

## **Irvette is happy with her comeback race**

Irvette van Zyl (Nedbank/HPC) surprised herself on Sunday (11/10) by running a time of 38 minutes and 23 seconds to finish 12<sup>th</sup> in the Spar Woman's 10km race in Johannesburg.

Lebogang Phalula won in 35:08.

It was the Olympic marathoner's first race since giving birth to her son, Louis, in September.

Van Zyl readily admits that she was quite nervous before the race.

"It was my doctor, Elmarie Wypkema, who assured me that I was going to be OK and she also advised that I should run the 10km instead of the 5km. Our plan was for her and me to run the 5km together, but she then decided that it would look bad if the patient should run away from her doctor only four weeks after giving birth."

Wypkema opted to run the 5km with LJ Van Zyl, Irvette's husband and Olympic 400-hurdler, who was pushing Louis in a pram in the shorter race.

Wypkema confidently predicted before the race that Van Zyl would be capable of running a time faster than 40 minutes.

"My doctor's confidence in my running abilities was just what I needed. I must admit that I was a bit worried about getting injured, but when she promised that I would be OK I relaxed."

According to the HPC athlete she only did three training runs before the race, which was nothing compared to what she did before. Apparently LJ outran her in one of her training sessions.

"I made some elementary mistakes on Sunday like not warming up before the race. It meant that my legs were still quite sluggish when I got

to the first hill. I also shuffled, not really lifting my legs, and my running posture was out of sync. But nothing mattered. It was just great to be out there and racing again. I missed it.”

Lindsey Parry (Tuks/HPC) said his main challenge as coach is to make sure that Van Zyl stays injury free until April.

“She really will have to take things slow for quite a while yet. Luckily there is no rush. The plan is for Irvette to be really racing fit only by April. That is when she will try to qualify for next year’s Olympic Games in Rio, either in the 10 000m or the marathon.”

According to LJ van Zyl, little Louis took to racing like a fish takes to water.

“He was smiling most of the time. At times the road was quite bumpy but that only seemed to make him sleepy.”

Chances are good that Louis will do more Spar races together with his parents in future.