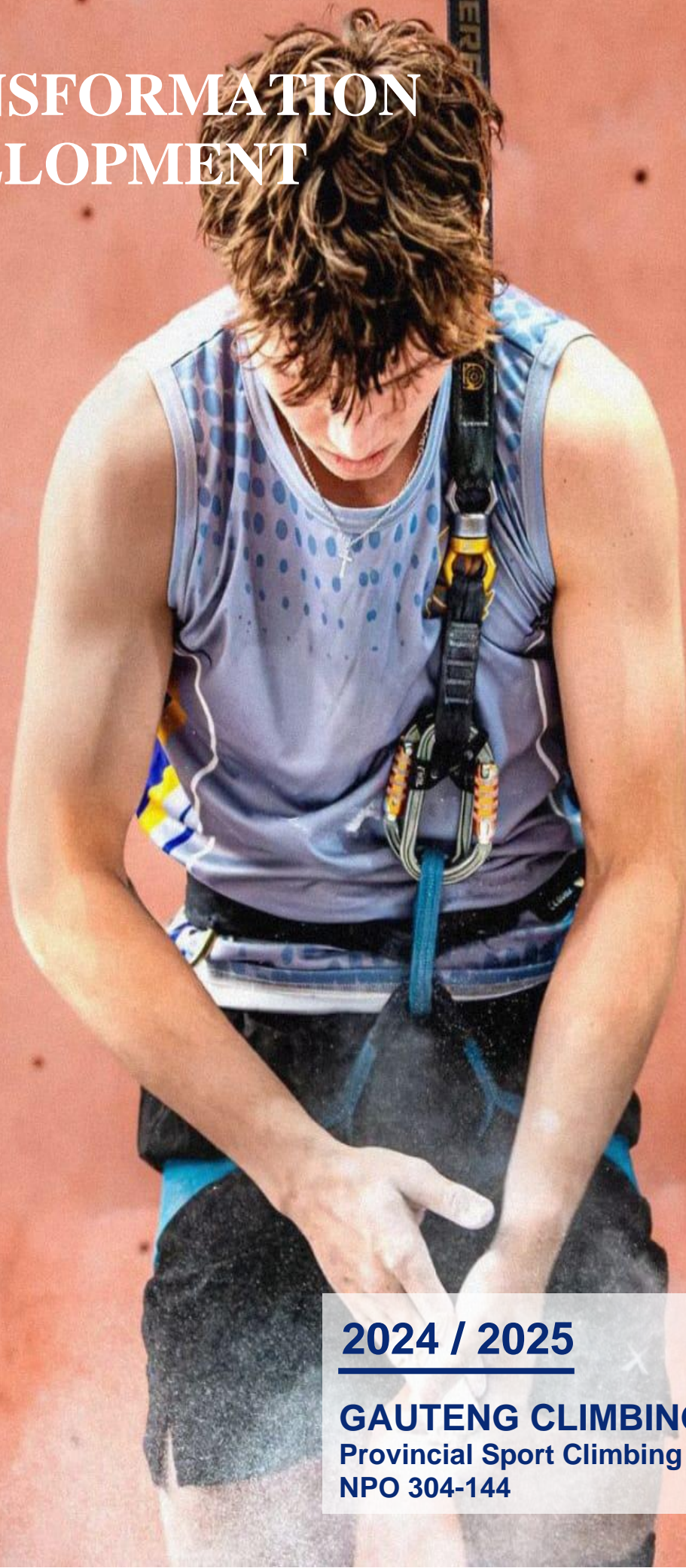


TRANSFORMATION DEVELOPMENT PLAN



2024 / 2025

GAUTENG CLIMBING
Provincial Sport Climbing Body
NPO 304-144





GAUTENG CLIMBING

Purpose

➤ Transcend

To inspire climbers to transcend their limitations through growth, development and opportunity.

Values

➤ Community

Our community is the foundation on which we build highly respectful, deeply connected, and lasting friendships between organisers, parents, climbers, and friends.

➤ Safety

We strive to create climbing experiences in which all people feel safe to express their emotions, and have confidence to take risks and feel challenged and excited to try something new.

➤ Psych

We encourage a healthy dose of psych, PSYCH where people psych each other in, rather than out.

Mission

➤ Climb. Connect. Transcend



Photo Credit: Surefooted Photography

“Only through delivering on the growth and development of our Gauteng climbers, and ensuring equal opportunity for all, will we enable them to transcend their limitations.”

Transformation of Sport Climbing

Introduction

Sport climbing represents a relatively recent addition to South Africa's sporting landscape. With its introduction at the Tokyo Olympics in 2021, where South Africa proudly sent both a male and female representative, the foundation is laid for the growth of this dynamic activity.

Although climbing is a new sport, it is arguably one of humanity's oldest physical activities and is inherently intuitive for children, who often take to it naturally.

Climbing has been enjoyed as a leisure activity in South Africa since the early 1900s, fostering a small yet dedicated community of outdoor enthusiasts. Notably, in 1996, South Africa launched an expedition to Mount Everest, sanctioned by Nelson Mandela, with aspirations of placing the South African flag atop the world's highest peak—a goal they successfully achieved.

Historically, climbing has been perceived as a predominantly male-dominated sport, originating in Europe before gradually becoming more inclusive on a global scale. The South African National Climbing Federation (SANCF) was only established in 2010 and has been actively working to align with transformation initiatives. Gauteng Climbing has been progressively developing the infrastructure necessary to promote the sport at a provincial level and is now positioned for expansion.

Our transformation agenda is centred on three key areas: increasing participation among people of colour, promoting women in sport, and advancing the adaptive climbing scene.

Through these initiatives, we aim to enhance accessibility to sport climbing, elevate the competitive standards of our athletes, and transform our administrative team as well.

“People don’t buy what you are selling, they buy what you believe in.”

The Sport Climbing Landscape

Climbing is a sport that encounters significant barriers to accessibility. The limited availability of recreational locations, high costs, and the essential skill gap needed for participant safety present considerable challenges.

For athletes, engaging in climbing entails substantial expenses, including costly equipment, membership fees at climbing gyms, and coaching focused on safety, technique, and performance.

Since the establishment of Gauteng Climbing in 2010, there was initially only one climbing facility in Johannesburg and another in Pretoria. Currently, Gauteng boasts five commercial climbing facilities and two university climbing walls.

As a result, climbing access is primarily restricted to individuals living near these locations or those who can travel to them. Although a few schools possess functional climbing walls, these facilities often fall short of modern sport climbing standards.

Our clubs operate within commercial climbing spaces, and schools with climbing teams typically supplement their training on school walls with sessions at climbing gyms to prepare their athletes for competitive environments.

Climbing has faced transformation challenges like those encountered by many sports federations in attracting female participants. However preconceived notions about the sport and its demographic remain difficult to overcome.

One of our most significant obstacles is engaging stakeholders who are preoccupied with navigating the current economic climate; as a result, there are limited time and resources available for philanthropic initiatives when many individuals are struggling to meet their basic needs.

Given the high costs associated with climbing, previously disadvantaged communities find it difficult to justify the financial investment required, and our climbing Provinces' limited resources impede our ability to assist them in bridging this gap.

Over the past couple of years, Gauteng Climbing have made extensive efforts to increase our participation levels which would lead to new opportunities for expanding the sport.

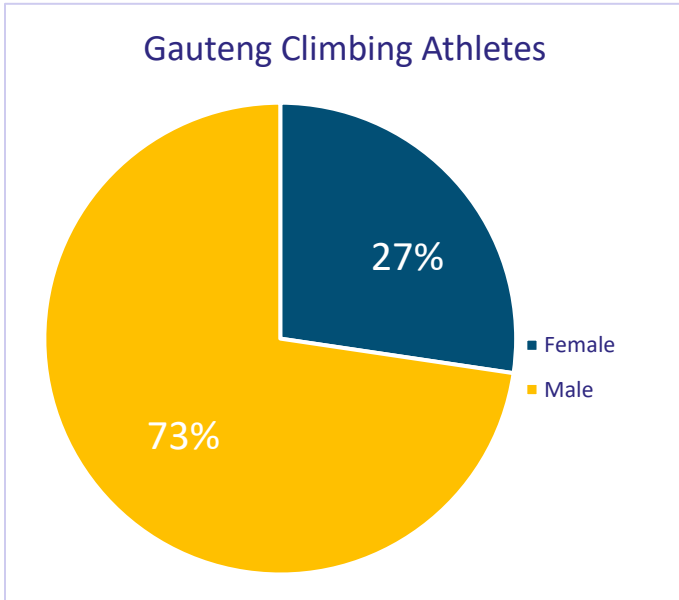
Recently, Gauteng Climbing obtained our Non-Profit Organization (NPO) status. With this achievement, we can now actively seek funding from various sources, which will significantly enhance our capacity to broaden the scope of our transformation agenda.

Transformation in Action

Despite the challenges mentioned above, Gauteng Climbing has been proactive with enacting transformation on the ground. We have opened pathways for people of all colours and of all genders to become equally involved in our sport.

We have reached out to the adaptive climbing community via the Adaptive Sport Fund and hosted a fun day with one of our gym partners, bringing their community into a climbing gym, letting them see and experience climbing.

Despite climbing being a traditionally male dominated sport, we have worked hard to give all climbers a chance to compete, including designing competition climbs specifically for the separate female and male categories. This has seen a rise in the number of female competitors, bringing our numbers close to even and in some categories, there are more female climbers than male climbers.



Our gyms have a positive impact on this and programs like “Climb Like a Girl” program has seen huge success in bringing women into a safe space within climbing.

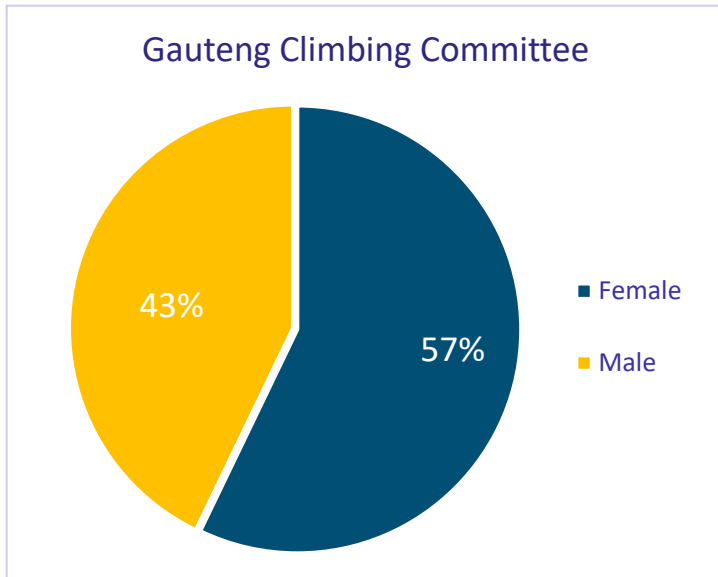
This is a space for women to learn from other women and climb together.

This group isn't focused on competing but rather using climbing as a tool for physical and mental health and they are involved in the volunteer space of Gauteng Climbing, acting as judges and scorers, helping manage competitions and acting as role models to the young competitors.

Over the past few years, we have observed an increasing number of women assuming significant administrative roles within our community.

Carmen Bouwer, a coach and the manager of one of the local Gauteng Climbing Clubs, has taken on the role of Manager for the South African Youth Climbing Team during the 2022, 2023, and the recent 2024 Youth Games in Guiyang, China. In 2023, Carmen participated in the SASCOC Sports Administrators workshop, from which she returned with invaluable insights and information to contribute to the development of our sport.

Currently the Gauteng Climbing Committee comprises 57% females and 43% males.



With Lee Atkinson acting as Treasurer, Bridgette Erdey as Secretary General, and Carmen Bouwer as President, these women hold key positions within our Management Committee (MANCO).

Additionally, committee members Heidi Marais and Debbie McGowan also contribute to our Provincial leadership.

Gauteng Climbing is fortunate to have member Katleho Pobe in our province. Currently, KP serves as both a Head Route setter at one of the local climbing gyms and a coach to young athletes.

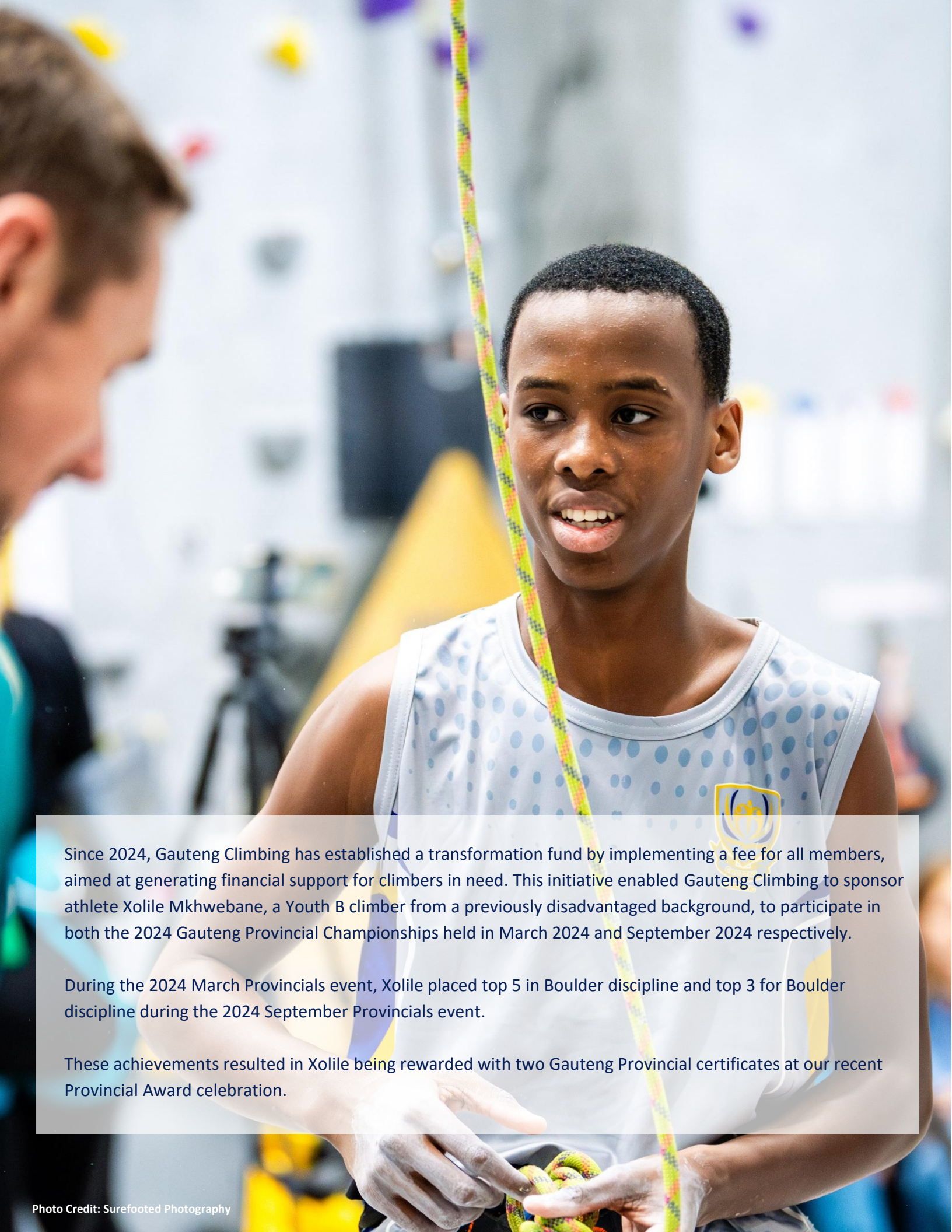
He has a remarkable talent for climbing and has represented both Gauteng and South Africa in various climbing competitions. Last year, he participated amongst a group of key individual setters at the 2023 IFSC Africa Qualifier Event held at Loftus Versveld. This event was one of the Olympic qualifier events in selecting athletes for the Paris Olympic Games held recently.

The collaboration with the head route setter from the International Federation of Sport Climbing (IFSC) and the rest of his colleges provided him with invaluable experience and enhanced his exposure in the field.

In 2023, he also served on the management team for the South African Youth Climbing team at the IFSC Youth World Championships in Korea.



This achievement is a testament to the dedicated efforts made over the past few years to establish a developmental pathway for his career.

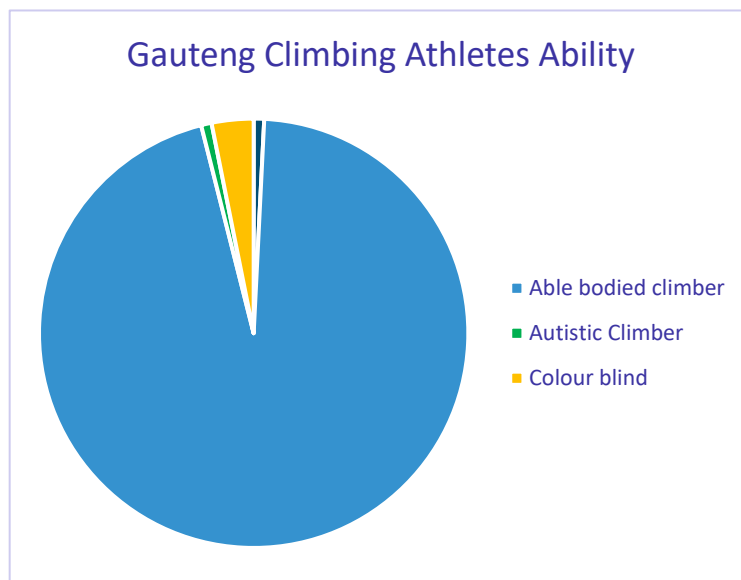


Since 2024, Gauteng Climbing has established a transformation fund by implementing a fee for all members, aimed at generating financial support for climbers in need. This initiative enabled Gauteng Climbing to sponsor athlete Xolile Mkhwebane, a Youth B climber from a previously disadvantaged background, to participate in both the 2024 Gauteng Provincial Championships held in March 2024 and September 2024 respectively.

During the 2024 March Provincials event, Xolile placed top 5 in Boulder discipline and top 3 for Boulder discipline during the 2024 September Provincials event.

These achievements resulted in Xolile being rewarded with two Gauteng Provincial certificates at our recent Provincial Award celebration.

In our efforts to expand the special needs climbing category, we are delighted to introduce eleven-year-old Sophia Aurelia Smit, who is on the autism spectrum. Sophia has actively participated in all local Junior climbing events hosted at our climbing facilities. We aspire to cultivate a strong relationship within this community and eagerly anticipate the participation of more individuals, both children and adults, on the spectrum in our sport.



Transformation Agenda

Our long-term objectives centre on three pivotal areas we have identified. We aspire to create pathways that facilitate engagement in climbing for individuals of all colours, genders, and abilities, encompassing experiences from recreational participation to high-level competition at both local and international levels.

Furthermore, we are committed to supporting newcomers in entering the sport and empowering them to contribute by becoming coaches, founding clubs, and participating in the administrative framework of our governing body.

Over the past two years, we have been cultivating partnerships with various stakeholders, who play a vital role in our transformation process aimed at achieving our goals. Previously, commercial climbing facilities offered reduced membership rates and access to essential equipment, and we hope to reinstate this initiative as we move into 2025 and beyond.

Furthermore, Gauteng Climbing in collaboration with our National Federation, is exploring the integration of the adaptive climbing community into sport climbing. However, this initiative faces significant challenges, including limited access to knowledge and resources, as well as the small number of adaptive climbers currently engaging in report climbing activities. We aim to strengthen our partnership with the Adaptive Sport Fund and organize another enjoyable event to introduce their community to the sport of climbing.

As a province, we recognize that our transformation involves enhancing knowledge and skills through workshops, both online and in-person. This year, two of our administrators participated in the SASCOG Para Sport Conference, hosted by the Gauteng Sports Council, where they had the opportunity to connect with a wheelchair rugby classifier who is also an avid climber. Furthermore, we have engaged with another individual who serves as a classifier across various sports. Both are eager to contribute to and integrate into the competitive climbing community.

Achieving comprehensive gender equality in climbing depends significantly on the united efforts of the recreational climbing community. Our partnership with programs such as Climb Like a Girl and commercial climbing facilities will be instrumental in broadening access to competitive climbing for those who currently participate solely in recreational climbing.



Moving Forward

Our existing support for providing financial assistance to previously disadvantaged athletes motivate us to extend this support to a greater number of climbers of colour who are facing challenges in meeting financial requirements.

Recently, Gauteng Climbing distributed a Google Form to all its members, parents, and affiliated clubs with the objective of establishing a volunteer base for subcommittees. This initiative aims to engage the broader climbing community in various areas of involvement. We believe that by fostering community participation, we can harness the collective strength of a united community, while also emphasizing the inclusion of more women, previously disadvantaged athletes, and adaptive climbers.

Our province is currently awaiting further information from our National Federation regarding a potential Para climbing administrator's course. This initiative aims to enhance understanding and training in competition planning, management, and route setting, specifically tailored for adaptive climbers.

We are eager to explore this area further, especially with Emily Grey representing South Africa in para climbing. This area of development will present our Province with a significant opportunity to host events that can effectively promote our sport and generate positive exposure.

Conclusion

We know and understand that Sport Climbing has a long way to go before we meet the transformation agenda set by the greater sporting community. We are however grateful to have a dedicated team of volunteers and a growing community who we can rely on to bring climbing to all citizens of Gauteng.

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Secretary General: secretary@gauteng-climbing.co.za

Treasurer: treasurer@gauteng-climbing.co.za



GAUTENG CLIMBING

A woman with dark hair in a ponytail is climbing a rock wall. She is wearing a blue tank top, dark pants, and a climbing harness. She is using blue climbing shoes and is reaching up to grab a blue climbing hold. The wall is white with a vertical blue stripe. A blue carabiner is visible on the wall to the right.

***“In the world of purpose driven organizations,
the true name of the game is implementation.”***