

Sports Day

MONDAY
10 JUNE 2019

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Steyn sparkles in the run of her life

● The team in green rules the day at Comrades with women's winner clocking formidable

Khanyiso Tshwaku
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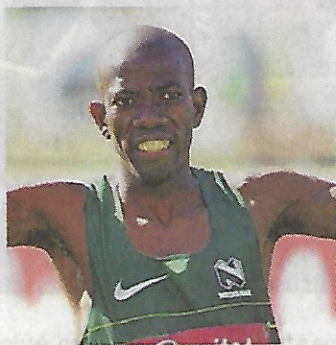
It was a red-letter day for the Nedbank Running Club, the team in green, on which members Gerda Steyn and Edward Mthombi were the toast of the 94th Comrades Marathon.

Steyn, who was second in 2018's down run, had the notorious up-run for a three-course meal. Her winning time of 5hr 58min 53sec shattered Elena Nurgalieva's 2006 record of 6.09.24 to smithereens.

Mthombi on the other hand, battled hard to shake off the defending up-run champion Bongmusa "The Bulwer Bullet" Mthembu to win his maiden Comrades in a 5.3L33.

While the men's race was exciting, with the contest being decided at the infamous Polly Shortts climb, the women's race was a no-contest as soon as the 29-year-old Steyn took the lead at the Winston Park marker.

From there, the two-time Two Oceans Marathon winner took consummate control and with every marker, her pace increased and so did the gap between her and the competition. Ann Ashworth (fourth - 6.27.15), Caitriona Jennings (third - 6.24.12) and Alexandra Morozova (second - 6.17.40) tried



Edward Mthombi

be problematic for the chasers.

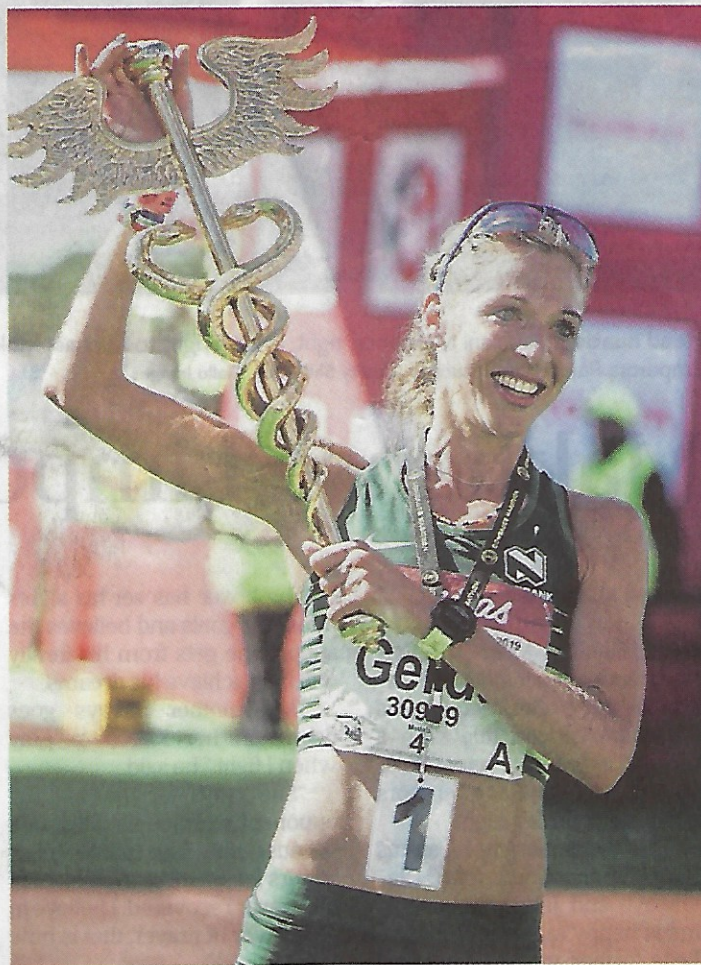
Morozova, who was a topic of contention when she and a group of fellow Russians were the subject of Athletics SA's ban that was overturned, ran a strong race.

All they could do was to swap places behind the red-hot Steyn, who chewed up and spat out the asphalt.

Her efforts earned her R1.2m, for winning (R500,000), as the record breaker (R500,000) and as first SA woman (R200,000) over the line.

"I can't believe what happened. It was an unreal day and everything went well. It was only towards the end when the fatigue started to set in, but I could smell the finish line. I thought the record was possible but I didn't plan to go for it.

"Halfway through the course,



Winner takes all: Gerda Steyn pulverised the field and the record at Sunday's Comrades Marathon. /Rajesh Jantila/ AFP

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