

# Global athletics community taking note as Luvo soars in Shanghai

"LUVO Manyonga is extremely talented."

After the Tuks athlete's performance in Shanghai on Saturday, where he jumped 8,61 m to record his second victory in only three Diamond League meetings, this might sound like stating the obvious.

But sometimes it is not what is said that matters, but who has said it.

Manyonga, on this occasion, was being complimented by Randy Huntington who helped Mike Powell set a world record in 1991 jumping 8,95 metres in Tokyo.

Huntington, who is currently coaching in China, was watching the South African's performance. He said he was sure that Manyonga "is going to continue having fun" this season.

The international athletics community is also starting to take note of Manyonga's jumping feats.

LaShawn Merritt (USA), an Olympic and World Championships medallist in the 400 m, and Omar McLeod (Jamaica), an Olympic 110 m hurdles champion, congratulated him after his record-breaking performance.

There is just reason why the Tuks athlete's performances create such hype. The last time any athlete managed to jump 8,60 metres on three or more occasions in a season happened more than 20 years ago.

Carl Lewis did so in 1987 and Ivan Pedroso in 1995. Both managed five 8,60 m and further jumps.

A proud Neil Cornelius (Tuks Athletics coach) said on average Manyonga is recording jumps of 8,58 m. In the past



South African long jump star Luvo Manyonga doing what he does best. PHOTO: GALLO IMAGES

four competitions that he has competed in so far, his winning attempts were 8,46 m, 8,62 m, 8,65 m and 8,61 m.

Manyonga started off jumping 8,48 metres, which was a meeting

record. His second official jump was 8,49 m, followed by 8,61 m.

With his winning jump Manyonga also set a new Diamond League record. Believe it or not, Manyonga was

slightly disappointed afterwards.

"I didn't get the distance I wanted today. I was looking for 8,80 metres but I guess I need to be patient. It will eventually happen.

"The track was really fast. That made it difficult and I did three fouls, which was a distraction. But I should not complain. It is special to win at a Diamond League meeting for a second time," said Manyonga, who also won last year in Brussels after jumping 8,48 m.

His agent, Lee-Roy Newton, compared Manyonga's achievements this season to those of Usain Bolt in 2008-2010. "Luvo is busy shifting the barriers of international long jump to where a few people believe it is possible to go."

Meanwhile, LJ van Zyl proved that he has got his "groove" back on the same day by finishing second in the 400 m hurdles.

In the season's first Diamond League meeting in Doha he finished in third place. One would have thought that Van Zyl was beaming with confidence.

But sometimes results never tell the full story. Earlier this season the Tuks athlete admitted to being at a crossroad concerning his athletics career.

"I no longer believed that I had what it takes to compete against the world's best anymore. It is not a good place to be. If it was not for Hennie Kriel [Tuks Athletics coach], I might have opted to quit, but apart from being a great coach, Hennie is also a great motivator. He made me believe that it would be worth my while to continue to train and race. Now I am reaping the rewards and it really satisfying."

Bershawn Jackson (USA) won the 400m hurdles by running 48.63s. Van Zyl was clocked at 49.35sec, with Rasmus Magi (Estonia) third in 49.38sec.

— SuperSport.