

**11-28-2020 Thokozani Mthethwa – Lifeguard – Capetown – Accidental Drowning****Muizenberg Beach Closed For Search Of Missing Lifeguard**

<https://www.capetownetc.com/news/muizenberg-beach-closed-for-search-of-missing-lifeguard/>

November 29, 2020 Published by leila stein

An intensive search is underway at Muizenberg beach for a missing lifeguard. The beach has also been closed to visitors on Sunday to allow rescuers to work quickly and efficiently.

“The City of Cape Town is working with numerous other agencies to find a seasonal lifeguard who disappeared in the surf yesterday,” said Mayoral Committee member for Community Services and Health, Zahid Badroodien.

The lifeguard fell off a rescue sled that was being towed by a jet ski as it was en route to help a kite surfer in distress at St James beach on Saturday, November 28.

“It is suspected that the lifeguard was knocked off the sled, approximately 50 to 100 metres offshore, and he then disappeared in the water,” said Badroodien. A rescue operation to find a missing lifeguard is underway.

“Lifeguards immediately started a search operation, with assistance from the NSRI, Law Enforcement, Fire and Rescue Service, Disaster Risk Management and Emergency Medical Services.”

Despite best efforts, the search was called off on Saturday as the sun set, but was immediately started again once the light returned on Sunday morning.

So far, the teams have not found anyone but the beach is closed for the continued search operation.

“The City will do everything possible to find our lifeguard, and to assist his colleagues, family and friends during this difficult time,” said Baroodien.



Picture: City of Cape Town

## Authorities Have Resumed The Search For A Missing Lifeguard At Muizenberg Beach On Monday Morning.

<https://www.capetalk.co.za/articles/402918/search-for-missing-lifeguard-continues-at-muizenberg-beach>

30 November 2020

The lifeguard disappeared in the surf on Saturday afternoon.

He apparently fell off a rescue sled being towed by a jet ski while on route to assist a kite surfer in distress off St James.

It's believed that the lifeguard was knocked off the rescue sled, approximately 50 to 100 metres offshore, and he then disappeared in the water.

The popular beach was closed to swimmers on Sunday, however, authorities have not yet been able to trace him.

The National Sea Rescue Institute (NSRI) has been leading the search together with officials from the City of Cape Town's Law Enforcement, Fire and Rescue Service, Disaster Risk Management, and Emergency Medical Services.

"The City will do everything possible to find our lifeguard, and to assist his colleagues, family and friends during this difficult time", councillor Zahid Badroodien [said in a statement](#).

## Body Of Missing Lifeguard Found Near Muizenberg Beach

<https://www.iol.co.za/news/south-africa/western-cape/body-of-missing-lifeguard-found-near-muizenberg-beach-091b67e6-5885-4541-908c-9299a9d6cb5f>

Dec 1, 2020 By IOL Reporter

Cape Town – The body of lifeguard Thokozani Mthethwa, who went missing near Muizenberg beach at the weekend, has been recovered.

His body was recovered late yesterday afternoon between Strandfontein and Mnandi beach.

Employed as a seasonal lifeguard by the City of Cape Town, the 23-year old Mthethwa fell off a rescue sled being towed by a jet ski while en route to assist a kite surfer in distress off St James beach just before 3pm on Saturday. A senior lifeguard had been operating the rescue craft.

Western Cape police spokesperson Captain FC Van Wyk said on Tuesday members attached to the SAPS dive unit, in conjunction with the SAPS air wing unit, had used a helicopter to do aerial searches along the coastline from Mnandi beach until Kommetjie main beach on Monday.



**Thokozani Mthethwa**  
Picture: Facebook

SAPS divers had also performed a coastal patrol on quad bikes and 4x4 vehicles from Muizenberg until Mnandi beach without success.

At about 5pm, Law Enforcement informed the diving unit that a body had been washed up between Sunrise circle and Mnandi beach, Van Wyk said.

"The body was on dry land, no need for divers to attend above scene. An inquest case was registered for investigation," he said.

Counselling has been arranged for his colleagues, family and friends. It is suspected that Mthethwa had been knocked off the sled approximately 50 to 100 metres offshore.

Lifeguards had immediately started a search operation, with assistance from the National Sea Rescue Institute, Cape Town Law Enforcement, the Fire and Rescue Service, Disaster Risk Management and Emergency Medical Services.

## Missing Muizenberg lifeguard's body found

<https://www.capetownetc.com/news/missing-muizenberg-lifeguards-body-found/>

December 1, 2020 Published by capeetc

After an intensive three day search, the body of Thokozani Mthethwa (23), a seasonal lifeguard stationed at Muizenberg beach, has been found.

The lifeguard fell off a rescue sled that was being towed by a jet ski en route to help a kite surfer in distress at St James beach on Saturday, November 28.

On Sunday, **Muizenberg Beach was closed** to allow rescuers to comb the area without any hinderance. Rescue teams and police divers continued the search on Monday. His lifeless body was recovered by divers on Monday afternoon between Strandfontein and Mnandi beach.

Condolences have been pouring in on social media. One Facebook user said, "Ah I'm so sorry for his family's devastating loss. That he lost his life to save another's does not solve the grief of such a young life but hopefully sends some comfort to the devastation of losing him."

Another shared pictures of him from school, saying he will be sorely missed. Mthethwa was employed by the City of Cape Town as a seasonal lifeguard to assist during busy periods. Counselling has been arranged for his family and work colleagues to assist them through this difficult time.



Thokozani Mthethwa

## Loss Of A Lifeguard: Thokozani Mthethwa remembered

<https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2020-12-04-loss-of-a-lifeguard-thokozani-mthethwa-remembered/>

04 Dec 2020 By Biënne Huisman



**Late Muizenberg lifeguard from Durban Thokozani Mthethwa Photo:Supplied**

Every summer season, lifeguards risk their own lives to save countless of lives as thousands of revellers descend on South Africa's beaches. They say it is a passion, not a job. And this week, lifesavers mourn the loss of one of their own.

This week in a Fish Hoek bedroom, Lungelo Ndlovu packed away Thokozani Mthethwa's prized Armani Exchange sneakers for the last time.

The two friends, from Durban, bought the shoes in Dubai at the Mall of the Emirates while working there as lifeguards earlier this year.

But Covid-19 cut their Dubai tenure short and they spent lockdown in Durban. Later, they were thrilled to land contracts to patrol Cape Town's Muizenberg Beach – famous for its for buzzing surf scene – over six months this coming summer.

Ndlovu (23) and Mthethwa (21) were sharing a room in Fish Hoek; when, a month into their contracts, tragedy hit.

Last Saturday afternoon during a rescue mission to help a distressed kite-surfer, Mthethwa fell off a sled attached to a jet-ski, some 50m offshore, instantly disappearing beneath choppy waves. On Monday, after a gruelling three-day search, his body was found washed ashore between Sonwabe and Sunrise Beach.

Ndlovu spoke to *Daily Maverick* hours after identifying his friend's body at a Cape Town morgue on Thursday. Over the phone, his voice holds firm and friendly.

"Thokozani was behind glass," he says. "A lady opened the curtain and I saw his face, I saw that it was him. He looked so innocent, his eyes were closed."

Mthethwa and Ndlovu met in 2017 at uShaka Marine World on Durban's beachfront, where they worked as lifeguards at the waterpark.

"One of my first impression of Thokozani was that he was always happy," says Ndlovu. "You know, he was always pulling jokes with people. For example he'd make up stories of a dream he'd had the previous night, always getting everyone to laugh. He was that kind of guy. And everyone knew how much he loved his girlfriend.

"He was also a very smart man and very passionate about his job. His life motto was to always learn more. He was very energetic.

I mean, I introduced him to bodybuilding here in Cape Town. We joined a gym, Zone Fitness in Fish Hoek. He wanted to shock everyone with his ew muscles when we got back home to Durban, especially his girlfriend. We were renting in Fish Hoek; sharing a room together, sharing a bed. Now, I've packed all his stuff into his suitcase. His laptop, his clothes, the Armani Exchange sneakers..."

Ndlovu recalls the fun they had in the United Arab Emirates: "It was a great experience. I went in 2018; then Thokozani and I went together in 2019. Working under those conditions, it is difficult. I mean the heat would get up to 50 degrees Celsius. We were indoors a lot of the time, chilling in the room, shopping at the mall. We bought a lot of clothes with expensive brands."

This week Sue-Ellen Martin (39), the only woman among 70 professional lifeguards patrolling eThekweni Municipality's beaches last season, recalled working with Mthethwa at Durban surfing hotspot Battery Beach.

"Yes I had the fortune to work with him," she says. "My heart is broken. It's a pain only lifeguards will know because the reality is, we know how painful it is to run out of air while fighting in the water. We have seen hundreds of families cry at the ocean, asking for their family member back. We know what happens when you have been in the water for too long, lost. We feel his pain. He was such a great boy."

Mthethwa matriculated at Protea Secondary School in Chatsworth and lived in Mobeni Heights.

Together with his girlfriend of three years, Kyra Smith, he dreamed of one day opening a swimming school on the KwaZulu-Natal's coast.



**Late Muizenberg lifeguard from Durban Thokozani Mthethwa(R) and his girlfriend of three years, Kyra Smith.Photo: Supplied**

Born to Themba and Thembisile, Mthethwa sent money home to his family each month. Themba works as a cleaner at Excelsior Primary School, where his four boys were schooled. Thembisile is unemployed.

Speaking from Mobeni Heights, Themba's voice breaks over the phone. There is a language barrier and the conversation is slow.

"I am choking, I am crying," he says. "Thokozani was a quiet boy, a nice boy. Every month he was sending money to support the family. Money used to buy food and clothes. He started swimming and doing lifesaving to support the family. Now we are waiting for his body to be returned. He was in the water a long time, so the body won't be right any more. It is too much pain for the family, we are anxious for him to come home now."

Mthethwa's elder brother Mondli (28), also a lifesaver who helped to teach Mthethwa to swim, adds: "Culturally we just want to put him to rest now. We don't want to argue, we want to give him a better place."

But, what happened on Saturday?

"Thokozani was a really strong swimmer," says Ndlovu. "So even for us lifeguards, we really don't know what happened. There were kite-surfers struggling further out at sea. He saw them, so they got the jet-ski ready to be launched. A senior lifeguard was driving the jet-ski, with Thokozani behind him on a little sled. The sea was choppy, but they got past the first wave. On the third wave, the driver realised Thokozani was missing. He turned around, starting to look, then calling for help. There were deep divers, looking for him.

"We searched the whole area. I was there, using a torpedo, those floating devices used to save people. Unfortunately we could not find anything. Normally someone would float for a couple of seconds, before sinking; not disappear immediately like Thokozani did. It was heartbreaking. The moment I came out of the water, I messaged his brother, Mondli, who is a lifesaver too. His girlfriend of three years is back in Durban; Kyra, they were dreaming of starting a swimming school, she is devastated."

Every summer season, lifeguards risk their own lives to save countless of lives as thousands of revellers descend on South Africa's beaches. Martin relays how she used to work in banking, but that she switched to a career in lifesaving when she was 32 years old.

"I love what lifeguards stand for," she says. "Nothing beats saving people. There is no greater reward than doing a job you love. I feel like I am no longer working, but living. Being a lifeguard is a passion not a job."



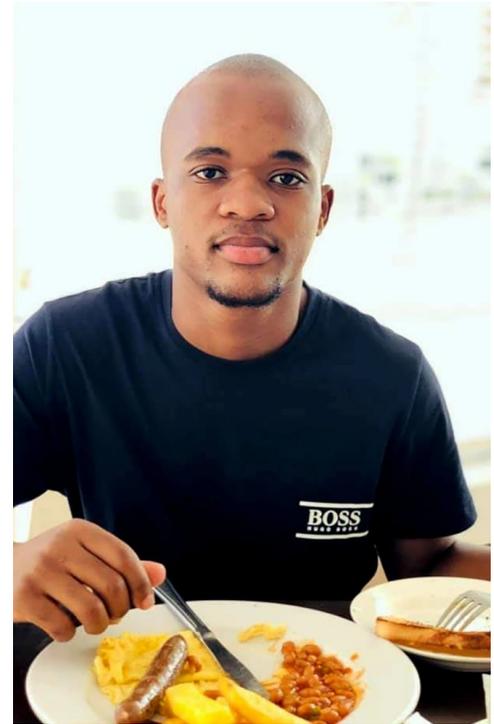
Thokozani Mthethwa. Photo: Supplied

She is a single mother of two daughters. Sometimes her job keeps her awake at night: "The families that are left after a drowning. Their cries and heartache. Sometimes I worry for my own family – the fear that tomorrow I could go to work and run in for a rescue and never make it out, leaving my own beautiful girls behind."

Ndlovu adds that he will complete his lifeguarding contract in Cape Town this summer. "It's what Thokozani would have wanted," he says. He hopes to be able to travel to Durban to attend his friend's burial.

On whether the City of Cape Town is assisting with transporting Mthethwa's body back to Durban, Mayoral Committee Member for Community Services and Health, Councillor Zahid Badroodien, said that they were in daily contact with the family.

"At this stage arrangements are being made to finalise the post-mortem. Thereafter the city will be in a position to determine how best to support the family in arranging logistics for the memorial and burial," he said. **DM/MC**



**Late Muizenberg lifeguard from Durban Thokozani Mthethwa.  
Photo: Supplied**