

# Nyahora wins SPAR Challenge

## Koos Venter

Zimbabwe's Rutendo Nyahora managed to defend her title successfully as champion of the Pretoria SPAR Women's Challenge when she won the 10km race in Centurion on Saturday.

The 27-year-old Nyahora, who finished the race in 35 minutes and 26 seconds, managed to beat one of her biggest rivals, Lebo Phalula, who finished a few seconds behind her in 35 minutes and 40 seconds.

Nyahora's time was a bit slower than her winning time last year (34:54), but it must be said this year's race was done in very hot conditions. They say Pretoria does not have spring or autumn.

This was proven again at the race in Centurion. It was supposed to be a nice spring day, but the sun started stinging early morning already.

When the race started, it was already very hot and some of the athletes struggled.

The medics on duty had their hands full to assist some of the athletes who needed help due to heat exhaustion.

Lebo Phalula finished second in a time of 35:40, which is also a bit slower than her time last year when she ended in the same position. Her sister, Lebogang, who was one of the favourites to win the race in the absence of Irvette van Zyl, could not achieve a top three position.

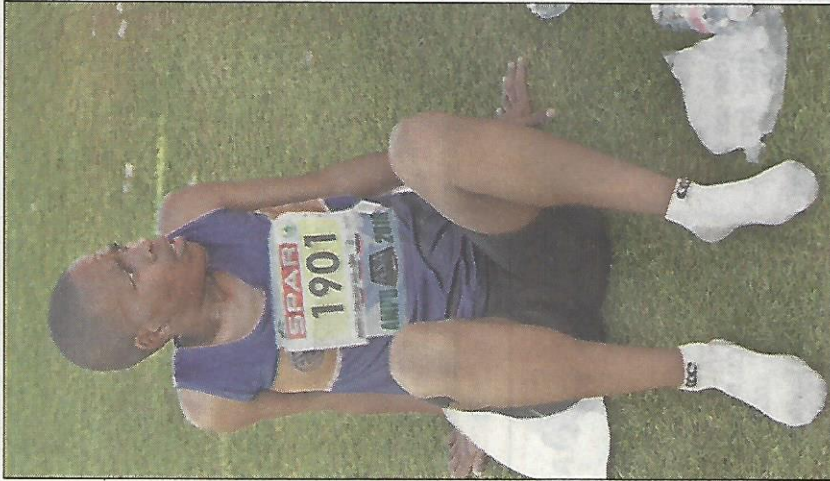
In third position was Glenrose Xaba from the Eskom Athletics Club in a time of 36 minutes and 13 seconds.

Van Zyl, the frontrunner in the SPAR Grand Prix series, unfortunately had to withdraw from the race in her hometown.

She was still struggling with the foot injury that kept her out of the marathon at the Olympic Games.

The real stars of the day were the rest of the women who completed the race with smiles and fun along the way showing their support for this year's race theme, #IamGrateful.

"Our goal is always to get our race



Glenrose Xaba from the Eskom Athletics Club (third) needed medical treatment for heat exhaustion shortly after she crossed the finish line.



The winner, Rutendo Nyahora (right), in a lighter mood shortly after the race with one of her biggest rivals, Lebo Phalula in second place.

the SPAR Grand Prix series and nearly 25 000 Pretorians braved the heat and took to the streets of Centurion, which was turned into a sea of green shirts.

There were once again the fat ones, the thin ones, the old ones, the young ones and quite a few babies in strollers.

Then there were again hundreds of men who have done their bit for charity by taking part in the women's race. These men once again braved the trail decked out in wigs, dresses and sometimes high-heels.

Along with showing their gratitude for

everyone who came out in support of the race, SPAR North Rand paid their good fortune forward by making generous donations to each of this year's race beneficiaries StandWithStan, The Chrysalis Foundation, Cupcakes 4 Kids With Cancer, Helpnet, The Zoleka Mandela Foundation, Jacaranda Good Morning Angels, Irene Homes and the Hanna Charity Foundation.

This race has become an undeniable part of Pretoria's spring culture and hopefully all the participants were inspired to continue training for next year's race.