

Motor racing driver Nathi Msimanga is living out his childhood car racing dreams

Issued by [Sumitomo Dunlop](#)

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With a love for all things automotive inspired by movies he watched when he was a child, and having passed the Kyalami Race Track on his way to school each day, it was only time before motor racing took centre stage in Nathi Msimanga's life - and he is now literally living out his childhood dreams.



: Dynamic young racer Nathi Msimanga is a rising star on the tracks, and will be part of the Toyota Gazoo Racing team in the upcoming motorsport season.

The Midrand born-and-raised Toyota Gazoo Racing driver has further sealed his passion for automobiles by pursuing studies that also deal with moving parts. He is presently undertaking a degree in Mechanical Engineering at Wits University.

“My passion for cars goes as far back as I can remember. I turn 20 in September, and when I was a child, the movies Cars and the Fast and Furious franchise were very popular. I was so obsessed with cars that I soon got into indoor karting where I was very quick on the track. Seeing my passion and early talent, my dad contacted a professional go-kart team, Squadra Corsa, and within a few weeks I was an official racer,” said Msimanga.

The passion for driving turned into practice two to three times a week.

“I trained as frequently as I could because I loved the adrenaline rush. At the same time though, the early days were not all roses because my competitors had a lot more experience than I did, so I worked very hard to catch up to their years of practice and skill,” said Msimanga.

The groundwork and passion soon paid off for Msimanga, with Toyota Gazoo Racing spotting his talent.

“Toyota reached out to me to potentially drive the third GTC car for Toyota Gazoo Racing in the 2023 season. Needless to say, I grabbed the opportunity with both hands. Toyota is a fantastic brand, and I am really excited to drive for them. It turned out to be the best decision of my career so far. Right now, I am fourth in the championship. I know that I have the

speed, and with the support from my family and Toyota family, I am sure I can secure a higher placement,” he said.

The Toyota Gazoo Racing SA team, races in the GRCUP, Global Touring Cars (GTC) series, as well as the Yaris League at South Africa's premier motorsport event, the National Extreme Festival. The Dunlop Motorsport Service team, operating from their newly equipped fitment bay at Zwartkops, was fully operational throughout the festival ensuring that all the Toyota Gazoo Racing vehicles were fitted with their Dunlop tyres.

There's clearly no stopping Msimanga in his pursuit of his dreams.

“My goal is to race in the GT3 category, but not specific to a series as they are all great. Every race helps you do better the next time. In fact, after every race I put some notes down in a book to help me and the team reflect on what went well, what didn't go well, so that we can do better next time. My hardest race was go-karting in the rain in my first national race in Junior Max at iDube Raceway in Camperdown, KZN. I was not familiar with this track and it took a lot from me to keep focused. But every time there's a race that you don't do well in, it means you have gained experience into how you perform in different situations. At the end of the day it's up to you to use that experience to do better the next time. I take inspiration from Lewis Hamilton who has poet Maya Angelou's famous quote “Still I Rise” tattooed on his back. I think it sums up my approach to everything I do,” he said.

With a parallel career in mechanical engineering coming round the corner quickly too, Msimanga is a wealth of knowledge on moving parts.

When it comes to tyres, he advises: “When acquiring a new tyre, it's important to check the tyre compound. Too soft, it's fast but doesn't last long, and if too hard they are slow. A good balance is key to the right tyre for your vehicle. And as any technician will tell you, always inspect your tyres for bulges, wear and tear, tread, or overheating,” he said.

The driven young man is eager for success and chasing his dreams through commitment, dedication and practice.

“What I love about motor racing is that it pushes man and machinery to their absolute limit in pursuit for the ultimate lap time or victory. It combines cars, speed, and competition into one. When I am racing, all my worries disappear, and it just allows me to focus on just driving. It is a stress relief for me in some ways too,” he said.

And off the track, Msimanga is crazy about a different kind of wheels that can get you from point A to point B.

“I buy and sell sneakers so you will find me at sneaker events or shoe drops, or car events sporting sneakers!”

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