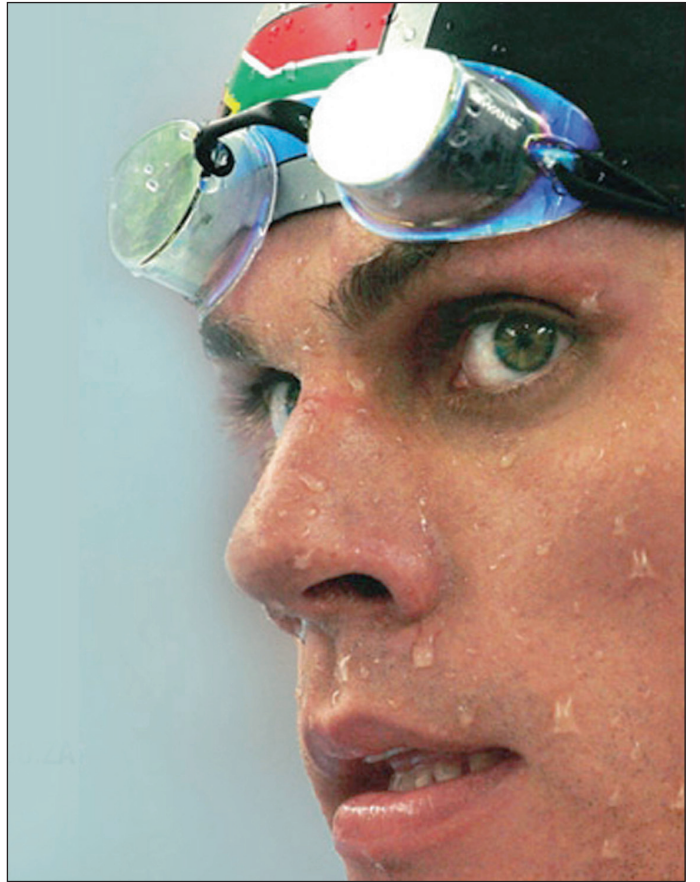


## RYK NEETHLING

For the next couple of months, we'll be featuring exclusive interviews with some of SA's best loved and most popular sport stars. We'll find out what they are really like behind the facade, how fame and success changed their lives, and also, who they're dating!



# Golden boy



Ryk Neethling is more than just a gold medal-winning Olympian, but an all-round success story, writes **Sheetal Schneider Cross**

**R**YK NEETHLING is best known as a former Olympian, with various world records in swimming. What you might not have known about this charming entrepreneur is that he is so committed to his goals that he doesn't have a TV. Instead, his days are filled with business ventures and philosophical books that equip him in business and in life.

He owns four Ryk Neethling Swimming School franchises in Gauteng and the Western Cape and is a shareholder, marketing director and property developer at Val de Vie Estate in the Cape Winelands, not to mention his shareholding in a development company on the estate called Guardian Projects, which just won an award at the International Property Awards. Furthermore, Ryk has shares in a construction company named Brick Art.

While doing all this, he still mentors Olympic gold medallist Cameron van der Burgh and Olympic finalist Anaso Jobodwana, while considering MBA studies. So how does this superman get it all done successfully?

"I have to be active, otherwise I get grumpy. You don't go from pushing your body to the limits for five hours a day for decades, to being a couch potato. Exercise is important to me and enables me to operate at a higher level than what I would otherwise. I swim a bit, run, mountain bike and gym. I recently tore my calf muscle, so at the moment I am a bit sidelined," said the tenacious former athlete.

As if there wasn't enough on his plate, Neethling, who is passionate about charities, spends most of his left-over energy on Hope through Action, an organisation that builds sports facilities in disadvantaged communities ([www.hopethroughaction.com](http://www.hopethroughaction.com)) and Legacy Lifestyle's Blow the Whistle, to stop violence against women and children.

When he was young,

Neethling considered becoming a conveyancer, influenced by his father and his own keen interest in amassing personal and commercial properties. When it was discovered that his sister Elsje Neethling-Blair had a brain tumour, yet still kept swimming and living an active life, he was inspired to do the same.

He was mentored in America by coach Bob Davis and also went on to represent the University of Arizona, taking them from 16th out of 350 universities in his first year to constantly being top four in the US.

He admits that he has taken on too much at times, but realised with the right network of people who share the same passion and vision, that anything can be accomplished.

Learning from this lesson, he said: "Every day I try to squeeze the most juice out of life. I have learned from taking on too much, to equip myself to deal with these things by reading books, having meetings and taking advice from mentors.

"You have to surround yourself with people who help you, to get the right team around you because you don't win gold medals by yourself, even though you stand on the podium alone. There is a whole team of people that helps you get there. It takes the same discipline to be an entrepreneur."

In doing so, he has learned to overcome his introverted personality. Sharing his experience of living in the US, he realised the culture of loud and proud meant that he would have to speak up and be heard if he wanted to be taken seriously. That is when he "learned to be different", in the way he was expected to be as an athlete and figurehead, teaching him that prominence has a price.

"It's something that you learn, even though we are not in America. It's something the culture almost expects of you, if you are a celebrity (and I hate that word), you must be confident and bubbly, so you

kind of learn to act like it. For me, it's a bit exhausting to be like that. I would be much comfortable in a smaller setting, but I definitely learned a big part of it in America."

"I am not the guy who will look for attention, that's definitely not who I am, but when I walk into a room, I do get attention and I have to project a certain image."

Keeping up to date with information has led this news junky to great news titles, magazines and books, which he says changed his perspective.

"The recent books I have read are Anton Rupert's biography, *Quiet* by Susan Cain, *What Got You Here Won't Get You There* by Marshall Goldsmith."

He said that travelling has been a gift, especially being exposed to different ideas. It was also during his time in the US that his mentor gave him the book *Never Eat Alone* by Keith Ferrazzi and Tahl Raz.

"It's about networking and although I do like to eat alone because I am an introvert and I need my alone time, it's about a network and the exposure I have been given over the last 10 years. I've got a great network and when I do these talks to corporates, that's the best type of networking you can find because I don't need to belong to any organisation. There is always business that comes from it."

It's not all work and no play for the hunky athlete-turned-businessman, who admits he would like to start a family one day, but doesn't spend too much time worrying about when that will happen.

"The same can't be said for my mother," he laughed.

"Balancing family, personal and work time is a big challenge. I love what I do and at the moment I just want to make the most of my opportunities. My family and friends understand that I have some time to make up, after spending so much time in the water".

**BUDGET TUESDAYS**

ADVANCE BOOKINGS WITH ALL MAJOR CREDIT CARDS, ADVANCE BOOKINGS WITH DEBIT CARDS WITH CERTAIN BANKS AND CELLULAR NETWORKS.

**SUNCOAST CINECENTRE**  
WE BRING YOU THE STARS

**FRI 11 APR - WED 16 APR**

**BOOKING LINE**  
0861 CINE (2463) 00  
9am - 9pm  
WWW.CINECENTRE.CO.ZA

**NOW SHOWING**

**real 3D CINE3D YOUR 3D STARS**  
★ NEW RELEASE

**RIO 2 3D ★** TBA  
Fri-Wed: 9:30, 12:00, 14:30, 17:15 & 19:45

**NOAH 3D** 13V  
Fri-Wed: 10:00, 14:00, 17:15 & 20:15

**NEED FOR SPEED 3D** 10-12PG  
Fri-Wed: 9:30, 12:00, 14:45, 17:30 & 20:30

**CAPTAIN AMERICA THE WINTER SOLDIER 3D** 13V  
Fri-Sun: 14:15 & 17:30  
Mon-Wed: 14:15, 17:30 & 22:00

**LIVE SHOW**  
★ BACK BY PUBLIC DEMAND  
**WED-DINGALINGS NIGHT BEFORE** ALL  
11-13 APRIL 14  
Fri: 20:30  
Sat: 17:00 & 21:00  
Sun: 17:45

**NOW SHOWING**  
★ NEW RELEASE

**THAT AWKWARD MOMENT ★** TBA  
Fri: 9:30, 12:00 & 14:30  
Sat & Sun: 9:30 & 12:00  
Mon-Thurs: 9:30, 12:00, 14:30 & 17:15

**NON STOP ★** 13V  
Fri-Wed: 9:30, 12:00, 17:15, 20:00 & 22:15

**OUT OF THE FURNACE** 16DLV  
Fri-Sun: 22:00  
Mon-Wed: 19:45 & 22:15

**DIVERGENT** 13V  
Fri-Wed: 9:15, 12:00, 14:45 & 20:30

**STARTS 17 APR**

**THE LEGEND OF HERCULES 3D ★** 13V

**SON OF GOD ★** 10-12PGV

**2 STATES ★** TBA

**CINEBOLLYWOOD**  
BOLLYWOOD'S BRIGHTEST STARS  
★ NEW RELEASE

**BHOOTNATH RETURNS ★** TBA  
Starring: Amitabh Bachchan & Boman Irani  
Fri-Wed: 9:30, 13:00, 17:00 & 20:30

**MAIN TERA HERO** 7-9PGV  
Starring: Varun Dhawan & Ileana D'Cruz  
Fri-Wed: 9:30, 12:00, 14:30, 17:30 & 20:15

**Now Showing**

**LARGEST CINEMA SCREEN**  
**THE SUPERNOVA!**

**WED-DINGALINGS NIGHT BEFORE**  
LIVE SHOW FRI-SUN

**Now Showing**

**Rio 2 3D**

**Now Showing**

**NON-STOP**

**CINE-E-TICKET**  
BOOK YOUR SEAT COULDN'T BE E-ASIER!

- 1 BOOK YOUR TICKET ONLINE
- 2 RECEIVE CONFIRMATION EMAIL
- 3 PRINT YOUR TICKET AND BRING TO CINECENTRE
- 4 SKIP THE TICKET QUEUE TO GET TO THE REFRESHMENTS AND MAIN ATTRACTION FASTER!

WWW.CINECENTRE.CO.ZA

**ADD ME:** 0761 2463 00  
**INVITE ME:** 20C483D5

**WHAT'S APP** **BBM PIN**

**LIKE US ON** **f** **LINE-UPS SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE** **MOBISITE** [m.cinecentre.co.za](http://m.cinecentre.co.za)

**FOLLOW** **t** **ALL SCREENS** **PREMIER**