

Teenager defies the odds after transplant

FAATIMAH HENDRICKS

A Big Bay teenager took spectators by surprise during his performance at the South African National Transplant Games held earlier this month, and has since been asked to represent South Africa at the World Transplant Games in Argentina next year.

Doctors said Martinique du Preez's new kidney adapted to his body quickly, and he was able to take part in the games even though transplant patients usually had to wait about a year before taking part in sports.

Martinique, 18, had end stage kidney failure and in March last year he had his first kidney transplant ("Blouberg kidney patient reaches for his dreams", Tabletalk July 3 2013). The kidney was donated to him by his mother, Shantol September. However, the kidney failed a few hours after the transplant. She gave her kidney because there were early signs of problems with the catheter in Martinique's body with, which he was hooked up to for dialysis.

Ms September said the doctors told her if anything went wrong with the catheter, Martinique would die. There were no more entry points for the catheter to be inserted.

After Ms September's kidney



■ Martinique du Preez will take part in the World Transplant Games next year.



PICTURE: BILLY DE LA QUERRA

■ Martinique du Preez broke records at the National Transplant Games.

died, the family decided they were not going to do another transplant because it was too traumatic for them. Then they decided to look into a stem cell transplant. However, the doctor wouldn't release Martinique's medical information for a stem cell transplant because they didn't believe it was a procedure that would work.

In May this year the family was told there was another kidney available for Martinique. At first they turned it down because they were afraid Martinique would get his hopes up, only to have the kidney fail once again. However, the doctors said they if he didn't take the

kidney, they would be removed from the waiting list.

Ms September said they decided to take the kidney, and it was the best decision they could have made. Until the second transplant, Martinique had 24 operations, which were mainly to get access points for the dialysis.

The kidney came from a 17-year-old boy who died after being shot on the Cape Flats. He shared Martinique's rare blood type – AB positive.

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"We got there and the coach said he will coach Martinique and he won't charge a cent," said Ms September. Martinique said he wanted to take part in the National Transplant Games, and trained hard to be able to do so on Saturday October 11.

Martinique's coach sent him to see a mind conditioning coach. "The coach said Martinique is on a winning level, but they had to condition his mind to become a winner because when you are sick, that mindset keeps you back," said Ms September.

She said Martinique took everyone by surprise and came first in the 100 metre and 200 metre races, as well as in shot put and even broke records. He is now gearing up to represent South Africa at the World Transplant Games in Argentina next year and has to train four days a week.

Martinique said everyone praised him after his performance, making him feel like a celebrity.

"I feel like somebody who's going to be famous one day," he said. "I want to be a professional athlete and work on an oil rig."

He is also aiming to compete in the 2020 Olympics.

"Martinique was so sick but so determined to make a success of his life. "He is a motivation to the kids around him," said Ms September.

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