

# The Weekly

## NGWATHE BECOMES SA'S POWERBOAT MECCA

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Future powerboat superstars ... Some of the youngsters that are sponsored by the Ngwathe Local Municipality to become Powerboat drivers

**The municipality is developing dozens of township kids to become international Powerboat drivers and sent them overseas to hone their skills.**

Preparations for the annual Phakisa Ngwathe Powerboat Racing festival later this month in Parys are already underway and it is expected to make a dramatic return with an electrifying display of power and skill in water.

This is according to Formula One (F1) powerboat promoter and development programme publicist, Zola Key.

Key said the training dates for the 16 powerboat superstars have commenced and added that the festival will line up a number of other fun activities including wine tasting and an air show.

He promised that revellers will be blown away by the kids' talents with some of them having just returned from the F1 National Powerboat Racing Championship (PRC) series in Ternopil, Ukraine, where they finished in 12th place.

The Ngwathe Local Municipality powerboat development programme is recognised by Union International Motonautique (UIM), a governing body with similar racing rules such as Formula One car racing.

Key said the training programme is part of the annual F1 PRC series and singled out one of the determined young talents.

“One of the young kids to definitely look out for is 17-year-old Puleng Direko, who has demonstrated tremendous enthusiasm; she is brave and intelligent, she observes the officials from time to time, which is a very special skill.”

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“We took them to the PRC to motivate them, they went as observers and they did well because they were part of the crew. They were taught how to look out for their boats and how to look out for their pilot.

In the next two years, we are going to have a female F1 pilot coming from this province,” he added.

Key said there will be various pilots racing competitions in a number of different types of craft including hard-bottom or leisure boats.

Each powerboat race will last approximately 45 minutes following a circuit marked out in a selected stretch of water, lake, river or sheltered bay.

Every race circuit is different in size but generally about 2000m in distance with each circuit consisting of at least one long straightaway and several right turns, mostly left with one or two right turns.

Key has made it his mission to grow the sport in the Free State.

“My wish is to make the Free State the hub of powerboats; when people think of powerboats they must think of this province,” he said.

[Source: [www.theweekly.co.za](http://www.theweekly.co.za)]