

27^{of} 100**Hannele Steyn**

Here to be Tenacious

The Last Lioness:
A legacy built on grit,
courage and the will to
keep going.

Some sporting achievements are measured in medals, records and podium finishes. Others are measured in something harder to quantify: the courage to keep showing up. Hannele Steyn, affectionately known as the “Last Lioness”, belongs to the latter category.

A former world champion triathlete and multiple South African mountain-bike champion, Hannele has become synonymous with the Absa Cape Epic, not simply because she has competed in one of the world's most demanding mountain-bike stage races, but because she has completed every edition since its inception in 2004.

That remarkable consistency has made her part of the race's history. Year after year, across punishing terrain, unpredictable conditions and the physical

and mental demands of multi-stage racing, Hannele has returned to the starting line. Each race has presented its own challenge, but together they tell a much bigger story: one of resilience, discipline and an enduring refusal to believe that limitations should determine ambition.

Now a veteran of more than two decades of competitive sport, Hannele continues to challenge herself on the Untamed African MTB Race. Her longevity is remarkable in a sporting world often obsessed with youth and peak performance. Yet her journey demonstrates that experience can be its own form of strength. With every kilometre, she continues to challenge assumptions about age, endurance and what women can accomplish.

But Hannele's legacy extends beyond her own race results. Through Absa's #SheUntamed platform, she has become an advocate for greater participation by women in mountain biking, using her experience to encourage others to discover the freedom and confidence that comes from taking on challenges of their own.

Her story matters because representation matters. When women see other women occupying spaces they may once have considered inaccessible, possibility becomes tangible. Hannele's presence on the mountain-bike trail tells aspiring riders that they belong there too, that they can take up space, test their limits and pursue ambitious goals simply because they can.

There is something fitting about the name “Last Lioness”. It speaks not of being the last to arrive, but of being the one who remains; resilient, determined and still moving forward. Hannele has

shown that true endurance is not about never struggling. It is about continuing despite the struggle.

She is not merely part of the Absa Cape Epic's history. She is living proof of what happens when perseverance becomes a way of life. Every time the Last Lioness crosses another finish line, she adds another chapter to a story that is far bigger than one cyclist: a story about courage, possibility and the power of refusing to stop.

Your
story
matters

