



### Adventure Sport | Lindy Taverner

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## Cele brothers rattle Dusi cage

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Pietermaritzburg - Brothers Richard and Nhlanhla Cele of the Change A Life Academy sent out a strong warning to the rest of the elite Dusi canoe marathon field when they claimed a shock victory in the tough Campbell's Farm to Dusi Bridge race at the weekend.

The siblings took the line honours ahead of many top Dusi title contenders in the key race, which incorporates most of the tough paddling and portaging sections of the Dusi first stage on water levels exactly the same as that predicted for the big race in a fortnight's time.

"It was a very tough race and we had to work very hard so we are very happy to have won," said Richard Cele. "It is our first win together so we are very proud."

Adding further mystery to the duo's surprise success was the fact that until recently they were not going to tackle the Dusi together and were instead down to race with other members of the academy.

"We only formed this combination when our other partners dropped us, but I'm really enjoying paddling with my brother. We discuss everything and we always talk about exactly what we want to do so it has been really nice," Cele said.

"Neither of us is lazy, so we've been working very hard together and we are feeling very strong at the moment," he said.

The win, however, disguises the fact that Nhlanhla Cele is carrying an ankle injury which might prove decisive in their hopes of a Dusi podium finish.

"We have been paddling and running very well, but we'll just have to see how Nhlanhla's ankle is before the race," said Richard Cele.

"We could only paddle together last week because he couldn't run, but I have still been running hard."

This result, along with their third at the Rietvlei Rumble and a string of solid finishes in the past few weeks, has cemented their status as genuine top five contenders, who could well threaten the podium.

Careful guidance by multiple Dusi winner and Change A Life head coach Martin Dreyer has kept the pair's feet firmly on the ground.

However, the talented Cele brothers are quietly lingering in the wings, ready to pounce on the slightest mistakes the supposed 'big names' may make and could well be this year's surprise package.

"We are hoping to finish in the top 10 at Dusi and if we can beat Kwanda [Mhlope] and Lance Kime then we will be very surprised but very happy," said Richard Cele.

"Our main goal is to finish ahead of Thomas Ngidi and John [Ngcobo] and Lucas [Mthalane] and Mmeli [Cele]," he said.



Richard (front) and Nhlanhla Cele (Photo: Dave Macleod/Gameplan Media)

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