

Shaun Bartlett admits to missing epic adventure

By [Shaun Bartlett](#), issued by [Mscsports](#)

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I decided to do the ABSA Cape Epic thinking that it would be a great adventure and would get me out of my comfort zone which I have been in for the last 17 years playing football!



I think that when I look back I would rate it as one of the stupidest things that I have ever done! Having said that though, finishing the event, injury free, is something that I am most proud of.

As my friends at Toyota continue with the race currently, I admit to having texted and called them on a regular basis, as I miss the event and all it's torture's terribly !

There's no doubt that there were many a tough time in the event, but luckily there were a few factors that kept me going. Firstly the encouragement of my partner and the will to finish the race was huge. The other factor was that I was competing with other sportsmen within the race itself: ie. Mark Fish and Chester Williams. I have no doubt that this is the same with Adrian Garvey - determined to show Joel Stransky a thing or two. The physio's and masseuse provided by Toyota certainly worked overtime on my fragile body, and were worth their weight in gold.

The one thing that I did find strange in this sport was the benefit of drinking fizzy drinks - never before have I consumed so much Coca-Cola! As a footballer we were always kept away from fizzy drinks but for some reason it is good for you to drink it whilst riding a bike - apparently giving you more energy.

The three biggest lessons that I learnt from the race is firstly to expect the unexpected. Also make sure that you put in the hours long before the event to be in the best possible physical condition (I bet that you're hoping that you had trained harder by now). My last piece of advice would be to be mentally prepared for what remains at this stage. If I ever do an event of this magnitude again, I will most certainly focus on these three area's to ensure a significant improvement.

An event of this kind shows how cycling is in a healthy state in SA. The support that we received for that race from public, family and media was overwhelming and very motivating. Whilst it's not as well supported as our Bafana matches, a small crowd in a rural village can be just as hair-raising.

If I were to do the race again, I would make sure that I laughed more - oh, I also would have got a lighter bike! Hitching a ride on the Hilux lead vehicle also would be an option (despite not being allowed!). Stage 2 was the greatest challenge for me - after completing the 118km's the day before, then having to get up and do another 10 hours in the bike nearly killed me. I am however relieved that we don't have the same set up as this year, with the 27km time trial on day one resulting in

you having to make up the lost 100km from days two - eight!

When I crossed the finish line, it was without doubt the most relieved that I have ever felt! It was an honour to sit on anything BUT a bike! The race was most certainly one of the proudest moments in my life - I hope that all of you are enjoying it thus far and well done to making it through to day seven!

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