



DON'T MISS Champion Moore sets sights on Eye of Africa title defence

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Four time Non-Stop Dusi Canoe Marathon winner Sbonelo Khwela is not perturbed by the quick turnaround between the recently concluded FNB Dusi Canoe Marathon and next Friday's ultra marathon.

However, despite the Euro Steel/Red Bull flyer and his partner Banetse Nkhoesa (Computershare Change a Life Academy) racing home in a commendable third place at the 2016 FNB Dusi, Khwela has confirmed he is relishing taking on the Non-Stop Dusi alone.

'Two weeks between Dusi and Non-Stop Dusi is a short time but I think it's better like that because then you don't have to train for Non-Stop, you just concentrate on recovering and then use what is leftover in the tank from Dusi!' explained Khwela.

'I first wanted to do the Non-Stop Dusi on my own in 2014 but then I got scared just before the race and that's when Hank McGregor and I teamed up together.

'I then did it in my K1 last year and I really enjoyed it so I'm looking forward to doing it in my K1 again this year!' he added.

While taking on the challenge individually nullifies any support Khwela may have received from his partner had he opted to tackle the challenge in a K2, the Shongweni Valley star also believes it frees him of any added responsibilities to a team mate.

'If you're on your own and you blow then you've got no-one to blame but yourself!

'However, doing Non-Stop alone also means you don't have the responsibility of looking after your partner if they hit the wall, and that's what I like about being in my K1 for such a long race.' Having spent much of the KwaZulu-Natal river marathon season in a K2 as he prepared for the recent FNB Dusi, Khwela will spend a few brief training sessions making the adjustment back to his K1 ahead of Friday's expedition.

'I won't actually train for the Non-Stop Dusi but I'll do a few sessions of Shongweni Dam just to check my K1's setup.

'I'll also do one or two short runs with the boat to get used to running with my K1 again and loosen the legs up.

With a reduced focus on his physical preparations, Khwela will spend much of his time preparing mentally for the energy-sapping challenge. 'Although it is raced on almost the same route as Dusi, Non-Stop is a very different race and you have to be mentally strong for it!

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'When you go past the normal Dusi day one and day two finishes, you think to yourself 'If this was Dusi, then I'd be finished for the day' but it is still a long way to the finish at Blue Lagoon.

You also eat a lot more during Non-Stop and so you need to plan when and what you're going to eat very carefully, while getting your hydration right is very important too. You also have to pace yourself very carefully because it is a very long day!

Having claimed the Non-Stop Dusi title in 2010, 2011, 2013 and 2014 with Thomas Ngidi, Thulani Mbanjwa, Andy Birkett and McGregor respectively, Khwela finds himself lying third on the list of most Non-Stop Dusi wins behind 'Dusi Duke' Martin Dreyer (7) and Mbanjwa (5). While the likes of Birkett and his 2016 FNB Dusi winning partner Lance Kime have confirmed they will not be taking part in this year's Non-Stop Dusi, Khwela still expects a tough challenge as he goes in search of his first individual victory at the event.

'It is still early; some of the guys will still be scared and still trying to recover from Dusi. By the time Non-Stop comes though, I'm sure a lot of the usual guys will do it as always!

'Either way, I'm not too worried about who else will be there; I'm just concentrating on racing in my K1. I will keep coming back for the Non-Stop Dusi, especially until I win the overall title in my K1!' said Khwela definitively.

Picture of Khwela courtesy of Anthony Grote/Gameplan Media

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