

Double at Two Oceans race

Pietermaritzburg's Bongmusa Mthembu grabs his first Two Oceans title in fastest time since 2012

Africa since the heady days of Frith van der Merwe at her peak. Pietermaritzburg's Mthembu was delighted with his win. "I planned to run consistently and kept something in the bag for the final stages," Mthembu confessed. "I knew the Kenyans were going for the record and let them go as I thought they would probably pay for their fast pace."

"It was a great victory for South Africa. It's fantastic that top races like the Two Oceans draws the best ultra-distance athletes on the continent to compete and that we can show that we can match the guys from the north. It was a great feeling to come past the Kenyans and Ethiopians in the final quarter of the race. "I'm a professional athlete and must be able to recover in time for Comrades Marathon. But my goal today

was on Two Oceans and I'm delighted to have finally won it." Mthembu, who bases himself in the Lesotho highlands for much of his training, has now completed nine Two Oceans ultras, including four top-ten gold medals, his previous best of 3:10:16 coming in 2012, when he finished fifth, as he did last year. Steyn finished in 3:31:28 – 44 seconds outside Van der Merwe's race record, which has stood for 30 years.

"I'll definitely be back next year for the record," said Steyn. "I felt good the whole way and really enjoyed the climb up Ou Kaapse Weg. It was a great race in every way. I was not going for the record, and at 50km I realised it was not really on, so I backed off a bit." Kenyan

Priscilla Lorchima had taken an early lead, with Steyn and Irvette van Zyl drawing level approaching Fish Hoek at 20km. Lorchima fell behind, with Lesotho athlete, Mamorallo Tjoka, taking her place as the three crossed Ou Kaapse Weg. Van Zyl fell off the pace shortly after the steep descent and finished third in 3:41:27 with Polish athlete, Dominika Stelmach, and Durban athlete Jenna Challenor rounding out the top five.

Johannesburg-based Elroy Galant upset favourite Stephen Mokoka to win the Half Marathon in 1:03:20, with Namibia's Helalia Johannes destroying the previous women's mark by over two minutes, winning in 1:10:30 in another extraordinary performance.

Two Oceans Champion Gerda Steyn.

