

Fencers in contest for tickets to Olympics

ANASTACIA MASHABA

THEY might be set apart by age and gender, but the young up-coming Tshwane fencers have one goal in mind – going to the Olympics.

The youngsters represented the city in the SA Junior National Fencing Championship at the University of Pretoria's Groenkloof campus at the weekend.

More than 100 juniors from seven provinces took part and put their names to the fore, making it known they were in it to win.

Of the participants, 25 percent were from Soweto Fencing Club.

Willowridge High School fencer, Geza Kozma, who clinched a silver medal was impressed with his performance and now wants to improve on it at the Gauteng Open slated for December.

Kozma trains at Tuks and said he was introduced to the sport by his father six years ago. He fell in love with the sport mainly because it is an individual sport.

"I also swim, but just for fun. I love individual sport because you get to concentrate on yourself and your performance.

"That is why I want to go deep with fencing. I see myself participating at the Olympics and believe it is possible. I want to win gold at the Gauteng Open because I won it last year. I have to be consistent," the 17-year-old said.

Natania Bester, ranked No 1 in the under-17 age group in the country, won a gold medal and is also



Geza Kozma, Thato Mashilo, Christiaan Bester, Natania Bester and Liam Parnell did well at the South African Junior national championships hosted at the University of Pretoria's Groenkloof campus at the weekend. PICTURE: OLIPA MOKOENA

eyeing the Olympics.

Although others like Thato Mashilo do not have a medal to show for it, the results are still positive and a good foundation has been laid going into the future as they can only work harder.

Thato, also 17, finished in the top eight.

He said he was disappointed but would work hard in order to do well at the Gauteng Open in December.

"I see a lot of improvement now compared to when I started out as a 13-year-old.

"Fencing is not that big where I come from in Mamelodi and I want to shine and show people the sport exists and that they should try it out.

"I am inspired by my brother (Sello Maduma) because he has gone as far as participating in the Olympics and I believe if I work harder I will achieve that as well.

"The results mean I have to work even harder to prevail at the Gauteng Open," said Thato, who won a silver medal at the 2012 Pretoria Open.

Liam Parnell, from Hoërskool Hendrik Verwoerd, won a silver medal in the under-20 age group.

He said he was now working on achieving national colours.

Parnell will also feature at the Gauteng Open.

PRETORIA NEWS

WEDNESDAY OCTOBER 8 2014