



Manyonga can stake his claim

SHANGHAI: SOUTH AFRICAN'S CHANCE FOR REVENGE

➔ **Henderson beat him to the gold medal in Rio last year.**

Wesley Botton

The winner of the men's long jump in Shanghai today could stake a claim as the early favourite for the world title, according to Neil Cornelius, the coach of South African sensation Luvo Manyonga.

With Manyonga leading a formidable SA trio, which also includes Ruswahl Samaai and Khotso Mokoena, they will face a strong line-up at the second leg of the Diamond League series.

The field features the top six athletes in last year's Olympic Games final, including American Jeff Henderson, who beat Manyonga by one centimetre to snatch gold in Rio.

Flaunting his spectacular form ahead of their rematch, Manyonga set a national record of 8.65m in Potchefstroom last month to win the national title.

Samaai was also at his best in the domestic season, launching a personal best of 8.49m, and he was ranked second in the world behind his countryman in the early stages of the international campaign.

Cornelius, however, felt this afternoon's top-flight contest would offer a real indication of which athletes to watch at the World Championships in London in August.

He hoped Manyonga would



LUVO MANYONGA
Picture: Getty Images

overcome the pressure and gain a crucial edge over his opponents.

"I think in Shanghai the athletes might just be vying to get a psychological upper hand," said Cornelius, who started working with Manyonga at Tuks early last year.

"One good jump for any athlete could get the others to start worrying."

National 400m hurdles record holder LJ van Zyl was the only oth-

er SA athlete in the entry lists for today's meeting.

After finishing third from lane eight at the Diamond League season opener in Doha last week, he was facing a field spearheaded by Olympic champion Kerron Clement of the United States.

Van Zyl was scheduled to compete at 1.03pm (SA time) in the first event of the main programme, with the long jump set to begin at 1.27pm.

