



Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games



Namibia Team Brochure

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Statement by the Honourable Minister of Sport, Youth and National Services

• Ms Agnes B. Tjongarero

The greatest sporting spectacle on earth, the 2020 Olympic Games will be held in Tokyo, Japan from 23rd July to 8th August 2021, and Namibia will once again be present among the world's sporting elite. Namibia became a member of the International Olympic Committee in 1991 and participated as an independent nation for the first time at the 1992 Olympic Games in Barcelona, Spain. It will be our 8th Olympic Games we will be competing at with 11 athletes in 5 sporting disciplines: Aquatics, Athletics, Boxing, Cycling and Rowing.

Since the opening of the first modern Olympic Games in 1896, the international sports competition has only been cancelled three times: once during World War I (1916) and twice during World War II (1940, 1944). Until the 2020 Covid-19 outbreak, which postponed the Summer Olympic Games for a year, the Olympics weathered politically charged boycotts and two separate terrorist attacks without being cancelled or postponed during peace time.

The Road to Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games was rocky and bumpy for the athletes and their managements:

Starting with the lessons learnt from the 2016 Olympic Games in Brazil, there was the Zika Virus during the Olympic and Paralympic Games in Rio de Janeiro. Several players in fact chose not to attend the Games due to the Zika Virus. As many pointed out, we should have taken the impact more seriously and developed systems to cope with pandemics effectively.

The Covid-19 pandemic's impact on the athletes' preparation:

A direct impact was made on the athletes and players who have trained for the 2020 Tokyo Olympic and Paralympic Games for a long time.

For some, the announcement of postponement automatically meant retirement and the eternal loss of opportunity. For others, however, the postponement merely indicated a temporal shift of timing and quick adjustment to optimise their peak, so that they can use it as an extended chance to further improve their performance or recover from injuries they might have endured.

The Covid-19 pandemic fundamentally changed the players' cognitive assumptions in that they will no longer take these events and schedules for granted.

Another aspect that was lost is the daily, weekly,



Agnes B. Tjongarero

monthly, and annual routine, affecting the mental and physical status of athletes and players, including their income.

The lockdown regulations halted sports programmes, events and travel restrictions, resulting in the cancellation of qualification events for the athletes and preparation events for those who already qualified.

Diversification of resources to the international and national response to the Covid-19 pandemic, leaving the athletes and players with little or no resources.

The above certainly also impacted Team Namibia to the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games. We are sending 11 athletes to the Games which will include only

one boxer. In the past Namibia was well represented by boxers, while we also had sportsmen and women in wrestling, karate, swimming, shooting, athletics and gymnastics.

Team Namibia 2020 to the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games is a continuation of the Rio 2016 Olympic Games Team, which brought us two gold medals in marathon and boxing at the 2018 Commonwealth Games. We have a mixture of juniors and seniors, which represents raw talent and experience in the team.

On behalf of the President of the Republic of Namibia, His Excellency Dr Hage G. Geingob, myself, Minister of Sport, Youth and National Service and my entire staff component may I make use of this opportunity to thank the Namibia National Olympic Committee, its Leadership, Executive Board and Office Staff for their hard work over the past five years in getting the Team Namibia constituted and ready for the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games. The Athletes, families, management, coaches and sponsors for their dedication, continued commitment and hard work. To the National Federation Leadership, thank you for your guidance and collaboration with minimum and at times no substantial resourcing.

Let us continue under the theme of the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games motto: "United by Emotion". The motto emphasises the power of sport to bring together people from diverse backgrounds of every kind and allow them to connect and work together for a common good through sport beyond their differences.

As Namibians, citizens of the Land of the Brave, We are 1 000% with and behind Team Namibia - 2021 is the year in which we will bring home the elusive Olympic gold medal(s).

Statement by the President of the Namibia National Olympic Committee

• Sir Abner Axel Xoagub

The 2020 Summer Olympics, officially the Games of the XXXII Olympiad and also known as Tokyo 2020, is scheduled to be held from 23 July to 8 August 2021 in Tokyo, Japan.

Originally scheduled to take place from 24 July to 9 August 2020, the event was postponed in March 2020 as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic and will be held largely behind closed doors with no spectators permitted under the state of emergency. Despite being rescheduled for 2021, the event retains the Tokyo 2020 name for marketing and branding purposes.

The Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games' core principles are: Excellence, Respect and Friendship:

Excellence: Excellence means doing the best we can, on the field of play or in our professional life. The important thing is not winning, but taking part, making progress and enjoying the healthy combination of body, will and mind.

Respect: This includes respect for yourself and your body, for other people, for rules and regulations, for sport and for the environment.

Friendship: Friendship is at the heart of the Olympic Movement. It encourages us to see sport as an instrument for mutual understanding between individuals, and between people all over the world.

Sport gives people the opportunity to experience a variety of emotions and passions, and the Tokyo 2020 Games will allow people to witness the courage and competitive spirit of the athletes and to voice their support. Crowds of spectators who do not know each other prior to the Games will come together and learn that there is more that unites them than divides them. This is precisely the power of sport – its ability to connect



Sir Abner Axel Xoagub

people through their emotions. And it is what Tokyo 2020 intends to depict with the motto “United by Emotion”.

The moment when the world turns to Tokyo to share the excitement of the Games will soon be upon us. Tokyo 2020 will use this motto throughout the build-up to the Games to illuminate the city of Tokyo and its Games venues.

The Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games will be the last Games for some of Team Namibia's members and the first for some others. As the Olympic Committee we all gave our best, with some members having started their journeys long ago in the Olympic Games arena, while others are only starting now.

We have shared your pains, victories, happiness, frustrations and joy. Your dreams have become our dreams, and now is the time to realise those dreams at the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games!

To the Namibian Government, thanks for the peace and stability we enjoy; to the Ministry of Sport, Youth and National Services thanks for the legal and policy guidance, to our stakeholders and private sector, thanks for your bottomless pockets and willing hearts; to the executive board members, thanks for your volunteerism, dedication and willingness to serve the Namibian athletes; to the media, thanks, you are our sunrise and sunset; and finally to our athletes, thank you for trusting and believing in the Olympic Movement.

The goal of the Olympic Movement is to contribute to building a peaceful and better world by educating the youth through sport practiced without discrimination of any kind and in the Olympic spirit, which requires mutual understanding with a spirit of friendship, solidarity and fair play.

Good luck with the Games and let the best men and women win the gold.

Statement by the Chef de Mission of Team Namibia

• Dawie Augustyn

Tokyo 2020 will be remembered as an Olympic Games like no other.

I believe Namibians are the most resilient people in the world and it is clearly evidenced by the way the 'Olympic Family' has come together in the preparation for these Games.

The athletes were unbelievable in qualifying and preparing under very difficult conditions. The National Federations and the Namibia Olympic



Dawie Augustyn

Committee staff collaborated exceptionally well.


The multitude of regulations and rules has made the planning and preparation extremely trying. That said, our focus should now be on the Games.

I truly believe that our team is made up of exceptional people and they will make Namibia proud.

With the support of the Nation, our athletes will excel.

It is my wish that Namibia will remember Tokyo 2020 for the excellence of her representatives.

National Anthem of Namibia

A light grey silhouette map of Namibia serves as a background for the text of the national anthem.

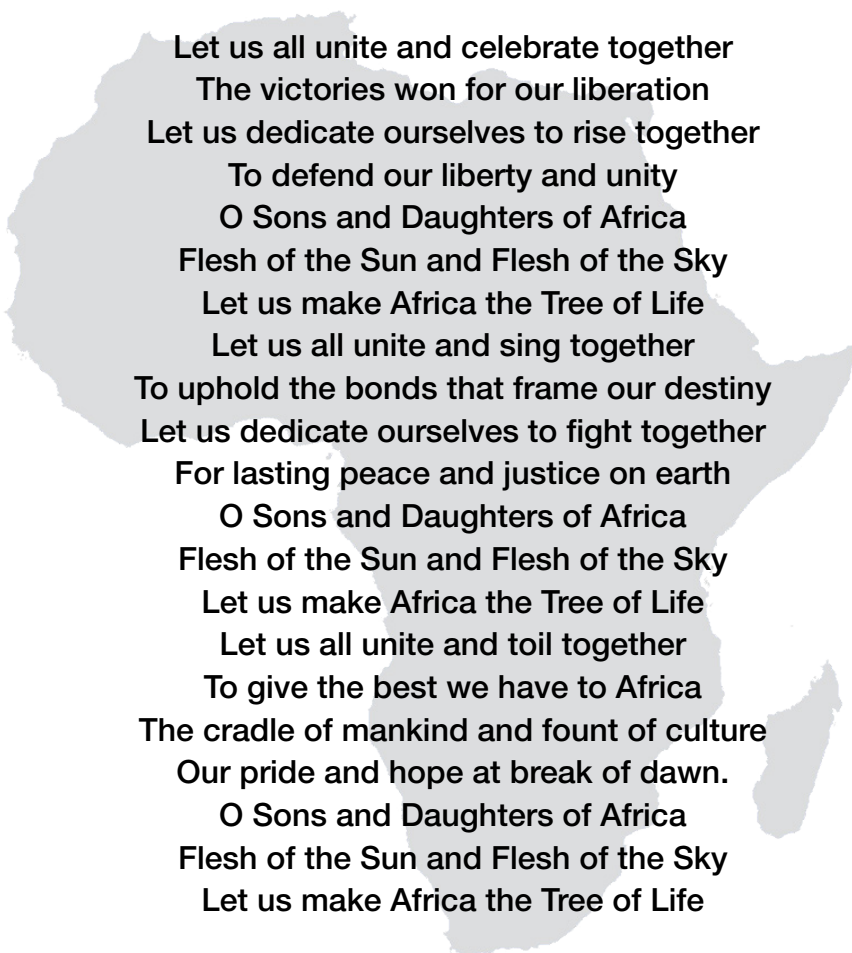
Namibia
land of the brave
Freedom fight
we have won
Glory to their bravery
Whose blood waters
our freedom

We give our love
and loyalty
Together in unity
Contrasting beautiful
Namibia
our country

Beloved land
of savannahs
Hold high the banner
of liberty

Chorus:
Namibia
our Country
Namibia
Motherland
we love thee

African Union Anthem



Let us all unite and celebrate together
The victories won for our liberation
Let us dedicate ourselves to rise together
To defend our liberty and unity
O Sons and Daughters of Africa
Flesh of the Sun and Flesh of the Sky
Let us make Africa the Tree of Life
Let us all unite and sing together
To uphold the bonds that frame our destiny
Let us dedicate ourselves to fight together
For lasting peace and justice on earth
O Sons and Daughters of Africa
Flesh of the Sun and Flesh of the Sky
Let us make Africa the Tree of Life
Let us all unite and toil together
To give the best we have to Africa
The cradle of mankind and fount of culture
Our pride and hope at break of dawn.
O Sons and Daughters of Africa
Flesh of the Sun and Flesh of the Sky
Let us make Africa the Tree of Life

Namibia at the Olympic Games

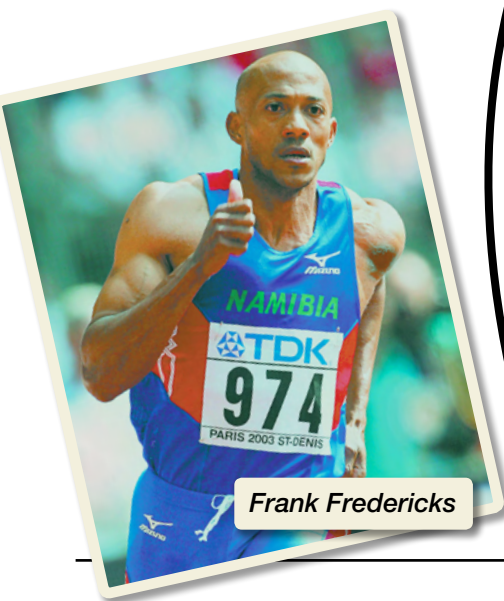
The greatest sporting spectacle on earth, the Olympic Games will be held in Tokyo, Japan from 23 July to 8 August 2021, and Namibia will once again be present among the world's sporting elite.

Namibia became a member of the International Olympic Committee in 1991 and participated as an independent nation for the first time at the 1992 Olympic Games in Barcelona, Spain.

Barcelona 1992

6 athletes

Namibia sent a team of six athletes to Barcelona, headed by their great sprinter, Frank Fredericks. The previous year he established himself as one of the world's best when he won a silver medal at the World Athletics Championships in Tokyo, Japan, and in Barcelona he lived up to expectations. He won a silver medal in the 100m final after coming second behind Britain's Linford Christie and followed that up



Frank Fredericks



Luketz Swartbooï

with another silver in the 200m final where he came second behind Michael Marsh of the United States.

None of Namibia's other athletes managed to make the finals, but through Fredericks' exploits, the IOC's newest member, Namibia was placed firmly on the international sporting map.

Namibia's other Olympians were marathon runners Luketz Swartbooï and Frank Kayele, boxer Harry Simon, and swimmers Jörg Lindemeier and Monica Dahl.

Atlanta 1996

8 athletes

Four years later Namibia sent a team of eight athletes to the Olympic Games in Atlanta, United States, and Fredericks was once again amongst the favourites in the sprinting events. A month before the Olympics he had set the year's fastest time of 9.86 seconds for the 100m while he was also in hot form in the 200m.

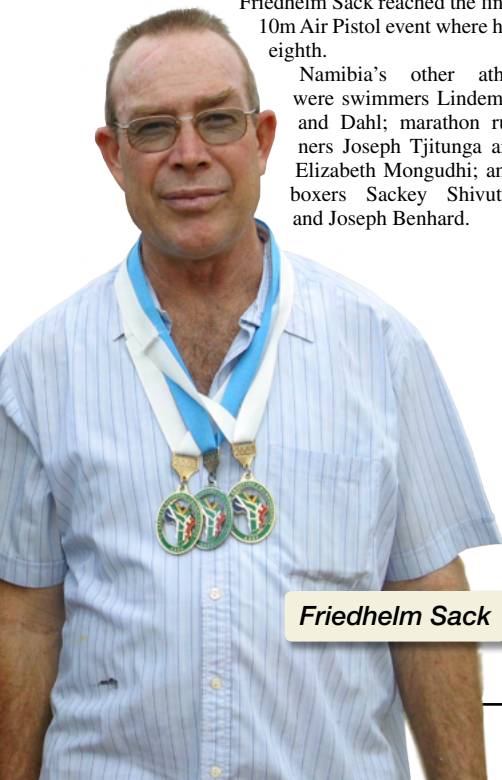
But the gold medal again eluded him as he once again won two silver medals.

In the 100m Canada's Donovan Bailey produced a stunning performance to win the final in a new world record time of 9.84 seconds, while Fredericks came second in 9.89.

In one of the best sprints of all time, in the 200m final, Michael Johnson of the United States smashed the world record with a brilliant time of 19.32 seconds, while Fredericks came second in 19.68, which was also below the previous world record of 19.77 seconds.

Of Namibia's other competitors, shooter Friedhelm Sack reached the final of the 10m Air Pistol event where he came eighth.

Namibia's other athletes were swimmers Lindemeier and Dahl; marathon runners Joseph Tjitunga and Elizabeth Mongudhi; and boxers Sackey Shivute and Joseph Benhard.



Friedhelm Sack



Paulus Nuumbembe

Sydney 2000

11 athletes

Namibia selected a large contingent of 12 athletes for the 2000 Olympic Games in Sydney, Australia, but its star performer, Frank Fredericks had to withdraw on the eve of the Games.

After coming so close to win a gold medal on the previous two occasions, Fredericks had a great opportunity at Sydney, especially since his long-time rival Michael Johnson had retired and his opponents were not that strong. But in a cruel twist of fate, a recurring Achilles tendon injury, which had dogged him for more than a year, flared up again and a tearful Fredericks announced his withdrawal barely a day before the start of the 100m heats.

It was a disappointing exit for Fredericks, especially since Costas Kenteris of Greece went on to win the 200m final in a relatively slow time of 20.09 seconds.

None of Namibia's other athletes could make an impact in Sydney.

They were Willie Smith (400m hurdles), Luketz Swartbooi (marathon), Sherwin Vries (100m), Christie van Wyk (200m), Stephan Louw (long jump), Elizabeth Mongudhi (marathon), Paulus Nuumbembe (boxing), Mannie Heymans (cycling), Gharde Geldenhuys (gymnastics), Friedhelm Sack (shooting) and Jörg Lindemeier (swimming).

Athens 2004

8 athletes

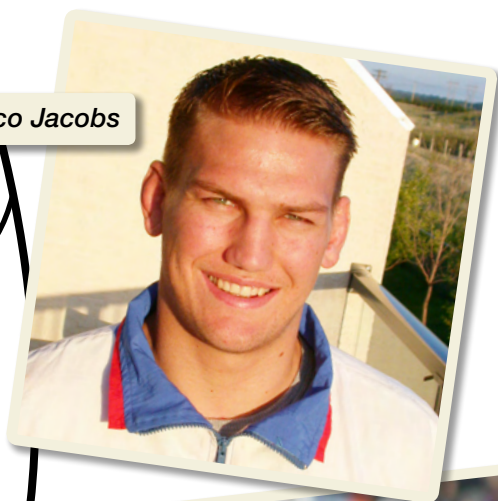
Namibia was represented by eight athletes at the Athens Olympic Games, with Fredericks giving it one final attempt to win the elusive gold medal. But at the age of 36 he had reached the end of his brilliant career and a new generation of sprinters, headed by Justin Gatlin and Shawn Crawford of the United States were the hot favourites.

Fredericks was eliminated in the second round of the 100m and then reached the 200m final where he just missed out on a medal, finishing fourth behind Crawford, Bernard Williams and Gatlin.

Of Namibia's other athletes in Athens, boxers Joseph Jermia and Paulus Ambunda both reached the quarterfinals of their respective weight categories. Jermia was eventually ranked fifth in the 48kg bantamweight category, while Ambunda was also ranked fifth in the 54kg fly-weight category.

Namibia's other athletes were Christie van Wyk (100m), Agnes Samaria (800m), Mannie Heymans (mountain biking), Friedhelm Sack (shooting) and Nico Jacobs (wrestling).

Nico Jacobs



Agnes Samaria



Helalia Johannes



Beijing 2008

10 athletes

Namibia was represented by 10 athletes at the 2008 Olympic Games, which was held for the first time in China, in its capital Beijing.

But inadequate preparation and organisational problems led to a poor overall performance.

Marathon runners Beata Naigambo and Helalia Johannes were both nearly disqualified after coming late for the start, while the boxing team's coach was changed at the last minute, which disrupted the boxers' preparations.

Road cyclist Erik Hoffman gave Namibia's best performance, coming 22nd overall in the 245km road race. He finished 2 minutes 28 seconds behind the winner, Samuel Sanchez of Spain, and also beat the Tour de France winner, Carlos Sastre of Spain, in the process.

None of Namibia's other athletes made an impact in Beijing.

Namibia's Olympians in Beijing were Stephan Louw (long jump), Helalia Johannes and Beata Naigambo (marathon), Agnes Samaria (800m and 1 500m), Jafet Utoni, Julius Indongo and Mujandjae Kasuto (boxing), Erik Hoffman (cycling), Mannie Heymans (mountain biking) and Gaby Ahrens (shooting).



Mujandjae Kasuto



Stephan Louw



London 2012

9 athletes

Namibia was represented by nine athletes at the 2012 Olympic Games in the United Kingdom capital, London.

Helalia Johannes was Namibia's best performer, coming 12th in the women's marathon in a new Namibian record time of 2:26:09, but Namibia's other athletes failed to make an impression.

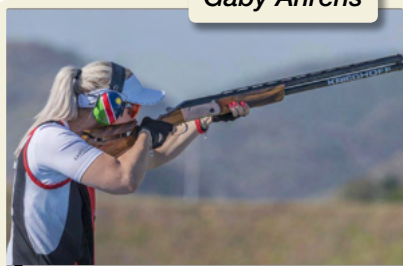
Beata Naigambo, who also competed in the women's marathon, came 36th, while 400m athlete Tji-pekapora Herunga advanced from the first round, but was eliminated in the semifinals.

Bantamweight boxer Jonas Matheus was eliminated in the first round, while middleweight boxer Mujandjae Kasuto won his first round fight before being eliminated in the round of 16.

Mountain bike rider Marc Bassingthwaite came 30th in the cross country race, while road cyclist Dan Craven was involved in a crash and had to pull out after 80km of the road race.

Shooter Gaby Ahrens and wrestler Sem Shilimela failed to progress past the first round.

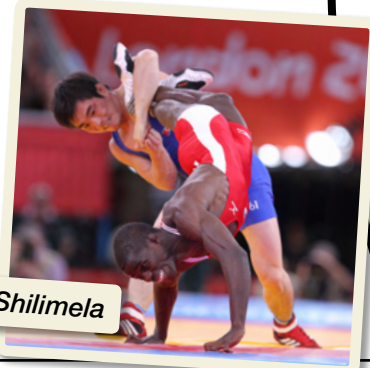
Gaby Ahrens



Marc Bassingthwaite



Tjipekupora Herunga



Sem Shilimela



Jonas Matheus



Dan Craven



Rio de Janeiro 2016

10 athletes



Beata Naigambo

Namibia was represented by 10 athletes at the 2016 Olympic Games in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

Marathon runners Helalia Johannes and Beata Naigambo, as well as shooter Gaby Ahrens joined Frank Fredericks as Namibia's most capped Olympians with three appearances each.

Ahrens was Namibia's best performer, coming ninth in the Women's Trap event and missing the final by only one target, but Namibia's other athletes failed to make an impact in Rio.

Naigambo and Johannes finished 41st and 56th respectively in the women's marathon, while Alina Armas came 75th in the same race and Mynhardt Kauanivi 70th in the men's marathon.

In boxing, light flyweight Mathias Hamunyela won his first round bout, but was eliminated in the second round, while light welterweight Jonas Junias Jonas was eliminated in the first round.

None of Namibia's cyclists managed to finish their races, with Dan Craven and Vera Adrian pulled off in the men and women's road cycling races, while Michelle Vorster was pulled off in the women's mountain bike race. Craven, however, did complete the time trial, finishing 35th.

Tristan de Lange

Road Cyclist

Tristan de Lange was a late replacement for Dan Craven in the men's road cycling event after Craven tested positive for Covid 19 on July 15.

The 24-year-old De Lange is better known as a mountain bike rider and was involved in a big battle with Alex Miller for Namibia's mountain bike spot at the Olympics.

Miller eventually pipped De Lange to the spot after a series of selection races, but the Namibia Cycling Federation named De Lange as the reserve mountain bike rider, and when the reserve road cyclist Martin Freyer declined the spot, De Lange was called up as a last minute replacement for Craven.

De Lange made his mark amongst Namibia's cycling fraternity from a young age.

In 2009 he won the under 12 title at the National MTB Cross Country Championships, and followed that up with the national u14 title the next year. He retained the title in 2011 and won the u16 title in 2012, when he also won the u16 national road race title.

By 2013, at the age of 15, De Lange announced his arrival amongst Namibia's seniors when he won the Kuiseb Classic and the Klein Aus Vista MTB Marathons, while he retained both titles the following year, as well as the national u16 title.

In 2015 De Lange started making his mark in Africa, and after coming sixth at the African Road Race Championships in February, he became the continental champion three months later when he won the junior men's title at the African MTB cross country championships in Rwanda.

Later that year he won the Namibia Junior Sportsman of the Year award, while he was also ranked fourth on the junior world MTB cross country rankings.

In 2016, De Lange won the u23 title at the National MTB Championships, having just turned 19, and a year later once again excelled at continental level when he won the u23 gold medal at the African MTB Championships in Mauritius.

In April 2018, De Lange represented Namibia at the Commonwealth Games at Australia's Gold Coast in both the MTB cross country and cycling road race categories.

In the former he finished 12th overall, while he was also the second African behind third-placed Alan Hatherly of South Africa, and in the latter he finished 36th overall.

Later that month De Lange won a silver medal in the u23 category at the Africa MTB Championships in Cairo, Egypt, and in September, he finished 71st in the u23 category at the World MTB Championships in Len-



zerheide, Switzerland.

In 2019, De Lange finished second behind Alex Miller in both the National MTB Cross Country Championships and the National MTB Marathon Championships, but his finest performances came later that year when he won two gold medals at the Africa Games in Rabat, Morocco.

On 21 August he won the MTB Cross Country race over 35km, beating Miller by nearly a minute to the line, and then two days later won a second gold medal in the MTB Marathon over 60km, finishing 11 seconds ahead of Yannick Lincoln of Mauritius, while Miller came third.

In February 2020, De Lange and Miller teamed up at the Tankwa Trek MTB Race in South Africa where they gave a great performance to finish third overall against a top class international field.

Later that month, De Lange shone at the National Cycling Championships, finishing a close second behind Dan Craven, but Miller would have the final say in the race for Namibia's MTB Olympic spot, after beating De Lange over four selection races in 2019 and 2020.

De Lange, however, was named as Namibia's reserve MTB rider for the Olympics, and after he once again came second at the 2021 National Road Race Championships behind Drikus Coetzee, he finally got his Olympics spot after Craven's late withdrawal in the Men's Road Cycling event.

De Lange said he was looking forward to representing Namibia at the Games.

"I'm super excited and honoured to take Dan's place - they are very big shoes to fill, but I am ready for it and I'm confident about the challenge ahead. It's always an honour to represent Namibia and I'd like to thank everyone for their support and from here on it's just full steam ahead," he said.

Vera Looser

Road Cyclist

Vera Looser (née Adrian) has dominated women's road cycling in Namibia for close to a decade and will be going to her second Olympic Games in Tokyo.

A natural athlete, Adrian also excelled at swimming and triathlon at a young age, but eventually decided to focus on cycling.

By 2009, at the age of 15, she won her first senior title at the Nedbank Cycle Challenge, going on to win the title three times over the next four years.

By 2012 she won the National Championships for the first time and from 2014 went on a fantastic, unbeaten run, winning the national title for seven years in a row.

In 2016 she qualified for the Rio Olympics in brilliant fashion when she won gold at the African Championships in both the road race and the time trial, but her Olympic debut was one to forget as nerves got the better of her.

"I was so nervous and emotional before the race - I started getting knots in my legs the day before the race and the next morning I started getting shivers and hot flushes. When I left for the race I was fine again, but I think the whole experience cost me so much energy, so I wasn't on top form and got pulled off before the end," she said.

By now, Adrian was racing more in Europe and in 2017 received her first professional contract, joining a Spanish team. By 2018 she joined a Swiss professional team, while she also produced her best performance on the European tour that year, coming fourth at a UCI event in Cham, Hagendorn, Switzerland.

At the African Championships in Bahir Dar, Ethiopia in March 2019, Adrian once again suffered a setback as she was struck by a stomach bug a day before the race and could hardly eat, and eventually finished fifth overall to miss out on an automatic qualifying spot for the Olympics.

She, however, still had a chance of qualifying by finishing the year amongst the top 100-ranked professional cyclists, and after picking up crucial points at the Africa Games in Morocco where she won two bronze medals in the road race and team time trial, she just managed to qualify for the Olympics by finishing 98th overall at the cut-off date.

It was very close at the end towards the deadline and I was quite worried that I might not make it. I was considering competing in some more UCI races, while I even entered an African race in Port Elizabeth that was cancelled at the last minute, but in the end I just made the qualification and it was a huge relief," she said.



Adrian married Swiss marathon cyclist Konny Looser in February 2020, and although she could not compete much for the rest of the year due to the advent of Covid-19, she still managed to post some encouraging results.

In February she won the National Championships for the seventh year, and a month later finished fourth at the Cape Town Cycle Race.

Looser also competed in some mountain bike races in Europe, coming third in the Tour du Jura and fourth at Rund um Uzwil.

In February 2021 she did the double at the National Championships, winning the road race for the eighth time and the individual time trial for the sixth time, and a month later she won two bronze medals in the road race and time trial at the African Continental Championships in Cairo.

Having now qualified for her second Olympics, a wiser and more experienced Looser is aiming to do better than at her Rio debut.

"I know what I have to focus on, but it won't be easy. But I'm definitely in a better physical shape than before Rio, because back then I'd never raced in Europe, and being young and still studying, I think I was just overwhelmed. Now I know what the racing is like, and I've raced against a lot of these girls before, so hopefully I'll be more relaxed," she said.

Alex Miller

Mountain Bike Cyclist

Growing up on a farm near Helmeringhausen in the arid expanse of southern Namibia, Alex Miller has been cycling for as long as he can remember.

"I had a BMX bike so I always rode around on the farm. In 2014, when I was 13, I entered a half marathon race at Klein Aus Vista and enjoyed it so much, that I went back the next year and finished third in the junior category," he recalled.

In 2016 he was back, doing the full marathon for the first time and announced his arrival on the Namibian MTB scene when he won the junior category and finished fifth overall amongst the seniors.

"I realised that this is what I want to do and that's also where I met my coach Hans du Toit, who put me on a training programme and that's how it all started," Miller said.

He made swift progress, and by 2017 the results started to show. He was selected for the Namibian junior team for the Africa MTB Championships in Mauritius, where he won a bronze medal, while he made a big impact at The Namibian Cycle Classic, beating Xavier Papo by more than 10 minutes to win the Elite Men's category, despite being only 16 years old.

In 2018 he reaped the rewards of his hard work under Du Toit when he won the gold medal at the Africa Junior MTB Championships in Cairo, Egypt.

It was a great feeling to win the African gold medal - it had been one of my goals for quite a while and shortly after winning it I headed to Europe to compete at the World MTB Championships in Lenzerheide, Switzerland," he said.

Here, Miller only managed to come 26th in the junior category, but he made a good enough impression to be invited to a training camp at the UCI Centre in Switzerland the following year.

Back in Namibia, he started 2019 in great style when he beat Dan Craven by a split second to win the national road race championships on 3 February, and then three weeks later won the senior men's title at the National MTB Marathon Championships, when he beat national champion Tristan de Lange for the first time.

His finest performance, however, came on 13 April 2019 when he competed in the senior men's category at the African MTB Championships in Windhoek. Despite only being 18 years old, he produced a brilliant ride to win the bronze medal, behind two South Africans, but more importantly, by finishing as the second country behind SA, Miller had also secured a spot for Namibia at the Tokyo Olympic Games.

The Namibian Cycling Federation decided to select



four races to determine who would go to the Olympics and a fascinating battle between Miller and De Lange ensued over the next year, as they battled it out for the Olympic ticket.

Miller took an early lead after the 2019 National MTB Championships counted as the first selection race, while he also edged De Lange when he came third at the second selection race - the first leg of the SA MTB Cup series in Mbombela, Mpumalanga on 15 February 2020, when De Lange had to withdraw due to a mechanical problem.

On 5 July, De Lange, however, bounced back when he beat Miller by more than a minute at the Nedbank cross country series in Windhoek, but a week later Miller gave a great performance at the final selection race to beat De Lange by more than three minutes at the National MTB Championships.

On 7 August 2020, the NCF finally announced that Miller had been selected to represent Namibia at the Tokyo Olympics, and Miller was understandably thrilled.

"I'm very excited to say the least. It's been my dream since I first started riding seriously in 2016, but I didn't think I'd reach it so soon, so the whole experience has been very rewarding.

"I'm definitely aiming for a top 20 place at least and hopefully a bit higher. It's difficult to gauge myself against international riders now because of a lack of international races, but that's my aim," he said.

Michelle Vorster

Mountain Bike Cyclist

Michelle Vorster, who will be going to her second Olympics in Tokyo, has overcome huge setbacks to reach the top.

She only started cycling at the age of 35 in 2013 but through sheer determination and will power she made rapid progress to establish herself as one of the continent's best riders.

In 2013, on the spur of the moment, she joined a group of cyclists training for the Cape Argus and the cycling bug immediately caught. She soon started making her mark on the Namibian MTB circuit, winning the women's sub veteran category in 2014, and the Elite women's title the following year.

She represented Namibia for the first time at the 2015 Africa MTB Championships in Rwanda where she made an immediate impact, finishing third behind two South African riders. The event also served as a qualifier for the 2016 Olympics, and although there was initially uncertainty as to whether Namibia had qualified, it was finally confirmed by the UCI (International Cycling Federation) in June 2016, just before Vorster left for Europe to compete in the World Championships.

"The night before I left for Europe, Joan Smit of the Namibia Olympic Committee called me - she was ecstatic saying 'you've got the spot, you've got the Olympic spot. I was so excited, I couldn't sleep that evening,'" she recalled.

On 20 August 2016, Vorster lined up against the world's top riders in Rio, but had a tough Olympic debut as she was pulled off after falling too far behind the leaders.

Undeterred, Vorster continued to go from strength to strength in Namibia and Africa.

In 2017 Vorster started making her mark against some of the world's top riders.

In March she teamed up with South Africa's Carmen Buchacher at the Cape Epic, and came fifth in the grueling eight-day stage race, and two months later won the gold medal at the African Championships in Mauritius for the first time.

In July she comfortably won the national championships, beating Irene Steyn by more than 12 minutes, and in October once again teamed up with Buchacher to come third at the Berg & Bush MTB two-day stage race in South Africa.

By 2018 Vorster underlined her dominance on the Namibian MTB scene with a brilliant performance at the National Championships in February. She collided with a car during the race, but despite injuring her shoulder and thumb, showed great courage to continue and win the race in emphatic fashion, finishing more



than 15 minutes ahead of Steyn.

In April, Vorster represented Namibia at the Commonwealth Games in Australia where she came eighth in the MTB race, finishing five minutes 35 seconds behind the winner, Annie Last of England, while she came 21st in the cycling road race.

In September, Vorster excelled at the World Championships in Italy when she finished 15th after starting in 67th position on the grid.

She started 2019 off in great style, winning the National MTB Marathon title for the fifth year in a row in February and then two months later clinched a spot for Namibia at the Olympics when she finished fourth at the African MTB Championships in Windhoek. With three South Africans taking the podium spots, Namibia got an Olympic spot as the second country behind South Africa.

Barely two weeks after her triumph, disaster struck when she was hit by a car while practising on the Western Bypass outside Windhoek, and broke her right arm and ankle.

After recuperating, Vorster once again showed great courage and determination to resume her training regime and six months later regained the top spot in Namibia when she won both the MTB and road race at The Namibian Cycle Classic.

In March 2020 Vorster's Namibian dominance continued as she won the National MTB Marathon Championships for the sixth year in a row, beating Courtney Liebenberg by nearly 20 minutes, while she also won the National XC Championships, the Tour de Windhoek two-day stage race and the Namibian Cycle Classic.

In 2021 Vorster emigrated with her family to New Zealand, but continued to make her mark, winning the Karapoti Classic in May, while she came 19th and 20th at two French Cup races in June against Europe's top riders.

Jonas Junias Jones

Lightweight Boxer

The precociously talented amateur boxer Jonas Junias Jones has won everything there is to win except an Olympic gold medal, and this time he is determined to reach that long cherished goal.

His brilliance in the ring, though, has been offset by disaster outside it and now, as at the Rio Olympics, a shadow is once again looming over his chances of success.

His Olympics debut at Rio in 2016 became a nightmare after he was accused of sexual molestation by a cleaner at the athletes village and was arrested. He was allowed out to compete, but lost his first round fight and was then once again holed up in the Namibian embassy for eight months.

The case against him finally fizzled out due to a lack of evidence, but the ordeal had left its scars and now five years later he is facing a similar situation.

In April 2021 he was arrested in Swakopmund and later charged with attempted murder as well as assault against a police officer. He was granted bail, but will now once again have to return to court after Tokyo to await judgement.

Born in Swakopmund on 24 November 1993, Jonas first shot to prominence in 2010 when he won his first national junior title and by 2011 he had established himself as the top junior in his category.

In 2012 he represented Namibia at the Zone 6 Youth Games in Zambia where he won a silver medal, and after taking a break from boxing in 2013 to concentrate on his schooling, came back with a bang in 2014.

Fighting as a senior for the first time, he once again won a gold medal at the national championships and followed that up with a silver medal at the Zone 4 Championships in South Africa. In August, however, he took the Commonwealth Games in Edinburgh, Scotland by storm with a string of brilliant performances to reach the final, where he lost a close fight to Josh Taylor of Scotland.

In 2015 Jonas won a silver medal at the All Africa Games in Congo Brazzaville, losing to an Algerian fighter in the final, and in 2016 he finally reached his dream when he won the gold medal at the Olympic Qualifiers in Cameroon to qualify for the 2016 Rio Olympic Games.

His Olympic debut, however, was a nightmare and after being holed up for eight months in the Namibian embassy in Rio de Janeiro, he finally returned home to Namibia in April 2017.

Junias put the experience behind him, got back to



training and two months later was in superb form when he won gold at the African Boxing Championships in Congo, Brazzaville.

His greatest performance, however, came on 14 April 2018 when he won the gold medal at the Commonwealth Games at the Gold Coast, Australia when he overwhelmed Thomas Blumenfeld of Canada 5-0 in the 63kg final. In the process he became only Namibia's second boxing gold medallist at the Commonwealth Games, following in the footsteps of Jafet Utoni, who won gold at the 2006 Games in Melbourne.

In 2019 Jonas won a bronze medal at the Africa Games in Rabat, Morocco, after losing to the eventual gold medallist, Abdelhaq Nadir of Morocco in the semi-finals, but on 28 February 2020 he was back to his best, winning a gold medal at the African Olympic Qualifiers in Dakar, Senegal to qualify for his second Olympic Games in Tokyo.

On 6 April this year Jonas was in great form when he won the 63kg gold medal at the International Manger Memorial Tournament in Kherson, Ukraine, but only 10 days later his world came crashing down when he was arrested for assault and attempted murder, after attacking a police officer and striking another man on the head with an unknown object, which left him fighting for his life.

Jonas was later granted bail, on condition that he returns to court after the Olympics, so it remains to be seen what psychological effects that will have, but if he can live up to his great potential and pedigree he will have a good chance of success in Tokyo.

Maike Diekmann

Single Sculls Rower

Maike Diekmann has made a spectacular rise in rowing, going from an absolute beginner to African champion in a matter of five years.

She started rowing for the first time at the end of 2014 when she helped out at a social race while a student at Grahamstown University, and made an immediate impression.

Her team won by far and after the race the university coach advised her to take the sport up seriously.

Diekmann followed his advice, making steady progress, and by 2016 started making an impact against South Africa's top rowers, coming third in the quad sculls and fourth in the double sculls at the SA National Championships.

In September that year, she also competed at her first European event, the u23 World Championships in Rotterdam, where she came 22nd overall.

In 2017 Diekmann graduated with an Honours Degree in Geology, but decided to put further studies on hold to pursue her new dream of qualifying for the 2020 Olympics.

She got a boost when she applied and received a bursary from Olympic Solidarity and by 2018 she teamed up with her personal coach Grant Dodds for the first time.

Diekmann embarked on a rigorous training programme of up to 200km per week, that she maintained through thick and thin, but it wasn't easy.

"There were days and weeks and months when I trained on my own and I had to motivate myself and think about making it to Tokyo to get through those sessions. I often wanted to give up, and thought why am I doing this, but I always told myself those tough sessions are the most important ones, and I was determined to reach my goal," she said.

But her sacrifice was worthwhile as her results steadily improved. By now she was regularly finishing amongst the medals at South African races, while she also started making an impact further afield.

In September 2018 she came 16th overall at the World Championships in Plovdiv, Bulgaria; in April 2019 she won her first international medal when she came third in Piediluco, Italy; in July she came ninth overall at the World Rowing Cup in Rotterdam; and in September she came 16th overall at the World Championships in Linz, Austria.

By October 2019, she was in top shape and ready for the African Championships in Tunisia, which also served as a qualifier for the 2020 Olympics.

Her moment had arrived and she seized it in style as she won the gold medal in the women's single scull



final, finishing more than 20 seconds ahead of the second-placed rower.

She had realised her dream and when she received her medal on the podium, singing the Namibian anthem, she felt a great sense of relief and pride.

"I had reached my goal, and to be standing there singing my anthem and realising that after all those long days of hard training on my own, it all suddenly made sense, and then I felt so grateful that I had pushed through," she said.

Covid-19 struck in 2020, putting paid to her plans of international competition, but she continued training on her own from home and with her dedication and determination she maintained her high standards.

In November she competed for the first time that year at the Virtual African Indoor Championships and once again won the gold medal with ease, finishing 38 seconds ahead of the second placed rower. With that she qualified for the World Rowing Virtual Indoor Championships in February 2021, but was not able to compete due to internet connection problems.

Diekmann decided to compete in any case on her own rowing machine and posted a new personal best time, which was nearly nine seconds faster than her previous best, while it would also have won her the silver medal had she competed.

In June, however, she showed how far she had come when she finished sixth at the World Rowing Cup III in Sabaudia, Italy.

In the process, she made history by qualifying for the A final for the first time after finishing second in her semifinal.

Helalia Johannes

Marathon Athlete

Helalia Johannes will set a Namibian record when she appears at her fourth Olympic Games in Tokyo in August.

She had shared the three-Games record with Frank Fredericks, Mannie Heymans and Gaby Ahrens, but will now, just before her 41st birthday, become Namibia's most capped Olympian.

Despite being Namibia's oldest Olympian, Johannes is in the prime of her career and also one of the nation's best hopes for a medal.

She first burst onto the scene more than a decade ago in 2006 when she won the Two Oceans 21km Half Marathon in a record time of 1:13:35. That was the start of a great run that saw her winning the title four times in six years, while breaking the record three times, bringing it down to 1:11:56 in 2011.

In August 2007, she competed at the All Africa Games for the first time in Algiers, coming fifth in the half marathon, and two months later made a stunning 42km marathon debut when she came fourth at the Dublin Marathon in a new Namibian record of 2:35:30.

In March 2008 she lowered that time to 2:33:06 when she came seventh at the Seoul Marathon to qualify for the Beijing Olympics, but her Olympics debut was one to forget as she could only finish 40th after administrative lapses saw her and compatriot Beata Naigambo nearly coming late for the start.

Johannes, however, started to make her mark internationally, especially at the Dublin Marathon where she came fifth in 2008, second in 2009, and first in 2011 in a new Namibian record of 2:30:35.

In April 2012 she improved that time by more than three minutes when she came third at the Vienna Marathon in 2:27:20, and four months later she once again broke the record when she came 12th at the London Olympic Games in 2:26:09.

That record would stand for seven years as her performances took a bit of a dip over the next few years.

In March 2014 she came third at the Seoul International Marathon in 2:28:27, and four months later seemed on course to winning a gold medal at the Commonwealth Games when she led the marathon at the half way mark, but she had to slow down after picking up an injury and eventually finished fifth.

In August 2015 her first child was born, but she still managed to qualify for the Rio Olympic Games, although she could only come 56th in a slow time of 2:39:55.

At the age of 36 many thought that she had reached



her peak, but over the next four years her performances reached even greater heights.

In October 2016 she won the Dublin Marathon for a second time in 2:32:32, the following year she came second at the Cape Town Marathon in 2:30:29 and in April 2018 she made history when she became the first Namibian female athlete to win a gold medal at the Commonwealth Games, winning the marathon at the Gold Coast in Australia in 2:32:40.

Later that year she won the Cape Town Marathon for the first time in 2:29:28, and although her times were not that great, there would be a great improvement by 2019.

In March that year she won the Nagoya Marathon in Japan, smashing her Namibian record by more than three minutes with a time of 2:22:25, and six months later she once again made history when she won a bronze medal at the World Athletics Championships in Doha in 2:34:15, becoming the first female Namibian athlete to do so.

By now she had underlined her status as one of the world's top marathon runners and further cemented her reputation with a brilliant run at the Valencia Marathon in December 2020.

She came third in a new Namibian record time of 2:19:52, which was the seventh fastest time in the world that year, while Namibia in the process became only the third African country after Kenya and Ethiopia to break the 2:20 barrier in the women's marathon.

Rainhold Tomas

Marathon Athlete

Rainhold Tomas was born on 7 February 1991 at Eheke village in the vicinity of Ondangwa in northern Namibia.

In his early years he played soccer with the other kids in his village, but it wasn't until the age of 12 that he took up athletics.

He started competing in the middle to long distance events, doing everything from 800m to 10 000m, but later specialised in the 800m and 1 500m events and gradually improved.

In 2009, he was selected for the Oshana regional team and went on to win a gold medal in the 1 500m at the National Schools Championships in Windhoek. A year later, Tomas was selected for Namibia's senior national team for the first time, and represented the country at a regional event in Maputo, Mozambique, but could only manage to come 10th in the 1 500m.

By 2011 he started doing road running and soon excelled at the Old Mutual Victory Races series, winning the junior male category over 5km for three years in a row.

In 2013 he competed at the Omaruru Street Mile, and although he could only finish seventh against some of Namibia's top middle distance runners, he drew the attention of top Namibian long distance coach Robert Kaxuxuena, who invited Tomas to join his training group in Windhoek.

By 2015 he started doing the 21km half marathon at the Victory Races, finishing third overall, but by 2016 became Namibia's top road runner when he won the series for the first time, and went on to win the title for three years in a row.

By 2018 he made another step-up when he participated in a full 42km marathon for the first time and made a great debut at the Rössing Marathon in Swakopmund when he finished second overall in an impressive time of 2:17:35.

It was a very fast time for my first attempt, so I was very excited and I knew that I could go far in the marathon," he recalled.

Later that year he participated in the Cape Town Marathon where he came 14th in just about the same time, 2:17:38, and Tomas now set his sights on reaching the qualifying time of 2:16:00 for the 2019 World Athletics Championships in Doha, UAE.

He decided to enter the Hamburg Marathon in April 2019, and surprised himself when he finished 21st and improved his personal best (PB) time by more than three minutes to 2:14:14. In the process he comfortably qualified for the World Championships and once again undertook a vigorous training programme.



In Doha he had to contend with extremely hot weather, with the race starting at the unusual time of midnight to mitigate the conditions, but Tomas was well prepared and finished 17th in 2:14:38.

At the time I wasn't thinking about the Olympics at all, I was just thinking about getting a new PB, but shortly after Doha my coach said I should try and qualify for the Olympics.

"He entered me for the Maunichi Marathon in Japan in March 2020, but it was so cold, I couldn't even feel my fingers so I had to withdraw from the race after about 25km. But afterwards my coach said, don't worry, we will solve this problem," he said.

The Olympics qualifying time of 2:11:30 was nearly three minutes faster than his PB, but Tomas continued training steadfastly and when he lined up at the start of the Xiamen Marathon in Siena, Italy on 11 April 2021, he was ready.

He gave a great performance to improve his PB by nearly four minutes as he finished 28th in 2:10:24, which was well inside the Olympics qualifying time, and Tomas once again surprised himself.

"I didn't think I could qualify for the Olympics so soon and my aim was to run a 2:12, but then I ran a 2:10 and was very proud of myself that I qualified for the Olympics," he said.

"My aim at the Olympics is to improve my personal best time and I'd also like to break Luketz Swartbooi's Namibian record time of 2:09:08 one day," he added.

Beatrice Masilingi

200m Athlete

Born in Katima Mulilo on 10 April 2003, and growing up in Rundu, Beatrice Masilingi enjoyed sport from a young age and initially tried her hand at various sporting codes, including rugby at her school.

But it was only in 2015 at the age of 11 that she started to take athletics more seriously, after winning some sprinting events at her schools athletics meeting.

She improved steadily and by December 2018, at the age of 15, set an impressive time of 25,06 seconds in the 200m at a regional youth event in Gaborone, before making a major impact at the Cosassa Games in Swaziland five months later, winning four gold medals in the 100m, 200m, 400m TM and 4x100m relay.

By now it was clear that Namibia had a young gem on its hands that needed specialised training, and shortly after her return the ministry of sport facilitated her transfer to Agri-College in Grootfontein. Its principal Henk Botha had agreed to provide scholarships to Masilingi and another budding young star from the Kavango East region, Christine Mboma, and under his tutelage and training, they soon started to improve.

A week after joining Botha, Masilingi won three gold medals at a senior athletics event in Windhoek in impressive times of 11,93 for the 100m, 23,93 (200m) and 52,33 seconds (400m), and two months later she made a stunning debut at the Southern African Senior Athletics Championships in Mauritius as a 16 year old, winning two gold medals in the 200m in a new personal best time of 23,76 and 400m in 53,73 seconds.

On 14 March 2020, shortly before her 17th birthday, Masilingi burst onto the international stage with some brilliant performances at the Swakopmund Grand Prix, where she won three gold medals, while her 400m time of 52,19 seconds was the fastest u20 time in the world at that stage.

The advent of Covid-19 took her out of circulation for several months, but when she resurfaced again six months later, she once again stunned the world. Competing at her first international event, the Kip Keino Classic in Kenya, Masilingi beat some of Africa's top athletes to win the 400m in a new Namibian record time of 50,99 seconds, while she also comfortably broke the Olympics qualifying time of 51,35.

In November she won three gold medals at the Namibian National Championships and a month later she was in scintillating form at the Gauteng North Meet in Pretoria, winning two gold medals and setting new Namibian national records in both the 200m in 22,94 and 400m in 50,42 seconds, which was the fastest 400m time in the world at that stage??



By now, Masilingi had announced herself as a genuine medal contender for the Tokyo Olympics, but she raised the bar even further in 2021.

On her 18th birthday on 10 April, she broke her own national 200m record with a time of 22,72 at an international meeting in Lusaka, but her 400m performance the next day was even better. Her time of 49,53 seconds was the second fastest in the world in 2021 at that stage and would normally have grabbed the headlines, except for the fact that she finished second behind Mboma who won in a phenomenal 49,24 seconds.

A week later at the National Championships, she once again came second in the 400m in 50,05, when Mboma set a new world best of 49,22, while Masilingi was unfortunate not to break the 200m record after her winning time of 22,38 seconds was disallowed due to an illegal wind reading.

In June, Masilingi and Mboma embarked on their first trip abroad and took Europe by storm.

On 7 June, Masilingi competed at the Josef Odlozil Memorial in the Czech capital, Prague, and came third in the 200m in a new PB of 22,82 seconds; and two weeks later she won the 400m in 49,88 seconds at the Janusz Kusocinski Orlen Memorial in Chorzow, Poland.

On 29 June, Masilingi equalled Mboma's national record of 22,67 when she won the 200m at the Lucerne Meeting in Switzerland, and on 4 July she once again became the sole holder of the national record when she came second at the Stockholm Diamond Meeting in 22,65 seconds.

Masilingi's medal hopes received a big setback when World Athletics withdrew her from the 400m due to unnaturally high testosterone levels, but she could still make an impact in the 200m.

Christine Mboma

200m Athlete

Christine Mboma grew up in difficult conditions in Shinyungwe Village about 130km east of Rundu in the Kavango East region. Her mother raised Christine and her two younger sisters on her own, but when she died giving child birth in 2016, the 13-year-old Christine had to raise them herself, after they moved in to share a small hut with their uncle and aunt.

“My mother inspired me a lot and always told me to believe in myself, because one day she won’t be there, and I must start building my own future because I was the oldest daughter,” she recalled.

“When she passed away, I had to look after my younger siblings so I became more responsible and started thinking more about the future. I started doing better at school, while I also started taking sport more seriously,” she added.

She started making her mark in middle distance events at her school athletics competitions, and by 2019 made the national schools side for the first time that competed at the Cosassa Championships in eSwatini. She made a big impact, winning two gold medals in the 800m and 1 500m, and shortly after her return embarked on a new journey when she received a scholarship and joined another young prodigy Beatrice Masilingi at Agri College in Grootfontein.

Under the guidance of new coach Henk Botha, she made steady progress, although Masilingi grabbed the headlines at first.

At an athletics event in Windhoek on 18 May 2019, Mboma won the 800m in 2:18,68 and two months later she came third at the Southern Africa Senior Championships in Mauritius in 2:17,11.

Botha, meanwhile, had noticed her speed and decided to enter her for the 400m for the first time at the Swakopmund Grand Prix in March 2020 and Mboma gave a fine performance, coming second behind Masilingi in 54,14 seconds.

At the National Championships In November, she reverted back to the middle distances, winning the 800m in 2:11,65 and the 1 500m in 5:03,84, but the following month she improved her 400m PB by more than two seconds, winning the under 18 women’s race at the Gauteng North meet in 51,78 seconds. At the same meet Masilingi won the senior women’s 400m in the world’s fastest time of 50,42 seconds in 2020, but Mboma would not live in her shadow for much longer.

On 14 March 2021 she grabbed the limelight when she set the world’s fastest 400m time of 51,59 seconds at the Swakopmund Grand Prix, and two weeks later she beat Masilingi at the Oshakati Grand Prix, once



again in a world best time of 50,97 seconds.

That was just a taste of things to come and on 11 April she stunned the athletics world when she won gold at the Allcomers Memorial in Lusaka, Zambia in a phenomenal time of 49,24 seconds. Not only did she once again set the world’s fastest time of the year, but she also set a new world u20 record, breaking the previous mark of 49,42, which had stood for 30 years.

Her hot streak continued a week later when she once again broke both the national and the world u20 records with a time of 49,22 at the National Championships in Windhoek.

In June, Mboma and Masilingi left on their first trip abroad and set the European circuit ablaze with some brilliant performances.

On 7 June Mboma won the 200m at the Josef Odlozil Memorial in Prague, Czech Republic in a new Namibian record time of 22,67, and 12 days later she once again beat an international field in the Spanish capital, Madrid to win the 200m in 22,79 seconds.

Her best, and one of the world’s best performances of the year, however, came on 30 June at the Irena Szewinska Memorial in Bydgoszcz, Poland when she blew the field apart to win the 400m in a phenomenal 48,54 seconds. It was the fastest time of the year, and the seventh fastest ever, and would have made her a firm favourite for an Olympic gold, but World Athletics later removed her from the 400m due to unnaturally high testosterone levels. Mboma could, however, still make an impact in the 200m.

Phillip Seidler

Marathon Swimmer

Eight years of dedicated training paid off for Phillip Seidler on 20 June 2021 when he qualified for the Olympics in Setubal, Portugal.

Competing at the Olympic Marathon Swim qualifier over 10km, the 23-year-old Seidler finished 25th overall, but as the third-placed African clinched a continental berth for the Tokyo Olympic Games, to realise a life long dream.

"I trained seven years and sacrificed my whole life for this. I swam about 80km and had three biokinetic sessions and gym sessions every week from Mondays to Fridays, but it has all been worth it. I'm very proud to have put Namibia on the world map and I feel honoured to be representing Namibia at the Olympic Games," he said.

Born in Swakopmund on 25 March 1998, Seidler started swimming at a young age, initially just to recover from an injury.

"My dad was a well-known surfer in Namibia, so he taught me to surf when I was four and I could actually surf before I could swim. But when I was five I broke my arm and my mom said I should do exercises to rehabilitate my arm and the best rehab was swimming, so that's how it started," he recalled.

He started taking swimming lessons with the renowned Swakopmund coach June Smit who soon saw potential and started entering him for competitions.

By 2010, at the age of 12, he broke his first Namibian age group record in the 400m freestyle at a gala in Durban, South Africa, and the following year teamed up with Dolphins coach Janis Stergiadis, when the seed of his Olympics dream was first sown.

"I told Janis that I would love to compete at the Olympics one day, but I was just not sure if it would be in the pool or in open water swimming," he recalled.

Seidler started competing in open water long distance events and soon excelled. In 2012 he competed in the Jetty Mile at Swakopmund for the first time and came third overall and the next year won the event for the first time, despite being struck by food poisoning two days before the race.

That was the start of a brilliant unbeaten run which has seen Seidler rewriting the record books with eight consecutive victories at the Jetty Mile.

By now, Seidler was on a strict training programme with Stergiadis, while his parents also started supporting him with his coaching and expenses.

In 2016, Seidler competed in his first open water event at Midmar Dam in South Africa, coming second over 5km, while he also came seventh overall at the South African Open Water Championships.



In 2017 he competed in Europe for the first time, coming 42nd overall at the Senior World Championships in Hungary, where he was also the fourth African swimmer over the line.

He continued to improve at the South African Open Water Championships, coming third overall in 2018 and second overall the following year.

By 2018, Seidler started concentrating on the 10km marathon event, and made a great start when he won his first 10km race in the Eastern Cape, while he came third at the SA Championships.

In 2019 he came sixth at the SA Championships, and entered the World Cup in Seychelles where he came 33rd, as well as the World Championships in Gwangju, South Korea, where he came 32nd overall.

Since 2020, Seidler has not competed much due to Covid, but continued his strict training regime and came third at the SA Championships in 2020 as well as in 2021.

All his hard work came down to the Setubal race, where he eventually reached his dream in extremely tough conditions.

"It was a very physical race, I got hit from the start in my face and on my body - it's like boxing, getting body shots all the time, so after the first round I was already exhausted. I got hit in my face and my goggles broke a bit on the left side, so water came into my eye and I could only see with one eye, but because I'm from the land of the brave, one eye was enough for me to see for the rest of the race and I just gave it my all," he said.

Namibian Athletes' Olympic Games timetable

July

- 23** Rowing: Women's Single Sculls Heats - **Maike Diekmann**
- 24** Cycling: Men's Road Race - **Tristan de Lange**
- 24** Rowing: Women's Single Sculls Repechage - **Maike Diekmann**
- 25** Rowing: Women's Single Sculls Semifinals E/F - **Maike Diekmann**
- 25** Cycling: Women's Road Race - **Vera Looser**
- 25** Boxing: Men's Lightweight Round 32 - **Jonas Junias Jonas**
- 26** Rowing: Women's Single Sculls Quarterfinals - **Maike Diekmann**
- 26** Mountain Bike: Men's Cross Country Race - **Alex Miller**
- 27** Rowing: Women's Single Sculls Semifinals C/D - **Maike Diekmann**
- 27** Mountain Bike: Women's Cross Country Race - **Michelle Vorster**
- 28** Rowing: Women's Single Sculls Semifinals A/B - **Maike Diekmann**
- 29** Rowing: Women's Singles Sculls Final F, E, D - **Maike Diekmann**
- 30** Rowing: Women's Single Sculls Final C, B, A - **Maike Diekmann**
- 31** Boxing: Men's Lightweight Round of 16 - **Jonas Junias Jonas**

August

- 2** Athletics: Women's 200m Round 1 and Semifinals - **Christine Mboma, Beatrice Masilingi**
- 3** Boxing: Men's Lightweight Quarterfinals - **Jonas Junias Jonas**
- 3** Athletics: Women's 200m final - **Christine Mboma, Beatrice Masilingi**
- 5** Swimming: Men's 10km Marathon - **Phillip Seidler**
- 6** Boxing: Men's Lightweight Semifinals - **Jonas Junias Jonas**
- 7** Athletics: Women's Marathon - **Helalia Johannes**
- 8** Athletics: Men's Marathon - **Rainhold Tomas**
- 8** Boxing: Men's Lightweight Final - **Jonas Junias Jonas**

2020 TOKYO SUMMER OLYMPIC GAMES

TEAM NAMIBIA

CHEF DE MISSION: Dawie Augustyn

1. AQUATICS

10Km Marathon Swimming: Athlete: Phillip Seidler
Coach/Manager: Nadja Seidler

2. ATHLETICS

200m Sprint: Athletes: Beatrice Masilingi
Christine Mboma
Coach/Manager: Henk Botha
Marathon: Athletes: Helalia Johannes
Rainhold Tomas
Coach/Manager: Robert Kaxuxuena

3. BOXING

Category 63kg: Athlete: Jonas Jonas
Coach/Manager: Albertus Tsamaseb

4. CYCLING

Road Cycling: Athletes: Vera Adrian
Tristan De Lange
Coach/Manager: Mannie Heymans
Mechanic: Martin Nghilifavali
Mountain Bike: Athletes: Michelle Vorster
Alexander Miller
Coach/Manager: Hans du Toit
Mechanic: Ermin van Wyk

5. ROWING

Sprint: Athlete: Maike Diekmann
Coach/Manager: Grant Dodds

6. MEDICAL AND COVID LIAISON

Medical Officer: Dr. David Weber
Physiotherapist: Anna-Mart Kruger

7. SAFEGUARDING

NNOC Secretary General: Joan Smit

8. TEAM ATTACHE

2nd Secretary in the Namibian Embassy in Japan: Simataa Matali

9. MINISTRY OF SPORT, YOUTH AND NATIONAL SERVICE

Executive Director: Dr. Audrin Mate

10. NNOC REPRESENTATIVE

President: Abner Axel Xoagub

11. NAMIBIA SPORT COMMISSION

Vice Chairperson: Alna Similo

12. ATHLETES REPRESENTATIVE

Chairperson of Namibia Athletes Commission: Gaby Ahrens

Namibia's Flag Bearers at the Opening Ceremony

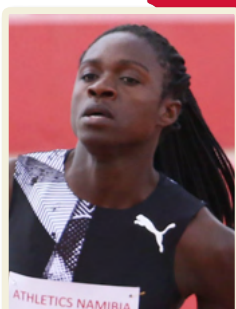


Jonas Junias Jonas



Maike Diekmann

Namibia's Flag Bearers at the Closing Ceremony



Christine Mboma



Beatrice Masilingi