



As to who won when the Pretorius brothers challenged each other as youngsters Fredriech (left) admitted his older brother Constant (right) was the fastest over 100m but that he was the better jumper. **Photo: Reg Caldecott**

The drive to achieve surely in their blood

This week, when the two Tuks-athletes represent South Africa at the World Student Games in Taipei, the brothers will be each other's biggest supporters.

A few years ago, Constant and Fredriech Pretorius had quite a rivalry going on on the athletics track.

Each wanted to prove he was the fastest and could jump the furthest.

But all of this has changed.

This week, when the two Tuks-athletes represent South Africa at the World Student Games in Taipei, the brothers will be each other's biggest supporters.

Constant will be competing in the 400m-hurdles and Fredriech in the decathlon.

If nothing unforeseen happens, Constant ought to qualify for the final.

According to the statistics, he is certainly South Africa's most improved 400m-hurdler.

At the end of last year, his best time was 50.0sec. Now it is 49.28sec.

The former Commonwealth Champion, Cornel Fredericks (49.27sec), is the only local athlete to have run a faster time so far this season.

Constant is confident of at least setting another personal best in Taipei.

The goal he set himself for this season is to see how close he can get to dipping under 49sec, which is the benchmark in international athletics.

While he was still a junior athlete, he had all the makings to become a true champion, but after he finished school, he sort of faded away when he went to study and train in the United States.

There is an ever growing list of talented South African athletes who never fulfil their true potential after deciding to accept bursaries to study in the United States.

However, Constant said his decision to go to New Orleans was certainly not all bad.

"The coach who worked with me was

good.

"He helped me to improve my speed and running technique.

"That led to me setting personal bests in the 200m and 400m. I guess I am to blame that my performances in the 400m-hurdles stagnated.

"The problem was that I did not trust my coach's advice when it came to hurdling.

"Hurdling is such a technical event which means that if you start doubting your coach you are doomed to fail," said Constant.

Fredriech made South African athletics history at the Gauteng North Championships when he won the decathlon, scoring 8 002 points. He is only the second South African decathlete to go past 8 000 points.

Another former star from Pretoria, Willem Coertzen, who is the current South African record holder, was the first.

Meanwhile, Fredriech makes no secret that he wants score 8 000 points again to prove to himself that the first time was no fluke.

"My training has been going well.

"More importantly is that apart from the usual niggles I am injury-free at the moment. So I am hoping to be competitive in Taipei," he said before the team's departure.

What excites Fredriech is that he was able to set personal bests in eight of the 10 events so far this season.

"The 400m and the 1 500m are the only two events in which I still need to improve. I am confident I can do so.

"It took me a while but I now realise to improve on 8 002 points does not mean I have to set new bests in every event all the time. The secret to being a good decathlete is consistency," he said.