

MASAKHANE GYM

UNATHI KWAI

No-one would ever think to look at him that body-building medal winner **Unathi Kwai** (24) previously spent all his time and money at a local shebeen (drinking house)! Unathi has swapped the shebeen for the gym as his preferred place of relaxation, and spends hours at the Masakhane Gym to perfect his body-building techniques.

After completing his studies at Cowan High School, Unathi's future had no direction and with no prospect of further education, he became a drifter. He worked as a labourer every now and then, and completed a security guard's training course – but the lure of liquor was strong and the shebeen became the only place he could call home. Every cent of the money he earned doing piece work was spent on alcohol, and he went for days without eating because he had no money to buy food. Unathi became interested in body-building in 2006 but didn't join the gym until early in 2008 when he made the life-changing decision to quit drinking and smoking and try and do something with his life.

After a few short months of working out, he entered a regional body-building contest, and amazed seasoned body-builders with his technique and physique. He walked away with third prize in the competition, and this triumph has spurred him on to train even harder. Since then he has won awards at the PE IFBB competitions and was selected to attend the SA Championships in Pretoria in May 2009. He triumphed – coming away with a 2nd prize!

Apart from wanting to add to his medal collection by winning more competitions, Unathi is determined to better his skills so that he can earn enough money to afford to eat a proper body-builders' diet. At the moment his diet consists mainly of bread and coffee – which makes his recent achievement all the more incredible. He has recently qualified as a forklift driver and hopes to find a job in this field soon.

Unathi is committed to helping other young men stay away from the shebeens. "If you gym, you stay out of trouble. Save the money you waste on drinking and drugs, and use this to pay your gym fees." Wise words indeed from this very fit young man who goes to gym twice a day and is grateful for the opportunity to do so.