



Communication and Marketing Department
Isebe loThungelwano neNtengiso
Kommunikasie en Bemarkingsdepartement

Private Bag X3, Rondebosch 7701, South Africa
Welgelegen House, Chapel Road Extension, Rosebank, Cape Town
Tel: +27 (0) 21 650 5427/5428/5674 Fax: +27 (0) 21 650 5628

www.uct.ac.za

23 June 2025

Books, bikes, and big dreams: UCT student heads to Triathlon World Champs



Rebecca Monk

Photo: supplied

Third-year University of Cape Town (UCT) student Rebecca Monk is proving that excellence knows no boundaries. At just 21, she's navigating the rigorous demands of a double major in geology and oceanography while earning accolades as a competitive triathlete – and this month, she'll represent South Africa at the 2025 World Triathlon Multisport Championships in Pontevedra, Spain.

Taking place from 21 to 29 June 2025, the global event marks the second time Monk has donned her national colours on an international stage. She first competed at the World Championships in Ibiza, Spain in 2023 – a challenging debut that left her humbled and determined to return stronger.

“In 2023, I was on the start line, I was incredibly nervous, and I felt like I didn’t belong there. It was impossible to enjoy. But now, after gaining more racing experience and working harder, I’m confident I deserve to be on that start line and in my skills that I can perform well,” said Monk.

From a curious start to world-class competition

Monk’s triathlon journey began at the age of 13 when her uncle encouraged her to try a race, knowing she already swam and ran. “My uncle mentioned a race, knowing I swam and ran, and I thought, why not? He never entered the race, but I did, and I haven’t looked back since,” she recalled.

That spontaneous start has evolved into a lifestyle defined by discipline and passion. A typical week involves intense, often twice-daily training sessions across swimming, cycling, and running. “I train every day, sometimes twice a day. I can’t picture a day without swimming, cycling, or running – it’s what keeps me grounded,” Monk explained.

Her impressive achievements include being crowned South African duathlon champion for three consecutive years and finishing third at the South African Triathlon Championships in 2023.

A balancing act of body and mind

Despite her jam-packed schedule, Monk has kept her academic goals firmly in sight. She credits her sport as a source of clarity and resilience: “When I’m stressed with my studies, training keeps me calm and clears my mind. It’s also a great way to meet people and make friends. Some of my closest friendships have been formed through sports.”

Monk is an active member of UCT’s swimming and cycling clubs on campus.

Backed by passion and sponsorship

Adding to her motivation is a recent sponsorship from Selfish Wear Suits, a performance sportswear brand. “Racing is no longer just about me. Knowing that someone else believes in me gives me a sense of purpose and confidence, even when I feel nervous or doubt myself,” she remarked.

She attributed her success to prioritisation, preparation and a willingness to make sacrifices. “It’s all about finding balance. Some days, training takes a backseat to studying, and other days it’s the reverse. Sacrifices are part of the process. You have to wake up early and stay organised, but it’s worth it.”

Inspiring a new generation

Whether in the lab, lecture hall or racecourse, Monk embodies the spirit of perseverance. Her message to other students juggling multiple passions is clear: it can be done.

“I love being a student and an athlete. It’s not always easy, but it’s incredibly rewarding. I highly recommend it to anyone considering this path,” she concluded.

As Monk prepares to take on the world's best in Spain, she carries with her the hopes of a nation and the spirit of a university proud to call her one of its own.

Story by Myolisi Gophe, UCT News

Issued by: UCT Communication and Marketing Department

Velisile Bukula

Head: Media Liaison
Communication and Marketing Department
University of Cape Town
Rondebosch
Tel: 021 650 2149
Cell: 071 642 3495
Email: velisile.bukulai@uct.ac.za
Website: www.uct.ac.za