

## SA runners plan blitz of Comrades

**Khanyiso Tshwaku**

WHEN Ludwick Mamabolo won the 2012 Comrades Marathon, it was a groundbreaking victory on all levels.

It was the first win by a South African since Sipho Ngomane in 2005, breaking the foreign hegemony the race had become accustomed to.

Zimbabwean Stephen Muzhingi and Russians Leonid Shvetsov and Oleg Kharitonov made the race their own before Mamabolo finally made it a South African affair.

Since that breakthrough, SA has started to reassert its dominance and Mamabolo hopes that will not change.

"I'm very happy that the race is now dominated by South Africans in both races [men's and women's]," Mamabolo said.

Sunday's 91st edition will see the past four winners square up.

Bongmusa Mthembu will be back to defend his down run title while the erstwhile figure of Gift Kelehe lurks ominously in the shadows. Muzhingi, who earned a hat-trick between 2009 and 2011, is also set to grace the down run.

SA athletes will be keen to make up for last year's up run, despite Kelehe's win. There were only four local runners in the top 10, compared to the 2014 down run where



**ON PACE: Ludwick Mamabolo will hope to add to his 2012 title**

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there were seven.

Should Kelehe win, he will become the first South African since Bruce Fordyce in 1988 to win the race back to back.