



Two gold bets for SA today

Schoenmaker and Le Clos both look poised for medal victories in the pool

David Isaacson

NEW breaststroke queen Tatjana Schoenmaker could help make it rain gold for Team South Africa today 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 last 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 being the other in the 100m butterfly (1.59pm SA time today).

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.

The country - 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 Bruinjies are in the 100m final, where they will have to negotiate Jamaica's Yohan Blake, Englishman Adam Gemill and Kemar Hyman, of Cayman Islands, (2.15pm SA time).

Dyan Buis is SA's best chance in the T38 category 100m final (11.10am) and Orazio Cremona will be aiming for the podium in the shot put (12.25pm).

Cameron van der Burgh has a shot in the 50m breaststroke, where he is seeking his third consecutive Games crown (1.07pm).

But he will need a Herculean effort to upstage the seemingly unbeatable English-

man Adam Peaty. "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."

The veteran will have two other SA 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 (1.12pm).

"I don't think too much about the medal. I just want to get good times. I was aiming for 1:06-high so I'm close - a 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 want to try go for it, but if it doesn't come, that's also OK," she said.

Schoenmaker could be the first local female to bag a breaststroke double at a championship since Heyns at the 1996 Olympics.

She pointed out she had 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 yesterday 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 at Glasgow 2014.

It was the first day of the Games that Team SA failed to land a gold, and it showed on the medals table as they slipped from fifth to seventh. - TimesLIVE



COLLEEN PIKETH



BREASTSTROKE QUEEN: Tatjana Schoenmaker, right, of South Africa, celebrates with teammate Kaylene Corbett, of Port Elizabeth, after the women's 200m breaststroke final at the Gold Coast 2018 Commonwealth Games in Australia on Saturday. Corbett finished eight ahead of South African Emily Visagie
Picture: GALLO IMAGES/ROGER SEDRES

