

from the CEO'S OFFICE



It seems like only yesterday that we were all glued to our TV sets watching the pinnacle of all sporting events from the XXXth Olympiad in London and what a Games it was for the country and more importantly in the life of the hpc.

In late February 2009 Mr. Gideon Sam announced SASCO's strategy towards London 2012. "SASCO's goal is to select a team capable of winning 12 medals by 2012! Gideon made it clear that SASCO will be demanding potential medal winning performances come Olympic selection time."

"It is proposed that high performance sport will revert back to SASCO while funds will be prioritized for the codes that traditionally have been successful namely; Athletics, Swimming, Boxing, Rowing, Canoeing, Cycling, Judo, Shooting and Weightlifting." He said that this strategy would rely heavily on the sport scientific support and expertise as well as the facilities of the universities around South Africa.

I was one of the invited guests that listened to Gideon's plea for the sports fraternity to take up the challenge and step up in preparation for 2012. I subsequently directed my staff to prioritize the annual hpc sportscience support sponsorships to current and potential Olympians. Twelve Olympians and six young promising athletes covering Swimming, Athletics, Rowing, Canoeing, Judo and Triathlon were presented to me and also to the then high performance manager of TuksSport, Mrs. Xilia Dreyer for consideration. The high performance centre in conjunction with TuksSport

and the Institute for Sports Research then committed our sportscience and sports medical services, sports facilities and coaches to these athletes with the belief that it will significantly enhance their performances.

I wish to congratulate our Olympians whose performances have catapulted them into the limelight and South African History books as they are members of a very small number of Olympic medal winners in South African history.

South Africa first took part in the Olympic Games in St Louis in 1904 and we won our first medal in the London Olympics of 1908 with a gold medal in the 100 meters from Reggie Walker and a silver medal from Charles Hefferon in the Marathon. Swimming only won its first medal in the Amsterdam Olympics in 1928 with the Womens 4 x 100 m freestyle relay team of Rhoda Rennie, Rederica van der Goes, Maria Redford and Kathleen Russell winning a Bronze medal. As most of you know, Rowing first medalled at the 2004 Athens Olympics in the men's coxless pairs.

We are therefore extremely proud of our unique group of Olympians who are all the first Olympians to medal for South Africa in their respective events. Our Gold winning "Oarsome Foursome" of James Thompson, Matthew Brittain, Lawrence Ndlovu and John Beanie Smith, our silver medal winner in the Women's 800m, Caster Semenya and our Bronze medal winner in the Women's K1 500m Canoeing, Bridgitte Hartley, a huge congratulations for your outstanding achievements. You now bring the medal tally for South Africa's

participation in the Olympic Games up to 76 medals, so you are a very select band of sportsmen and women.

To add to these medals we are also proud of the performances of our International athletes/friends who honed and polished their performances here at the hpc in preparation for the Olympics. We were party to 12 medals won by athletes of other countries who used the hpc as one of their training bases for London.

For many years now I have been standing on a very lonesome podium shouting from the hilltops on just what we can do and want to do for South African Sport, but have never been given the recognition or opportunity to do so and I trust that our showing at this years' Olympics will go a long way in hopefully seeing that the hpc at the University of Pretoria receive its rightful place in the sun at last.

One of the mottos for the London 2012 Olympics was "Inspire a Nation" and I can certainly say that our Olympic medal winners certainly did this and it is now up to the powers that be in sport in South Africa to ensure that the performances in London are now built upon and more structured and well funded programmes put in place.

Toby Sutcliffe