



DEL Officials Conquer the 2026 Comrades Marathon Up Run



Demonstrating the values of resilience, determination and perseverance both in and outside the workplace, officials from the Department of Employment and Labour proudly participated in the 2026 Comrades Marathon "Up Run" from Durban to Pietermaritzburg on 14 June 2026.

Against the backdrop of steep climbs, demanding conditions and nearly 89 kilometres of relentless endurance, officials from the Department of Employment and Labour rose to the challenge of the 2026 Comrades Marathon Up Run from Durban to Pietermaritzburg on 14 June 2026.

In a race renowned for testing the limits of human endurance, the Department's runners exemplified courage, strength, persistence and dedication from start to finish. Their participation in the prestigious ultramarathon served as a powerful reminder that success is achieved through determination, discipline and an unwavering commitment to one's goals.

As we celebrate their achievement, we salute these remarkable officials for embodying the values of resilience and excellence that continue to inspire both their colleagues and the communities they serve.



Reliving the Journey

As the first light of dawn slowly broke over Durban, a cool coastal breeze swept through the city streets. What would ordinarily have been a quiet Sunday morning was transformed into a sea of anticipation, determination and excitement as thousands of runners prepared to embark on the ultimate test of endurance.

Hours before the official start, the city was already alive. Families, friends, running club members and supporters lined the streets, offering words of encouragement and last-minute embraces to the athletes who had spent months preparing for this moment. Amid the excitement, there was also a palpable sense of nervous energy. For many, the journey ahead would be the culmination of countless early morning training runs, sacrifices and unwavering commitment.

The rhythmic sounds of running shoes striking the pavement echoed through the starting precinct as participants paced up and down, stretching their muscles and calming their nerves. Conversations flowed between runners, some sharing words of confidence while others quietly gathered their thoughts for the demanding 85.77-kilometre challenge that lay ahead.

The moment everyone had been waiting for.

At exactly 05:00, the starting gun signalled the departure of the first group of runners. Groups Two and Three followed at 15-minute intervals, each greeted by thunderous cheers from supporters lining the route. The streets erupted with applause, whistles and words of encouragement as thousands of runners surged forward, carried by a wave of energy generated by those who had come to support them.

With every stride, the race officially began.

Ahead lay the legendary hills of the Comrades Up Run – a route revered and respected for its relentless climbs, demanding terrain and unforgiving test of both physical endurance and mental resilience. While the morning air remained cool and refreshing, each runner knew that the true challenge was only beginning.

For the Department of Employment and Labour officials among the field, the road to Pietermaritzburg would become more than just a race. It would be a journey of perseverance, courage and determination, where every kilometre conquered would bring them one step closer to achieving a goal that had inspired months of preparation and sacrifice.

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The Spirit of the Up Run

As the hours passed, the cool morning air gradually gave way to the familiar warmth of a KwaZulu-Natal winter's day. With every hill conquered and every descent embraced, our runners experienced a whirlwind of emotions. There were moments of exhilaration and confidence, moments of fatigue and self-doubt, and countless moments where sheer determination carried them forward.

The legendary climbs of the Comrades Up Run tested both body and mind. Yet, with every summit reached came the reward of a downhill stretch, offering runners a brief opportunity to recover, regroup and refocus on the journey ahead. Each kilometre completed represented a small victory, bringing the finish line in Pietermaritzburg ever closer.

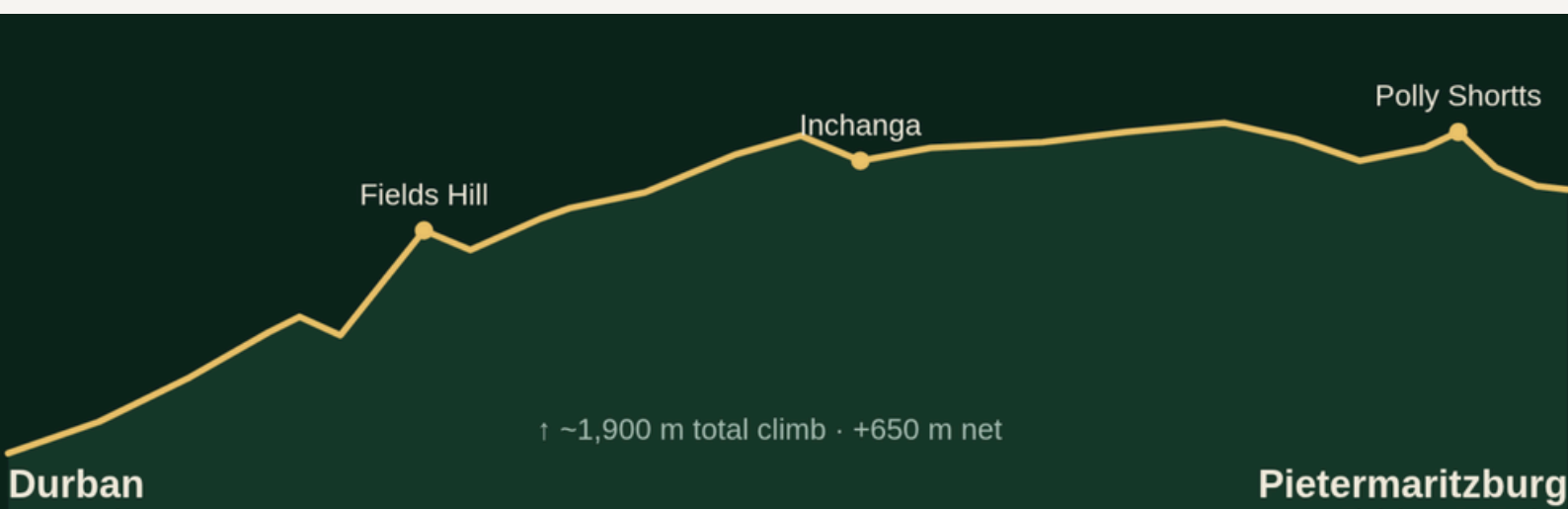
Along the route, hydration stations became more than just refreshment points. They offered runners a chance to recharge and gather the energy needed to tackle the next section of the race. The water, energy drinks and words of encouragement shared by volunteers provided that extra boost—often just enough to carry tired legs to the next milestone.

Meanwhile, highways and roads running alongside the route were filled with anxious yet enthusiastic supporters making their way to various checkpoints. Families, friends, club members and spectators followed the progress of their runners with anticipation, eager to catch a glimpse of them at different stages of the race. Wherever the runners went, they were met by cheering crowds, waving flags and voices calling out words of encouragement.

The energy generated by the spectators proved to be one of the race's most powerful sources of motivation. For runners pushing through fatigue, aching muscles and mental exhaustion, every cheer, every clap and every shouted name served as a reminder of why they had started the journey in the first place.

Whether maintaining a steady pace, slowing down to conserve energy, or pushing harder to make up time, each runner shared a common objective: to conquer the race famously known as the "Ultimate Human Race". With every passing kilometre, they drew closer to their goal, fuelled not only by physical endurance, but by an unwavering determination to reach the finish line and become part of Comrades Marathon history.

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RUNNERS RESULTS



Lethabo Shokane completed the Comrades Marathon

Finish Time
8:02:38
05:38 min/km



Cwayita Ngcangula completed the Comrades Marathon

Finish Time
11:11:05
07:49 min/km



Robert Nkale completed the Comrades Marathon

Robert Nkale completed the Comrades Marathon

Finish Time
8:56:50



Robert Mokgalaka completed the Comrades Marathon

Finish Time
11:56:43



Reginald Mampuru completed the Comrades Marathon

Finish Time
12:23:41



Chuma Toni completed the Comrades Marathon

Finish Time
9:11:35



Lwandiso Nodada completed the Comrades Marathon

Finish Time
11:28:25
06:01 min/km

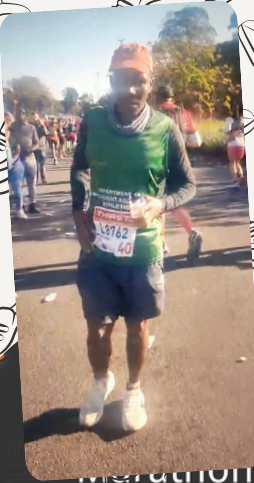


Marathon



No Finish Time

Did Not Finish



Eric 'Chairman' Molema



No Finish Time

ERIC 'CHAIRMAN' MOLEMA UNFORTUNATELY COULDN'T FINISH DUE TO AN INJURY



Sculo Lungwase completed the Comrades Marathon

Finish Time
10:37:48
07:26 min/km

Splits

TLOU SETATI RAN AN IMPRESSIVE 80KMS



A sight of hope and unwavering support

While the Comrades Marathon is a test of individual endurance, every runner knows that success is made possible by the support of others. Throughout the race, family members, friends, colleagues and supporters provided the encouragement needed to keep runners moving forward, one kilometre at a time.

Special appreciation goes to the Department of Employment and Labour's officials and executive leadership, led by Dr Kahla, Chief Director: Provincial Operations in KwaZulu-Natal, for their tireless efforts in coordinating refreshments and support points along the route. Their presence, encouragement and unwavering support provided runners with much-needed motivation as they pushed towards the finish line. It was equally uplifting for runners to witness the presence of the Inspector General, whose support and encouragement further lifted spirits and reinforced the sense of camaraderie that defined the day.

The runners also expressed sincere gratitude to fellow Departmental runners who, despite being unable to participate in this year's race, dedicated their time to supporting their colleagues throughout the day.

Congratulating the participants, Deputy Minister Jomo Sibiya, himself an avid runner, commended the officials for their resilience and determination.

As the final runners crossed the finish line in Pietermaritzburg, they did so with the pride of knowing they had conquered one of the world's greatest endurance challenges, supported every step of the way by a team that believed in them.