

26-year-old from Limpopo is Shoprite's top truck driver

Frederick Chauke (26) from Tembisa, Gauteng was crowned National Driver of the Year after he outmaneuvered the Shoprite Group's 1 400+ truck drivers with his unparalleled skills at the steer of a sixteen-wheeler truck.

Originally from Malele in Limpopo, Chauke joined the retailer on a learnership in 2021 and has been permanently employed since 2022.

"My father was a truck driver for the South African government for over ten years. He used to take me on trips during school holidays and showed me what it meant to be a great driver," explains Chauke. "My father also won a truck driving competition in Cape Town back in 1997 when he was working for the Department of Agriculture. Now a pensioner, he is very proud of me."

Speaking about his achievement, Chauke says he realised how important technical knowledge is when it comes to truck driving.

"I was nervous about the competition, not because I doubted myself but because I knew how experienced the other 12 finalists were and that it would be stiff competition. My father taught me that being a truck driver is a big responsibility. It is something I never take for granted, so I am proud of myself."

The National Driver of the Year competition celebrates the dedicated drivers responsible for transporting fresh food and groceries on board the Group's fleet of 1 111 trucks and 1 491 trailers.

"Our truck drivers are the very best on the continent, and we ensure that they receive ongoing training with frequent reassessments," says Ruaan Britz, the Group's Head of the Transport Centre of Excellence.

"We extend our congratulations to Frederick for emerging victorious in this year's grueling competition. He earned the top spot after completing a written exam, a yard challenge and a road test."

"We even had to maneuver the truck to miss coins on the road, demonstrating our skill and precision driving," adds Chauke.

Based at the Shoprite Group's new Riverfields Distribution Centre, Chauke says being a truck driver is hard yet rewarding work and he would encourage anyone to take up the career.

"Kids from my local community asked me how I eat when on duty. They are curious about how I sleep when I'm tired and I told them that I was fit, that I eat well, and exercise and I

always have water to drink. They are so interested in learning about the job, and I told them if they work for someone like Shoprite that takes care of them, it is a good job to have.”

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