

Correctional Services do it for Madiba!

The Department of Correctional Services marked the 22nd year of former President Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela's release from decades of incarceration by staging the remarkable 27 For Freedom Race in Drakenstein on 11 February 2012, the date at which the icon of the South African struggle against apartheid became a free man 22 years ago.

National Commissioner, Tom Moyane, said the significance of the event was its ability to remind all of us the good values that Madiba stood for: honour, grace, humbleness, kindness and, more significantly, the power of forgiveness and nation-building. "Our wish is to develop the 27 For Freedom Race to the calibre of the Comrades Marathon and the Two Oceans. The significance of this race is that it reminds us of what Tata Madiba has taught us – the importance of forgiveness."



National Commissioner, T Moyane flanked by the winner of the 27km men's race, Sityhilo Diko Hout

The defending champion, 24-year-old Sityhilo Diko, made it two in a row when he won the 27km for Freedom Race in rainy conditions in Paarl. The winner of last year's race, the Nedbank Running Club runner, clocked a time of 1:27:23 for the 27 km event. His time was a new course record, improving last year's winning time of 1:29:00. He snatched victory under the nose Wanda Roro of Khayelitsha who led the better part of the race only to surrender the lead in the last six kilometre stretch to the finish line.

Roro, of Itheko, finished third, with Mtandazo Qhena of Nedbank Running Club taking second place. Diko said the race was part of his training programme for the Two Oceans Marathon. He said: "It's a great honour to win this race as it is named and held in honour of Nelson Mandela. I wasn't worried when I was trailing behind Wanda because I knew from experience that I would eventually overtake him."

Diko was overjoyed to have bettered his last year's record. "It was a good race for me," he said. Qhena said he does not enjoy running in the rain. "This was not a good race for me." Roro said he had been expecting a good time. "I expected to win. But I got bogged down in the sandy part of the race. That's when Diko overtook me but I'm not disappointed at all."

The first woman home was Bulelwa Simaye of Nedbank. She won in 1:55:14. She was closely followed over the finishing line by Darrette Smit in 1:55:39 and Jaquiline Haasbroek in 1:57:03.

Cape Town Routes Unlimited CEO Calvyn Gilfellan walked 5km with 30 HIV/AIDS orphans from the Emasithandane shelter. "It was just wonderful for them to be out in the open. They may not realise the significance of today's event but one day they will. I was happy to be here with them. Their participation was in the true spirit of Nelson Mandela," he said.

The national commissioner of Correctional Services Tom Moyane also walked with the children.