

Ryk breathes easy ahead of August Olympic Games

Local pharmaceutical company Cipla will be assisting one of SA's finest athletes, Ryk Neethling, in his quest for success at the Beijing Olympics this August.

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The company has also signed a 3 year sponsorship deal with Neethling, a chronic asthmatic who uses Cipla's range of respiratory products.

Cipla CEO Jerome Smith said: "We are delighted to be associated with a sportsman of Ryk's calibre. His legendary sporting achievements have established him as a role model for hard work, determination and success to many both locally and internationally. However the fact he's achieved his level of success despite lifelong asthma proves if one has the necessary talent, a chronic condition such as asthma - if properly managed - should never impede one's performance or stand in the way of one's goals."

Neethling, who is currently undergoing an intensive 17 week training programme ahead of his fourth Olympic bid at his base in Arizona, said his new association with Cipla was well timed. "I recently changed to Cipla's products after my medical team reassessed my condition and medications ahead of commencing my Olympic training schedule. My base training has been intense the past few weeks with a lot of running and weight training, plus nine 6km swim training sessions per week. The new medications have made my chest feel a lot more 'open', as if I get an extra couple of litres in my lungs which of course is aiding my training immensely. I haven't had any difficulty breathing either which has been great as it's been very windy here lately with a lot of dust around.

"At times Beijing's air pollution levels have been nearly five times above the World Health Organisation's safety standards and for people predisposed to asthma and allergies, preventative treatment is going to be crucial to coping during the Games, especially when you add in the heat, humidity and severe dust storms the city experiences. Fortunately those factors were considered in my new medications so I'm feeling pretty confident heading to Beijing."

"My dream when I was younger was to go to one Olympic Games. I never imagined then that I would have the privilege of being the first South African to compete at four Olympic Games, so I'm working extremely hard towards August."

After the Olympics, Neethling will return to SA for a rest period and to resume work with his swim academy and swim school in Centurion.

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