

Keynote Speech by Deputy Minister of Sport, Arts, and Culture, Ms Peace Mabe

11 September 2024

Johannesburg

Good afternoon, distinguished guests, Hall of Famers, finalists, and members of the gsport family.

It is a privilege to stand before you today at this incredible gathering of women who have not only made history but continue to shape the future of sport in South Africa. Today, we celebrate 18 years of the gsport Hall of Fame, a platform that honors the icons and role models who have paved the way for countless others. We are gathered here not just to honor the past, but to look ahead at the possibilities that lie before us.

As we mark this milestone, it is equally significant that we reflect on 30 years of freedom in sport—three decades of opportunity, progress, and transformation in our country.

Sport has always held a special place in our society, not just as a source of entertainment, but as a powerful tool for nation-building. The journey to freedom, equality, and representation has been long and difficult, for women in sport.

Platforms like gsport have been instrumental in ensuring that women in sport are not overlooked. Visibility matters. Representation matters. Today we are witnessing a revolution in sport where women are not only participating but excelling on the global stage.

Hall of Fame

Our Hall of Famers today are the embodiment of leadership and game changers. From Penny Heyns, who was the first recipient of this prestigious award and to those will be inducted today, these women have defied the odds, broke barriers, and carved new paths.

Athletes

Our athletes, coaches, and administrators are proving that we can compete and succeed at the highest levels. And it is our responsibility, as a society, to continue supporting them, creating opportunities, and closing the visibility gap.

Finalists

To our finalists for the Momentum gsport Awards, I want to extend my heartfelt congratulations. This moment is yours, and you are already among the best of the best. Being shortlisted for a gsport Award means that your hard work, your perseverance, and your dedication have been noticed. Take this inspiration and use this opportunity to learn, grow, and make your mark.

Momentum:

I would like to take a moment to extend a special thank you to Momentum for their sincere commitment to women's sport. Your partnership with gsport has been invaluable in providing opportunities and recognition for female athletes. To all the other partners who have joined forces with gsport, your dedication is helping to transform the sporting landscape in South Africa.

The road to success is rarely a straight path. There will be challenges and obstacles, but it is in those moments that we find our true strength

To every young woman in sport, know that you are part of a legacy. You are standing on the shoulders of giants, continue to push boundaries, break barriers, and dream big. Your story is just beginning, and I have no doubt that you will go on to achieve greatness.

Thank you.