

■ COMRADES

Herron has got the belief

'I always aim to give my best on the day'

MATSHELANE MAMABOLO &
MBONGISENI BUTHELEZI

SOME would have deemed it as the calm before the storm. But such is the camaraderie among elite women's runners of the Comrades Marathon that even in competition, they remain cordial.

Four days before race day, defending up run champion Camille Herron's Twitter timeline was abuzz – the frizzy-haired American getting some of her competitors in stitches with a post announcing she had landed in Durban.

"We made it to Durban!!! It's been such a great day so far! We're staying at the Elangeni Hotel again for a few days, which has an 'amazing' breakfast, view of the ocean, & I love running along the boardwalk! The best part was the monkeys," Herron tweeted.

Durbanite and Comrades debutant Jenna Challenor was quick to respond with a chuckle: "We call it the promenade here in SA."

Sarah Baard, then told a tale of her experience with monkeys. "I got chased by monkeys during my workout today! That was a first! Required a car that had recently passed me to reverse and honk at them so I could escape!"

Herron herself had a similar experience two years ago, before smiling her way to a resounding triumph.

There will be no monkeying around on Sunday though, as the Nedbank Running Club star looks to get to the Scottsville Racecourse in Pietermaritzburg ahead of all the other ladies.

Fully fit after a hamstring injury, the Nedbank Running Club athlete is excited to be back.

Herron expressed disappointment at having missed last year's down run due to injury.

"I accidentally strained my quad from trying a YouTube exercise less



Camille Herron leading the race during the 2017 Comrades Marathon from Durban to Pietermaritzburg. | BackpagePix

than two weeks before, and it began to pull on the bone and turned into a femoral stress reaction. It was not caused by running," she explained.

Now that she is back, bet on the American who is equally adept on the trail just as she is on the road to go full on out in search of glory.

"I always aim to give my best on the day and believe I can win. I will get everything out of myself, put my heart into it, and do it with a smile and flying hair. I always aim to win and let the magic come out," Herron said.

Herron has already tasted victory this year, winning the Tarawera 100 miler in February. Her focus for the year though is mainly the Comrades.

"I've run two races this year, including a major trail win at the Tarawera 100 miler back in Feb. I've focused on mainly training to be best prepared for Comrades," Herron said.

And she is content with how her training has gone. "It has gone well. We were conservative and cautious – making sure I feel good most importantly.

I have a tendency to have freak non-running accidents, so I might need to be wrapped in bubble wrap these few days," Herron said

Already in Durban and running with the monkeys, there clearly will be no bubble-wrapping the smiling up run champion from the United States.