

# With you from start to finish - with a 'bus' along the way

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Main sponsor of The Comrades Marathon, Bonitas Medical Fund, has reiterated its support for the 25,000 runners, their families and beneficiary charities at this year's gruelling 'up' race with a number of initiatives to ensure they are there from 'start to finish'.



'The true spirit of The Comrades is the guts, determination and teamwork it takes to finish this 89km ultra-marathon,' says Lee Callakoppen, Principal Officer of Bonitas. 'We believe every runner is a hero and want to honour their success. For the past decade we have been an integral part of the incredible Comrades story and continue to salute runners for the time, patience, effort and commitment they have invested to be part of this race. It is such a proudly South African event and we are thrilled to once again be on the start and finish line at this year's race.'

## *The Bonitas support*

The sponsorship is multifaceted and designed to help runners every step of the way – pre, during and post the race. It began with the hosting of a number of countrywide educational, motivational and inspirational seminars to assist runners make it across the finish line. The seminars were aimed specifically at the novice runner and women to get them prepared, both physically and mentally for the race. There were also roadshows held to provide tips and important information to run a safe and healthy race.

## *Talking of heroes*

A mini website has been created by Bonitas that provides important information on the route, nutrition, hydration, rest and much more. It also features Comrades heroes – past and present. Real people telling their Comrades story. Runners are encouraged to share their experiences online.

Bonitas has also brought on board a digital partner who will live stream the event – details and links are on the website.

## *Pre-race boosts*

During the Comrades expo, in addition to having various BMI testing and physiotherapy at the Bonitas stand, there will also be an 'expert advice booth' manned by Coach Parry and other experienced runners. They will be available to answer any questions and give invaluable route tips, especially when it comes to pacing.

You can also relax and enjoy some light hearted fun and win fabulous prizes with the 'win and spin' activation at the exhibition.

## *At the start*

On Sunday, June 9 in Durban the team from Bonitas will be on the start line to cheer on the runners. In addition a total of eight 'Bonitas Buses' led by experienced pace setters have been co-ordinated to assist runners run their best race. These buses are grouped in time categories, geared for different running styles and pace and finishing the race at different times. The 'bus drivers' will be appropriately dressed with signage to keep the 'passengers' together as they run the race – all in keeping with the 2019 slogan of 'Together We Triumph'.

## *Standing out from the crowd*

Bonitas believes its involvement in The Comrades goes way beyond the sponsorship. 'It's about making a difference and giving the runners and their supporters what they want – from pre-race tips and advice through to on the day support', says Callakoppen. 'For us it is about living out our slogan promise and being with the runners 'from start to finish'. We are a proudly South African company that promotes health and wellness and provides accessible quality healthcare, which makes this race an ideal fit for the brand.'

'This race is billed as the ultimate human endurance and it is no surprise when you consider some of the stats,' says Callakoppen including:

- The fact that for every km run 66 joints, 55 bones and more than 100 ligaments, muscles and tendons go into action every time a shoe hits the ground
- Most runners will lose around 3-5kg during the race
- Around 43% will suffer from cramps

Yet this does not deter them in their quest to cross that finish line.

'We salute the dedication and determination of these runners and are proud to be part of this amazing journey – from start to finish.'

For more information or to share your Comrades hero story go to: <https://comrades.bonitas.co.za/>

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