



Weather Update: Cold front promises much-needed rain in Western Cape

A cold front is due to make landfall in the Western Cape on Tuesday bringing rain, while high fire danger conditions and

LAST UPDATED: 2017-10-03, 07:43

Johannesburg Tuesday **13-23°C**
 Showers early. Morning clouds. Mild.
3 DAY FORECAST

Brought to you by: **weather24**

Enabling KZN's raw talent

2017-10-02 13:47

Nondumiso Zakwe, The Witness

The Witness

Mention Martin Dreyer and sports fans will regale you with tales of his astonishing endurance feats.

He has, after all, won the Dusi Marathon seven times. And this year the rugged local man won the Freedom Challenge — a 2 300km race by bicycle across South Africa — in a mind-boggling record of 10 days, six hours and 40 minutes.

But sporting success is not Dreyer's overwhelming motivation. Instead the 48-year-old seems to get far more satisfaction from helping a set of young South Africans to overcome their disadvantages.

Born in Barberton, near Swaziland, Dreyer emigrated to the United States in 1992 after completing his BCompt degree at the University of Cape Town to avoid compulsory military service.

"It [defending apartheid] just didn't seem like a worthwhile fight to be a part of. I then moved to Canada and lived there for six years," he recalls.

In 1999, the Capetonian-turned-Midlander returned to South Africa and marked his return to the country with his maiden Dusi win.

Today he dedicates that win to the late veteran canoeist Graeme Pope-Ellis, the 15-time Dusi winner, for taking him under his wing.

"The top paddlers were very secretive with their river knowledge. But Pope showed me the river and shared his knowledge. I didn't expect to win in 1999 but I did, and so I kept doing it for 10 years."

Pope-Ellis was killed in a freak accident on his farm in 2010.

Dreyer says his real life-changing moment came in 2008 after he won his seventh title with young protege Thulani Mbanjwa — the first black person to win the race.

"It was his first win and my seventh. I only had more wins because of my privileged white support structure. I had far more opportunities than him."

But it was seeing the struggles of Mbanjwa's young friends in that race that convinced Dreyer to dedicate his future to helping them. Their performance had been below what he had expected after seeing them train, and he believed this was a consequence of their disadvantaged circumstances.

In 2009, Dreyer started his Change A Life Academy to give support and guidance to previously disadvantaged paddlers from the Valley of a Thousand Hills.

"Computershare sponsored my dream to try and get 10 of Thulani's friends in the top 50. One of the obligations though, was that I don't race the Dusi but focus on the athletes. I didn't realise that my 2008 win would be my last, but it's the best decision I ever made. I then realised that I could not live in Cape Town and run my academy, so I moved to Pietermaritzburg."

He has no regrets about relocating to "homely Pietermaritzburg" with his wife and two children.

"We love Pietermaritzburg. It's a small town but very impactful. I came here by default but I love it and, strangely, people think I'm from here," he said. He says his proudest moment was watching all his "Zulu" athletes come in the top 36 in 2009, with Sbonelo Khwela and Lucas Mthlale in the top 10.



Martin Dreyer with Thomas Ngidi and Eric Zondi after they came third in the 2010 Dusi Canoe Marathon. (File)

Multimedia · User Galleries · News in Pictures
Send us your pictures · Send us your stories

What To Read Next

Las Vegas gunman had 'bump-stock' device that could speed up fire

ANC election: Drama till December, then what?

Uncaring council and locked gates at Richie Road dump blamed for heaps of trash

Related Links

- Twin nurses still cause confusion decades on**
Veteran cop passionate about serving community
- A remarkable journey to success**

MOST READ | NEWS IN YOUR AREA | TOP LIFESTYLE

AS IT HAPPENED: Putin says Vegas shooting is 'shocking in its cruelty'
WATCH: Shots fired during Bedfordview hijacking **WATCH**
 2 children, 2 adults killed in 'gruesome' Cape Town crash
 Zuma tried to give her house away
EXCLUSIVE: Forensic analyst 'poured samples down the drain'

[More..](#)

Watch: Investing in the future through child development
 An investment of R32-million into 11 early childhood development centres is changing the future for children in the Northern Cape.

PARTNER CONTENT

/Sport

This Bok team is comfortable with ball in hand - Coetzee



TRAFFIC ALERTS

Western Cape

TRAFFIC

Cape Town 07:35 AM
Road name: M5 Northbound
 Northbound

Cape Town's housing list is 60 years, meeting told
 Inbound

59 minutes ago
 More traffic reports **traffic24**

Lotto results Saturday,

The academy has since branched out into running and mountain biking. In 2015, one of his prospects, mountain biking star John Ntuli claimed a historic triumph at the first Munga from Bloemfontein to Wellington. KZN-born Ntuli completed the 1 070-km, non-stop event in 69 hours and 10 minutes. "It almost makes me sad to think about what other talent there is in other rural areas.

"I feel privileged and fortunate to be able to add value into their lives."

Read more on: [pietermaritzburg](#) | [pmb people](#)

Join the conversation!

24.com encourages commentary **submitted via MyNews24**. Contributions of 200 words or more will be considered for publication.

We reserve editorial discretion to decide what will be published.
[Read our comments policy](#) for guidelines on contributions.

Other Stories in South Africa...

Waiting period on Cape Town's housing list is 60 years, meeting told

The waiting period on the City of Cape Town's housing list is roughly 60 years, according to Stuart Wilson, director of the Socio-Economic Rights Institute.


Mbalula to visit families of 11 Cape Town murder victims

Police Minister Fikile Mbalula is set to visit Phillipi East to pay his respects to the families of the 11 people who were killed during a shooting at a tavern in the Marikana informal settlement.

University of Fort Hare closes Alice campus after violent protests

The University of Fort Hare has closed its Alice campus until further notice after a student centre was set alight, causing damage worth an estimated R200 000, says a university spokesperson.


September 30 [Login / SignUp](#)




[Click here for the full list of lottery results](#)

JOBS IN CAPE TOWN [\[change area\]](#)


PROPERTY [\[change area\]](#)



APARTMENTS / FLATS FOR SALE IN Cape Town, Sea Point
Apartments / Flats
R 1 290 000



HOUSES FOR SALE IN Cape Town, Plumstead
Houses
R 4 295 000



HOUSES FOR SALE IN Cape Town, Kenilworth Upper
Houses
R 11 900 000



news 24
LUSATU: "LONGER A FORCE"
LISTEN NOW! Page

11 friends like this



INSIDE NEWS 24



Best-loved smartphone
Samsung is SA's best-loved electronic and cellphone brand.



#MalaysianGP
Top 5 moments



5 Vegetarian dishes for every day this week
Be vegetarian from Monday to Friday with these easy and sensationally tasty dinner recipes.



#GapYear: Top destinations
How much will it cost to get to some of the world's top gap year destinations in the world?

SERVICES



RSS feeds
News delivered really simply.



E-mail Newsletters
You choose what you want



News24 on Android
Get the latest from News24 on your Android device.



SMS Alerts
Get breaking news stories via SMS.



[News24Wire](#) · [Search](#) · [Advertise on News24](#) · [Terms & Conditions](#) · [Press Releases](#) · [Jobs at 24.com](#) · [About us](#) · [Contact us](#)
© 2017 24.com. All rights reserved.

NEXT ON NEWS24



Waiting period on Cape Town's housing list is 60 years, meeting told

59 minutes ago