our local legends. From Zola Budd and Elana Meyer to the Kalmer sisters and Dominique Scott. They are examples that you can have a kind, caring heart and still be a badass on the track, and that is something I look up to. These inspiring ladies make me feel that it is possible for a little South African runner to rise up and take a place among the greatest.

What was it like racing a national hero in Gerda Steyn, and then beating her?

It was a real honour to run with Gerda, as she is an incredible athlete and such a cheerful person. In South Africa, we need more races where athletes can strive towards faster times together. When I heard Gerda was setting out to run a fast 5000m on the track, I was so excited for the opportunity to finally let loose on home soil for a change.

How has COVID-19 affected your career?

It has just "moved up" my career by one year. Instead of finishing my studies in May of 2020 and then trying to turn professional, I get the chance to pursue a Masters and have one more season to run for the University, before entering the "real world" of senior racing.

What are your plans for 2021?

I plan to finish my graduate degree and race collegiately until June 2021 in the States, after which only time will tell. I am hoping to explore some options of either staying in the States to pursue a professional running career or coming home and doing the same here. The possibilities are endless. */A*

