

d Slam title

Djokovic in each semis



Serbia's Novak Djokovic during the men's singles quarterfinal match of the ...
re: RYAN PIERSE/GETTY IMAGES

forced error from Djokovic. In a see-saw contest, Djokovic regained the upper hand to open a 3-0 lead in the fourth set but Nadal would not

go into a fifth set, breaking back for 4-5 before forcing a tiebreak in which he gave his opponent no chance. — Reuters



BIG FIELD EXPECTED: Former elite athlete and Nedbank Running Club national manager Nick Bester
Picture: SUNDAY TIMES

Fast times on cards in NMB Half Marathon — Bester

Vuyokazi Nkanjeni

Former elite athlete and Nedbank Running Club national manager Nick Bester says Nelson Mandela Bay is a hunting ground for athletes looking to run fast times.

Bester was speaking before the NMB Half Marathon which takes place at Pollok Beach in Summerstrand on Saturday.

The race, which holds World Athletics Elite Label status, will also serve as the ASA Half Marathon National Championships.

EPA is gearing up for about 1,500 athletes. Because of Covid-19 limitations, only 250 athletes were allowed in 2021.

Precious Mashele narrowly beat Stephen Mokoka with an impressive finish in 1.01.17, with the foreign contingent ensuring fast times in the women's contest.

Brillan Jepkor Kipkoech of Kenya dominated the women's battle to win in 1.07.32, with Sisay Alemaddis of Ethiopia second in 1.08.04.

Glenrose Xaba was the best SA athlete, in fifth position overall, earning the gold medal in 1.09.30.

Mashele is coming back to defend his title, which will be highly contested by Bay favourite and golden boy Melikhaya Frans and Moses Tarakinyu, who won the Two Oceans 21km in April.

A tough race is also expect-

ed in the women's field as the SPAR Women's 10km Grand Prix podium winners have also confirmed their participation in the half marathon.

Helalia Johannes, from Namibia, who crossed the finish line first at Nelson Mandela University at the weekend, and Ethiopians Tadu Nare and Selam Fente Gebre, who finished second and third respectively, will be looking to run fast times on Saturday.

Bester said it would be a competitive race.

"It will be a 21km and I am a bit worried that the 10km will still sit in their legs this week, but let's see if there will be more competition this year.

"Our SA athletes have specially prepared for the 21km. Glenrose Xaba will be coming to defend her title so it won't be an easy walkover and hopefully the 10km is out of their legs."

When asked which athlete he would put his money on, Bester said: "It's difficult to say, but obviously I will support my team. However, I can say that Gqeberha is a hunting ground for our athletes. There are always fast times here in the 21km SA Champions that's coming up.

"Look at the 10km. There were fast times, and the 50km world record has been run here in NMBM, so our runners are always pleased to come here and run fast times."