



Tough at the top for Mzansi's young guns!

WHILE the biggest names in South African athletics are living up to expectations, some of Mzansi's other athletes have found the ongoing IAAF World Championships at the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park a steep learning curve.

Wenda Nel crashed out of the women's 400m hurdles at the semifinal stage when she managed a time of 55.70 sec. She is hoping to bounce back stronger at the next major championships in Doha, Qatar, in two years' time.

Long jumper Zarck Visser, who disappointed in the long jump qualification when he failed to register a leap of 8.05m to book a place in the final, is also looking ahead to the next championships to redeem himself.

But two of the saddest moments of the championship were probably the setbacks suffered by teenager Clarence Munyai (19) and Thando Roto (22), who were both disqualified in their heats.

Roto was disqualified for a false start in the 100m, while Munyai was disqualified for a lane violation in the 200m.

Munyai, a matric pupil at Tuks Sport High School, thought he had done enough in his heat when he clocked 20.19, only to be told he had stepped out of his lane at the finish. His performance would have indeed secured him a spot in the 200m semifinals – and who knows what may have happened there.

The youngster, who didn't seem nervous at all, had timed his race to perfection and was unfortunate to be disqualified after putting so much effort into qualifying.

Roto was too distraught to talk after his disqualification. But Munyai said that it was a tough lesson and that he hoped to take part in more events of this nature in future.

He said he was learning a lot from Wayde van Niekerk and Akani Simbine: "We keep learning from Wayde and Akani – hopefully we'll get there some day."

Nel said she made a slight error before the last hurdles, which cost her qualification: "I will take the mistake and try to improve next time."

"I still have one race in Zurich to give it a go and try for a season's best."

