Tuks race sets the pace for season!

By CHARLES BALOYI

FOLLOWING a dramatic week in Tshwane, specifically at the Union Buildings with former president Jacob Zuma's resignation, it's time to charge the endorphins with some exercise.

And what better way to do that than to take part in this weekend's Bestmed Tuks Race at Tuks Stadium tomorrow.

There is an air of excitement about the 42,2km route which has been added to the 21,1km and 10km distances to make the event great preparation for the season ahead for marathon runners too.

The annual Tuks race has now grown into a qualifier for the Two Oceans Marathon, which is reason enough to expect top local and international runners to compete.

The starter's gun for the gruelling marathon will go off at 6am, the half marathon runners set off at 6.30am and the 10km run starts at 7am.

Sikhumbuzo Seme, who trains at the High Performance Centre where the event takes place, finished second in the 21,1km event last year.

He won the 10km run two years ago and says he jumped at the opportunity to run in the first 42,2km race. He has been training on the route for weeks.

Seme, son of the legendary athletics coach Michael "Sponge" Seme, is confident he will win the marathon.

The versatile long distance runner secured a fifth place finish at the Nelson Mandela Day Marathon in Pietermaritzburg last year, clocking 2:29:32 as the highest placed South African in the race.

Seme will use the Tuks race to prepare for the Two Oceans in Cape Town on 31 March, where he will line up in the 21,1km event.

"It's a nice route, it has few hills. I know it, as I'm based here, and I hope to use that to my advantage. Training has been going well. I usually peak in winter, this will be my first race of the season.

"The Mandela Marathon is the toughest race I have ever run in my life, but this one is a relaxed marathon."

Former Comrades Marathon champion Charne Bosman is the favourite to take the highest place on the podium in the women's marathon.