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MARCH 3, 2017

SHOCK NON-STOP DUSI WIN FOR YOUNG CHANGE A LIFE CREW



Dusi

The 2017 edition of the Non-Stop Dusi Canoe Marathon, presented by Lovemore Brothers, ended with a dramatic twist to the gruelling 110km tale that saw the underdog pair of Mthobisi Cele and Mpilo Zondi claim a shock victory at Blue Lagoon on Friday.

The Change a Life Academy pair looked to be heading for a minor step on the podium as FNB Dusi star Sbonelo Khwela and the on-form pairing of Banetse Nkhoesa and Nhlanhla Cele fought it out at the front of the race.

First Nkhoesa and Cele, who had dominated for most of the race and lead for a large majority of the contest, blew spectacularly after the tough Burma Road portage, leaving the door ajar for the Under-23 duo of Cele and Zondi ready to take their last-gasp opportunity to strike.

That chance came at Mango Rapid where they were able to get past the leading K2 crew of Nkhoesa and Cele. With adrenalin surging through their veins at that stage they powered on and caught Khwela, who was battling with a leaking kayak, before cruising over the line at Blue Lagoon for a historic win.

The race was going to test the fittest of paddlers with the leaders expected to run over 40km and paddle 70km on their way from Camps Drift to Blue Lagoon, with bitterly low water below Inanda dam and temperatures that nudged 40 degrees Celcius in the valleys.

Pre-race favourite, Euro Steel/Red Bull's Sbonelo Khwela seemed to have timed his charged brilliantly as he managed to close the gap right down just before the Burma Road portage however problems before that hurt him in the run-in to the line.

"The guys caught me at the N2 Bridge because I had a huge crack down the bottom of my boat so I had to get out and keep emptying all the time," Khwela mentioned.

"We all put in at the bottom of Burma Road together and I managed to put about two minutes into the guys but then I felt the water in my boat and after I stopped to empty I noticed the crack.

"When the guys caught me at the N2 Bridge I knew that I couldn't stay with them. I was taking on water and I didn't have any power left in my body to try and keep up the pace."

Having faired reasonably well in the Dusi recently Hungarian flat-water ace Adrian Boros took on the Non-Stop with race organiser Carl Folscher. The pair were in race for a large portion of the first half but began to flail as the pressure increased.

The duo continued to battle on and finished the race in fourth place overall ahead of Sboniso Shozi, second K1 and fifth place overall.



The crew of Mthobisi Cele and Mpilo Zondi took their chances perfectly to storm to a shock win at the 2017 Non-Stop Dusi, presented by Lovemore Brothers on Friday, 3 March.

2017 NON-STOP DUSI PRESENTED BY LOVEMORE BROTHERS

Overall

- 1.Mthobisi Cele/Mpilo Zondi (U23) 8:57.17
- 2.Sbonelo Khwela 9:02.28
- 3.Banetse Nkhoesa/Nhlanhla Cele 9:18.28
- 4.Carl Folscher/Adrian Boros (HUN) 9:31.29
- 5.Sboniso Shozi (U23) 9:38.31

Images: Anthony Grote

www.nonstopdusi.co.za(<http://www.nonstopdusi.co.za>)

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