

ROAD RUNNING

Gelant eyes new 10km PB in Gqeberha

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ELROY Gelant is a glass half full kind of guy.

Whereas many an athlete would have been left gutted by having missed on out Olympic marathon qualification by a whisker, the veteran runner chose to look on the bright side of things instead.

Following the impressive 2:08:56 that he ran at the Sevilla Marathon last month – thus missing out on earning a ticket into Team South Africa for the Paris Games by just 46sec – the Boxer Athletic Club man has gained confidence for the shorter distances.

Gelant is therefore eager to produce a lifetime best in the 10km when he

runs the season-opening race of the Absa Run Your City series in Gqeberha on April 7.

“My goal for the (Gqeberha race) will be to run a sub-28. I’m looking forward to it. All of my training paces are set for a sub-28. It will depend on the body and how it responds on the day, but I would really love to run a PB (personal best) and better my time of 28:04,” Gelant said this week.

The two-time Olympian said his 42km performance has laid a good base for the year ahead. “I’m really looking forward to this year. I started off my season with a marathon PB. That laid a foundation for me going forward in 2024, because it showed me that I can achieve what I put my

mind to. I’m looking forward to a positive year.”

At 37, Gelant is among the older athletes in the 10km distance that has become highly competitive, with a number of younger athletes coming to the fore. But instead of falling behind, the North West University employee continues to make his presence felt.

And though many will see his sub-28-minute target as being a tad too ambitious, his recent form backs him up. He did, after all, have a fantastic 2023, in which he ran that PB in the 10km, as well as clocking a half-marathon best time of 60:56. And then he added that brilliant marathon time to the mix in Sevilla.

“My performance over the last six

months is just a blessing,” he said. “To have run three PBs, especially at this age, is a blessing.”

Ahead of the Gqeberha event, which is the first in the five-race series – Cape Town, Durban, Tshwane and Joburg are the other host cities – Gelant is encouraged by recent performances of his competitors.

All of national 10km record-holder Precious Mashele, national half-marathon champion Thabang Mosiako and last year’s series star Kabelo Mulaudzi have recently run sub-27s – and they will all be toeing the line in Gqeberha.

“I think we have a few phenomenal athletes that can pull me to that sub-28. It’s going to be a fantastic race with an adapted route, so we are looking forward to some fast times.”

Apart from the aforementioned trio, one of those phenomenal athletes to whom Gelant alludes is Kenya’s Maxon Kipngetch. The 10 000m athlete will lead the east African charge in

his first official road race. After compatriot Daniel Ebenyo won last year’s inaugural race in 27:21, Kipngetch said he would love to follow in the fast footsteps of his more illustrious countryman.

“It is a good race,” Kipngetch said. “I’ve seen people like Ebenyo run, and it opened their careers. I want the same. I want to expand my career to run from 5km to 21km in the near future. I want to expand my range, starting here with the 10km. I’m aiming to set a good start in the Absa race – 27:50 to 27:59 will be a good start for me.”

Michael Meyer, the managing director of Stillwater Sports and the series founder, said the presence of Gelant and Kipngetch brings a wealth of experience and talent to the race.

“Their presence not only raises the level of competition, but also adds a layer of excitement and prestige to the event, highlighting its growing reputation as a top-tier road race.”