

PING PONG KING



SMASHING: Zakeer Moosa, SA junior table tennis champion, of Manenberg, eyes a place on African Table Tennis team



MEDAL HAUL: Zakeer Moosa, 17

WHEN this teen table tennis whizz kid picks up his bat, there's no stopping him.

And now, Zakeer Moosa will be travelling to Tunisia to play for a spot in the African table tennis team.

The 17-year-old, from Manenberg, says he started playing table tennis at the age of 12, at the Duinefontein Community Centre.

"I started playing because my older brother played table tennis and I wanted to be like him. I always tried to beat him," says Zakeer.

He's ping ponged his way onto the Western Province and South African table tennis teams every year since then.

Excel

"I made it to the finals every year, since I started playing and I've won most of those finals," the modest athlete says proudly.

"Now my brother gets angry every time I beat him, but always pushes me to improve my game."

Zakeer, who plays for the Duinefontein Tennis Table Club, says the secret to his success is passion and hard work.

Manenberg champ set for table tennis honours in Tunisia

STORY AND PICS BY
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He said: "You need to have passion for the sport. If you don't have any passion, you won't excel."

He clearly loves what he does - he trains three times a week, on a Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday, for five hours each day.

He would do more, however, the matriculant at The Leadership College in Manenberg says school comes first and his coach understands that.

"If I have a test coming up and I need to study or do homework, my manager understands and will give me time off," he explains.

The excited teen will be leaving for Tunisia on April

8 to compete in the International Table Tennis Federation (ITTF-Africa) Junior & Cadet Championships taking place in La Marsa, from April 9 to 16.

Dream

The tournament is tough and will take its toll on the young athletes, as they will be competing daily, starting with group stages, then the knockout rounds.

"If I make it to the quarter-finals I will qualify for a place in the African Table Tennis team. That would be a dream come true for me."

Coach Wafeeq Domingo says Zakeer is one of the best junior players in SA.

"He has been number one for five years now, he will definitely make the African team," a confident Domingo adds.



TROPHY TIME: Zakeer off to Tunisia to take on Africa's best