



Runners for Life (Sherina Desai)

The Lenasia Athletics Club (LAC) was established in 1988. Its founding members were Siva Veeran, Vassie Subramoney, Ali Springfield, Khatija Veeran, Ahmed Karolia and Bharat Parbhoo. The first leader of the club was Ali Springfield.

The Executive of the Lenasia Athletic Club at the time demonstrated foresight and passion. This selfless act allowed ordinary people to have access to major events taking place on our doorsteps. Our Club members pushed hard to open avenues, brought literature of running and keeping fit to Lenasia.

The LAC has always maintained a progressive mindset and vision. This is reflected in our culture, as evidenced by the inclusion of a female member on our executive committee since its establishment. Khatija Veeran's portfolio speaks volumes of her character and her leadership qualities.

The Dark Days

This core group of runners struggled to keep the club alive under apartheid. The club faced various challenges, and several methods were used to accommodate the runners and athletes based in Lenasia. Sport-hungry athletes had to travel far and wide to find a corner to share or listen to the expert advice that was not readily available to us.

The criteria for a club to break into a sport that was dominated by Whites was more stringent than what we have today. One of the rulings of the Central Athletic Association at the time was that a club had to prove its membership numbers - the minimum being 50 members. Given the time and circumstances this was certainly one of the most challenging rulings for a young club like the LAC.

Lenasia-based runners and athletes travelled to surrounding areas like Eldorado Park and the northern suburbs to participate in races. Many of our members

previously belonged to the Brotherhood and Jaguars Clubs based in Eldorado Park and the Rand Athletic Club in Randburg.



To the Kovalen Brothers, Naresh Nana, Sharita, Boer Lala and others who participated in the Comrades Marathon in its early years, we recognise your involvement and commend your incredible strength and perseverance.

The LAC's colours are White, Blue and Red - white represents neutrality, blue signifies brotherhood (initially brought in from the Brotherhood Club) and red represents the jaguar stripes (drawn from Jaguars Club). It now represents our speed.

Other members who came into the fold and carried our banner high are Ahmed Cassim, Bashir Ahmed, Yunus Bhamjee, Vanessa and Sandra Singh, Rodger Naidoo. the Kovalan Brothers, Luich Morar and the late Adam Lorgat.

The LAC runs a Development Programme that started in 1996. It arranged for 60 odd youngsters of all races and ages to participate in cross-country competitions. They were trained under the coaching leadership of Nadishah Khan, Ayoob Chandly, Lalita Parsooth, Sherina Desai, Monty and Vigie Budhoo and Dinesh Nagar. The late Adam "Eddie" Suliman also played an instrumental role in our development programmes.

The success of this club and the growth of the individuals is evident in our community to this day. We have Monty Budhoo, Anil Nana and Jaydev Parbhoo from the old guard not missing many of the Rose Park Runs, Nadishah Khan manages a

successful coaching academy in the north of Johannesburg and from the coffers of LAC, we had the first Indian female achieving a gold placing at the Comrades Marathon. The Iron Men and Ladies added more accolades to our club. We are proud of Anand, who without fail represents this community in the Midmar and Iron Man events. We do have many of our members achieving podium finishers and Harshik Bhuda continuous to fly the balloons high at most major events.



The story of LAC continues

We cannot discount Mem Moosa's contribution to growing this club. He was involved in the very early days getting the LAC up and running. Although he now belongs to Brotherhood, he is seen at all LAC events being our biggest supporter. He has also published a 25-year history of the LAC.

The LAC's top achievers are:

Kashmira Parbhoo – first LAC female to achieve Gold in the Comrades Marathon 2009,

Koovalin Moodley (Lenasia South) - Silver Medal at Comrades,

Harshik Budha - Best LAC Comrades finishers over the last few years,

Fahani Madhi (now Jozi X) first Indian to complete the ironman event in South Africa,

Ismail Hassim – the only member in the club to have run at least three Knysna Marathons,

Naresh Nana is the only member on record to have climbed second base of Everest Kilimanjaro and also holds the club's record for most Comrades finishers,

Nadi Khan (Now Jozi X) represented South Africa in both duathlon events in Paris and Canada

Anand Morar - only member of LAC with most Ironman (Nelson Mandela Bay) finishers,

Archie Moosa – completed Argus Cycle Races 9 times, and

Suliman Mohamed – 1995 Comrades last runner in.

Presently, we are blessed with a crop of younger people, who are actively engaging and executing tasks to keep the LAC moving from ordinary to excellent. We have a good partnership with our sponsors, Pradeep Gowen, Klevas, Khan's Chemicals and 27Four, who have assisted the LAC for over a decade.



The LAC is working on getting the 21km race on the map again. **LAC 2024 Neon Run&Walk** was a huge success, and we achieved our goal in getting our community out on the streets. We have plans in place for the future and promise to get it bigger and better and our Sponsors have promised to make this an annual event.

Our goal remains to encourage members of our community, both young and old, to embrace a healthy lifestyle. We have weekly Runs/Walks starting from Virgin Active.

For those who need a challenge, weekly runs are planned and shared under the leadership of our running and walking Captains. We encourage participation in community events as well as the Rose Park Run on Saturdays. Naresh, Maya, Anil Sadia and Chris Moonsamy will assist and advise you on your journey towards a healthy and happy lifestyle. LAC has started a **Tekkie Drive** to help those in need. Please drop off old shoes as they are valuable and should not be left unused.



We cater for those over the age of whatever you think is OLD, and Najah Mohammed and others are always there to take your hand to cross that line.

Our contact details are:

Chairperson: Ashreff - 083 275 3269

Vice-Chairperson: Ismail Hassim - 081 482 3203

Secretary: Ferhana

PRO: Zaheer 074 433 3270/Licensing Sadia Valli /Finance Yusuf Motala & Yusuf Waja

We are a proud club and proud of the Lenasia community. 37 years going. No clubhouse, no track, yet we keep moving forward!



