

## High Performance Centre (hpc) creating new champions

By Manfred Seidler

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Two of SA's brightest young swimming prospects, William Diering and Lize-Marie Retief, base themselves at the hpc, University of Pretoria.

The two 21 year-old swimmers are the next generation of stars emerging from the pools of South Africa, and both believe that a huge part of their success can be attributed to the facilities and support available to them at the High Performance Centre.

"There is more to training than the mere swimming practice itself, it is the whole support structure that goes with it that makes a huge difference," says Diering who won Bronze at the recent World Short Course Championships in Manchester in the 200m breaststroke. "The daily access to massage and physio treatment at any time, not only eases any worries about niggling injuries, but also aid hugely in the recovery process."

According to Lize-Mari, having the services of a sports psychologist virtually on demand is a key aspect to her rapidly improving performances. "One of the most important factors for me is being able to speak to a sport psychologist. These days it is not only the physical training that makes you a champion, but the mental work involved is also incredibly vital and being able to prepare mentally with the aid of a professional sport psychologist has certainly been one of the reasons that my swimming has improved over the last few years."

Retief started swimming in seriously at the age of 8 when the coach of her school noticed her talent at a swim gala and persuaded her parents to let him coach her.

"There was really only one pace for to study when I finished school. Only at the University of Pretoria with its link to the High Performance Centre, do we have the availability of nutritionists, physiotherapists, a world class gym and access to professionals such as sports psychologists. So when it was time for me to start studying I went straight to the University of Pretoria.," says Retief. The 21 year old is a third year Sports Science Student and readily admits that studying the field of Sport Science does provide her with a unique insight into preparing her swimming career.

Retief is already a Bronze Medallist at the Commonwealth Games (Melbourne 2006, 50m Butterfly), finished 5<sup>th</sup> at the World Short Course Championships in 100m fly and holds the Africa Record in the 100m fly – 58.70sec.

William Diering resides in one of the Sport Houses in South Street, just off the premises of the High Performance Centre. Through his bursary at Tukkies, as Pretoria University is known, and its affiliation to the High Performance Centre, Diering has access to world class facilities and support structures and readily admits that without them he would not be so far advanced in his sport.

Diering not only tasted success in the pool in Manchester this year, but has also recorded some stellar performances on the World Cup Circuit. In Singapore last year he won the 200m breaststroke and finished second in the 150m. He then went on to place third at the Sydney World Cup in the 200m breaststroke.

Diering gave notice of his enormous potential a week before departing for Manchester and the World Short Course Championships when he broke the 200m South African and African breaststroke record. His time of 2:11;99 broke the 8 year old record of Terrence Parkin. Diering also set a new South African and African record when he won his first major international medal at the World Short Course Championships. His time of 2:06;85 was good enough for Bronze. "I feel that I've now broken through to a new level. Breaking Terrence's record in Durban was a dream I was chasing for two years and now picking up a Bronze Medal at a World Championship I feel I am ready to move on to the next level."

It is quite clear that the World is the oyster for these two 21 year olds and having scientific support and back up such as is available at the High Performance Centre means that this new generation of swimmers may recapture the glories of Roland Schoeman, Ryk Neethling, Lyndon Ferns and Darian Townsend, sooner rather than later.

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