

# Ngidi and Zondi make history

RAY DE VRIES

THEY came third in 2008, second in 2009 and yesterday their dream came true when they won the Stihl Non-Stop Dusi Canoe Marathon.

Thomas Ngidi and Eric Zondi made history by being the first all-black crew to win a major canoe marathon world wide.

"It was a dream come true for us," said Ngidi at the finish yesterday.

"We started leading from about an hour into the race and decided that we needed to be at least 10 minutes ahead on the Inanda Dam if we stood a chance to win.

The pair who recently placed third in the Hansa Powerade Dusi heaped praise on Martin Dreyer, who heads up the Change A Life Programme at Nagle Dam.

"He has won the Dusi and the Non-Stop a number of times and he is changing our lives by showing us the secrets" said Ngidi.

Loveday Zondi who origi-

nates from the Valley of a Thousand Hills took the K1 (singles) title after a long battle against a powerful line up.

The event attracted a record entry of 132 boats that took to the water in Camps Drift, Pietermaritzburg at 5.30 am with the aim of making it to Durban before night-fall.

The blazing heat put paid to a number of paddlers' hopes of making it. Twenty-one per cent of the field did not finish the race mainly due to dehydration. The temperature reached 46°C at times with high humidity levels.

The last paddlers home arrived at Blue Lagoon in Durban at 20h00 — an incredible 14 hours after the start in Pietermaritzburg.

Had it not been for good water levels many more paddlers would not have made it.

"We are thrilled with the event this year. It was very tough and we take our hats off to all who finished. Everyone starts this event as an equal and finishes a winner" said Ray de Vries, spokesman for the organisers.

## RESULTS

(KZN paddlers unless stated)  
Overall: 1 Thomas Ngidi (Lembethe CC)/ Eric Sbonelo Zondi (Umzinyathi CC) 8 hours 16 minutes 31 seconds, 2 Craig Turton (Canyon CC)/ Kelvin Trautman (Kingfisher CC) 8:25:47, 3 Kwanda Mhlope/ Richard Cele (Lembethe) 8:37:41, 4 Piers Cruikshanks (Dabulamanzi CC, CG)/ Michael Mbanjwa (Soweto CC, CG) 8:48:51, 5 Loveday Zondi (Soweto) 8:57:46, 6 Lucas Mthalane (Lembethe) 9:01:05, 7 David Chaplin/ David Kidd (Kingfisher) 9:02:28, 8 Scott & Mark Stanton (Scottburgh) 9:04:14, 9 Nhlanhlayakhe Wiseman Cele 9:05:21, 10 Mark Mulder (Kingfisher) 9:06:19, 11 Debbie Germique (Umzinyathi)/ Jeromy Dacey (Crocodile CC, CG) 9:06:27

IT WAS A DREAM COME TRUE FOR US.

Thomas Ngidi



Thomas Ngidi and Eric Zondi after their historic Non-Stop Dusi Canoe Marathon victory yesterday.

PHOTO: SUPPLIER