

Endurance Athletes from all over South Africa will participate in the Quarter century Challenge to do FIVE daring events IN ONE YEAR!



Midmar, Dusi,

“Millennium Big 5 Challenge 2025”



Cape Town Cycle Tour, Comrades, Mt. Kilimanjaro

Midmar Mile

In 1974 only 154 swimmers swam across the Midmar Dam because fuel restrictions had prevented them from travelling to the Buffalo River Race in East London in 1973. Otters water-polo club with the help of friends from Glenwood raised funds to purchase a new water-polo ball.

As the race grew in popularity Wayne Riddin stamped his authority on the early years of the race. He won in 1975 and 1976, was fourth in 1977 and second in 1978.

The first women's entries were received in 1975 but were regarded as "unofficial". Debbie McLaren was the first women's winner, and has gone on to swim the event every year since!

In 1977 entries topped the 1000 mark, 2000 in 1979 and 3000 by 1981 which led to which led to a new format at the start, with swimmers divided into groups according to age. Event 1 placed the girls and boys under 14 years, the men and women 31 years and older and all Ironmen entries together. This was followed with all men (14-30 years) in event 2 and later all women (14-30 years) in event 3. The introduction of a time limit of 50 minutes came this year.

In 1982 Tricia Butcher became the first woman to win the Mile three times (in succession and in total) and this time around had to defend her title against her sister, Susan. Gail Jeffrey was third. (See more about Tricia Butcher under Legends of the Midmar).

In 1984 and 1985 Graham Hill secured back to back victories but subsequently failed in his attempt to win three Midmar Mile titles when Shaun Rivalland turned the tables on Hill in 1986.

In 1987 more than 3500 entries were received.

In 1990 there was a record field with just over 4000 and Natasha Figge recorded her first official victory. She proved to be in a league of her own until her retirement after her 1995 victory where she had then won 7 Midmars.

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In 1992 over 4400 entries were received and the event was computerised for the first time. Also in 1992 seeding was introduced.

The next year (1993) Paul Fryer totally dominated the event, recording the largest ever victory margin of one minute and three seconds, while in the women's race, Natasha Figge made it victory number four in a row - eclipsing the three in a row won by Tricia Butcher in 1980-82. Times were slower this year, as the course had to be altered to accommodate the low level of the dam. The start was moved to the Morgenzon campsite and therefore slightly longer than other years at approximately 200 metres further. In 1994 a record breaking 5027 entries were received.

In 1999 over 10 000 swimmers finished the Midmar Mile for the first time in the race's history. A three-man tussle developed in the men's 14-30 year main race with the talented Commonwealth Games finalist Terence Parkin, Rob Mackay and Carl Storm on each other's heels. Seagulls star Parkin lead through the 400m and 800m Ola buoys to take the 'hotspots' before Wanderers distance specialist Mackay aimed at the R1200 purse at the 1200m mark. The two pushed hard only to cross the line together and share the spoils – and soon after the mark South African Junior triathlete Storm attempted to break away.

Only Mackay managed to respond to the Storm breakaway as Terence Parkin settled in for the third place and an additional R250 to add to his R1800 incentives along the route. Mackay hit the slipway first in 19 min 03 sec to take the R1600 overall prize for a total of R2200 while Storm took the R750 second place just seven seconds off the pace. Carl Storm lead home an unusual feat with brothers Anton in 7th place and Brad in 9th place setting a record of their own for a great performance by one family. Competitors completing the Mile swim in 1999 experienced probably the roughest conditions in the 26-year history of the event. However, despite the wet and rainy day, there were the least 'drop-outs' as a record 10 045 swimmers earned themselves a valentine's finishing medal.

Victory in 2000 went to super athlete Terence Parkin in a fast 18min 46sec ahead of previous double winner Gareth Fowler by just two seconds, preventing him from becoming the first male to win three times. Parkin went on that year to win silver in the 200 metres breaststroke at the Olympic Games in Sydney. Marika Theunissen was the Women's Champion in 2000.

2004 brought yet another record entry, this time 16 124.

In 2011, Chad Ho produced a very impressive swim to fend off a strong challenge from the British national team to successfully defend his men's title in 18:27. David Davies, swimming on the opposite side of the course to Ho, finished in second, 11 seconds off the winning time, with another Briton Alfie Howes taking third in 18:47.

The Midmar Mile celebrated its 40th anniversary in 2013 with another massive entry. Chad Ho dominated the men's race to win for a fourth year in a row, winning in 17:57. In 2023 a total of 32 swimmers completed the gruelling 16-Mile Challenge while 231 entrants completed the 8-Mile Challenge. Collectively they raised millions of rand for charity in the process and the 50th staging of the Midmar Mile saw thousands of swimmers participating in a 4 day event. 32 swimmers swam 16 miles and 231 swam 8 miles raising millions for Charity.