

CUT ALUMNI HALF MARATHON

NEWSLETTER SPECIAL EDITION



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Foreword



Dear CUT Alum

It is with immense pride that we present this special edition of the CUT Alumni Newsletter - an edition that captures not only the highlights of the 2025 CUT Alumni Half Marathon but also the spirit of unity and shared purpose that continues to define our university family.

Over the years, CUT has grown into more than an institution of learning – it has become a home for ambition, collaboration and lifelong connection. Events like the CUT Alumni Half Marathon remind us of the extraordinary things that happen when our community comes together across generations, across disciplines and across life journeys. What unfolded on 25 October 2025 was a testament to this enduring bond: alumni returning with pride, students stepping forward with enthusiasm, and the broader community embracing the celebration with open hearts.

This edition reflects that collective spirit. Beyond the achievements on the road, we celebrate the stories, relationships and moments that continue to strengthen our alumni network. Each stride taken on race day echoed a deeper truth - that the legacy of CUT lives on through active participation, shared experiences and the commitment of alumni who remain connected long after their graduation day.

As you explore the pages ahead, may you feel inspired by the determination and joy that shaped this memorable event. And may it serve as a reminder that your engagement - whether through participation, mentorship, collaboration or support - continues to shape the future of CUT in powerful ways.

Thank you for being part of our story and for helping us carry forward a legacy built on excellence, community and unwavering Blue Pride.

Warm regards

Qondakele Sompondo
Director: Institutional Advancement

Editorial note



Dear Alum

Welcome to this special edition of our CUT Alumni Newsletter – an edition filled with pride, spirit and the unforgettable energy of the CUT Alumni Half Marathon held on Saturday, 25 October 2025. The marathon was more than an athletic event, it was a celebration and a powerful reminder of who we are, and what it means to be part of the CUT family.

The day was alive with energy as alumni, students, staff, friends of CUT and the broader community gathered to run, cheer, reconnect and reflect. Whether tackling 5km, 10km or 21km, every participant carried the spirit of determination that depicts our institution and the powerful sense of belonging that defines our community.

In this issue, we cover highlights from the race, including the standout performances of our male and female category winners in 10 km and 21 km races who set the pace for an inspiring day. We also share the voices of alumni whose stories of motivation, growth and perspective on why such events matter long after graduation.

What truly made the day memorable, was not only the achievement, but the atmosphere – filled with encouragement, laughter and moments where strangers became teammates and alumni became family once more. The half marathon offered a space where personal goals met collective pride, and where the spirit of CUT was visible in every high-five, every shared challenge, and every finish-line smile.

As you read this edition, we hope you feel that energy and that you are reminded that your journey with CUT did not end with your qualification – it continues in the relationships you nurture, the milestones you celebrate, and the ways you choose to stay engaged with your alma mater.

May this special edition inspire you to reconnect, participate, contribute and be part of the evolving story of CUT. Your presence matter. Your involvement shapes the future. And together, we continue to build a legacy that future generations will be proud of.

Warm regards

Jacqueline Pietersen
Deputy Director: Alumni Affairs

CUT Alumni Half Marathon unites community for wellness and purpose



On Saturday, 25 October 2025, the early morning air in Bloemfontein buzzed with anticipation as the first rays of sunlight spilled across the CUT Rugby Stadium (Tokkie Park). Hundreds of eager runners laced up their shoes, their breath visible in the crisp Bloemfontein dawn. Then the whistle blew and they were off. The pounding of feet, the cheers from the sidelines, and the bright burst of colour from the runners' gear transformed Tokkie Park into a festival of movement, unity, and purpose.

What began as a small fun run on the coldest day in South Africa in 2024 has evolved into a tradition of celebration of wellness, community, and giving back. Hosted by CUT Alumni Affairs, this year's event brought together students, alumni, staff, the greater Free State community and participants from other provinces, for one powerful cause - to support the Student Nutrition Programme, ensuring no student learns on an empty stomach, and to champion a culture of health and belonging that defines the university's spirit.

The event featured three categories - the 21.1 km half marathon kicking off at 06:00, the 10 km race at 06:15, and the 5 km fun run shortly after. From seasoned athletes to first-time runners, every participant shared a common goal - to finish strong and make a difference.

Across every route, determination met inspiration. The open categories for both men and women saw runners pushing their limits, cheered on by friends, family, and volunteers lining the streets. Winners were recognised not only in the open races but also in age divisions; Junior (under 20), Veteran (40-49), Masters (50-59), and

Grandmasters (60+), highlighting the diverse talent and enduring spirit within the CUT community.

In the 21.1 km half marathon, three-time South African Paralympian Louzanne Coetzee blazed across the finish line to claim first place in the female category, her victory met with thunderous applause and admiration. In the male division, Teboho Noosi triumphed with a commanding performance that inspired fellow runners and spectators alike. The 10 km race concluded with impressive performances from the category winners. Miss Likeleli Majara claimed victory in the female category, demonstrating strength and consistency throughout the race. In the male category, Mr Thabang Mathosa emerged as the winner, delivering a determined and disciplined run to secure first place. Their achievements stood out as highlights of the 10 km event.

Adding a touch of luxury and care, the CUT Spa offered free post-race massages to weary but smiling runners - a crowd favourite that perfectly complemented the event's wellness theme. Safety was paramount throughout the morning, with ER24 medical teams stationed along the routes, ensuring every participant could run with peace of mind.

Behind the scenes, volunteers played an unsung yet vital role - manning water stations, cheering runners on, and keeping spirits high. Their enthusiasm, paired with the support of generous sponsors, gave the marathon its heart and momentum. Standard Bank, NTT Suzuki, Red Bull, aQuellé, Virgin Active and 4D Health all contributed to making the event an unforgettable success.

Deputy Director of Alumni Affairs and the event's Race Director, Jacqueline Pietersen, shared her pride and gratitude: "Every stride on that route told a story of determination, unity, and purpose. Seeing our alumni, students, and community members run side by side for wellness and compassion reminds us of what CUT stands for. It was deeply humbling to see that our first half marathon wasn't just a race; it was a celebration of hope, health, community, and humanity. And this is only the beginning... next year, we're going even bigger!" Mr Setumo Llale, Executive Director: Resources and Operations, also said a few words at the end of the race. "On behalf of the Vice-Chancellor and the council of CUT,

we just want to say thank you very much. We appreciate your time and we are looking forward to seeing you again next year".

As the sun climbed higher and medals glistened in its light, laughter and accomplishment filled the stadium. The 2025 CUT Alumni Half Marathon was more than an athletic event - it was a living, breathing portrait of community, resilience, and care. With every passing year, this tradition will grow stronger, the routes longer, and the purpose deeper, ensuring that the CUT Alumni Half Marathon remains not just a race, but a movement of wellness, togetherness, and pride.



Mr Setumo Llale, Executive Director: Resources and Operations



Mr Sompondo Qondakele, Director: Institutional Advancement Office of The Vice-Chancellor and Principal





Louzanne Coetzee: Breaking barriers one stride at a time

South African Paralympian Louzanne Coetzee claimed victory in the women's 21 km race at the CUT Alumni Half Marathon, delivering a performance that highlighted determination, resilience, and the importance of inclusion in sport. Reflecting on the race, Coetzee described it as challenging, yet rewarding.

One of the toughest sections was the climb up Universitas Ridge, which demanded mental focus and careful pacing. "The climb was definitely challenging, but I knew that once we got through it, we would be able to run the second half faster," she said. Throughout the race, she relied heavily on her guide runner, Jaco Ebertsohn, and training partner, Stefan Trytsman, who helped her maintain rhythm and confidence.

The event held special meaning for Coetzee because it was hosted by a higher education institution. "I really appreciate how welcoming the CUT community was," she said. "The race was well organised, and the organisers' support made a big difference." As someone who also works in a university environment, she values initiatives that bring together sport, education and community engagement.

After a particularly difficult race in Berlin the previous year, crossing the finish line as the winner was an emotional moment. "After Berlin, I had doubts," she admitted. "Winning this race showed me I am still okay and can still compete." The victory reaffirmed her confidence and reminded her why she continues to push herself in the sport.

As a Paralympian, Coetzee stresses the importance of visibility and participation in mainstream events. "Racing alongside able-bodied athletes helps change perceptions," she explained. "It shows that disability does not limit what you can achieve." She believes events such as the CUT Alumni Half Marathon play a vital role in growing para sport and inspiring future athletes.

Coetzee credits her continued success to discipline, consistency and a strong support system. "You have to keep showing up, even after disappointment," she said. "Resilience is not just about sport; it is about life." Going forward she encourages athletes of all abilities to take part in future editions of the race. With its inclusive spirit and strong community focus, the CUT Alumni Half Marathon remains a platform that celebrates talent, perseverance and excellence beyond the finish line.



Winning on home ground: Likeleli Majara's 10 km victory



Running through familiar streets gave Likeleli Majara, the women's 10 km winner at the CUT Alumni half-marathon, a sense of special meaning. Though she is based in Welkom, she considers Bloemfontein her home and enjoys running in spaces where her presence can inspire and motivate the community.

She described the race as enjoyable yet challenging, especially in the first half of the route. "The first part was difficult because we were running uphill," she explained. "But the second half was downhill, which let us recover and push harder." This balance between difficulty and relief made the route ideal for competitive athletes.

The real test came around the eight-kilometre mark, when fatigue began to set in. At that point, Likeleli had to rely on mental strength. "I told myself I was not far from the finish line, so I had to push until the end," she said. Her determination paid off.

At the turning point of the race, where runners could see those behind them, she realised she was in a strong position. The gap between her and the second runner confirmed what she had hoped for. "That was when I knew I might win the race," she said, adding that winning remains a personal motivator in her athletic journey.

Beyond the competition, Likeleli praised the event's organisation. She highlighted the availability of support throughout the race and described it as well-organised and easy to navigate. "You could get help whenever you needed it," she said. "I really enjoyed the race, and I am looking forward to running it again."

She also reflected on the broader significance of the race within the community. For her, the event showed that the CUT values more than just academics. "This race shows that the CUT cares about the community, not only about education but also about talent," she said. She believes the event conveys an important message that education and talent should be developed hand in hand.

Likeleli encourages fellow athletes, especially women, to take a more active role in athletics. She notes that women's races often have fewer competitors, making growth in the sport even more important. Her advice to aspiring runners is simple: work hard, train consistently, and remain disciplined.

Her performance and words reflect not only sporting excellence but also the impact of institutions such as the CUT in creating platforms that celebrate talent, community and opportunity beyond the classroom.

Distance runner Teboho Noosi takes 21km honours



Distance runner Teboho Noosi secured victory in the 21km men's category, describing the achievement as an important milestone in his ongoing preparation for bigger competitions, including the Soweto Marathon. Reflecting on the win, he said, "I felt very proud, especially since I was already on a journey preparing for the Soweto race. This became a great honour for me, to actually end up being the winner."

Noosi explained that he chose the race as part of his training strategy to assess his fitness and pacing ahead of future events. Structured preparation was key to his performance. "We start by building mileage, then pace work and then speed work. All three must be balanced so your body and muscles develop properly without weaknesses. That helps you perform well whether it's a 21km race or a full marathon," he explained.

As an athlete from outside South Africa, he also commended the organisation of the event and the support on race day. "We were warmly welcomed, properly guided, and everything was well organised. We ran freely without any disturbances, and we really had no complaints."

The race itself was competitive, particularly among the leading runners, but Noosi remained composed. "There was nothing particularly difficult except the competitors we were running with. When you race, some people will challenge you, but it mainly requires patience. Because I remained patient, I ended up winning," he reflected.

Encouraging broader participation in sport, Noosi emphasised that athletics offers more than recreation. "I believe athletics is not just recreation; it's work, it's a career." He encouraged parents to support children in sport, noting that participation can help keep young people away from negative influences.

He also highlighted growing opportunities for older runners, pointing out that categories such as veterans, masters and grandmasters allow people to remain active and healthy through sport. "Truly, sport is work and it is life," he said.

Noosi's 21km win enhances his confidence as he keeps training for upcoming races and works towards his long-term distance running goals.



Proudly in blue: Magdaleen Kemp gives back on the road



Wearing her Central University of Technology (CUT) blue with pride, alumna Magdaleen Kemp lined up at the start of the half marathon with more than a race in mind. For her, the run was not only about maintaining momentum after full-marathon training but also about showing up for a local event that reflects the community spirit she values deeply. "I really value community races and being able to show up, run and support something close to home, which made it an easy decision," Kemp said.

Running in her alma mater's colours also brought a sense of pride and nostalgia. "It felt really special. There was a sense of pride and even a bit of that old-school nostalgia," she reflected. "Seeing how successful the race was made it even better, and running out in blue was something I truly enjoyed."

Despite being a recreational runner, Kemp's preparation for the race followed a structured routine. "During the week, I usually do two focused runs: Tuesday is for sprint or speed work, and Thursday is a faster-paced training run. Saturdays are reserved for a long, slow run, and on Sunday afternoons I'll often add a shorter, quicker run to round off the week," she explained. This consistency, she said, helps her stay motivated while balancing her personal and professional life.

The race was very well organised, and Kemp praised the careful planning. "The road markings were clear and correctly placed; the water stations were conveniently located and supplied cold water, which was very helpful; and the marshals were numerous and encouraging throughout the course," she said. "The full-size chocolate definitely made my day, and the excellent goody bags were a great surprise. Overall, it was an outstanding event, smoothly managed."

As a Free State pacesetter, Kemp embraced the responsibility of guiding fellow runners. "The hardest part is always having to leave runners behind. When you know someone is strong enough and capable, but in that moment they're simply exhausted, you can't pull them out of that space," she said. "On a hot day like this, the conditions can break even the strongest athletes, making those moments even harder."

But the human connection was what made the experience truly rewarding. "There's nothing quite like a sweaty hug and a big smile at the finish line when someone says, 'Thank you, I didn't believe I could do that. If it wasn't for you, I would have given up,'" Kemp remembered. "Moments like that stay with you and remind you why pacing matters so much."

Crossing the finish line brought a mix of accomplishment and joy. "Crossing the finish line was such a happy moment, especially sharing it with two lady friends who ran alongside me," she said. "They had endured a tough race, and finishing together on time made it even more special. It was a true celebration of perseverance and camaraderie."

For Kemp, events like this strengthen alumni ties. "Events like this are a wonderful way for alumni to come together, celebrate our successes, and, of course, support and celebrate the achievements of current students," she said. Running also offers personal and professional benefits. "Personally, running is my 'me time', a space to focus and recharge. Being a pace setter adds another layer. Knowing that I've encouraged someone or helped them believe in themselves, even in a small way, makes my day feel successful," she shared.

Looking ahead, Kemp has ambitious personal goals. "I'm currently 37, approaching my target of 40 marathons at 40 years old, and in April I'm excited to run my 41st at Two Oceans, 41 marathons at 41 years old," she said. Her story is a testament to perseverance, community and the spirit of giving back, both on the road and in life.

Back where it all began: Wynand Smit's reflections while running forward



From left: Mr Wynand Smit from The Running Edge Club, and Mr Johann Klaassens from the Correctional Services Athletic Club

Standing among students, alumni and professionals at the start line, Mr Smit was not only preparing for a 21km race but also returning to the place where his professional journey began. The Central University of Technology, Free State (CUT) alumnus and civil engineer approached the half-marathon as both a personal endurance challenge and a meaningful homecoming.

"Running was not always part of my lifestyle," he explains, but his passion for physical challenges led him to the 21km distance. "The 21km distance is long enough to test endurance while still allowing strong performance," he says. For him, participating as a CUT alumnus added another layer of significance. "The CUT played a major role in shaping my professional foundation. Being back in that environment reminded me where the journey began," he reflects.

Mr Smit completed his B.Tech. in Civil Engineering at the CUT, an experience he credits with shaping his professional outlook. Reflecting on his studies, he says, "My time at the CUT instilled discipline, analytical thinking and resilience. Engineering studies are demanding, and they taught me to approach complex problems methodically." He adds that the perseverance cultivated during his studies continues to guide his long-distance running and his management of complex projects at BVi Consulting Engineers.

Balancing a demanding professional schedule with training requires careful planning. "I treat training sessions like scheduled meetings; they are non-negotiable appointments," he says. Early-morning runs and structured

weekend sessions help him stay consistent without compromising work commitments, underscoring the importance of discipline and time management.

The race tested both physical endurance and mental resilience, particularly in the closing stages. "The final 5km is always the real test. Physically, you start to feel fatigue, but mentally you need to stay focused. Managing pace and energy distribution becomes critical at that stage," he explained. He noted that how runners handle those final kilometres often determines how strongly they finish.

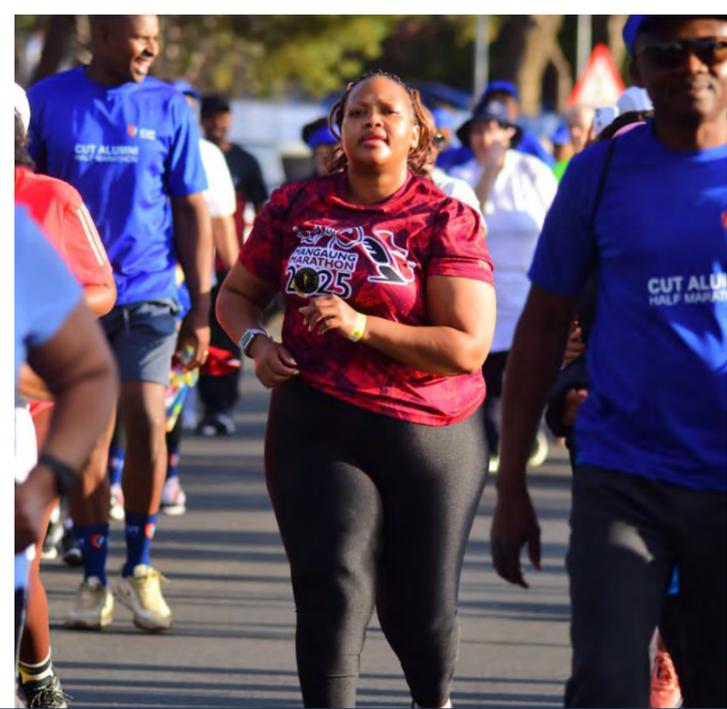
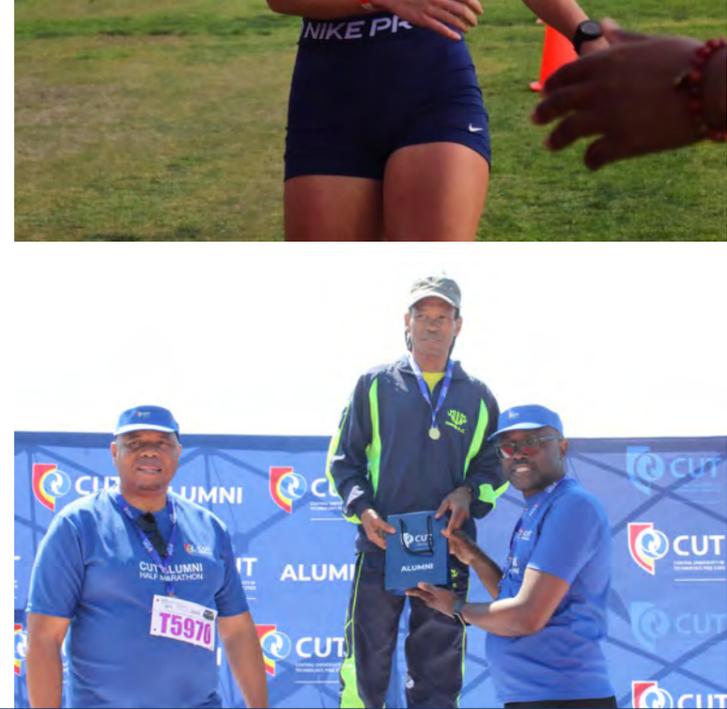
Preparation for the event included a structured programme of tempo runs, hill sessions, endurance training, and strength work. Equally important was mental preparation. "I visualise difficult sections of the race beforehand," he explains, adding that breaking the distance into smaller segments makes the challenge more manageable.

His engineering background also shapes his training. "Engineering is about systems, planning and optimisation," he says, adding that he applies these principles by analysing pace data, tracking performance metrics and monitoring recovery. This structured, data-driven approach helps him balance career demands with personal well-being.

Beyond the physical challenge, what stood out most to him this year was the race atmosphere. He highlights the sense of community among students, alumni and professionals running together, as well as the strong organisation and support along the route. He believes events such as the CUT Alumni Half Marathon are valuable because shared experiences create strong bonds and foster meaningful connections across the university community.

For current students preparing for demanding careers, his advice is straightforward: "Prioritise your health early." Staying active, he says, improves focus, resilience and stress management, all of which are essential to professional success and personal well-being.

Moving forward, Mr Smit remains committed to improving his endurance, with goals of stronger marathon performances and consistent sub-two-hour half-marathons. Continuous self-improvement keeps him motivated, as does the sense of accomplishment from finishing each race. Reflecting on his return to a CUT-related event as a professional, he describes the experience as deeply rewarding.



The long run: Nkosinathi Singonzo on work, wellness and consistency



Balancing a demanding role in the Free State Department of Health with regular marathon training requires careful planning, yet for Nkosinathi Singonzo, the routine has become second nature. His participation in the Central University of Technology, Free State (CUT) Alumni Half Marathon reflects his commitment to wellness and his ongoing connection with the institution. "I was inspired by my passion for running and my commitment to promoting health and well-being. Since I started in 2016, running has become part of my lifestyle, and taking part in races motivates me to stay active and disciplined," he explains.

Participating in the race as a CUT alumnus held personal significance. "It felt deeply rewarding and meaningful because CUT significantly contributed to my academic and personal growth. Representing the university as an alumnus was a proud moment for me." He views events such as the alumni half-marathon as important for strengthening alumni relationships and fostering a greater sense of pride and community within the institution. Singonzo's professional journey reflects steady growth since completing his Advanced Diploma in Human Resource Management at the CUT. "I progressed from a Senior Administration Clerk in Monitoring and Evaluation to my current role as a Software and Systems Training Coordinator, focusing on training, systems support and skills development," he says.

Balancing professional responsibilities with marathon preparation requires discipline and careful time management. "I balance both by following a structured routine. I plan my training around my work schedule and manage my time carefully, ensuring neither my work nor my training is compromised," he explains. His motivation to continue running stems from both personal well-being and the impact on the community. "My motivation comes from personal growth, the desire to stay healthy, and the opportunity to inspire others. Being part of All Athletes United, an athletics non-profit organisation, also keeps me motivated and accountable."

Preparing for races requires both physical and mental readiness. Singonzo says, "I prepared through consistent training, gradual mileage increases and by maintaining a positive mindset. Mentally, I focused on discipline, resilience and enjoying the process rather than just the outcome." Despite this preparation, he acknowledges that endurance races always present challenges. He adds, "The most challenging moments were managing fatigue in the later stages of the race, but experience from previous races helped me stay focused and push through."

"Running," he adds, "plays a significant role in maintaining overall well-being. It helps me manage stress, stay physically fit and maintain mental clarity. It also helps me achieve a healthy balance between work and personal life." The discipline gained through endurance sport carries over into his professional environment. He says, "Endurance running has taught me discipline, patience, goal-setting and perseverance, qualities that are directly applicable to my professional responsibilities."

Reflecting on the event, Singonzo highlights the positive atmosphere. "The positive energy, good organisation and support from fellow runners and spectators stood out most and made the experience enjoyable," he notes. Looking ahead, he intends to remain active in the running community. "I aim to continue competing in major races, improving my performance, and contributing as a pacesetter at key events." He also encourages students and young professionals to prioritise physical activity alongside career development. "Plan your time well, stay consistent, and recognise that physical activity enhances productivity, focus and overall performance." Ultimately, Singonzo believes sport plays a broader role in personal development, emphasising that 'sport promotes discipline, health and personal growth'. "Staying active is an investment in both physical well-being and long-term success in life and work."

Pushing through to victory: Thabang Mathosa's 10 km triumph



For Thabang Mathosa, the men's 10 km race at the CUT Alumni Half Marathon was about discipline, patience, and trusting his preparation. Rather than chasing speed from the start, he entered the race with a clear goal, to manage his pace carefully and rely on endurance when it mattered most.

His preparation had gone according to plan, and that gave him confidence on race day. "The plan was to stay with the pace without killing myself, and to save energy to finish the race," Mathosa explained. Competing against strong runners was part of the motivation. He wanted to test himself at a higher level and see how he would perform against experienced athletes.

The race began at a steady pace, but the intensity increased after the turnaround point. "After the five-kilometre mark, the pace kept increasing," he said. By seven kilometres, he realised he had a chance to win. "My competitors started dropping off that's when I saw myself winning".

In the final stretch, mental focus became just as important as physical strength. Mathosa kept pushing by reminding himself how close the finish line was. "I told myself it was only three minutes to go, so I had to push harder and control my breathing," he said. Crossing the finish line first brought mixed emotions. "I was happy and overwhelmed, but also very tired and in pain," he said, reflecting on the physical demands of the race.

Mathosa praised the organisation of the event, highlighting the water points and support along the route. He said the encouragement from spectators added to the experience and helped carry him through the difficult moments.

Beyond the race itself, he believes events like the CUT Alumni Half Marathon play an important role in connecting the university with the surrounding community. In his view, the event helps promote public health while strengthening engagement between the campus and local residents.

Looking back, Mathosa described the level of competition as strong, noting that runners stayed together until late in the race. The win confirmed that his fitness is at a good level, but he remains focused on maintaining consistency in his training. For those starting out in running, his message is practical and honest. Success, he believes, comes from patience, consistency and learning to enjoy the journey rather than focusing only on speed.





Alumni One-Stop Service

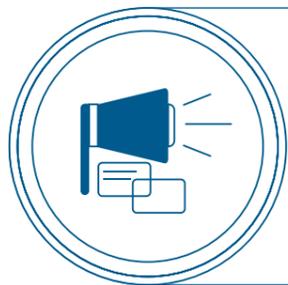
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