

Local stars to set the running season aight

It is still early in the season and in distance running it is always risky to make predictions. Nevertheless, it will probably be safe to predict that both Ivette van Zyl and Charne Bosman will run at least one race this season that will cause a stir among spectators.

Two weeks ago, Van Zyl won the Johnson Crane half-marathon in 74 minutes and 48 seconds. Bosman finished third in the marathon in a time of 2 hours 57 minutes.

The athletes, both sponsored by the University of Pretoria's high performance centre (HPC), admit they surprised even themselves with the times they ran.

According to Bosman she was supposed to enjoy an easy training run of about three hours.

Van Zyl said: "I was not supposed to win and should have run at a leisurely tempo. I never looked at my stopwatch and was quite surprised at the end of the race when I saw my time."

In spite of her unexpected victory, Van Zyl is still uncertain about her goals for the season. "Last year I made the mistake of running the wrong marathons. As a result I got hurt - not just physically but psychologically

as well. To be quite honest, I just don't feel up to running marathons at the moment. I want to run shorter races.

"Maybe trying to win the Two Oceans half-marathon will be a good start, seeing that I have never been able to do so. But, who knows, maybe I will still decide to run a marathon. I just don't want to force anything right now."

"The fact that I am being coached by Lindsey Parry is quite reassuring. I don't have to worry about when and where I am going to race, because those are Lindsey's decisions. He definitely does not want me to race practically every weekend, as I have done in the past, even though it may be just for training."

Bosman hopes that her injury problems of last year will be something of the past. "My thyroid glands played up last year. That was the main reason why I did not finish last year's Comrades," said Bosman.

In 2013, she was second in the Two Oceans Marathon and fifth in the Comrades.

According to Bosman her main goal for the Comrades will again be to finish in the top five. "I really think it is do-able. I will run the Two Oceans as well, but it will be considered as part of my preparation for the Comrades."



Charne Bosman (left) and Ivette van Zyl in the gym at the Tukkie's high performance centre, where they are training nowadays as part of their preparation for the long road race season ahead in 2015.

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New women's record in Spar Irene Lantern Race

With more than 4 000 entries, the Spar Irene Lantern Race, hosted by Irene Athletics Club, is by far one of the most popular night races in Gauteng North.

With 2 293 finishers on the 10km and 1 765 on the 5km races respectively, runners at this year's event were pleased with the beautiful medals and the bonus goody bags from Spar.

It stands out from other road races due to the unique atmosphere of the event taking place on the Agricultural Research Campus (ARC) and its farm-like surrounds, as well as the distinctive lantern-lit route.

Lucky Mochale (not affiliated to a club), won the men's 10km in a time of 30min. 20sec. and Mapaseka 'Speedstar' Makhanya broke the 9-year-old 10km-record for female

athletes in a magnificent time of 34min. 34sec. Makhanya did justice to her nickname when she broke away from the pack very early on and finished almost 4 minutes before her closest rival. The previous record time of 35min. 40sec. for this race was improved with more than a minute.

Irene Athletics Club hosts three well-known road races every year, being the Spar Lantern Night Race, the Irene Village Mall Spring Race early in September and the Liquifruit half-marathon and 10km-races in November.

This year, Irene Athletics club will host a marathon for the first time in the club's 21-year's existence.

The marathon, which will be an early Comrades qualifier on 30 August, is perched



Mapaseka Makhanya broke the nine-year-old 10km record for female athletes in the Spar Irene Lantern Race that was hosted at Irene Athletics Club on Saturday.

to serve as a training run for ultra and endurance athletes, with the marathon starting at 12:00 midday, with a cut-off of six hours. In true Irene style, this will be a family-friendly event, complete with half-marathon, 10km and a massive 5km fun run. The first Irene Lantern Race was held in 1997. Spar has been the sponsor for the past 15 years.