



BNL Bulletin

WOMEN'S MONTH CELEBRATION WITH YOLISWA LUMKA

My journey in sport and basketball has been an interesting if an unconventional one. I learned to love the game not necessarily on the court, but for what happens off the court and behind-the-scenes. Basketball is a dynamic, multidimensional sport that innervates from the top of the head to the toes, one of very few sport codes that does this. For most of my life and career, I have worked on the other end of the basketball spectrum, science of the sport; that is, trying to figure out what makes what work, how it works and what I can do to make the players in the teams that I work with become better so they can be the best athletes they could be.

I count myself with the lucky few who have had the opportunities to work and participate at the different levels of sport, starting at ground level all the way to international level. I have seen the power of sport. I have seen the inequality in sport, where teams are treated very differently based solely on the gender of their participants. I have also learned a lot from sport, particularly the ladies of the Wheelchair Basketball Women's National Team whom I managed for 8 years.



This was a team made up of very differently abled people, who loved playing basketball. They did whatever it took to be their best regardless of what was available to them. It sometimes meant travelling in public transport (which they sometimes paid for) with their wheelchairs to get to training camps. This was also the team that lost the finals at the 2015 Paralympic Qualifiers in Algeria, to Algeria). My experience with differently abled athletes and teams, Banyana Banyana, Basketball SA National Teams, SA Schools National Teams, Wheelchair Basketball National Teams, SA Olympic and Paralympic Teams has taught me that everybody has the opportunity to be the best, it's up to them on how hard they are willing to work for it.



Sport in general and basketball in particular; has allowed me to see the world, learn from the world and hopefully be able to better our sport systems in South Africa. This experience is becoming very useful In the BNL, having worked with Soweto Panthers for almost 3 years and now the only female administrator with the EC Windbreakers, it is becoming clear that proper and enabling systems must be implemented for the BNL to be stronger and to start becoming a building block for South African

Basketball for the future. As we commemorate women's day and women's month, we must celebrate the women who were the trailblazers and lead the way not only for women but all South Africans. I salute them, Mrs Sophia William De Bruyn who is one of two living of the five leaders of the 1956 Women's March to the union buildings. I salute colleagues and friends in Basketball who have blazed the basketball trail for future generations; the late Lungile Mposula, Brenda Mutungutungu, Sibongile

Maswanganye, Susan De Bruyn, Asnath Makena, Takalani Mfamadi, Emmarentia Ledwaba, Nicki De Villiers, Mpumi Ramatsoga, Thesline Davids, Nqobile Gama and so many others.

I do believe that we have what it takes to move South African basketball forward because there are still so many opportunities out there, we just have to work and collaborate as a collective to get there. Thuli Madonsela said it, "Passion opens doors even when such doors are invisible and look like brick walls."

