



BNL BULLETIN

NEWS AND UPDATES FROM THE BASKETBALL NATIONAL LEAGUE



Congratulations to Coach Gcina of the Soweto Panthers on the birth of her beautiful baby girl!

Fueled by Love of Caring & Healing

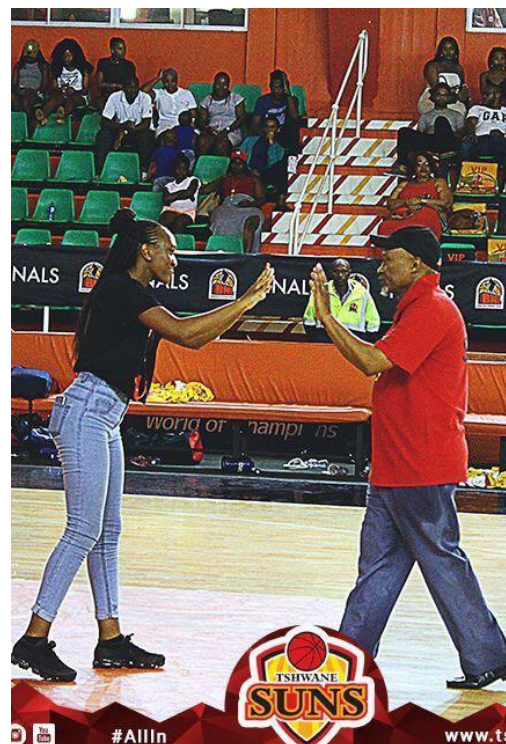
by Thato Meka - Biokineticist of the Tshwane Suns

I am an athlete and an avid lover of anything sports. I began track athletics and excelled at it from as early as grade 1 all through to my Matric year, achieving all that I hoped to in my school years.

The urge to try something different crept up on me in my first year of varsity where my love and appreciation for basketball began. I joined the Wits Basketball team and during my time there as a student, my teammates and I went on to win the USSA National Championship in 2014, a first in all of Wits Basketball history. Thereafter, we made it to the finals stage for the next three years, only winning another championship in 2017, during my first year as team Conditioning coach.

Off the court, I am a Biokineticist and founder of my own practice called "Thato Meka Biokineticists". I am also an ultra-marathoner who has gone on to complete two back-to-back Comrades marathons.

My journey with the Tshwane Suns as the team Physio/Biokineticist began in 2017. This was an exciting opportunity as it allowed me to combine two passions into one. Through it, a platform where my love for caring, healing and teaching the athletes about the human body (while helping them using my professional skills) came to life. It secondly enabled me to become a part of another basketball family. We have won 3 championships since the inception of the league and hope there will be many more to follow!



#AllIn

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Breaking Barriers to Win

by Gcina - Assistant Coach of Soweto Panthers

I got into the BNL through working with Coach Sergei Paly as the University of Cape Town (UCT) Men's First Team student Physio. During that time, I assisted Coach Sergei with more than just the wellness of the players but as his extra eyes and fitness assistant. Having impressed him thoroughly, he recommended me with high praises to the Western Cape Mountaineers management which started my BNL journey in 2017.

Having a great passion for fitness as well as physiotherapy, I filled a huge gap for the Mountaineers. Taking over their fitness training and conditioning work with a team that was labelled as the fittest team in BNL was a great stepping stone.

With greater ambitious for my basketball career, I moved to Johannesburg in 2018, where great things indeed happened. I made my big move by approaching Soweto Panthers who welcomed my knowledge and expertise with open arms. Being the only woman in a male organisation came with its difficulties, instructing a group of men who most of the time were older than me was daunting, but being strong and standing my ground pushed me through the difficult times. Even with the struggles, the ups and downs, Soweto Panthers was now the new fittest team in the league. And with that new title, the Panthers went on to win the 2018 Championship.

With great success comes great responsibility and the 2019 season saw me step up to the plate as I took on the role of Assistant Coach along side my standing role of physio, fitness and conditioning coach.

As women in South Africa, we face a huge challenge of being marginalized even more so in sport. We are often taken for granted and under valued. Knowing that I have been able to break through that barrier has been a highlight, but it is not the end. Growing the game for women and working from the inside to change the mindset of those Who don't see us equally has been an even bigger goal for me.



Blessed to be part of Something Bigger

by Mosima Mojapelo - Biokineticist of the NW Eagles

I am a young lady who is interested in sport and has played provincial Rugby. I am keen on fitness and would love to be a lifelong student in sport, particularly sports fitness, injuries and recovery. As a keen sport person I am also a fan, and one of my passions is basketball. My first encounter with the game of basketball was at the University of Johannesburg. I was captivated by the way the players moved, communicated, ran and the family atmosphere that you could almost feel. The way basketball is truly a team sport as all players defend, all players attack and follow a given system, stole my heart.

I was blessed to meet coach Thuso Moiloa who then introduced me to his players who gave me a detailed background on the beautiful game. One of the players suggested to me that since I was already working as a Biokineticist for the University's second string sides in other disciplines such as netball, rugby, soccer and cricket, that I should request to join the basketball team and contribute my knowledge on sport as I learn more

EXPOSURE in the BNL

I started as a Biokineticist for the North West Eagles during the 2016 season, it was a great exposure indeed. It was the first time in my career to experience and work with a team on TV. The games were tougher than I expected. Working with men was a bit challenging because they fall on the court and as the Biokineticist, I will be thinking that they are injured. I learnt a lot by training with the players, assisting them with warmups and cooling down. I taught them the proper fitness program which needs to be followed by basketball players. I am passionate about the game and willing to continue learning and participating in this beautiful game.

WHAT DID I LEARN?

It was not easy for one to learn the emotions of the players and the coach's frustration during the games of Basketball National League. As I watched the games, I saw that some movements can hurt the players if they don't do proper warm up and stretching. I am the only female within the team, I also manage the team's gear, meals and their transportation at the same time under the management's guidance. Most of the injuries that I was dealing with were more of the knees, ankles and fingers.

Recently, I've been giving all the players exercise for them to improve their performance and fitness level. The BNL league has been tough for the NW Eagles team, and as their Biokineticist, I had to come up with the plan that will keep the players on their toes. Their endurance, strength and flexibility are my priorities. In conclusion, BNL has been the most interesting league that I have been part of and it will always be fun, emotional, and hectic every year because lots of young people are in love with basketball.

Thank you for the opportunity I had with the league in general.

