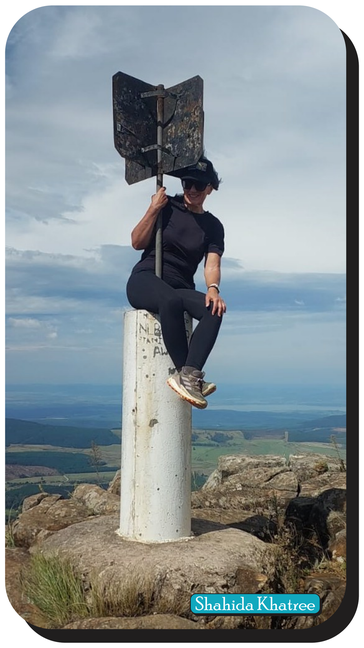
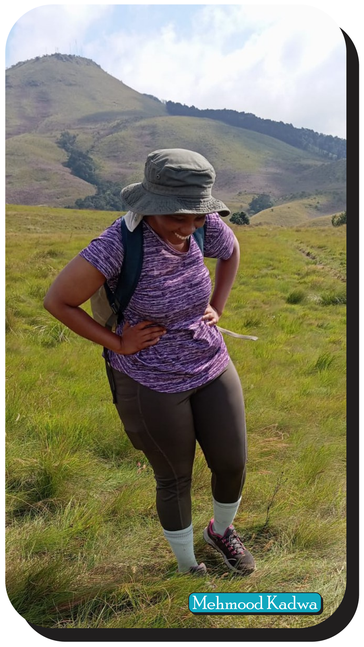
Andrew Loots


Shahida Khatree

Candice Piek


Mehmood Kadwa

Candice Piek

Jen Caruth

Candice Piek

MOUNT GILBOA HIKE

1st of 2026 BIG 4 CHALLENGE

SUNDAY 19 APRIL

Twelve enthusiastic hikers set off on the first of the Big 4 Challenges for 2026, tackling the mighty Mount Gilboa via the Shawswood route in Karkloof.

This was no ordinary hike, graded Difficult (Grade 4) with a demanding 950m ascent over approximately 8 hours, it tested every bit of strength and determination. From the start, we journeyed through pristine indigenous forests, making our way toward the breathtaking Gray Mare's Tail Falls, where we paused for a well-earned tea break. But the real challenge began as we pushed straight up toward the summit of Mount Gilboa.This hike was not for the faint-hearted. Along the way, some members were definitely questioning their life choices with a few even considering taking up knitting instead! Others battled nausea and cramps, but the spirit of the group never wavered. As we neared the summit, the conditions turned intense. Strong winds threatened to knock us off balance, and at one point, we were literally scrambling on hands and knees just to keep moving forward. With grit and determination, every single hiker pushed through, reaching the top and touching the beacon to officially complete the challenge.

The reward? Absolutely breathtaking views that made every step worth it. A moment of pride, relief, and pure accomplishment.

A special mention to our incredible hike leader, Neville, whose hands-on guidance and constant motivation kept the group going when things got tough. His leadership ensured that no one gave up, even when the mountain tested us to our limits. In true adventure style, Neville switched things up taking us along an old but new route - one that added even more excitement (and perhaps a bit of regret). Safe to say, he mentioned it might not be a route he'll repeat again!

This hike pushed us physically, mentally, and motionally but it also reminded us of the power of teamwork, resilience, and the beauty of nature.

What an unforgettable start to the 2026 Big 4 Challenge!

Report by: Shayadaa Banoo

Jen Caruth

Shahida Khatree

Mehmood Kadwa

Candice Piek

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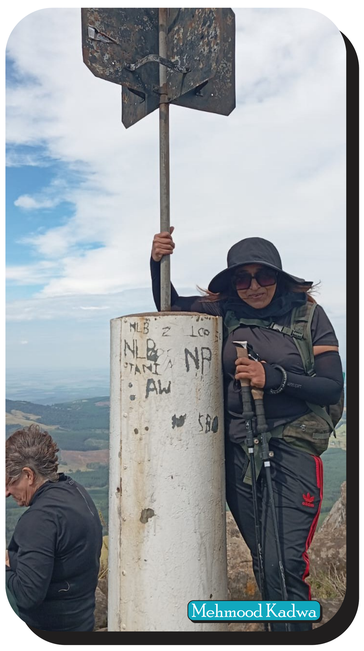
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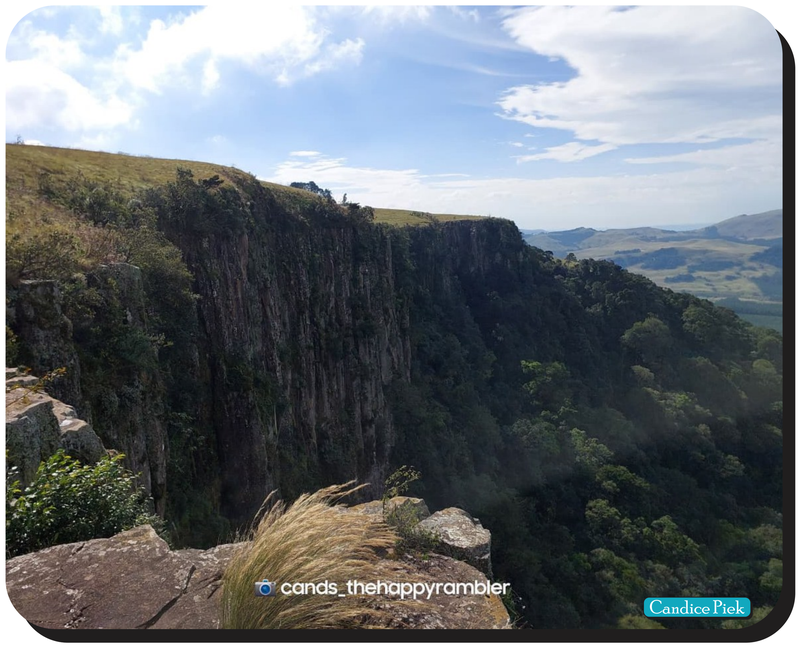

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