

Nkhasi makes like Bolt, Van Zyl's win's a bit slower

TWENTY-FOUR-YEAR-OLD Lesotho athlete Namakoe Nkhasi was in record-breaking mood in winning the Old Mutual Two Oceans Half Marathon yesterday, shaving 20 seconds off Stephen Mokoka's four-year-old mark.

While the gusting southeaster limited the ambitions of many athletes yesterday in both the half and ultra marathons, Nkhasi seemed unaffected as he breezed to an excellent 1:03:15 victory, 30 seconds clear of compatriot Khoarahlane Seutlaoli. Gun Run champion David Manja finished third in 1:04:19.

Currently one of the fastest middle distance athletes in Southern Africa, Nkhasi crossed himself before breaking the tape, jiving for some seconds and making the sign of a Usain Bolt rocket-launcher, suggesting his three minute per kilometre paced half-marathon was without effort.

No stranger to Cape competition, Nkhasi won the Cape Town Peace 10km last September in a brilliant 28:28, before chalking up another Mother City 10km win at Century City last month in 29:16.

A pack of eight runners started to break up after the climb up Southern Cross Drive, with none able to match Nkhasi's relentless pace over



the last 7km.

Irvette van Zyl (pictured) defended her title in the women's competition, winning in 1:03:53, 40 seconds slower than last year.

She was 34 seconds quicker than her friend, Cape Town's Nolene Conrad, who ran a superb race, overhauling Spar women's 10km winner, Louisa Leballo, in the final 5km.

Van Zyl held a 10-second lead over Leballo and Conrad after 8km and had increased the margin by five seconds after the Southern Cross Drive climb, with 7km remaining, at which point Leballo held a narrow gap over Conrad.

Van Zyl opened up a clear margin on the descent past Kirstenbosch to secure victory. – Stephen Granger

