

Diepsloot girls play at the national chess championship

Two Grade 5 girls from Diepsloot, who started playing chess through the [Tsogo Sun Moves for Life Chess programme](#) in 2015, made such excellent progress in the sport that they were selected to be part of the Johannesburg Metro Chess Union team at the SA Junior Chess Championship in Boksburg in December. [Montecasino](#) has been sponsoring the Tsogo Sun Moves for Life programme in Diepsloot for three years in five primary schools, accommodating 3 791 children.

The girls, Lindiwe Ranko, aged 12, and Puledi Seema, aged 11, attend the Musenga Vhadzimu Primary School in Diepsloot. They qualified for the SAJCC through participation at school as well as at the Johannesburg Metro Trials, playing in the U14 and U12 sections respectively.

The Johannesburg Metro team did exceptionally well in the championship, having been placed in 18th position out of 22 teams at the start and finishing in 6th place overall. Lindiwe won two of her seven games and Puledi won six of her seven games. They both thoroughly enjoyed the challenges and intensity of the demanding tournament and are committed to being regular players for Johannesburg Metro Chess, playing in the A team.

Says McDonald Mabuya, their Tsogo Sun Moves for Life Coach, "The reason that these girls stand out from among their peers is the amount of extra effort they put into the game; they practice chess every afternoon from Monday to Thursday. They deserve this chance and I am proud of the progress they are making in the game."

The girls are both passionate about chess and are delighted with their achievement. Lindiwe says, "I love how unpredictable the game can be and I love doing things that challenge me mentally. I also like interacting with other people my age – and chess is a great way to achieve this." Puledi says she loves chess because it has helped her choose her friends carefully and with wisdom. "It has also given us the opportunity to travel to other place and meet children from other areas."

Mabuya hopes that this achievement by these youngsters will inspire other girls to take up chess as it offers a wide range of benefits to learners. Glenn Joseph, GM of Montecasino explains, "The aim of the Tsogo Sun Moves for Life programme is to use chess as a tool for education which helps to improve children's mathematics, science and problem-solving skills. The idea is to improve the cognitive and analytical abilities of youngsters by exposing them to the mental discipline provided by the game of chess."

The girls' mothers, teachers and principal are extremely proud of how far these girls have come and how they are representing Diepsloot at the national championships. Puledi's mother says, "I never thought my daughter could make me so proud at such a young age!"

Mabuya believes that a lot more chess should be played in disadvantaged areas such as Diepsloot, giving children all the benefits that the sport offers. He thanked Montecasino and Tsogo Sun Moves for Life for their sponsorship. "Without their financial support and their dedication to the Moves for Life programme, none of this would be possible."