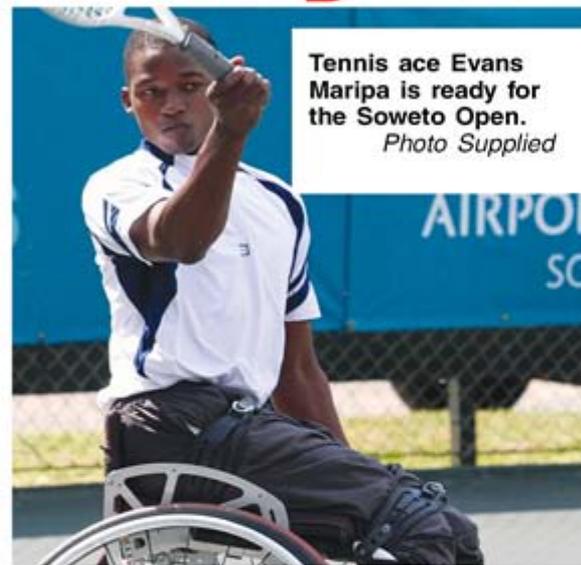
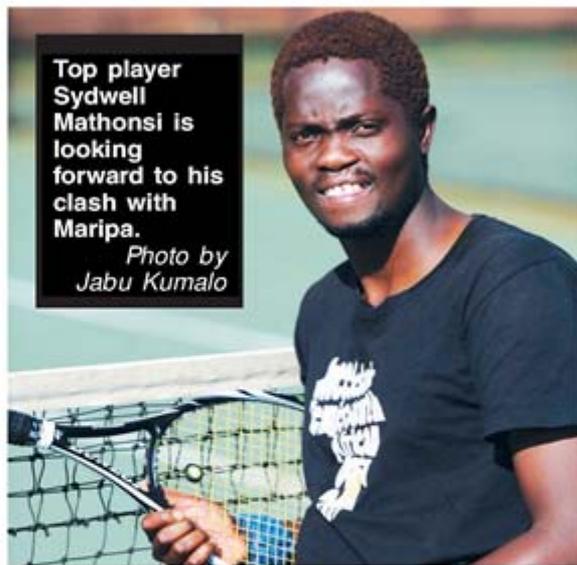


Maripa's racket is ready for Mathonsi



Tennis ace Evans Maripa is ready for the Soweto Open.
Photo Supplied



Top player Sydwell Mathonsi is looking forward to his clash with Maripa.
Photo by Jabu Kumalo

By JABU KUMALO

TOP-RANKING wheelchair tennis wizards in the men's division, Evans Maripa and Sydwell Mathonsi, are set to square up in the second Airports Company South Africa (ACSA) Soweto Open.

The Open is sanctioned by the International Tennis Federation (ITF) and is part of the World Tennis Tour.

The tournament started last Sunday and will end today.

Maripa (ranked first in SA) and Mathonsi (ranked second) are fresh from the grueling Polokwane leg of the same tournament last week.

It was Maripa who came out tops in that encounter by

narrowly beating Mathonsi.

The two members of the Wheelchair Tennis South Africa are only separated by four places on the international world rankings.

Both athletes are Paralympic London 2012 qualifiers and are looking to sharpen their shots before jetting out of the country.

Said Maripa: "I'm ready and in top form. We just played last week in Polokwane and I won. I have to put more pressure on myself to win this one."

He added: "I am looking forward to going to the London Paralympics. It's my first time participating on such a huge stage and I need to im-

press. I am also going there to learn from those more experienced than me."

Mathonsi also sounded confident at the possibility of meeting the man who defeated him last week.

Mathonsi told *SunSport*: "Revenge is the last thing on my mind after what he did to me in Polokwane. I need to focus more and concentrate on my tennis rather than think about revenge. I am very much ready and feel good about my game.

"As far as London is concerned, I don't want to put too much pressure on myself. I just want to play my best tennis and the results will follow."