

YOUR HEALTH

Mbanjwa rewrites records

VERNON MCHUNU

MICHAEL "Shaka Zulu" Mbanjwa's groundbreaking second place victory in the 2007 Hansa Powerade Dusi canoe marathon was exciting news for the city.

It was also expected to inspire many more black youngsters to enter what has traditionally been a white-dominated sport.

These were the words of Deputy Mayor Logie Naidoo as he stood on the Umgeni River bank to congratulate 23-year-old Mbanjwa.

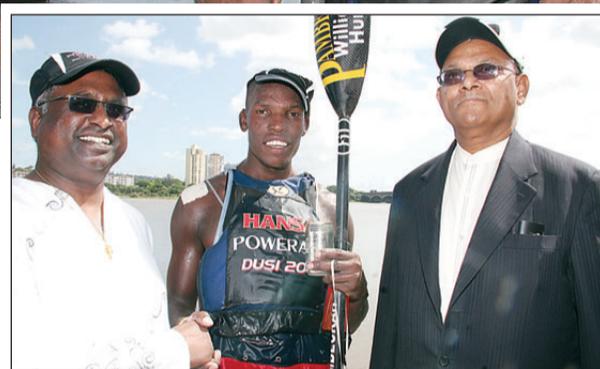
The young man was nicknamed Shaka Zulu by fans as he charged into Blue Lagoon at the end of the race last Saturday morning.

Mbanjwa, who said he had felt like he was a "machine" at one stage during the K1 race, was short of only eight minutes to allow Ant Stott to snatch the R40 000 first prize.

"Mbanjwa has proved to be a sportsman of merit," said Naidoo.

"He has broken into a non-traditional sport, and we are confident he will do even better the next time he participates in the (120km) marathon... He should be an inspiration to many more young black kids to participate in the sport," said Naidoo.

Mbanjwa, who hails from the rural Valley of a Thousand Hills on the western outskirts of the city, was described by race promoter and organiser Ray de Vries as the first black participant to finish second in the mind and body challenging race. Loveday Zondi, who could not participate this year due to an injury,



FINE FINISH: Deputy Mayor Logie Naidoo (left) and KwaZulu-Natal MEC for Sport Amichand Rajbansi (right) congratulate Michael Mbanjwa

took third place last year.

Noting Mbanjwa's challenge, Stott said it had not been smooth-sailing, with Mbanjwa hot on his heels since the second stage.

Described by Stott as having legs of steel, Mbanjwa

had come in number one during the first stage, which organisers describe as the toughest of the three stages as it involves many portages over hilly ground – an advantage for Mbanjwa who is respected for his tireless

running ability. In his after-race address, Mbanjwa, said he had felt like he was some sort of a machine as he ran up the gruelling Burma/ Egqumeni portage.

"I realised that Ant was ahead of me, so I just said to myself, 'carry me my feet' and then I just felt like a machine," said Mbanjwa, whose passion for canoeing developed in 1997 after he had seen canoeists paddling through Inanda Dam.

"Back then we initially wanted to just swim in the dam, but we were not allowed. So when a canoeist asked us if we wanted to do it, we saw it only as a chance to get to swim in the dam. So we

said 'yes'. And that's where it all started," said Mbanjwa.

Third place was taken by Martin Dreyer, while reigning Dusi Queen Abbey Miedema retained the title.

The marathon has been hailed by Durban Africa, the city's tourism arm, as one of the municipality's success stories.

Durban Africa's Perry Moodley said the projected spin-off from a tourism perspective was estimated at R3,8 million. "The race, along with the Comrades marathon and the July Beach Africa, among others, was important in swelling the city's coffers as it brought in visitors from across the globe," he said.

OAR-SOME:

Dusi marathon winner Ant Stott and runner-up Michael Mbanjwa savour success at the finish line, at Durban's Blue Lagoon

Pictures: BONGA MSIMANG

ASTHMA

Asthma is a long-standing (chronic) condition affecting the lungs, in children and adults.

WHAT HAPPENS:

As we breathe, air moves in and out of the lungs through the airways. In asthma, there is swelling of the airways, increased thick and sticky mucus and twitching of the muscles around the airways causing narrowing and making it difficult to breathe. The narrowing of the airway causes coughing; wheezing (or a whistling sound); breathlessness and a tight chest.

WHAT CAN START AN ASTHMA ATTACK:

Family history of asthma or allergies; infections, for example colds; house dust; strong smells and sprays; cigarette and other smoke; animals with fur; pollen; emotional upset; changes in weather and exercise.

HOW IS ASTHMA TREATED:

Avoid things that are likely to start an asthma attack. Know how your medicines work.

MEDICINES FOR ASTHMA:

Relievers: They are used during an attack. They widen the airways and make breathing easier.

Preventers: They are used everyday to prevent an attack. To be used twice a day even if there is no asthma attack. When used over prolonged periods of time, they control asthma better and prevent further attacks. The most preferred route for giving asthma medication is by inhalation. Why? Medicine gets delivered directly to the lungs; it has a quick effect; a very small dose of medicine is used; and there are very few side effects.

DANGER SIGNS IN ASTHMA:

Wheezing and shortness of breath are more troublesome and frequent. You need to take your reliever medicines more frequently. You fail to respond to your usual medication. You often wake up at night due to breathlessness or coughing. Difficulty in speaking sentences. When any of these are present, get to the clinic or doctor immediately.

ASTHMA REALITIES:

Asthma is not infectious. Asthma can be controlled; asthmatics can work, play and exercise normally. Inhalation medicines are not addictive. Inhalation medicines use a very small dose of medicine and are the first and safest line of defence against asthma. Inhalation steroids are safe even for prolonged use.

IMPORTANT:

Avoid self-medication for asthma. Go to your doctor or clinic.

Compiled by the eThekweni Health Department

Protecting your rights

Emmanuel Kleinbooi profiles the team who are helping keep the city's administration clean and accountable

THE very name of the municipality's Ombudsperson and Investigations Unit conjures up images of hard-nosed cops and stern looking detectives, not given to idle chatter lest they let slip some vital piece of information.

But once you are inside their offices and meet the unit's Head, Bheki Mkhize, and his Senior Managers Ray Zungu and Mandla Madlala, whatever apprehensions you may have had, disappear.

Mkhize says his staff are dedicated to ensuring the city's administration is ethical, clean and accountable, and that service delivery is transparent, fair and democratic.

The unit has two capacities: Ombudsperson and Forensic Investigations.

Mkhize says the primary function of his unit is to protect and promote the rights of individuals and help communities to learn about their rights.

"In the past, many people were less aware of their rights and the Office of the Ombudsperson has the

responsibility of educating the community about their rights.

"The bill of rights is the cornerstone of democracy in this country, and citizens of eThekweni need to know their rights, so that they can not only enjoy them but make informed decisions about their lives," said Mkhize.

The Office of the Ombudsperson respects and promotes human rights and ensures people are free and protected in exercising their rights, he said.

The office serves municipal employees and eThekweni residents.

The Investigations section deals with people who disturb the fulfilment of these human rights through fraud or touting.

It is a protective tool used to fight fraud, corruption and maladministration and encourage ethical conduct by staff and residents.

This section receives complaints from the public and staff who suspect that a crime was or is being committed which will bring

the municipality into disrepute. "All information given to the Investigations section is treated as strictly confidential," said Mkhize.

He says the office does its business in a manner that emphasises and respects the dignity of suspected individuals.

The unit, according to Mkhize, must be a place where people come to for advice, and not necessarily to complain. It must be an accessible office with integrity and a place that people can relate to.

He is looking ahead to a time when residents more readily call on the services of the office, while understanding it is fair in its dealing and independent in making decisions.

Mkhize said: "The unit plans to embark on an outreach programme to help make communities within eThekweni more aware of their rights and about what the unit stands for.

"The unit will also use existing programmes such as the Masakhane roadshows to reach out to communities."

New ticket to ride for metered taxis

SOHANA SINGH

THE eThekweni Transport Authority and Metro Police are busy accrediting metered taxis to ensure they provide satisfactory service.

Once these taxis are accredited, passengers, particularly tourists, can feel safe and be assured a comfortable ride and five star service.

The orange sticker, that was used for the past two years, will be replaced by a shaded navy blue one. In this new design a unique number will appear prominently, and will enable complaints and compliments to be reported by making reference to this number.

The new sticker, which will appear on the body of the vehicle, will be valid for two years (2007 and 2008).

For a vehicle to be issued with an accredited sticker metered taxi owners will need:

Valid Certificate of Fitness;

A specified operating private base/rank;

Permanent metered taxi marking on the vehicle reflecting name, address and telephone number;

Permanent fitted/fix roof light;

Paintwork to be dent free, no rust holes and the vehicle to be generally clean and tidy;

No torn seats;

Carpets to be clean and hole free;

A sealed taxi meter and the tariff to be displayed;

Seats belts in working order.

No dim windows; and Tyres in good condition

The accreditation process will run from Monday, 5 February to Thursday, 8 February from 9am to 11am at Old Fort Road (opposite the Pavilion Hotel).

Thereafter, accreditation will happen once a week on Tuesdays from 9am to 11am at Metro Police Offices.

For more information call Nathi Sibisi on 031 311 7495.

