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Pretorianer deel van duo

MACHELENE JOUBERT

Jotham van Tonder en Gabriel van Wyk, lede van die Akademie vir Kano-ontwikkeling se hoë prestasieprogram, het Suid-Afrika in Julie vanjaar by die Bochum Internasionale Regatta in Duitsland verteenwoordig.

Jotham, 'n leerling aan Hoërskool Garsfontein en Gabriel, 'n inwoner van Knysna, was vyfde in die 1 000m vir roeiers onder 18. Dié twee manne het ook tydens die onlangse SA skool-kayak-sprint-kampioenskap, wat by Roodeplaatdam gehou is, 'n goue medalje in die 1 000m en silwer medalje in die 500m roei gewen.

“Jotham en Gabriel word tans as die sterkste junior roeikombinasie in Suid-Afrika beskou,” sê Phillip van Tonder, direkteur en stigter van die akademie wat by Roodeplaatdam geleë is. “Hulle berei reeds vir die volgende Olimpiese Spele voor.”

Die manne oefen onder die bekwame leiding van Fouche van Tonder, Phillip se seun en een van die afrigters by die akademie. Fouche was voorheen deel van die SA roeispan se oefengroep en rig veral roeiers in die hoë prestasieprogram af.

Fouche se suster, Esti, is self 'n roeier van formaat en help met afrigting by die akademie. Sy en Bridgitte Hartley, die SA roeier wat 'n bronsmedalje by vanjaar se Olimpiese Spele in Londen verower het, is oefenmaats.

Ongelukkig het Esti met die verkiesing van die SA Olimpiese-span uitgeval, maar sy het Suid-Afrika in die Wêreld Marathon-kampioenskappe op 22 September in Rome verteenwoordig.

Vir meer inligting oor die Akademie vir Kano-ontwikkeling en/of die werk wat hulle veral onder agtergeblewe kinders doen, besoek www.kamcare.org. Klik op Canoe Academy.

Pretoria did well in the 2012 MBT league finals

The 2012 Spur School Mountain bike League Finals saw 241 mountain bike riders from across South Africa, Zimbabwe and Namibia battle it out for both the individual and inter-schools trophies in slippery and wet conditions at Bekker Schools in Magaliesburg in September. Pretoria's achievements are: Waterkloof third in the inter-schools girls and mixed trophies; Menlo Park came in second in the girl's race followed by Waterkloof in a close third; the Youth Women completed three laps with Janice Venter of Menlo Park winning the race and Danielle Rheeder of Waterkloof third.

Reuben Vorster of Waterkloof and Brandon Pretorius of Klerskorp HTS during the Youth Men category.



No limits for wheelchair tennis players

LIEZL HEIDTMANN

When Rose van der Meer, 29, was three years old, a tragic car accident left her a paraplegic. “My dad suffered severe brain damage. Fortunately my mom wasn't hurt.” But her tragic beginnings didn't stop her from becoming one of the best wheelchair tennis players in the country.

Rose, who lives in Waverley, is ranked the second best female player in South Africa and internationally she takes the 40th spot. “I grew up in a wheelchair, so I have always been used to this way of life. There are challenges when you are wheelchair bound. Not all places are accessible to people in wheelchairs and sometimes you need help from others, which makes you dependant. Luckily my mom or my husband is usually by my side to help.”

Rose has been playing tennis since she was 14 years old. “It's a lot of fun and it keeps me fit. I practice about three times a week and I also gym.”

Another player, Celia du Toit, 30, also from Pretoria, started playing wheelchair tennis when she was 23 years old. “At 14, I was in a car accident, and I woke up without

any feeling in my legs.”

Although adapting was hard, Celia accepted her fate and started investigating the prospects of her new life. She tried wheelchair basketball where she met her husband. “We were both drawn to wheelchair tennis and soon we started playing competitively.”

Celia is currently ranked the third best female player in the country. “One of the highlights in my tennis career was definitely the World Team Cup in Italy in 2008. When the South African team arrived we were cheered by the Italians. It was incredible that citizens of another country could show so much support to an opposing team.

Both Celia and Rose want to retire from the sport in about a year's time. “We'll still be involved in promoting the sport and in the administrative side. But we both want to start with families soon and focus on being the best mothers and wives.”

“Even though I'm in a wheelchair, I know that there are no limits. I know I can achieve whatever I set my heart on,” says Rose. Celia's final message to readers is: “Try everything at least once even if you don't feel like it. It

might turn out to be one of the highlights of your life.”



Celia du Toit (left) and Rose van der Meer
Photo: Liezl Heidtmann

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