

## 10 paddlers finish strong

**Florida Lake** — While a number of junior and less competitive paddlers are hibernating, there are some Florida Lake Canoe Club (FLCC) junior paddlers training hard for the upcoming marathon races.

These include longer distances and portages. During the most recent school league race held at Homestead Dam in Benoni on Sunday, 5 June, 10 FLCC junior participants finished their race successfully.

This has earned them points on the league log, as well as their schools and their club.

Looking at the results, a number of podium positions were achieved.

Tristan Trican from Arthur Matthews Primary School managed a third place (bronze medal) in his eight kilometre race, which he completed with

seven portages in a time of one hour and six minutes. Heinie Pieterse from Laerskool Florida finished fourth in the same race. These boys were the two youngest participants from FLCC.

Of course there was the outstanding Palesa Mathe from Maragon High School and Karima Hare from St Andrew's College — the only female finishers were both rewarded with medals for the 14 kilometre race — enduring 13 portages.

Other than that, Archie Moncho from Victory House Private School and Melusi Nxumalo from Unified both won gold and silver in the 14 kilometre U/16 boys' race.

Archie proved to be too quick for the others though, finishing a well-deserved 10 minutes ahead of the pack in a time of one hour and 24 minutes.



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SPORTS

## Palesa — the only female paddler to glow

**Florida Lake** — Being one of a few female

paddlers to participate in the school league canoeing race, which was held at Homestead Dam in Benoni recently, Florida Lake Canoe Club's very own Palesa Mathe stood out.

The youngster earned a high number of points for her school, Maragon Private School. She was the winner and only female participant in the U/16 age group.

At these races, various canoe clubs based at lakes and dams throughout Gauteng host monthly races for the junior leagues, from ages eight to 18.

This encourages youths to participate in the extremely exciting and different sport of canoeing.

Most canoe clubs have opportunities where these juniors can be introduced to the sport and learn how to canoe, build up their fitness and stamina, get exercise and even enjoy the fresh

air.

At the same time, points are allocated to the finishers throughout the year, as well as the schools they represent. But it is the points at the clubs they train at that accumulate towards the year-end prize-giving. And, since such a small portion of the population actually participates in the sport of canoeing, it is considered an elite sport.

These juniors stand a chance to represent their province at SA sprint and marathon competitions.

Some will then go on to even enjoy learning river skills, or playing canoe polo.

The main thing necessary in learning how to canoe, is the ability to swim in case of falling out, which can happen quite easily. Once the juniors have mastered their balance, they usually manage to paddle in quite choppy conditions without any difficulty.



Palesa Mathe in her canoe on the Homestead Dam in Benoni. Picture submitted.