

MOUNTAIN BIKE

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SA'S
BIGGEST
MTB MAGAZINE

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World Cup XCO
comes home

TECH

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SHOCKING
REVELATIONS

PAGE 120

PEOPLE

Duck! 6 low-flying chicks
changing the rules

Carmen, Emily, Zandri,
Miroda, Chantal & Joanne

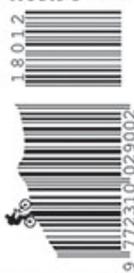
TRAVEL

RIDE IT MY
CHINA!

ON THE EDGE OF THE GREAT WALL PAGE 42

+ MIND-BLOWING Azores • Georgia • Canada • Australia • Botswana • Namibia

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RISING STAR

All eyes are on **Sthembiso Masango**, the 29-year-old from Kwazulu-Natal who is making history.

IN 2014, STHEMBISO BECAME THE FIRST black rider to be awarded KZN colours, just weeks after he and teammate Mboneni Ngcobo came 10th place at FNB Wines2Whales. As part of Martin Dreyer's RMB Change a Life Academy, Sthembiso is proving to be an unstoppable force. In 2016 he came 5th in the monstrous 1 000km Munga, dubbed the "toughest race on earth". He put in a brilliant effort at this year's Absa Cape Epic, until a mechanical pushed him and his partner way back. He also finished 6th out of 670 solo riders at the 36ONE MTB Challenge, 10th overall at the SA Marathon Champs and 7th at the SA XCO Champs.

Martin Dreyer says, "If cycling passion were a currency, Sthembiso would be a billionaire. When I started the Academy, identifying talent in rural KZN, Sthembiso rode 15km to and from our training sessions, on his *skadonky* bike, never once complaining. Making the national team for marathon and XCO is a *lekker* reward for all his hard work. Cycling has truly changed his life for the better."

Sthembiso represented SA at the World Marathon Champs in Germany in June (where he suffered a broken chain, placing 159th overall), and at the World XCO Champs in Australia in September. A bad crash left him with a damaged scaphoid and 18 stitches in his leg but he merely dusted himself off and carried on. He says, "My crash was a sign that I was trying my best for my country. My injuries let me down but I remained positive."

The sky's the limit for this determined fire-breathing dragon! 🐉



Main photo: Sthembiso during stage 3 of the 2017 Absa Cape Epic. Above, from left: Posing proudly with his national team jersey before the start of the UCI Marathon World Champs in Germany. Getting some air at the Absa Cape Epic. With Martin Dreyer, two minutes after completing The Munga.

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