

# Ngubane beats local field, heat, wind to take Ultra Trail Cape Town



**DETERMINED:** Eric Ngubane, en route to victory in the Ultra Trail Cape Town 100km yesterday. TREVOR BALL

## STEPHEN GRANGER

DURBAN marathon runner Eric Ngubane, 32, proved too strong for Cape Town's best in winning the inaugural Ultra Trail Cape Town 100km race in hot, windy conditions yesterday.

Ngubane defied the gusting southeaster and opposition from around the country to cross the line back at Cape Town High School 10 hours 41 minutes 15 seconds after the hardened group of 40 ultra-distance trail athletes had departed.

The wind and heat made conditions near impossible on part of Table Mountain, Karbonkelberg and along Hout Bay Beach, but Ngubane appeared

to take the adversity in his stride.

"It was very windy, but I backed off when it was at its worst, and ran with other runners," Ngubane admitted.

"I did not try to push the pace in the wind, and waited until it was no longer such a factor before making my move.

"I also got lost once or twice early on, and waited at Constantia Nek at 25km for the next group to show me the way. They were very helpful and helped me get back on course."

Ngubane is no stranger to ultra-distance running in Cape Town, having earned six silver Two Oceans Marathon medals, with a best time of 3hrs 26min in 2010. But this was his first off-road adventure in the Cape.

Local trail athlete Andrew Hagan placed second, an hour behind (11:45:26) after a close battle with Joburg's Jock Green (11:47:59).

The elements took their toll on the field, with several forced to give up the unequal struggle.

At the time of going to press, it appeared that fewer than 25 would complete the route.

UCT runner, Will Robinson, set a fast pace from the start, taking the field around Signal Hill in the pre-dawn darkness and reaching Kloof Nek in 54 minutes - a minute clear of Ngubane and Green with Nic de Beer and Hagan close behind.

Ngubane reached Constantia Nek in

1h 59mins, with a five-minute cushion, but waited for Hagen and Green to show him the way.

With well-known Hout Bay trail athlete Mark Preen employed to take the front over Karbonkelberg, Ngubane broke clear and had a 10-minute advantage on Hout Bay beach, which he had stretched to 30 minutes at the 64km mark at Groot Constantia.

Hagen and Green were within a minute of each other through the Cecilia Forest checkpoint at 75km, but Ngubane was moving ahead with every stride and came home a worthy winner.

Nicolette Griffioen won the women's race in 13 hours 18 minutes and 36 seconds.