

# THE SWEETEST WIN

Charne Bosman raced to victory in the 2016 Comrades Marathon, despite breaking her toe just a few weeks before the race, and we chatted to her about what it was like to claim her first Comrades title.

**Q:** Many people say that the path to winning the Comrades Marathon starts years before you actually win it. Is this true for you as well?

**CB:** Definitely! To win Comrades was my dream when I started running 24 years ago, and I always said to myself, "One day when I am big I want to run Comrades and win."

**Q:** What was the hardest moment of this year's run?

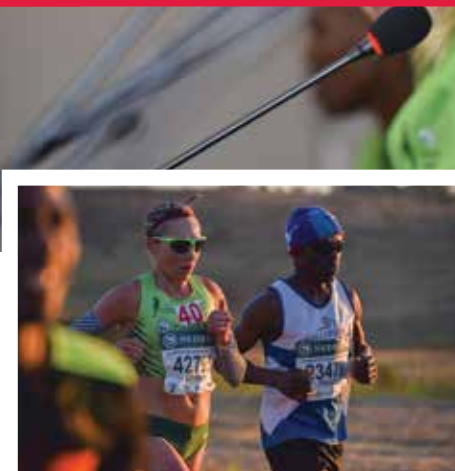
**CB:** Physically the race wasn't hard, it was more of a mental struggle. When I got to 10km to go and heard Caroline was 11 minutes ahead of me, that was hard... I thought, oh well, second place again, but I just decided to run my own race and not to think about it. I had my husband Carel seconding me, assisting me every step of the way, and that really helped to keep me going. I couldn't have done it without him.

**Q:** What got you through the last 20km of the race?

**CB:** The final stretch is mentally challenging, but you have to just keep going. With 15km to go I also had some Biogen Recovergen, which proved to be successful. It helped me push on to the end, and I wasn't affected by cramps or anything.

**Q:** Take us through the last few kilometres of the race. What went through your mind when you realised you were in the lead?

**CB:** For me it all started at 4.5km to go. On TV the route looks flat, but it's actually quite a



drop, and when I saw the lead vehicles ahead, I realised I would need to pass Caroline at speed, so if she chose to follow me, I would have the edge, having already built up speed. When I passed her, I kept looking back to see where she was, but there was so much noise around me, I didn't know where she was, and the kilometre between 2km and 1km was the hardest part, because I was so scared that Caroline would catch me. I had asked Carel to wait at the 1km mark for me, so that I could know where she was, and when I got there he told me I was clear, that she wasn't following me. Then I could breathe and enjoy the last kay.

**Q:** How did it feel running over that finish line to win the Ultimate Human Race?

**CB:** I could hear Chariots of Fire and had such a big smile, I couldn't believe what was

happening. I just put my hands in front of my eyes as I crossed the line and cried, because it had taken so much to get there. It was a really sweet victory. Obviously, the person I most wanted to see at the finish was Carel, but because he had waited for me at 1km, it took him a while to get to the stadium. He is always the first person I want to see – he wakes up every morning with me, he comes to all my training camps, and he supports me in everything – so when I saw him, the tears were flowing, because I was so happy. We work as a team and it was nice to share that moment with him.

**Q:** Have you reached your ultimate goal by winning the Comrades, or do you still have bigger running goals to chase?

**CB:** One of my biggest dreams was to win Comrades, and I would love to win another one. But if I don't win again, it will be fine, because the first one will always be the sweetest.

**Q:** What are your plans for the 2017 edition of Comrades and what are your thoughts on this year's campaign, Zinikele – It takes all of you?

**CB:** The race takes everything from you, so it's very appropriate. For 2017 I am going to take a more aggressive approach to push myself, but I will still follow my own plan again, and focus on racing my own race. I need to get to the race healthy and injury-free, but I'm not worrying about anything, I am just going to do my own thing. /A



Images: Courtesy OMA

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