

Team Kata secure bronze at tough Africa Games

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With more than 54 countries and over 4 000 athletes at this year's All-Africa Games in Brazzaville, in the Congo, team South Africa produced some impressive performances in the karate code – bagging seven medals (five bronze and two silvers).

Among the medal winners were Team Kata, including Sunward Park Goju Karate Academy's Sensei Marius Madgwick, and Stef and Silvio Biagioni.

As expected, the competition was fierce and Madgwick and his team had to challenge in a tough draw, which saw them face up to one of the powerhouses of karate in Africa in the first round, Senegal.

Team SA won that battle 3-2 before facing neighbours, Botswana, who had already beaten Madgwick and his team in their last two encounters.

The South African Kata team were not going to be denied this time around, however, and they managed a convincing 4-1 victory.

On to the semi-finals and next up was a very strong Algerian team for the SA trio.

The North Africans proved too strong for the SA team and quashed any chances of SA gold in the Team Kata division.

Team SA, however, still had a chance at redemption in the third/fourth place play-off, with a clash against Cameroon.

And, redeem themselves, they did.

Madgwick and his team managed to pull off a nail-biting 3-2 victory over the central Africans, to secure their place on the Games podium for third place.

Medal tally pace-setters Egypt went on to win gold by defeating Algeria in the final.

"It was a fantastic experience to represent Team South Africa at such a prestigious event and a great honour to contribute to the overall medal tally for South Africa," said Madgwick.

"Going into the African Games, we always knew that there was the possibility of us winning a medal at the Games.

"We have built up quite a good track record on the African continent over the last two years; plus we had done very intense and good preparation and training for the tournament.

"However, it was a very big tournament, with a lot of countries entering very strong teams.

"When we saw our draw and who we were up

against, about two days before the tournament, we realised that we would have to change our game plan and strategy slightly and really be on our top performance and that there would be no room for error as our competitors were some of the best that Africa has to offer.

"Fortunately, we managed to pull off one of our best performances to date.

"To my team mates Stef and Silvio Biagioni: I am very lucky to have had such karatekas, who are equally as passionate and dedicated as I

am and we work very well together as a team.

"All of us had to make a lot of sacrifices over the last couple of years to achieve what we have.

"They have always put the best interests of the team first. For example, Silvio is in matric at the moment and the African Games were right in the middle of his prelim exams.

"It really took a lot of dedication from him over the last couple of months and I would like to thank him for his sacrifice."

- @SabeloBoksburg



Team Kata SA: Silvio Biagioni is flanked by Marius Madgwick (left) and Stef Biagioni.

Among the medal winners were Team Kata, including Sunward Park Goju Karate Academy's Sensei Marius Madgwick, with teammates Stef and Silvio Biagioni.

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