



Top field for long jump at Shanghai

MISSED last year's long jump final at the Olympic Games in Rio? Don't worry, the competition at Saturday's Diamond League in Shanghai is going to be a near repeat.

The top six placed athletes are all competing. It could be seen as a re-run and an opportunity for athletes to settle old scores.

Neil Cornelius of TuksAthletics, who coaches Luvo Manyonga, arguably the hottest prospect in international long jumping at the moment, sees it as a good dress rehearsal for the forthcoming World Championships in London.

"I think in Shanghai, the athletes might just be vying to get a psychological upper hand. One good jump for any athlete could get the others to start worrying."

According to Cornelius, it is not often that you get a competition in which seven athletes can boast a personal best of 8,40 metres and better.

Three of them are South Africans — Manyonga, Khotso Mokoe-na (8,50 m) and Rushwal Samaal (8,49 m).

Manyonga is the trendsetter, having jumped 8,62 metres and 8,65 metres in competition. He is the first athlete to jump further than 8,60 metres since 2009.

The current statistics favour Cornelius' confidence as the top five jumps this season on the IAAF-list are all credited to South Africans. Samaal's attempt of 8,49 m is so far the third best of the season. Manyonga's 8,46 m is the fourth best and Samaal's 8,35 m slots in at fifth.

Manyonga is making no secret about the fact that he has his sights on Mike Powell's long-standing world record of 8,95 metres, set in 1991.

The top six in last year's Olympic Games final who will be competing on Saturday are Jeff Henderson (USA), Manyonga, Greg Rutherford (Britain), Jarrion Lawson (USA), Jianan Wang (China) and Emiliano Lasa (Uruguay).

— SuperSport.

