Dreyer’s black paddlers tops at Midmar

JOHN OLIVER CANOEING

MARTYN Dreyer’s Change a Life Academy project to train 10 black paddlers from Umgenvi Valley to place in the top 50 in January’s Hansa Powerade Dusi boycott forward on Sunday with 10 paddlers in the top 21 in the 111-Q Midmar Mini-marathon.

Paddling in the colours of East Rand Kayak, but both originally from the Lembethe Development Club at Nagel Dam, Michael Mnangwa and Thomas Ngidli took the first two places followed closely by last week’s Popes Challenge winner, junior Andrew Birkett.

Birkett, who will move up into the U21 category on January 1 and thereby race the Dusi as a senior, has moved firmly into the Dusi top-10 frame with a fifth place in the House of Paint Ozzie Chadwin, a win last week in the Popes Challenge and third on Sunday. Shane Price took fourth place at Midmar and was followed by three more of Dreyer’s men — Lucas Mthalane, U21 winner Nkosikazi Cele and the second junior, Nhlanhlayakho Cele.

Skhumbuso Ngidli was the third junior in 13th place. The winner of the U16 age group, Mmeli Cole, is also from the Umgenvi Valley. He finished second seconds behind Abby Miedema who had her second win in two weeks in the women’s race. She was just over four minutes clear of Abie Adie with junior winner Robyn Kime, third. Epworth paddlers Brittanays Petersen and Jomna Starr took the second and third places in the girls race.

The race, hosted by Fezeka Canoe Club in memory of Pieter de Klerk, was run over a 28-kilometre course on Midmar Dam and included three signifi-

Mmeli Cole (right) finished second seconds behind Abby Miedema (left).