

ing done with split squads
"It is great for the identity of both teams. The same applies to the players. It is important

make a mark.
"They can focus on a specific competition."

for places, but at the same time ensure that we are closely aligned in both our processes and approach."

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Mfunzi welcomes elite status for Nedbank Runified 50km race

Vuyokazi Nkanjeni

Nelson Mandela Bay's top woman road runner, Ntombesintu Mfunzi, believes there will be an extra push on race day now that the Nedbank Runified Breaking Barriers 50km race has been given elite status by World Athletics.

The race returns to Nelson Mandela Bay on March 6 and will also be shown live to television viewers around the world.

Earlier this year, it was announced that World Athletics (WA) had not only officially recognised the two world 50km records set at the 2021 Nedbank Runified Breaking Barriers 50km, but also awarded the event a WA label.

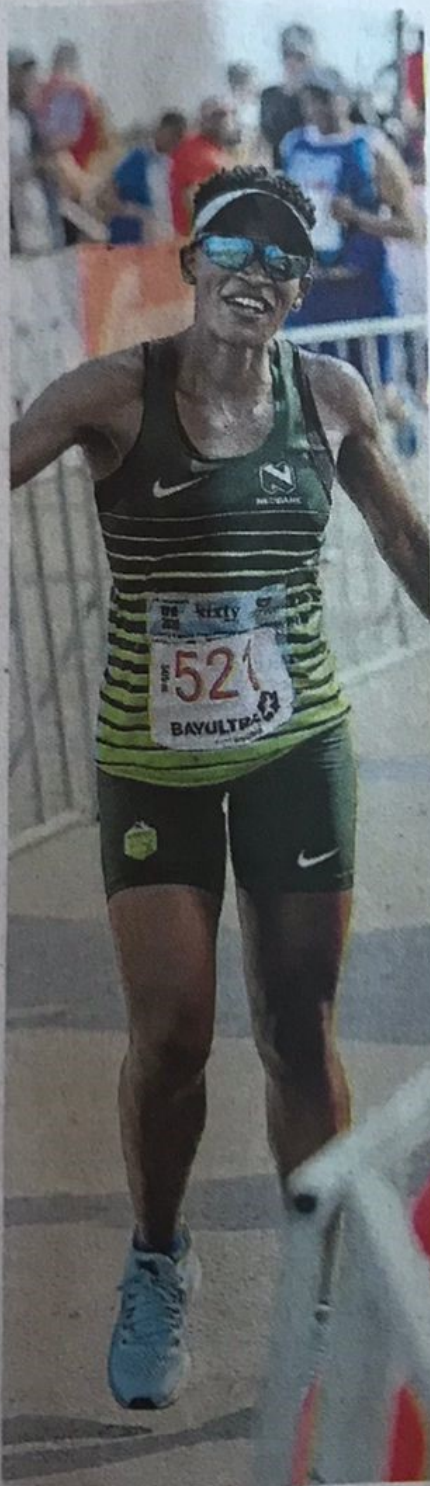
This has made the race the first and only ultra-marathon event in the world to be upgraded to elite label status with only a year of existence.

Mfunzi, 40, who celebrated 18 years of running last year, said she was excited to be taking part in the event.

"The fact that it has been given this label qualifies it as one of the biggest races in SA and the competition will be tough now," she said.

"I am excited this year and the other thing that has got me excited is the fact that this year I am injury free and health-wise everything is OK.

"I am more focused, more especially now that it was also announced that records for the



GIVING IT HER ALL: Ntombesintu Mfunzi is excited to be taking part in the Nedbank Runified Breaking Barriers 50km race on March 6 in Gqeberha Picture: WERNER HILLS

eight categories will be recognised.

"So I thought it could be a wonderful thing if I get my name up there.

"On the day, if my body is up to it, I am going to try to push and win in my age group.

"My preparation for the race has been going well so far.

"I am really looking forward to race day."

Race director Nick Bester said he was also excited that the marathon was now ranked by World Athletics as an elite label event, which put it on par with many of the world's biggest city marathons.

"Not only that, but we are the first and only ultra-marathon in the world to achieve this recognition.

"We have had such great interest from some world-class marathon runners outside SA who will add more excitement to the field," he said.

"NB Sport Promotions is proud to say that it has signed a three-year deal together with the Nelson Mandela Bay municipality to keep the event in Gqeberha from 2022 to 2024."

Bester said he was happy that the event had found a stable home for the next three years.

The prize money will also be increased as World Athletics requires certain criteria when it comes to the awarding of prize money for events that hold an elite label.

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