



# Gauteng North dominates at SA Athletics

**Koos Venter**

Gauteng North's athletics team once again dominated the national senior championship in Potchefstroom this past weekend.

The Pretoria athletes won 44 medals at the two-day event, twice as many as their closest opponent, Athletics Central North West.

The Gauteng North team won 44 medals: 15 gold, 14 silver and 15 bronze.

Sprinters were the star performers on the first day, while Pretoria's Olympic silver medalist, Luvo Manyonga, was the superstar on the second day when he set a new African record in the long jump.

Olympic finalist Akani Simbine out-classed a quality line-up to reclaim the SA 100m title he won in Stellenbosch two years ago.

Simbine crossed the line in 9.95sec, with Olympic 400m champion Wayde van Niekerk dropping down in distance to take the silver medal in 10.04sec.

Thando Roto earned bronze, also clocking 10.04sec.

"I'm pretty happy with the time, but I came here to get back the title I lost last year, so I'm very happy to reclaim my title," said Simbine, who clocked 9.94sec in the semis.

On Saturday, 400m world record holder Van Niekerk turned the tables on his good friend Simbine when he won the 200m final in 19.90sec, crossing the line 0.25sec ahead of Simbine.

Manyonga bettered his own continental mark by 3cm in the long jump, launching a massive 8.65m leap to earn the gold medal

through his very first attempt, which was also his last as he picked up a niggle in his hamstring.

"I'm pleased with the gold medal, but the focus is not on the SA Championships. The focus is on the World Championships (in London) later this year," said Manyonga, who earned his first national senior title.

Pre-race favourite Carina Horn, who narrowly missed the SA record (11.06sec) when she clocked 11.10sec in the semi-finals, pulled out of the women's 100m final due to illness.

In her absence, defending champion Alyssa Conley stormed to victory in 11.41sec, edging Tebogo Mamatu into second position by 0.03sec.

Conley also defended another title, winning the 200m final in 22.94sec.

In other events, upcoming Tuks star Le Roux Hamman won a tightly contested men's 400m hurdles final in 49.35sec, ahead of former title holder LJ van Zyl (49.52sec) and Constant Pretorius (49.83sec) with Gauteng North sweeping the podium.

Wenda Nel, the defending champion, won the women's one-lap race over the barriers by more than 3sec, securing gold in 55.16sec.

Another Tuks-HPC athlete, Orazio Cremona delivered the performance of his career, smashing his personal best by 49cm to win the men's shot-put with a heave of 21.12m, with Jaco Engelbrecht also securing a personal best of 20.63m for the silver medal.

In the women's 100m hurdles, Rikenette Steenkamp setting a PB of 13.02sec.



Luvo Manyonga in the men's long jump during day two of the Senior South African Championships in Potchefstroom.



Pretoria's Tiaan Smit (left) stunned defending champion Antonio Alkana from Western Province when he won the 110m hurdles at the South African Senior Athletics Championships in 13.42s.

