



**YINESU'S HISTORIC HATTRICK:**

2014: 2:17:55

2015: 2:23:20

2016: 2:20:44

**DECENT EFFORT:** South Africa's Irvette van Zyl finished third in the Soweto Marathon.

PICTURE: GALLO IMAGES

# Ethiopian athletes dominate in Soweto

NEVILLE KHOZA

EAST Africa's grip on the men's race at the Old Mutual Soweto Marathon continued as Ethiopia's Sintayehu Legese Ynesu dominated the 42km race yesterday.

He has now become the only athlete to have won the Soweto Marathon three times.

Yesterday, he crossed the line in 2:20.44 adding to his previous wins at the annual race through the streets of the historic township in 2014 and 2015.

He broke away from a three-man leading group in the closing stages and was able to open a gap between himself and second place Tsepo Ramonene from Lesotho who finished in 2:21.46.

Ynesu said he loves running the marathon because of the history of the township and wants to be part of the history and culture in running.

"The first time I won here, people were encouraging me and gave a lot of support, which is why I love this race and keep coming back," Ynesu said.

"The course was good and the weather was perfect and I am happy that I have won it for the third time.

I'm looking forward to be here again next year."

Edward Mothibi was the highest placed South African athlete, finishing seventh in 2:25:33.

Selame Abere of Ethiopia claimed victory in the women's race in 2:42:32 while South African Irvette van Zyl saved the host country's blushes by storming home in third place in a time of 2:46:32.

Ethiopian Chelitu Asefa finished second in a time of 2:45:22.

It has been a while since a South African claimed victory in both the men's and women's race.

Michael Mazibuko was the last athlete to win the marathon in 2011, Kenya's Shadrack Kemboi won it in 2015 before Ynesu claimed three successive titles following the relaunching of the rout in 2014.

In the men's half marathon, the locals could at least cheer countryman David Manja, who won comfortably in 1:07:17, while Oneille Dintwe of Botswana bagged the women's race in 1:19:4.

Namakoe Nkhosi of Lesotho won the 10km race in 30:17 and Chery-Lee Schoeman lifted the women's crown by crossing the line in 38:48.

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