



Pure gold for Schoenmaker

Tatyana Schoenmaker broke the South African 'jinx' when she won the 200m-breaststroke at the Gold Coast Commonwealth Games in a new African record time of 2:22:02.

In the past, South Africa's female swimmers fiercely contested the 200m-breaststroke at the Games but on three previous occasions, they had to settle for silver.

From a South African swimming perspective, the final was historic.

It was possibly the first time that three South African female swimmers contested the same final at a major championship. Emily Visagie was seventh and Kaylen Corbett eighth.

The Pretoria swimmer impressed with her dominance.

From the moment she dived into the water it was clear that she meant business. She was in the lead after 50m, dropped to second after 100m but from then on there was no stopping her.

Her winning time of 2:22:02 minutes is more than two seconds faster than the time she swam during last year's World Student Games in Taipei where she had won the silver medal in a time of 2:24:61 minutes.

"Overwhelmed" is the word Schoenmaker used when asked to talk about her performance.

"To win the gold medal is big for me. At first, I did not realise how fast I had swum. I was just relieved to be the first to touch the wall, but then I turned around and saw the time it was an absolute bonus that made the moment that little bit more special," said the Tuks swimmer.

Schoenmaker did not want to comment on whether she thought she was capable of swimming faster times.

She credited the fact that she now had won a gold and silver at major events to hard work.

"My coach, Rocco Meiring, and I believe in taking things step by step.

"For now, I am happy. The more I train the more confident I get about my own



Tatyana Schoenmaker won gold for South Africa in the 200m breast stroke for women at the Commonwealth Games. **Photo: Reg Caldecott.**

abilities," said Schoenmaker.

Meiring was quick to point out that it would be unfair to compare Schoenmaker to anyone or to speculate on what she was capable of at the moment.

When pressed for an opinion Meiring chose his words carefully.

"I am more cautious than excited. Tatyana got the X-factor when it comes to putting in the hard work and competing.

"To me, she is like a proverbial 'racehorse'. So, as a coach it is essential to know when enough is enough as the margin of error is so small. What excites me is the way she is capable of producing a really big output when it matters," said Meiring.

It is clear that Meiring has mapped out Schoenmaker's journey to the 2020 Olympic Games in Tokyo in the finest detail, leaving absolutely nothing to chance. He has prioritised her studies.

If everything goes according to plan, she will get her degree at the end of the year.

Only then will he want her to focus on swimming faster times seriously.