



Coach predicts Tuks team will make a breakthrough

Tuks's basketball coach believes that his teams will establish themselves at top level as real competition for the best opponents in 2019.

2019 just might be the breakthrough year for TuksBasketball, especially at local tournaments.

Over the past few years, both the men's and women's teams had their moments of brilliance.

However, these moments were unfortunately few and far in-between.

Women's head coach Danny Malothane is, however, not apologising for what happened as he sees last year as a building phase to get the results he wants.

"The focus was on getting our second stringers to play better," said Malothane.

"In doing so, we created a bigger pool of players from which I now can select the first team.

"It is exciting that about 90% of last year's first and second team players are still available for selection.

"Now we just need to recruit one or two more talented players. Then I am sure we shall start being competitive."

Malothane is genuinely passionate about what he does.

According to him if it was not basketball, he might have "self-destructed" growing up in Polokwane.

"I grew up in a crime-stricken area.

"There used to be always some temptation to do something illegal," he said.

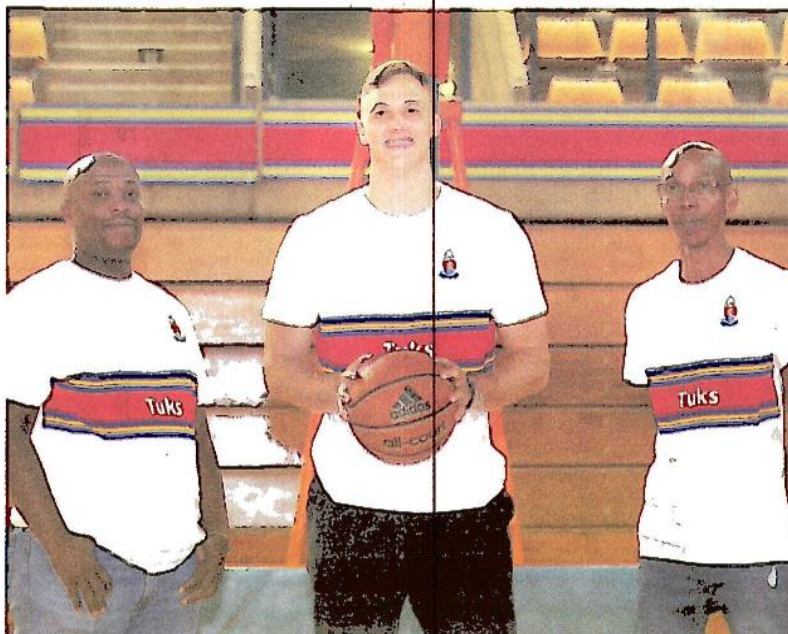
"If it was not for playing sports who knows how my life might have turned out.

"Luckily, I got the opportunity to play basketball and softball, which allowed me to channel my energy positively.

"I can say that basketball saved my life and gave me self-respect."

Malothane represented Limpopo in basketball as well as softball.

For the last 22 years, he has been coaching various teams also at a national level where he has mainly



The TuksBasketball coaching staff for this year is from left to right Danny Malothane (women's head coach), Ludwig Gerdes (Tuks men's second team) and Thanda Kweyama (men's first team assistant coach). George Makena (Tuks first team head coach) was absent. **Photo: Reg Caldecott**

been involved with the juniors.

He sees his role as a coach as payback for the opportunities he had through his involvement in basketball.

"It is never just about winning.

"There is no greater award than changing one player's life for the better.

"Getting my players to trust me is of the utmost importance. I see my role as sort of a father figure. If any player has a problem, I am always available to listen, and if I can help in any way.

"I will go out of my way to do so," Malothane explained.

The Tuks women's team will compete in three tournaments. The first will be in April at Wits.

In July, Tuks will be hosting an invitational tournament as part of their preparation for the USSA Tournament.

Malothane is not one to make bold predictions, but he hopes that his team will get to contest the semi-finals during the USSA Tournament.

They did so in 2017.

The Tuks men's team has a whole new coaching setup.

Neo Mothiba stepped down as head coach due to work commitments. George Makena who can genuinely claim to have been there done that in South African Basketball is the new coach.

He will be assisted by Thanda Kweyama who coached the second stringers last year.