



## Pta teenager qualifies for Commonwealth

By qualifying in the 200m freestyle for this year's Commonwealth Games, 15-year-old Duné Coetzee proved that anything is possible if you put your mind to it.

At the recent KwaZulu-Natal Aquatics Premier Championships at the Kings Park Aquatics Centre in Durban, the Tuks swimmer won the 200m freestyle in a personal best time of 2:02.68.

Marlies Ross was second in 2:03.04 and Kristin Bellingan third in 2:03.68.

An elated Coetzee ascribed her success to putting in long, hard hours. "From August my coach, Linda de Jager, and I worked on improving my times in the 200m events," she said.

"The times I have swum proves that if you are prepared to put in the hard work, you will reap

success."

Coetzee has also set her sights on trying to qualify for the 200m butterfly as well as the 400m freestyle.

She is the current South African senior 200m butterfly champion, boasting with a personal best time of 2:14.14.

Even though Coetzee has qualified, it is not a foregone conclusion that she will be selected for the Commonwealth Games. At 15, she might be too young.

The Tuks swimmer said she hoped to get the chance to compete as this was an opportunity to gain valuable experience.

"The time difference between Australia's Gold Coast and Tokyo, where the 2020 Olympic Games is going to be held, is only an hour," she said.

"This will give me the opportunity to get used to competing in that time zone and against senior and more experienced swimmers."

Coetzee started swimming when she was a baby to become water safe. When she was seven years old, she began to compete in galas.

Her role models were Missy Franklin, who won five medals at the 2012 Olympics, and Katie Ledecky, who won five medals at the World Champs in 2015.

"From Ledecky I have learned that there is no limit to what you can achieve. I watched Missy's movie – *Touch the Wall*," she said.

"There is a heap of stuff I learned from it. Locally, my hero is Karin Prinsloo. I had the privilege to meet Karin after she returned from London Olympics in 2012."



Fifteen-year-old Duné Coetzee shortly after she won the 200m freestyle in a personal best time of 2:02.68.