Kelsey braves icy waters to conquer Robben Island swim

**MURPHY NGANGA**

WHILE the Robben Island crossing has become a benchmark for a number of South African swimmers, this year 18-year-old Kelsey Chiang from overcoming the icy waves of the Atlantic Ocean.

Completing her first 7.4km Robben Island swim in 2 hours 18 minutes, at a sea temperature of 14.7°C, Kelsey is not to the waves.

“I learnt how to swim at an early age when I went to a swimming school, but it was when I was 10, I began swimming seriously. I finished swimming in a well-known school in Milnerton, where I learned to swim. Having a big wave downside, I have a fear of the sea.”

“I got older, I started to swim longer distances in the pool. This boosted my confidence in swimming long distances as a whole and then moved to swimming long distance in sea and began swimming the local nautical status that were run by various organisations. After swimming in both pool and ocean for quite some time, I later started swimming a great interest in swimming long distances. Although I swam a great distance in the pool, something about swimming to the ocean was more thrilling.”

“I always wanted to do the Robben Island swim for a while, as I knew of a couple of people who had done it and it seemed like a challenge that I was capable of doing. Even though the goal was to swim the Robben Island swim, I always honestly felt I was chasing the final destination,” said Kelsey.

While Kelsey’s school friends learn to excel in sports, she makes it her top priority to balance school work and sports.

“The academic are very important to me which puts even more pressure to balance both sports and school. In combination with the time consuming swimming and extramurals at school, it was quite a challenge,” said Kelsey.

“My end goal is to represent South Africa in any of my sports disciplines while furthering my studies towards a cause in engineering or medicine.”

Head coach at Milnerton Surf Lifesaving Club Brent Smith, said that Kelsey has been excelling in what she was doing.

“Kelsey is an excellent swimmer in the sport of swimming from an early age. She is incredibly strong and always sets up for a challenge. She is really coachable and her good sense of humour keeps those around her in high spirits.”

“I think teaching young people how to swim at such a young age is an important life skill to learn. We found that strong kids that should be safe and independent aside the water. We have a strong pool at Milnerton Surf, if they do not know how to swim, we teach them to swim. As life saving is community service, it teaches you a strong sense of responsibility, giving back to others, said Smith.

Milnerton Surf Lifesaving Club chairman, Brenton Jones encouraged young kids to take part in sport to boost their confidence during teenage years. “We need to find ways to hold on to our teenage kids in sport and ensure they feel good about themselves and excel in what they do. What we need is for the community to take up the challenge and support the kids,” said Jones.

While Kelsey’s school friends learn to excel in sports, she makes it her top priority to balance school work and sports.

**SHARNE MENDO**

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**THE TIMELESS** saying that dynamic comes in small packages certainly applies to little Empilo Aluminium. At just age 3, he has won trophies for playing the sport he loves. The little golfer, who turns 6 in August, will be taking part in the for Africa Challenge at San Lameer Golf Estate in South coast, which is one of many events this year.

At age 3, he has won trophies for playing the sport he loves. The little golfer, who turns 6 in August, will be taking part in the for Africa Challenge at San Lameer Golf Estate in South coast, which is one of many events this year. His passion for playing golf was born when his parents, who are both golfers, taught him to play when he was 3.

“I love being outside on different golf courses, especially at Irrawaddy Golf Course, which is my home course. My younger brother Rocco and I both play golf, and we spend lots of time at the golf course. Golf has helped me improve my public speaking, socialising with other children, general etiquette and to communicate,” said Rocco.

He has been playing golf since the age of 2 and started playing in tournaments this year.

“I played SA Kids Golf and Anna Squared tournaments, and have won in one of seven in my age group in the past six months,” said Rocco.

“We play lots of golf, which give me the chance to compete against children from other provinces, and other countries on the continent. And just to have fun on a new course,” said Rocco.

“I am looking forward to winning,” said Rocio.

Children from 6 to 18 can enter.

It is a qualifier for the following events: Kids Golf World Championships, Malaysia; DFC Junior World Championships, USA; Champions of Champions, Dublin, Ireland; ICG Callaway World Championships, USA; Australian Junior Age Division Golf Championships, USA; Kids Golf Europe; and more.

The operations director at SA Kids Golf, Yolandi Gamba, said golf helps children to focus.

**KEVIN CHANG**

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**7.4km Robben Island swim in 2 hours 18 minutes**

**SUPPLIED**

**KELSEY CHIANG**

Kelsey Chiang, 18, completed her first 7.4km Robben Island swim in 2 hours 18 minutes.