



# Simbine thumps international stars over 100 metres

Being one of the trailblazers of South African athletics seems to come naturally to Akani Simbine.

This past weekend when the Tuks-athlete outprinted Justin Gatlin to win the 100m at the Diamond League Meeting in Doha, it was the third time this season that he has set a first in South African athletics.

No other local sprinter has yet been able to win the short sprint at a Diamond League Meeting. His winning time was 9.99s.

Simbine is also the first local sprinter to run two sub-ten second 100m races on the same day and the first to run a sub-ten second 100m race and sub-20 seconds in the 200m on the same day.

Judging by Simbine's performances so far it might not be farfetched to predict that he is capable of winning a medal at the World Championships in London.

The Tuks-athlete's progress as sprinter

over the last six years is remarkable. In 2012 he set a new South African junior record running 10.19s.

Except for 2013 he has managed to improve his time each year.

In 2014 his best time was 10.02s, in 2015 he ran 9.97s and last year he ran 9.89s. His best time so far this season is 9.92s.

Simbine's coach, Werner Prinsloo views 2012 as his breakthrough year.

"When Akani ran that 10.19s it changed my life as a coach. It was not only the time he ran but more importantly the build-up to the race," Prinsloo

said.

"I realised that Akani was not powerful enough as a sprinter so I specifically changed his programme to include more strength training.

"We were doing so for about three months before he set a new national junior record. Running 10.19s was a massive improvement as his previous best of about 10.49s.

"The next milestone for Akani was in 2013 when he started competing in Europe. Up to then I was the one who taught him everything

he knew about sprinting.

"Once he started racing internation-



After Akani Simbine improved his technique at the start he can now beat the best sprinters in the world. Photo: GB Jordaan

ally he became a student of sprinting and started to learn from the other athletes.

"I always say that training is training, for an athlete to be successful he needs to learn how to run. This started happening for Akani in 2013. Sprinting will never just be about running as fast as you can when the starter's gun goes," said Prinsloo.

Prinsloo considers last year as the third breakthrough moment.

"We realised that we needed to work on Akani's start as internationally that was where he was losing races. His top speed was never a problem," said Prinsloo.

"I consider it to be on par with the likes of Asafa Powell but he lost out big time over the first 20m. Akani's start is now one of the best.

Simbine proved this at last year's Olympic final in Rio where his reaction time out of the blocks was the fastest.

"If Akani has a good start there are very few sprinters who will be able to beat him."