



IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **Momentum gsport awards celebrates overcoming the seemingly impossible**

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Impossible does not exist. These were the words of Nontokoza Madonsela, Group Chief Marketing Officer at Momentum Metropolitan Holdings, at the 16th Momentum gsport Awards, which was enjoyed by many South Africans on Supersport Variety 4 on 31 August.

The awards ceremony acknowledges and celebrates women in the sports industry and this year saw the best of the best being honoured in all their glad rags.

The Momentum gsport Awards has been a cornerstone in the world of women's sport and is a highly acclaimed feather in the caps of those who have received awards over the years. From double Olympic gold medallist Caster Semenya to cricket administrator Sandy Flanagan, and now Olympic debutant medalists Tatjana Schoenmaker and Bianca Buitendag, the awards have always been a safe and nurturing space for women in sport to shine off the field as they do on it.

Though unstoppable and owning their success, Nontokoza spoke of the importance of humility. This is a quality that was displayed all night as the women who were nominated celebrated each other and their successes by gracious and graceful praise of each other's achievements. Wheelchair Tennis star Kgothatso Montjane was the big winner of the evening with two awards for Brand SA Para Sport Star and Sasol Global Woman in Sport while champion bowler Shabnim Ismail won the Momentum Athlete of the Year award following a history making year for her on the global stage and with the Momentum Proteas. Truly unstoppable women who have not only made a name for themselves but done wonders for the cause of women in sport nationwide.

Speaking about unstoppable women, Nontokoza touched on some of this year's finalists and said these women prove that the impossible does not exist. South African wheelchair tennis ace, Montjane, recently made Wimbledon history by being the first black South African woman to reach the singles and doubles finals. Schoenmaker was also recognised by our Sports Minister after winning South Africa's only gold medal at the Olympics in Tokyo for the 200m breaststroke and setting a new world record.

Nontokoza, who is part of the team behind the Momentum sponsorship of gsport and its recent three-year renewal, spoke about sponsorship as an important part of the journey toward

recognising women in sport. “Women athletes continue to rise and brands need to step up, be counted, and invest in women’s sports,” she said. The Momentum sponsorship effort has focused on the professional advancement of women cricketers at the highest level over the past eight years and resulted in more women cricketers being contracted globally. She said sponsoring women’s sport is not just about the game itself but is part of a larger struggle for women to own their spaces and succeed despite the odds.

Impossible really didn’t exist as our country’s best sportswomen held their own and Nontokozi’s words on standing for something rang true as the winners accepted their awards with words of thanks to the people who helped them get to where they are, as well as self-acknowledgement of their own hard work. Montjane said, “I’ve always said in the past, every time when I win an award, that it is a motivation to me to keep going, to keep working hard. I never thought that I would one day be a double winner to be honest, but it’s things like this that keeps me going and makes me appreciate my work.”

In a video message, Ismail – currently in West Indies with the national team – said, “I am really honoured and privileged to have received the Momentum Athlete of the Year award. I just want to say a huge thank you to Momentum, gsport, the Department of Sport, Arts and Culture. I really wish I was there to receive this award in person.” The team is playing three T20 internationals and five one-day internationals against the Windies, which began on the day of the awards.

Momentum’s Head of Brand Marketing Charlotte Nsubuga-Mukasa handed out the Public Choice Award winner, Mbali Sigidi who was a Woman in TV finalist.

Momentum Metropolitan Head of Sponsorship and Events Carel Bosman presented the Coach of the Year award which went to SA Water Polo team head coach, Delaine Mentoor, whose team became the first women’s water polo team from Africa to qualify for the Olympics.

The night’s celebrations were a beautiful coming together of talent and inspiration and the idea that nothing is impossible truly resonated among the athletes and all attendees. The road to unstoppable success, which involves building something where there was nothing, was embodied in gsport’s founder, Kass Naidoo, who started gsport 15 years ago. “Until 2006, South African women’s sport had virtually no public profile. That changed ... when Kass launched gsport4girls, an online initiative committed to daily coverage of women’s sport to bridge the gap with men’s sport,” Nontokozi said. Today, women’s sports coverage has increased and the initiative has grown into a movement, proving that where others think that something is impossible, the impossible does not exist.