



Winning not just about medals

The promising young triathlon athlete Peta-Leigh Venter is TuksSport School's top performer for 2017.

A partnership with her roommate led to Peta-Leigh Venter bagging seven distinctions, making her TuksSport High School's top student.

Another achiever was Nathania van Niekerk, who recently qualified in the 200m backstroke for the Commonwealth Games. She got six distinctions.

The TuksSport High School's matrics managed for the 13th time in 14 years to get a 100-percent matric pass rate and 87 percent of them achieved university exemption.

Principal Hettie de Villiers ascribed the students' success to them living a philosophy of no regrets to the fullest every day.

"At the school, we emphasise that to be a real winner will never just be about winning medals. It is equally – actually more – essential to excel as a student. Winning

is going to sleep at night with no regrets; winning is checking your ego at the door; winning is assuming responsibility; winning is living a balanced life," said De Villiers.

Venter, one of the top young triathletes in the country, echoed De Villiers' sentiments.

She said having to train two hours in the morning before school and again for two hours afterwards helped her to realise the importance of time management.

"Anything is possible if you set yourself goals and are 100 percent committed to achieving them," she said.

"What helped me is the pact I formed with my roommate, Gizelde Strauss. She agreed to help me to become a better triathlete while I helped her with her studies. It was a win-win situation."

Although Venter is passionate about being a triathlete, she is going to take a sabbatical

from serious competition this year to get an opportunity to fulfil her other dream: to become a vet.

"I love animals. To be honest, animals are my greatest passion. Unfortunately, I did not get accepted to study veterinary science because I applied too late," she said.

"I am now going to study biological sciences. If my marks are good enough, hopefully I will be allowed to switch courses."

She said she hoped to work with horses one day.

"It is funny – I used to be slightly scared of them, but I am not anymore," Venter said in an interview.

"I think it could be rewarding to work in the racehorse industry as a vet, because you get to make a real difference in the life of animals."



Peta-Leigh Venter in action on the training course. Photo: Reg Caldecott