

# Marathon moms in running battles

No easy ride on the road to the Rio Olympic Games

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**SLEEP** is a rare commodity for athletic mothers fighting to get to the 2016 Rio Olympics.

Ivette van Zyl, surviving on six hours of sleep a night, is looking for a creche to place her newborn son so she can grab some shut-eye during the day. Mother of three Jenna Chal-lenor is in bed between 8pm and 8:30pm nightly.

And single mom Mappaseka Makhanya switched coaches recently so she could train closer to home and spend more time with her six-year-old daughter.

The trio are eyeing three places in the South African Games women's marathon team. Already, seven SA ladies have achieved the 2hr 45min 00sec qualifying time, which means the race is on to become one of the three fastest by the April 30 qualifying cut-off.

So far, Christine Kalmer tops the list with her 2:33.43 personal

best (PB). Her sister Renee, the quickest of the bunch with a 2:29.27 PB, has yet to get on the board.

"Renee can run the storm out of us," admits Van Zyl, 28, the wife of 400m hurdler L.J.

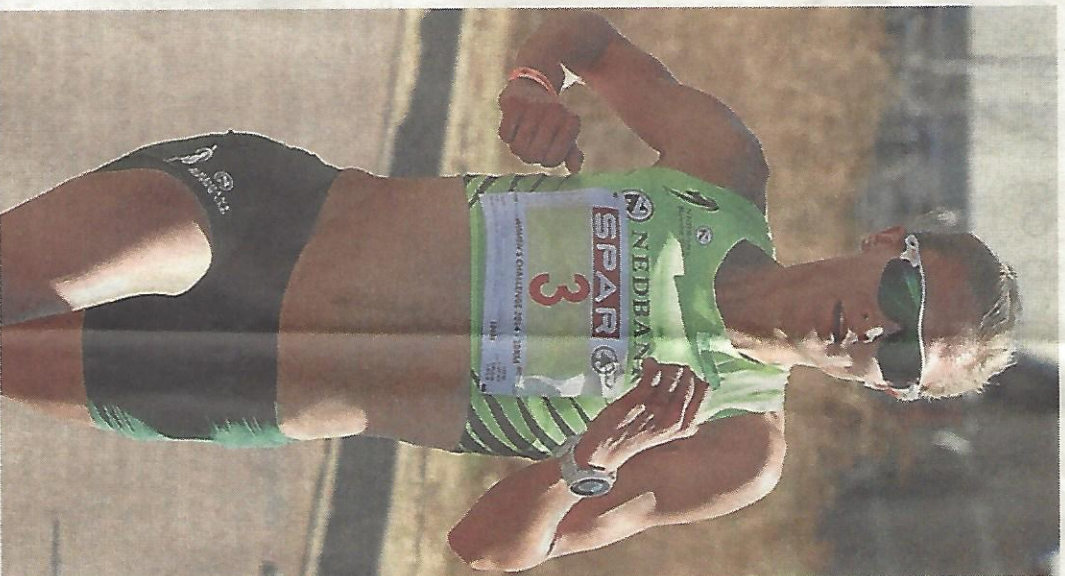
She feels bittersweet about putting Louis, nearly six months old, into a creche. "I just says to run well in London I will need to get some sleep.

"But a part of me hopes Louis doesn't like it. I love schooling him through his development milestones.

"He doesn't want to crawl, he wants to walk. Maybe I ran too much when I was pregnant," smiles Van Zyl, who a week before giving birth ran a 5km race accompanied by her gynaecologist who couldn't keep up after the first 2km.

Her marathon attempt is set for London on April 24, but she has a backup plan to try the 10 000m just in case.

Makhanya says daughter



**BACKUP PLAN:** Ivette van Zyl, yet to get an Olympic marathon qualifying time, is also eyeing the 10 000m

Naledi is forced to spend much time with her at weekend races.

"Once every two weeks, I take her out for a burger and a movie for a treat. It's more fun for her than going to my races.

"She knows I need to win to buy her stuff. She knows I don't get money every month like other people... She knows mummy must go run," says the 30-year-old, who competes in Daegu, South Korea, on April 3.

Challenor, 34, ran shorter distances until her three daughters, now aged 11, nine and



**KOREA MOVE:** Mappaseka Makhanya is second fastest so far, but says her 2:37.21 won't be good enough

three, were old enough.

She won her marathon debut in Mossel Bay in 2014, and has raced only one other 42.2km since. Her best is 2:41.44, but nobody is writing her off.

"Every time I ran a PB I fell pregnant. It's a standing joke with my husband — so each time I get a new PB he runs away and says 'you're not going to fall pregnant again!'"

Challenor, who will be in action at Nagoya, Japan, on March 13, is a late marathon bloomer, like Makhanya.



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Good at middle distance Makhanya was too lazy to far. "In a 4km cross-country race at school they begged finish the race so the team get points."

Van Zyl, by contrast, usually about her age to enter races. "I was 14 but I had to [so they'd let me] run 10km at least they didn't ask for my she laughs.

All three relish motherhood and the challenges it brings. Between training and sprints, Challenor gets no time



**NEWCOMER:** J aiming to surp