



Breaststroke queen eyes a second gold

● *Schoenmaker a golden bet for SA together with Le Clos in butterfly*

David Isaacson
Gold Coast

New breaststroke queen Tatjana Schoenmaker could help make it rain gold for Team SA on Monday as she bids for her second Commonwealth Games crown.

The 20-year-old Tuks student, the 200m champion, clocked 1min 06.65sec in the 100m breaststroke semifinals on Sunday night to take pole position in that race.

Schoenmaker will probably be one of SA's two best golden bets on the day.

Chad Le Clos is the other in the 100m butterfly. His 52.56 was fourth quickest in the 100m fly semifinals, behind Australians Grant Irvine (51.87) and David Morgan (52.48) and England's James Guy (52.34), but the final will be a different story.

SA – with four golds after the first four days of competition – has several other opportunities, although most are tough, if not close to impossible.

Akani Simbine and Henricho Bruinjtjies are in the 100m final where they will have to negotiate Jamaica's Yohan Blake, Englishman Adam Gemili and Kemar Hyman of the Cayman Islands. Dyan Buis is SA's best chance in the T38 category 100m final and Orazio Cremona will be aiming for the podium in the shot put.

In lawn bowls, the South African women's four, skipped by Elma Davis, will have a difficult task trying to inflict a first defeat on the Australian team.

the reigning world champions. Cameron van der Burgh has a shot in the 50m breaststroke, in which he is seeking his third consecutive Commonwealth Games crown. But he will need a Herculean effort to upstage Englishman Adam Peaty, who is seemingly unbeatable.

"I'm feeling confident," Van der Burgh said after winning his semifinal in 26.95sec, second to Peaty's 26.49 Games record.

"The most important thing is to come out and give your best performance. That's all you can do," said the veteran, who will have two other South African swimmers in his race, Cape Town matric pupil Michael Houllie and Brad Tandy.

Schoenmaker was happy with her time but refused to be drawn on golden ambitions in the final. "I don't think too much about the medal," she said. "I just want to get good times. I was aiming for 1:06 high so I'm close at 1:06 middle. I was pretty happy with that."

Schoenmaker is not far off Penny Heyns's last remaining African record, the 1:06.52 she set at the height of her powers in Australia in 1999.

I DON'T THINK TOO MUCH ABOUT THE MEDAL. I JUST WANT TO GET GOOD TIMES.

Tatjana Schoenmaker
South African swimmer



Joy of winning: SA's Tatjana Schoenmaker celebrates her gold medal in the 200m breaststroke at the Commonwealth Games. On Monday she will be aiming for a medal in the 100m breaststroke. /Reuters

"I want to try go for it, but if it doesn't come, that's also okay," said Schoenmaker, who could be the first local female to bag a breaststroke double at a championship since Heyns at the 1996 Olympics.

She has not felt this good in competition for a while. "I think it just all came together."

Le Clos picked up one of SA's two medals of the day on Sunday when he finished joint second in a pulsating 100m freestyle contest.

Bowler Colleen Piketh took the other, a bronze in the women's singles, the same medal she won last time around at Glasgow 2014.

This was the first day of the Games that Team SA failed to land a gold, and it showed on the medals table as it slipped from fifth overnight to seventh, below the same six nations that were above it after Glasgow 2014 – Australia, England, Canada, India, Scotland and New Zealand. /TimesLIVE

