



Non-swimmer turning into winner

Local upcoming triathlon star Tsebo Botsane would three years ago give any swimming pool a wide berth and with good reason – she could not swim.

“I could sort of stay afloat by doing some form of doggy paddling, but it could not be called swimming,” she laughed.

However, a lot can change in three years – especially if you are committed.

Botsane made local triathlon history at the recent Continental Cup meeting in Troutbeck, Zimbabwe when she raced to a second place finish in her age category. It was possibly the first time that a black South African triathlete medalled at an international meet.

If the Grade 10-learner from the TuksSport High School has her way, it will not be the last. She has set her sights on winning another medal at the South African Triathlon Championships in Bloemfontein.

She is on a mission to prove that there is no such a thing as a sport in which white athletes excel or vice versa.

“A lot of my friends are scared to participate in triathlons because they cannot swim. I want to prove that anybody can do any sport as long as they are prepared to seriously commit to hard training and not be fazed if they fail at first,” she said.

“It might sound a bit arrogant, but I want to become a role model in female sport. I know a lot of hard work still awaits me, but if I can stay focused I think there is a real chance that I can represent South Africa at an Olympic Games.”

In the Continental Cup race, her swimming was not too bad. She was about the fourth athlete out of the water. It was during the cycling leg that she suffered.

She blames it on the hilly course. But she did not lose focus and fought back well during the run to ensure a podium finish.

Kate Roberts, a former Olympian, coaches

her.

Roberts said she believed Botsane could become a trailblazer in SA triathlon.

“Tsebo just has that something special.”



Tsebo Botsane could become a trailblazer in South African triathlon. **Photo: Reg Caldecott.**

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