

CAPE AT 6 SPORT



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TOP CAPE TOWN AMATEUR ATHLETES MAGAZINE

AUGUST 2021

**VENTURA INTO
THE FUTURE**
WITH KIAHRA VANTURA

NAOMI OSAKA
TOP TENNIS
TIME-OUT

**A (VERY STRANGE)
YEAR IN SPORT**

**WOMEN'S
MONTH
EDITION**

ISSUE 6

**BABALV
LATSHA**

**BEING THE BEST
YOU CAN BE**

**ADELE
BRUGGEMAN**

**EMPOWERS KHAYELITSHA
SPORTSWOMEN**

RAEDENE LUCUS
**SPORT FOR
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Editor-in-Chief: Myolisi Gophe

Editor & Subeditor: Nicklaus Kruger

Designer: Jesi Townsend (Jeezy Town)

Contributors:

Nicklaus Kruger, Myolisi Gophe, Khanyisile Brukwe, Warren
Lucus, Cardre Goliath

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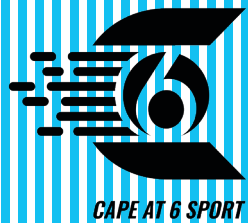
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SPORT:

A MATTER OF SCIENCE AND PLAY, AND A METAPHOR FOR LIFE

Some say sport is a metaphor for life...or is it the other way around? Either way, that belief has never been more relevant than it is now.

Initially activities in sport, as it was the case in life, were abruptly suspended as the pandemic soared. Then there were webinars, virtual events, e-sports, and spectator-less events. It has been a strange year indeed (see page 15). But things are slowly but surely going back to normal – under the circumstances – just like life in general.

While some sporting codes are still reluctant to resume formal operations (understandably so given the various waves of the pandemic), particularly at grassroots level, others have grabbed any opportunity provided by authorities to do what they love the most. That is: to play.

It's been good to see codes like athletics, football and rugby at university level resuming activities. And it's been inspiring to be able to watch the world's greatest athletes come together for the long-delayed 2020 (2021) Olympics.

After sport was financially, physically and mentally ravaged by the coronavirus in the last 18 months, the sector seems to be dusting itself off and is able to reimagine to survive what has been termed as the "new normal".

But as they say, there are many ways to skin a cat. Sport is not all about play, play and play. There is also a science aspect of it, as Warren Lucas has demonstrated (see page >>>). And it's also about development and outreach, as his sister Raedene Lucas shows ((see page >>>).



EDITORIAL

And most importantly, sport is supposed to make a difference in society. So it's also been good to see that sportswomen, in particular, have stood up to be counted – and to make sure that this new normal doesn't repeat old mistakes.

Women like Mitchell's Plain gymnast, sport scientist and hip-hop dancer Kiahra Ventura (see page >>>), who's trying to inspire her fellow youths to dream bigger. Or rugby superstar (and Laureus Sports Ambassador) Babalwa Latsha (see page >>>), who's working to help young women find their best selves through sport. [A4] Or world tennis icon (and comic book star) Naomi Osaka (see page >>>), who showed sportswomen everywhere that it's okay to not be okay.

This Women's Month edition of Cape At 6 is dedicated to these amazing women – and many others, who make a difference on the field and off it (see page >>> for some of our favourite examples of these inspiring women). And we hope that their example will inspire other young women (and men, for that matter) to see the greatness inside themselves, and let it shine.

And we'll be right here to celebrate it.

So happy reading, everyone. And Happy Women's Month!

Myolisi Gophe

VENTURA INTO THE FUTURE

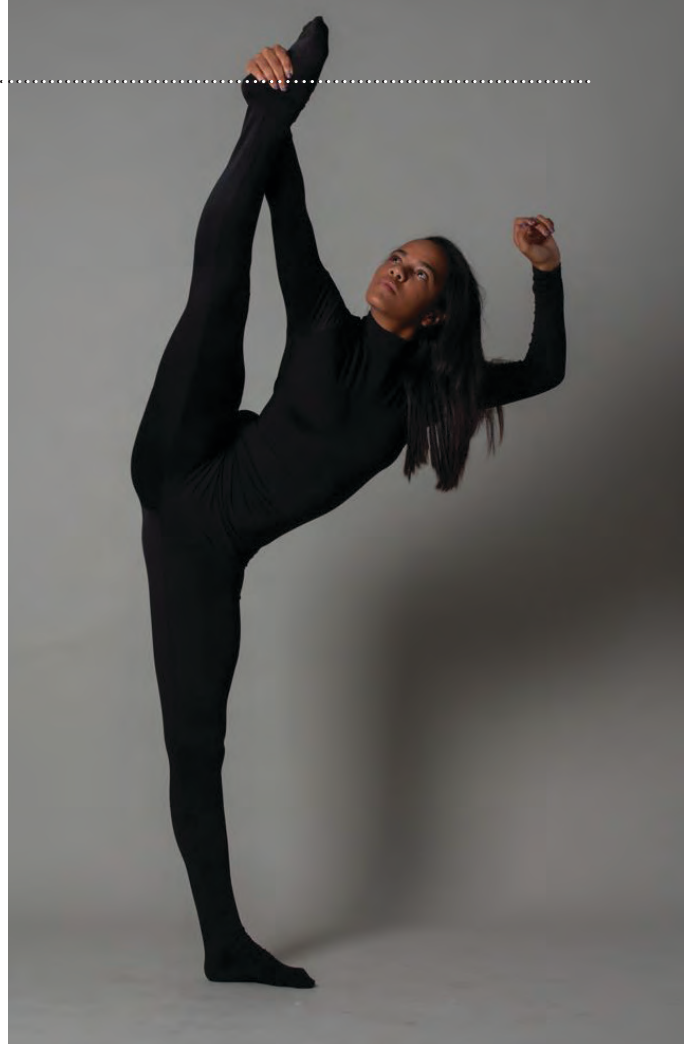
WITH KIAHRA VANTURA by Warren Lucas

As a kid growing up in Mitchells Plain, Kiahra Vantura used to struggle with her weight – but he knew that she had a fire burning within, a passion for movement and sport. And it's that fire that led her to become a dancer, a gymnast and a sports scientist...and a true fitness fanatic.

During her school years, she was passionate about sports and used to display this zest for movement during physical education classes. And then in grade 6, Kiahra learned of some gymnastic skills being displayed by a classmate during break – and when she saw these skills on the playground, she was enraptured. Suddenly PE only taking place one day per week wasn't enough for her; and this is when she embarked on her journey to becoming a gymnast.

Kiahra joined Cedar Gymnastics Club at the age of 11 years old, looking for gymnastics classes led by a qualified coach that could make her dream become a reality – and she hasn't looked back since. Now the twenty-year-old sports enthusiast participates in High Performance Acrobatic Gymnastics with the Cape Town Gymnastics Association and has represented both the District of Cape Town and the Western Cape Province since 2016.

In addition to gymnastics, Vantura loves to dance – and dance loves her, too. She's able to pick up choreography and movements through rhythmic interpretation, which makes for an achieving all-round dancer. Specifically, Kiahra specializes in contemporary and hip-hop dance genres. Currently, Kiarha is the the head choreographer of the Cedar Entertainment Senior Hip Hop crew and the Co-choreographer (alongside Riyaanah Dirks) of the Senior Contemporary crew.



"Gymnastics is an extremely high-level sport that doesn't get nearly enough recognition and support. More marketing of the sport and the piloting of development programmes at district, provincial and national levels will help more people become aware of this masterpiece of a sport. There is so much to be discovered and exposed to the world."

*Starr*

Kiarha is an avid soloist and duet contemporary dancer, and has been showcasing her dance talent by performing on stage since 2012.

She's also a Personal Trainer at Body20 Studio, where electro-muscular stimulation is used to aid fitness and wellness goals of clients. And that's not all, Vantura also debuted as a fitness model in 2019 and has been featured in two televised music videos.

And she's even found time to study as well – in (what else?) Human Movement Sciences. Kiahra began her academic career by registering for a Bachelor of Science in Sport and Exercise Science at the University of the Western Cape in 2019.

Kiarha expresses that participation in sport means everything to her. She loves sport in SA and believes that this is a mostly untapped market – especially for South African Gymnastics.

KIHRA VANTURA'S BIG ADVENTURE

While Vantura's career is just beginning, she has big dreams. She sees herself learning from the best sports physicians, researchers, physiotherapists, federations, coaches, clubs and facilities. She hopes to work with some amazing brands to gain experience and wisdom in every step of her journey. This is incredibly important as she hopes to make a difference in the lives of athletes and special populations through the discipline of Biokinetics.

"We are what we say we are," she says. "If our minds and hearts can believe it, then our bodies can achieve it."

She's also planning on continuing her academic studies: currently in her 3rd year of undergrad studies, Kiahra hopes

to apply for her BSc Medicine Honours in Biokinetics when she graduates. She encourages the pursuit of academic attainment, regardless of your age or place you find yourself in life.

"Realistically, I recommend that you study when you are most ready. It is not written in stone that you have to study immediately after matric and it is not a sin to study later in life. If you want it, go for it. You can do it."

Without sport, Kiahra expresses that she would indeed be lost.

"Sport has given me a home in Cedar Gymnastics Club, and the people there are equivalent to family – and that is something entirely apart from any medal or trophy that anyone could ever give me. My coaches have motivated me to keep going when I felt like giving up. They remind me that I am enough. I am strong and I can do absolutely anything that I put my mind to. I have overcome so many obstacles that I thought were impossible at first. Sport has changed my dreams to visions and my thoughts to goals. It changed my whole life."

Her advice for the youth this Youth Month? Dream bigger.

"The best advice that I can give the youth who aspire to follow in my footsteps is this: overtake me," she says. "Aim to overtake everyone ahead of you. Take your portion and learn from my journey that which is meant to help you in creating your own. Seek that which is inside you and let it out, be unashamed, be weird, be different and walk a path that no one has walked before, for you do not walk alone."



Sports
Performance Centre



SHINING HER RAE:

RAEDENE LUCAS
PROMOTES SPORT
FOR DEVELOPMENT
AND PEACE

by Khanyisile Brukwe

When Raedene Lucas matriculated, she deferred the decision to study further for a year, and used that time to pursue her passion: sport. Now she has two degrees, lectures, develops online lessons, and has her own sports recovery massage practice and leading roles in sporting outreach NGOs. Not bad for her first 25 years.

“Sport has always been a part of my life and has helped to shape me into the person I am today,” she says. “I definitely would not know the benefits of perseverance, hard work and discipline if it was not for Sport. These values are what brought me some of my most proud achievements to-date.”

Born and bred in Mitchell’s Plain, Cape Town. Lucas was a former high performance Women’s Artistic Gymnast, and represented and competed for Western Province for 10 consecutive years. So she recognized the need for athlete support in South Africa.

She registered for a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Sport, Recreation and Exercise Science majoring in Psychology at the University of the Western Cape, and also began volunteering for the Foundation for Sport, Development and Peace in 2015 and continues to serve as a youth facilitator to date.

“This is where my passion for youth development was ignited, and I continued to volunteer at other sport organisations and NGOs including, Sport Science Institute for the Community Health Intervention Programmes (CHIPs).”

One degree wasn’t enough for all that passion, so after graduation, she registered for a Postgraduate Diploma (Honors) in Sport for Development. She graduated Cum Laude – while also receiving the Dean’s Merit List Award for Top Achiever in the Community and Health Sciences, being invited as a

“IT’S OUR RESPONSIBILITY AS YOUNG PROFESSIONALS TO LEAD BY EXAMPLE”

member of the Golden Key International Society and receiving the New Member Recognition Scholarship for Scholastic excellence.

“That was an amazing experience – and a humbling one,” she recalls. “I didn’t really expect any of it – and definitely not all in one year!”.

Lucas continued her own development, completing a certification in Massage for Sport and Fitness as well as the Activate! Change Driver Programme in 2018. She also continued to volunteer and took up new leading roles. At the first African Youth Forum, in 2018, at Robben Island, the Youth Network for Sport Development and Peace was born, and Lucas has served as the YNSDP Vice-Chair ever since, leading a team that plans, creates and facilitates sport programmes focusing on Youth development.

The Youth Network strives to create a cohort of like minded individuals who aim: to understand, advocate and promote sport and Universal and Olympic values as tools for development, social change, and peace among youth and young adults, at the community level and at society at large.

“It’s our responsibility as young professionals to lead by example,” she says. “Each of us at the Youth Network practice the values that we instill in the Youth. To always encourage inclusive participation, celebrating diversity across cultures, race groups, sexual orientation, age, gender identity and creed. And to be part of the journey towards continuous development amongst the youth.”



PANDEMIC PLANS: GROWTH & RECOVERY

Just prior to the pandemic, Lucas began lecturing at Exercise Teachers Academy (ETA) in the fields of Advanced Fitness, Exercise Physiology, Sport for People with Disabilities and Sport Massage. She is also a content writer for Tate International School where she develops online lessons for high school students studying the Cambridge curriculum, through homeschooling.

“As a young professional, throughout my journey I have had the opportunity to learn, share, lead and teach,” Lucas explains. “I wanted to continue in that same fashion by creating a space that can provide opportunities for future young professionals in the sports industry to learn, grow and collaborate.”

In January 2021 Lucas launched her own massage practice, Raecover Sport Massage. She has worked with a variety of people from individual professional and amateur athletes to teams, maintaining muscle recovery and injury prevention for pre- and post-event recovery, including Karate South Africa Athletes and the Protea Rope Skipping Team.

Lucas’ career is one that excites her and makes her look forward to what the future holds. “I have had the opportunity to experience different cultures, traditions and I learned a lot in these spaces. Because of this, I have always looked for

ways to share that platform with others.”

She believes in striving for excellence, that one should aim to be a better version of themselves rather than trying to be better than others.

“I struggled in my first-year of undergraduate studies, and almost failed Anatomy. I received an A for Advanced Exercise Physiology in the following year and even taught the module as a student facilitator and lecturer. This taught me that your weaknesses can become your strengths.”

But Lucas does know how to kick back and relax – and, depending on Cape Town weather (and lockdown level these days), you’re likely to find her on the side of a mountain, enjoying the beach or at home curled up with a good book.

She says she owes her success to her siblings, Warren (yes, that Warren) and Melissa, and her supportive (and instructive) academic and professional mentors, Prof. Marion Keim and Prof. Christo de Coning. But above all, she attributes her achievements to her mother..

“Renee Lucas is a single parent who managed to teach three children that they could be what they wanted to be, and make a difference,” she says. “She taught me the power and strength of an independent woman, and I wouldn’t be where I am or who I am without her.”

Cape Universities Fair Well in VARSITY RUGBY COMPETITIONS

by Myolisi Gophe

Results speak for themselves: Western Cape universities have performed very well in this year's season of the Varsity Cup and Varsity Shield national university competitions - and the future looks even more promising.

In a bizarre season in which rugby at university level was played during Covid-19 for the first time in a bio-bubble, one of Western Cape's four universities lifted a trophy, the other one finished as runner's up, while the other two either reached the semi finalised or consolidated their position.

The Cape Peninsula University of Technology (CPUT) Tekkies were the happiest of them all after not only defending their Varsity Shield trophy with a 30-26 victory over the All Blacks from the Walter Sisulu University, but also putting one foot in the Varsity Cup. CPUT finished on top of the log standing in the Shield and if they can repeat the same feat next season they will earn promotion to the Cup, which is South Africa's premier university competition because this year's final logs will be combined with that of next year to determine who goes up.

The Ikey Tigers from the University of Cape Town also came close when they narrowly lost the final of the Varsity Cup 27-34 to the Tuks from the University of



Pretoria. The Maties from Stellenbosch University were not far off either as they lost in the semis of the Cup 35-44 to Tuks. The University of the Western Cape, who are the only previously disadvantaged university to qualify for the Cup, finished the season 6th on the log with a respectable 20 points. And those will come handy when the promotion and relegation is done next year.

Among the four universities in the Western Cape, Maties and Ikeys have always been part of the Cup competition since the inception of the competition in 2008. If UWC, who were promoted in 2018, maintain their position in Cup, and CPUT qualify for it Cup next year, it will be the first time that all four universities in the province make it to the competition. And that will be a significant boost to the sport of rugby in the Western Cape.

A (VERY STRANGE) YEAR IN SPORT

by Nicklaus Kruger

One year ago, we inhabited a very different world – a world where most of us had never heard of things like PPE, or lockdown levels, vaccine efficacy, curfews. But since the World Health Organization declared COVID-19 a pandemic...well, things have changed.

Today, we inhabit a world where millions have been infected, economies have been devastated, and many lives – too many lives – have been lost. (And it's not over yet – so try to stay safe, okay?)

It's a world where there's more to worry about than whether there'll be football on TV tonight (and yes, there probably will be – there's a lot of football out there... but more on that later). But if sports have taught us anything, it's that you've got to keep fighting – it ain't over until they blow the final whistle, right?

So now we're living in "the new normal" – or, as many prefer, "the new abnormal". But whichever one you prefer, that "the" is a bit misleading...because there's no singular norm (or abnorm, for that matter).

Because we're actually in a world where normal can change on a whim: where one day you can go to the beach, and another you can't; one day you can stay out until midnight, the next you'd better be home by 9pm (or else); and don't even get me started on cigarettes and booze.

Sport has had to adapt. So we've seen: the shutdown and reopening of amateur and professional leagues; a huge growth in ESports (and that classic e-sport, chess); a massive increase in home fitness routines; the rise of virtual tournaments for physical world sports; the development of tournaments held in "bio-bubbles" (and the inevitable failures and infections associated with that); the cancellation or postponement of championships big and small (remember the 2020 Olympics?).

Cape At 6 was there, in the trenches – and over the last year or so, week by week, we've taken a good long look at sport in a time of COVID...and in all that time, even I couldn't help but learn a few things.

Things like...

SPORT IS EVERYWHERE

There is a lot of sport out there. A LOT. There are tens of thousands of amateur athletes in Cape Town alone (and I've been reliably informed that that's likely a pretty big underestimate). And while COVID has had some effect on that (on the amount of people participating, at least – what with ever-changing lockdown regulations on where you can practice, when you can exercise, how you can work out, etc.), there are still games and tournaments and competitions and whatnot every day. And that's just the actual physical activity part of it. True sports fans know that it isn't just about the brawn – it's about the brains as well.

And we don't just mean the players and the coaches, either: all over the world, thousands of brains are working on sport- and exercise-related research, uncovering new wisdom, confirming old truths, and letting us know that things aren't quite as simple as we always thought. It's kind of amazing how much science there is in sport – and kind of awesome as well.

SPORT IS FOR GEEKS

Sports *fans* are – and I mean this in the nicest way possible – huge geeks. They're obsessed with obscure lore (who won the 1963 Quidditch World Cup?), they keep track of weird numbers and stats (runs per over, league rankings, etc.) and they're extremely passionate about this stuff. I may not understand all this stuff (okay, let me be honest, I don't understand it), but I do understand the extreme dedication to things that don't really matter to most of our daily lives – I'm a guy who's read pretty much every Green Lantern comic since 1959, and I'm all too happy to tell you about it. And the drama on the field (or in the ring, or on the court, or whatever) is just part of the story. It's not just about the clash of champions, and the race to excellence, and the joys of optimal human performance. There's also the story behind the story – the kickbacks, the racism, the courtside Karens, the rise of athletic activism. Sports fans actually care about that stuff.

SPORT MATTERS

Sports aren't just about having the biggest biceps, or the fastest legs, or even the best hand-eye coordination. There's more to being an athlete than just physical skills, and sport, as an activity and pastime, enables the facilitation of important life-skills that empower, fulfil and unite youth in a way that little else does. Sport is full of life lessons.

Work hard, and continue to work hard. Don't give up just because you had a bad game, or even had a few of them. And at the end of the day, remember that it's about how you played, not whether you won or lost. You know, all the clichés – but there's a reason we use them. And we need to remember that sporting activities give kids a way to channel their ambitions, a place to be after school where they can socialize and learn. And let's not forget the inspirational awesome folks who just happen to be amazing at some game or other. These folks inspire us to dream big – and maybe, just maybe, change the world.

Not exactly deep stuff, I know – but hey, we all learn something new every day, right?

So look.

COVID-19 has taken the world into uncharted waters, and we have learned the hard way that the pandemic is here to stay. These are tough times for the amateur sports sector, and for all of us, as individuals facing losses – of jobs, of lives, of families and friends.

But life has to go on.

We just need to play our part and follow the game plan, by sticking to the proper precautions and protocols. And remember: we're all in it together.

And that's a year in sport.





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CELEBRATING WOMEN IN SPORT

ATHLETES WHO INSPIRE by Cape at 6 Sport

In every sport, in every nation, there are women who are taking the game to another level, inspiring others to take up the challenge and do even better. It's an endless discussion: What makes a great athlete truly amazing? How can we properly honour women in sport? And who's the best / kewlest / GOAT sportswoman of them all? And what

We don't have the answer to that (to any of that, really – though we did do a whole magazine

honouring some of South Africa's top women in sport...go check it out). Everybody has their own ideas on who's the best. Ask four fans for their favourites, and you'll get at least that many options.

We know, because that's what we did.

So after much debate, here are four of Cape At 6's favourite women in sport – and why you really ought to love them, too.

SIRI LINDLEY: WORLD TRIATHLON CHAMPION, COACH, CANCER-ASSKICKER

Siri Lindley didn't even know how to swim when she started doing triathlons – and ten years later she ended up being the best triathlete in the world (twice), and even won the 2001 Aquathlon World Championship. She was part of the International Triathlon Union's inaugural Hall of Fame class. She's an author, a coach and a speaker, and the co-founder of Believe Ranch and Rescue, a non-profit focused on rescuing horses from slaughter. And her story of how she got where she is today is super inspiring. I feel like Siri almost looks for people to say no to her so she can prove them wrong. From her not being able to swim, crappy physical performances, toxic brand/sponsorship deals, her love life...the list goes on. It's long, but Tony Robbins does an amazing podcast episode with Siri – it goes through her whole journey, and it's well worth listening to. There's so much of her story and her approach to life that resonates with me. She's just awesome. And she also recently overcame cancer (leukemia) and still just has one of the most positive outlooks on life. I also have this long-term goal of wanting to complete a triathlon one day – but don't tell anyone I told you...

JESI'S
CHOICE



MYOLISI'S
CHOICE



THEMBI KGATLANA: AFRICAN FOOTBALL PHENOMENON

Thembi Kgatlana has done it all. She's well-known for her skills in SA soccer, which earned her the title African Women Footballer of the year, and she scored the best goal of the year (taking goals from men and women alike into account). She has shone in the US, in China and now in Europe. One thing about Thembi is that she has a strong faith in God and works very hard to earn her success. I remember while she was at UWC, I would often see her training alone with her coach while others were resting. But what makes her really awesome is that she's still grounded in her community, and she doesn't think twice before lending a helping hand to the needy. Besides her own foundation and tournament to develop not just women but also men footballers in her community, she is also a philanthropist, having financially supported many causes. She is a go-getter and an (over) achiever, but she puts God first and is passionate about community development.

**KHANYI'S
CHOICE****CASTER SEMENYA:
RIGHTEOUS RUNNER**

Caster Semenya is not just one of the greatest runners South Africa – and the world – has ever seen (you don't win two gold medals in separate Olympics, and three world titles, by accident, after all). She's also one of the most resilient. She's had to deal with underhanded and invasive testing, with intense public scrutiny of her life and her body, and with being banned for not being the kind of woman World Athletics approves of in their events. Despite all that, Caster has refused to let others define who she is and what she can be. Her bravery in fighting for what she believes is right and being unapologetically herself in front of all us is truly inspiring. She continues to do what she loves, no matter the obstacle, and that inspires me to be brave and to stand firm in who I am despite the disapprovals of society. As a black woman I could not be more proud to see the representation that she stands for. And I'm proud that she's managed to inspire an entire movement to #LetHerRun. In a world full of division and hatred, that gives me hope for a brighter future.

**NAOMI OSAKA:
TENNIS WITH HEART**

Okay, I kind of cheated with this one – Khanyi also voted for Naomi. But since I'm compiling this list, I get to make the rules – and it's one vote each, thank you very much! Anyhoo...Naomi Osaka is pretty good at tennis. As a Haitian-Japanese American, she's the first Asian athlete to be ranked World Number One by the Women's Tennis Association (she's currently number three), a three-time Grand Slam singles champion, and the US Open Reigning Champion. She's also the highest-paid female athlete in the world – ever (which, interestingly, doesn't even earn her a spot among the top 20 when you include male athletes; just think about that for a minute). And she's also just cool, you know? She's got a new bag line; uses her PlayStation to up her game; schooled her boyfriend good in tennis on TikTok; placed Black Lives Matter Activism at the forefront of her 2020 matches and victories; and wept when she first defeated her hero, Serena Williams. She's getting her own manga series, something she's (understandably) super excited about. And she paused play at the recent Australian Open to make sure a butterfly got away safely. Awesome.

**NICK'S
CHOICE**

JUGGLING FOUR JOBS NO CHILD'S PLAY – BUT DOABLE

by Myolisi Gophe

Not many of us really get to do the job we love – and even fewer of us get the opportunity to do it at university, national, continental and at international levels simultaneously. But sports photographer and communicator Sikhulule “Skhu” Nkomphela is a lucky – and talented – guy.

The 25-year-old hails from Cofimvaba in the Eastern Cape, and currently works for the University of the Western's (UWC) Sports Administration department, and also serves on the media and communications committee of both University Sports South Africa (USSA) and the International University Sports Federation aka Federation Internationale du Sport Universitaire (FISU). And now he's added yet another committee to that list: he's just been appointed to serve on the media and communications committee of the Federation of Africa University Sports (FASU).

That's a lot of acronyms to remember – and a lot of work as well. So how does he cope with performing his duties for all four organisations?

“I get this question a lot – and my answer is always the same,” Nkomphela says. “Basically it's all about time management. Time makes everybody equal: we all have 24 hours in a day, after all. The question is just this: what do you do with them? That's what makes one stand out from the crowd.”

Skhu tackles his life four hours at a time.

“I divide my day by six,” he explains: “I spend four hours of my time doing my international FISU & FASU duties; I spend another four hours doing my UWC Sport work; another four hours doing USSA work; and another four hours of uninterrupted time with my family and with the eight remaining hours is for my social life and photography – and sleep, of course!”





Photo: Sikhulule "Skhu" Nkomphela

For the UWC and USSA appointments, the environmental and water science graduate has renewable contracts until the end of the year, and is serving on the FASU and FISU committees until the end of 2023.

"The Committee will be assisting FASU in developing a better understanding of modern technology, and the potential for university sport stakeholders to forge global and national partnerships from within the sports movement and beyond," Skhu notes. "As with FISU, my duties will include producing, editing and distributing content; maintaining relations with the media; advising the FASU president; and upholding and spreading the FASU brand."

It's on the strength of his work for FISU, in fact, that the FASU appointment came about. Not bad for someone whose undergraduate degree is actually in environment and water science. But Skhu has always had a love for the media – and in particular for the power of photography to capture important moments.

"The gift of photography is just something that's been embedded in me since I was young. Every time I held a camera, I tried to improve on my skills – and once I really started associating myself with the media

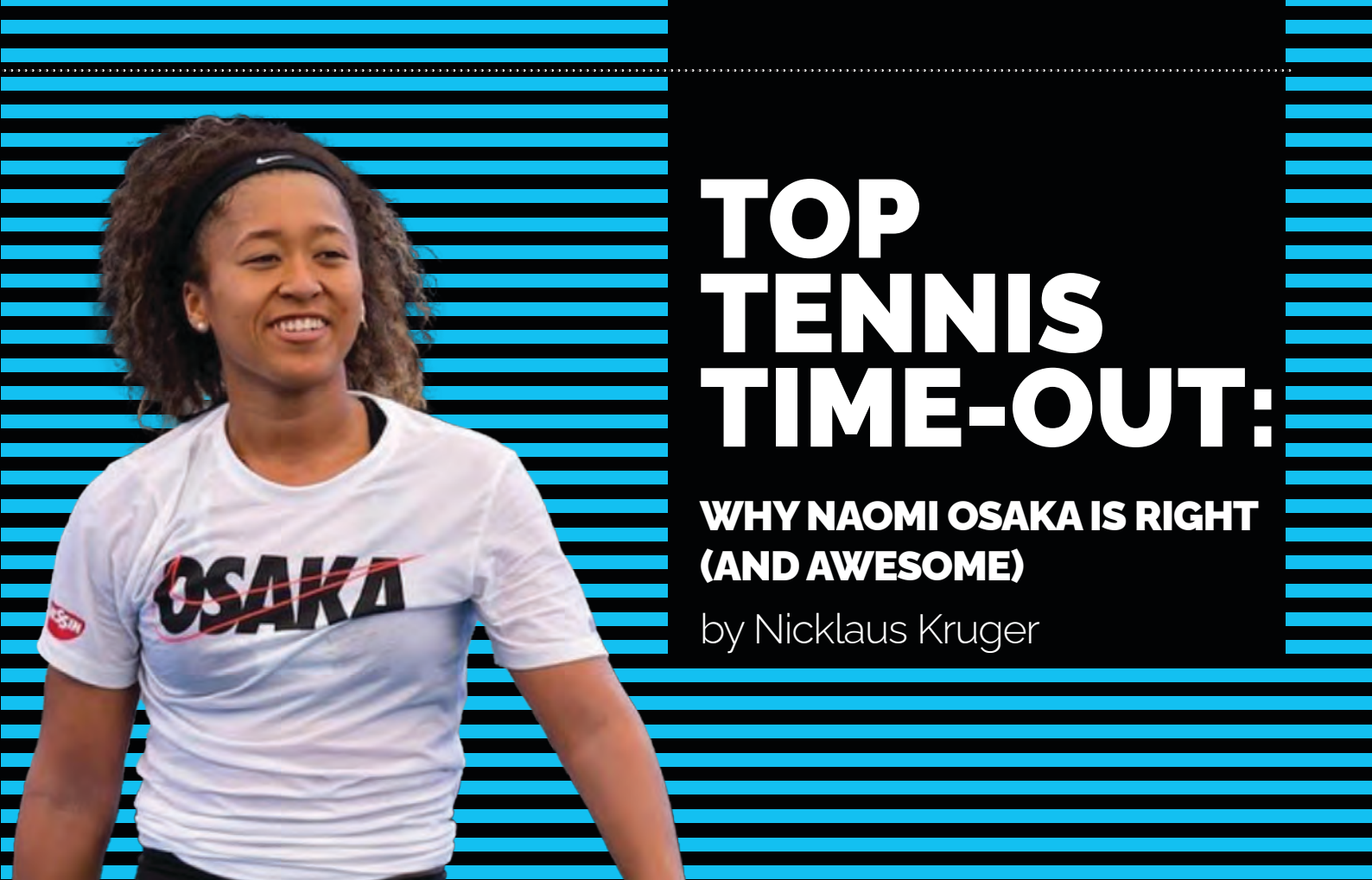
space, things just kept getting better."

While he was studying, Skhu and his camera were a regular fixture at sporting events, graduations and more, and he spent ages honing his craft in sports and media. He didn't skimp on formal training, though, and also completed a short course in public relations at the University of Cape Town to better equip himself for the challenge.

"I'm still hungry to study further, and that's what I'll be doing next year while working. I'd encourage everyone who looks to be in my shoes one day to study, study and study."

Another challenge that Nkomphela had to face was finding his feet in a white-male dominated sport photography industry. Finding mentors in the field helped a lot.

"Every successful mentorship is built upon a strong mentor-mentee relationship," he says. "Embarking on your career is tough, and being mentored can help you achieve your professional goals and objectives in ways you wouldn't have otherwise expected."



TOP TENNIS TIME-OUT:

**WHY NAOMI OSAKA IS RIGHT
(AND AWESOME)**

by Nicklaus Kruger

Naomi Osaka is pretty awesome. She's the first Asian athlete to be ranked World Number One by the Women's Tennis Association (she's currently number two), a four-time Grand Slam singles champion, and the US Open Reigning Champion. She's also the highest-paid female athlete in the world – ever, a passionate Black Lives Matter activist and just generally cool, you know?

But she doesn't always feel that way about herself - and that's okay. Or it would be, if the world of professional tennis – and professional sports in general – was better able to deal with this kinda thing.

So okay, as we all know by now, Osaka withdrew from the French Open on Monday 31 May 2021, for the sake of her mental health. She said she would

take a break from tennis, putting her participation at Wimbledon and her home Olympics at risk.

And of course, some of her fellow tennis legends – from World Men's Number One Novak Djokovic to her own hero (and competition), Women's GOAT Serena Williams – have come out in support of her decision, as have other sporting folks, journalists, academics and the like. And it's all led to some much-needed discussion about athletes and mental health.

"I feel for Naomi," Williams said at a press conference on Monday. "I feel like I wish I could give her a hug, because I know what it's like. Like I said, I've been in those positions."





And they put out a nice statement saying they wish her the best, and all that. To their credit, and very possibly not just because it's become a media circus.

But it didn't have to be this way.

See, Osaka first declared her intention not to take part in press conferences during the French Open last week. It was a personal decision, based on a few facts: she's kind of introverted, she's struggled with depression for a while, and press events distract her and can make her doubt her own abilities (particularly when playing on clay courts, where she knows she's going to have enough trouble performing).

"We're often sat there and asked questions that bring doubt into our minds and I'm just not going to subject myself to people that doubt me," she wrote. "I've often felt that people have no regard for athletes' mental health and this rings very true whenever I see a press conference or partake in one."

Not a big deal, right?

Wrong.

She was fined \$15,000, threatened with expulsion from the tournament, and warned about further consequences for other tournaments as well.

And of course, it ignited the aforementioned media circus, where everybody and their cousin thought they should weigh in with their opinion (um... kinda like we're doing right now). So she withdrew from the Open.

And while there's been a lot of support, there's also been a lot of heat, particularly from the media - like professional asshat Piers Morgan, who took a break from attacking Meghan Markle's health issues to focus on another woman of colour, and claimed she was using mental health as an excuse not to face difficult questions from the press.

He's 56, by the way. And she's 23. And it's not even worth comparing who handles enormous pressure (or even gentle criticism) better.

But here's something that seems to come up again and again in this discussion. Stop me if this sounds familiar.



SHUT UP AND PLAY? HELLZ NO

"It's her job. She should just take the money, do what she's contracted to do, and dance for our entertainment. Or find another job where she can do whatever she likes."

And that's just really silly. Here's why.

First off, she put her money where her mouth is: she communicated her challenges and decisions, paid the fines as required, and she withdrew when it became too much of a clownshow (and she did it in class). So yeah, she walked the talk, and tried to be as responsible about it as she could be.

Secondly, it's really not that easy to just find another job. Not for regular people, not for skilled people, and not for professional sportsfolks who are already competing for a limited number of (admittedly high-paying) deals in a limited number of leagues.

Third, shut up and play? That's the same crap people pulled when Colin Kaepernick first started kneeling in support of BLM. It made folks uncomfortable, and their first reaction was to try to force him to perform like some kind of wind-up toy. Like that actually solves anything.

AND THEN THERE'S THE OTHER THING: WHY IS THIS PART OF THE JOB AT ALL?

I mean, who really cares about getting off-the-duff comments on sporting performances right before or after a match? Probably not the players (they're too busy trying to get into the zone beforehand, or trying to process what just happened right after). And probably not most fans, who are usually more interested in the actual performance than in immediate dissection...and for those who aren't, isn't it better to give sportsfolks some time to think and let them speak when they're ready?

And look, it's not exactly a secret that people perform at their best when they like what they're doing. And we want to see people perform at their best, right? So why don't we make them feel valued, and heard, and let them be engaged when they want to be engaged?

Sports people aren't robots. They're real people with real feelings and challenges and problems. That's the entire reason the discipline of sports psychology exists, after all. We all have bad days...or bad weeks, or months, or years. It's not easy to face that, to admit we're not coping, and to ask for some understanding.

Now, more than ever, that's something we should keep in mind.

So yeah, Naomi Osaka is awesome

**ACTIVATE HER**

Adele Bruggeman Empowers Khayelitsha Sportswomen

by Warren Lucas & Nicklaus Kruger

In South Africa, growing up as a girl can be more than a little difficult. One in 5 young women are exposed to gender-based violence. 1 in 3 young women become pregnant before the age of 20. And young women contract HIV at a rate 2 times higher than young men. Girls need safe spaces to be able to be themselves - and develop their full potential.

“Sports can teach skills you didn’t even know you possessed, and help you discover what you can do even when you might not have believed that you could,”

says Adele Bruggeman, the founder of ActivateHer, a sports-for-development NGO located in Khayelitsha, Cape Town. “Practice and hard work teaches you that you can overcome challenges, and that is an empowering process in itself.”

ActivateHer is a sports development organisation for girls, leveraging the power of sports to become a catalyst for positive change through education, health, and employment. ActivateHer works to empower girls and young women who bear the largest burdens of poverty by

**“SEEING THE GIRL'S
ENTHUSIASM WHEN
IT'S CLASS TIME, AND
THEIR MASTERY OF
SKILLS, MAKES IT
ALL WORTHWHILE.**



giving them access to support, resources and training to guide them towards success.

“Girls and women often have low self-worth and self-esteem,” Bruggeman says. “Sports is a great way to empower girls by acknowledging all the strength they have within themselves, discovering more about their bodies and abilities, and developing life skills that will lead to their future success as leaders in their communities.”

ActivateHer was founded in 2018, and that first year saw Bruggeman and her team offer programming for 35 girls. Now ActivateHer reaches over 100 girls in weekly sports programming, breaking down the traditional gender barriers that are associated with physical activity, and helping girls recognise that they too can dribble a soccer ball, toss a rugby ball, or run around the field.

“Growing up on the sports fields myself, I have a strong passion for helping more girls find their own confidence through taking ownership of their bodies, minds, and leadership potential with all of the

magical skills sports can teach us,” she says. “I’m still recognising this as an adult, that sports taught me many of my skills around working with a team, communicating clearly, setting goals and more all came from having participated in sports as I grew up.”

It gets challenging, though - especially now.

“COVID has put a real spin on our programming in the past year, as we weren’t able to run programmes from March to October 2020,” Bruggeman notes. “Because we supplement what the girls are learning in school there wasn’t really a way we could reach them while they were sheltering at home - so instead we supported the school as best we could to provide food, sanitation and education materials to them.”

In order to fund ActivateHer’s work, the team is developing HerActive, an ethical activewear line to generate sustainable income for their programming, while also leading more girls and young women to get active through access to appropriate sports apparel.



Activating Adele: Sports And Development Around The World

Adele Bruggeman grew up in the United States, primarily playing soccer and lacrosse throughout my whole childhood (a goalie in both).

"Basically I was always outside either riding my bike, hanging out at the pool, or creating games in the yard with my two sisters," she says. "My parents always harped on being well-rounded, so it wasn't enough to just be good at sports, but was important to also achieve academically, and give back to the community whenever possible."

This led her to become a volunteer coach for local primary school teams and eventually led me into playing both soccer and lacrosse while studying sociology at the University of Notre Dame. Having taken a few international development courses, she quickly became interested

in building a career working around the globe using sports for good and building communities - an interest that took her to Uganda, Kenya, and finally South Africa.

"I originally moved to South Africa in 2013 where I worked at a children's home in Komga, Eastern Cape," Bruggeman recalls. "And after living there for a year, I fell in love with this amazing country - so I decided to pursue my Masters at the University of Cape Town to continue to appreciate all of the magic South Africa has to offer. Eight years later, I'm still here!"

She'd been working in community development since 2015 and had always been interested in using sports for development. When a local NGO focused on empowering girls through STEM programming decided to start a

pilot school to make their programmes accessible to more girls, they couldn't find a sports partner to complement their after school programmes.

"All of the other NGOs we spoke with either didn't work in the Khayelitsha community, didn't have female coaches, worked with older children, or only had sports specific offerings. That's really the moment that the idea of ActivateHer came, realising there was a gap in sports development offerings specifically for girls that takes a multi-sports approach and works with girls from their point of entry into school all the way through to adulthood."

It's an incredibly rewarding experience.

"Seeing the girl's enthusiasm when it's class time, and their mastery of skills, makes it all worthwhile. We have portions of our class that have a set routine so they know what is coming (super important for kids), and when they can lead these activities themselves without their coaches, it's so exciting to see them take on leadership roles and show off what they have learned."

So does she have any advice for other young athletes who want to be all they can be?

"Never give up," she says. "Sounds cliché, sure, but if you set goals for yourself and work hard toward achieving them through practice, hard work, mental toughness and perseverance there's no stopping you from achieving success. And remember how important it is to be a team player, you can only get to where you are going by working together."

Want to help young women achieve their dreams?

Visit www.activateher.org or email info@activateher.org - and get involved!



BEING THE BEST YOU CAN BE:

**Babalwa Latsha,
Rugby Superstar
& Laureus
Ambassador**

by Nicklaus Kruger

Sport helped Babalwa Latsha become her best self - Springbok Women's prop and the first women's rugby 15s player in SA to turn professional. Now she's helping others find their way as well, as the latest Laureus Sport for Good Foundation ambassador - joining fellow sporting icons like Olympian athlete Wayde van Niekerk, fellow rugby star Cheslin Kolbe and current Banyana Banyana coach Desiree Ellis.

"I like to think of sports as a calling," she says. "No matter where you are, it will find you. When it finds you it ignites that fire of greatness that burns softly in our hearts. It is that flame that makes the wildest of dreams seem possible to the dreamer. And it's our job to help others find that flame within themselves - and help it burn bright, inspiring others to do - and be - better."





Born in the Eastern Cape town of Mount Frere and raised in Khayelitsha, Latsha started playing rugby out of curiosity and completely fell in love with the game. Since then, the popular prop's own sporting flame has been burning brightly, and she has a string of achievements to her name.

Two-time Inter-Provincial League winning captain. South Africa Rugby Women's Top Achiever in 2017. Captain of Springbok Women since 2019. And after becoming the first African women's rugby player to turn professional upon joining Spain's Eibar Rugby Taldea in January last year, Latsha went on to score 13 tries in seven games – receiving a renewed contract in the process, and becoming a triple finalist for the 2020 Momentum gsport Awards. Oh, and she captained the Springbok women's team to qualify for the Rugby World Cup 2021.

"In my rugby career, I have had the privilege of playing at all possible levels, and captained teams at those levels as well," she says. "Over the years, I have travelled the world, met and engaged with new people and embraced them and their diversity. With that, I have picked up some valuable life lessons that I still cherish to

this day. Rugby is a way of life after all."

Latsha balanced her rugby career with her studies, bringing textbooks along on tours, managing matches and exams and graduating with a law degree from the University of the Western Cape in 2019, paving the road for a bright future on and off the field.

And by overcoming gender stereotypes and criticism throughout her rugby career for playing a male-dominated sport, Latsha has become a beacon of hope to many aspiring female rugby players across SA - and the perfect Ambassador of Laureus sporting values..

"Latsha's journey from township to rugby stardom has been phenomenal to watch," notes Chairperson of the Laureus Sport for Good Foundation SA, Morné du Plessis. "We are thrilled to welcome her to the Laureus family. She is already doing such important work to shine a light on women's rugby and continues to leave a legacy that will inspire future generations of African women to pursue professional rugby. We are very excited to be working with her to upliftment communities across SA."

cont. on next page



Shining Bright - By Helping Others Shine

Laureus Ambassadors volunteer their time and effort to support the work of Laureus Sport for Good Foundation SA, using sport as a means to combat some of the toughest social challenges facing young people today, such as juvenile crime, HIV/AIDS, discrimination, social exclusion, lack of education, landmine awareness and health problems such as obesity.

That's something that's very important to her. Latsha maintains close ties with her community, and often spends time

inspiring young people through talks and training sessions in disadvantaged communities. And as a director at the MENstruation Foundation, she aims to help young women understand their bodies better (and end 'period poverty' through initiatives like sanitary pad vending machines).

"Acceptance is something that I struggled with throughout my teens - I never conformed to what was generally perceived as normal for a girl. I was



slightly taller, a little bit more muscular. Like a boy," Latsha recalls. "Rugby taught me to accept that I was different, and to love that difference. It taught me that could embrace my strengths and stand out boldly."

Ultimately, it's about getting young women to overcome the expectations of society to build the lives they deserve.

"I have had the honour of being surrounded by exceptional women -



women who have moulded me into an all-round improved human being and athlete," she says. "I have been inspired to inspire good in others, opening their eyes and hearts to the greatness that is within them. They, too, must realise and understand that they are leaders in their own right. In a world that accepts mediocrity, they can shine bright."

Latsha has championed women's rugby in SA and around the world, challenging gender stereotypes and focusing on grassroots rugby and empowering women on and off the field.

"Sport is the one place where a girl can be as safe as possible, and where you can truly be yourself. It creates young, independent and strong vocal women who do not shy away from anything," she says.

And she has no plans to quit anytime soon.

"My biggest dream is to see a society where young women can grow up safely, freely and confidently, where they can be empowered to become young leaders within our communities," she says. "My dream is that young boys and girls see themselves as equal, so that we can ultimately and finally foster a society that does not see women as lesser than, but sees them for who they truly are - and helps them reach their full potential"



SHILENE BOOYSEN:

**Cape Town Coach
Makes History As
South Sudan Bright
Starlets Take The
Field** by Myolisi Gophe

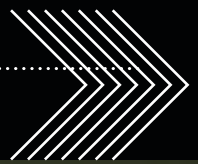
Capetonian women footballer Shilene Booysen is making history - as she leads South Sudan's Senior Women's National team to their first ever match this month, marking the beginning of a new era.

The Bright Starlets, as the team is affectionately called, will play two friendly games against Ethiopia's Senior Women's Squad in Addis Ababa on Saturday 10 April and on Tuesday 13 April 2021.

Booyesen, who played and coached a number of teams in the Mother City, was appointed as the head coach of the East-Central African country's first national women team. She assembled a 25-member team from the country's newly-established Women's National League.

"I'm really excited to bring all these players together from different regions, backgrounds, abilities and to see how we can grow as a team," Booyesen was quoted as saying by the South Sudan Football Association website.

Booyesen brought decades of expertise to her two-year contract with South Sudan. She started playing football as a goalkeeper at the age of 25, and went on to play for Westridge FC and Santos FC before joining Spurs Women's Football



Club. At Spurs, she enjoyed resounding success, taking home five provincial championships and one national title, and she represented the province at interprovincial tournaments.

While playing, Booysen worked as an engineer for an international company - but also took the opportunity to educate herself even more about sporting matters, arming herself with various courses. Among them were the Football Coaching Level One course with Safa Western Province, a Sports Science course in 1997 with the Sports Science Institute Newlands, a Goalkeeper Coaching Course with Farouk Abrahams Goalkeeper Academy, a FIFA/SAFA goalkeeping course in 2012, her CAF B in 2013 and CAF A, which she completed in 2015.

"I did some of my coaching courses while I was playing," she told the Far Post. "I'm passionate when I get into something and I just wanted to know more about sport."

Booyesen took a trip down memory lane when she returned to Santos and Spurs as head coach. She again won the provincial and national titles with the latter. Her next assignments were as goalkeeper coach Dunoon Academy, All Youth Western Province and the provincial

women's team. She then toured Germany, Czech Republic and Zambia with the Ambassadors in Sport as head coach. In 2014 she was appointed as an analyst for Banyana Banyana, and four years later she took her skills abroad as an assistant coach at Houston Dash, in the United States.

So what brought her to South Sudan? More passion, naturally - this time the ambition and passion of the South Sudan Football Association for women's football development.

"When I saw what South Sudan was doing in terms of women's football and the strategy the SSFA has put in place, and what they have done since putting it in place, everything that they have done made me excited and since then I have always wanted to be a part of something like this," Booysen was quoted.

Shilene Booysen is expected to lead the Bright Starlets through some major campaigns, including the Cecafa Women's Cup and African Women's Cup of Nations, which double as the qualifying event for the 2023 Women's World Cup.



CAPETONIAN THE FIRST EXERCISE SCIENTIST

for Gymnastics SA

by Myolisi Gophe

It's every South African athlete's dream to don the green and gold for their country, but very few get to make their dreams come true. Cape gymnastics star Warren Lucas is one of those few, having achieved the feat both as a player and now as a member of the technical staff.

And he did that in grand style, after he was appointed as the very first (ever) exercise scientist for Gymnastics South Africa's national teams for international tournaments. Lucas was at the helm when the African Championships for Men's and Women's Artistic Gymnastics took place in May, and helped prepare the team for the Rope Skipping and the International Gymnasiade for Aerobic Gymnastics that are scheduled for August and October, respectively.

"I am incredibly proud to be recognized as an Exercise Scientist with Gymnastics South Africa," the Mitchell's Plain-born Lucas comments. "As a former member of the Protea team in Aerobic Gymnastics, I am in the position to extend assistance to current Team SA gymnasts, and take the lead in the development and scientific



support of gymnasts, thereby contributing to the body of knowledge within Exercise Science and Gymnastics for South Africa. For my career, this has been my dream from the beginning of my studying journey within Sport Science at the University of the Western Cape. This is one of the most exciting employment opportunities I've had to date in my career as an Exercise Scientist."

Lucas, the Chairperson of the Cape Town Gymnastics Association, notes that gymnastics is identified as one of the top 16 priority codes by the Western Cape Department of Cultural Affairs and Sport, and has enrolled three members of the Protea gymnastics team (Malusi Tumtumana, Mkhululi Gosa and Buyisile Hubela) to the Western Cape Sport Academy programme to receive specialist sport, biokinetics and nutritional services from the Sport Science Institute of South Africa.

"With these types of advances, specifically in gymnastics, we are creating an increased awareness about this sport, which may lead to increased participation and possible sponsorship. Gymnastics is predominantly self-funded by its own members, so we are interested in expanding gymnastics through networking and professional affiliations to assist in funding our High Performance gymnasts and Olympic hopefuls."

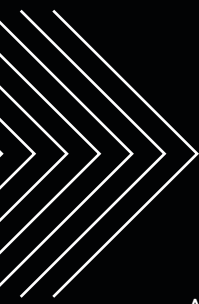
And this is where his expertise as an exercise scientist comes in handy. "As gymnastics grows and develops in South Africa, so does the need for knowledge within exercise science and sports medicine," explained Lucas, who obtained his BA in Sport and Recreation Management (2011), BA (Hons) Sport and

Recreation Management (2012), and MA in Sport, Recreation and Exercise Science in 2016 from UWC.

"We have made progress in developing a basis for knowledge within gymnastics in the past through some of my research as a Master's student at UWC, as well as through the work of Dr Denise Bouah in the Sport Psychology of high-performance athletes, and Dominic Rhodes with his work in Injuries and Physiotherapy of gymnasts."

After obtaining his Master's, Lucas completed a research fellowship in Preventive Medicine through the Erasmus Mundus mobility programme via the Division for Post-Graduate Studies, and earned certifications in Public Health and





Applied Statistics in Health Sciences. And he has no intentions to stop learning - he is currently a PhD candidate in Exercise Science at the University of Cape Town.

This will surely give him the edge in his job, as he is responsible for overseeing the body composition, strength and conditioning and fitness assessments of gymnasts on the High Performance Men's and Women's Artistic Gymnastics teams, the Senior Rope Skipping team and the Aerobic Gymnastics team.

So what would he like to achieve as the first exercise scientist for Gymnastics SA?

"Gymnastics is a multifaceted sport that requires a high level of physical fitness and skill to succeed," he says. "Speed, strength, endurance, agility, flexibility, balance, and power are all physical abilities that play a role in the success of a competitive gymnast. A gymnast's physical abilities may also be related to the ability to sustain injury-free participation in the sport, and I would like to contribute to the education and training of coaches to facilitate increased understanding and awareness of these sport science principles. Additionally, I'd like to provide workshops to gymnasts on nutritional management, life-skills, personal development and possible career guidance."

Lucas advises the youth to prioritise their work by applying savvy time management practices to reduce their academic workload.

"And if you are thinking of becoming an exercise scientist, sport science researcher/lecturer, sport physiotherapist, biokineticist, personal trainer, coach or fitness instructor, ensure that you connect with people who are working in these capacities and ask questions about their daily duties, and be available to shadow, volunteer and learn through experience and participation. In doing so, you will be expanding your network, which will make it much easier later to connect with industry professionals when you are qualified."

