



Luvo Manyonga during his attempt to break the world long jump record at the French Alps yesterday. / TWITTER

World long jump record dodges Manyonga

Mike Powell's 1991 distance unbreakable

By **Daniel Mothowagae**

It was a case of so near yet so far for Luvo Manyonga in his attempt to break the world long jump record yesterday.

The newly crowned world champion posted jumps of 8.35m and 8.46m, but the effort was still good enough to earn him a gold medal at the unique meeting in the ski resort of Tignes in the French Alps.

"The wind was bad," his agent Lee-Roy Newton told Sowetan from France where six other jumpers also fell short in their bid to smash Mike Powell's dust-gathering 8.95m record.

France's Kafetein Gomis took silver in 8.22m, while Emiliano Lasa of Uruguay completed the podium with his best distance of 8.18m.

"The conditions were tough, especially the wind. He [Luvo] really enjoyed the meeting," Newton added.

Competing at 3 032 metres above sea level on a specially built track with an artificial sand pit, yesterday's event was always going to be a mammoth task for Manyonga and his fellow competitors

since there is less oxygen at high altitude.

Powell achieved his feat at the Tokyo World Championships in 1991 when Manyonga was seven months old.

The 26-year-old SA and African record holder has always expressed his desire to break the 9m-mark, and he made a big statement early this year when he shattered Khotso Mokoena's 8.50m national and continental record that had stood since 2009.

Manyonga set the new SA record of 8.65m at the SA Championships in April in Potchefstroom, North West, bettering the 8.62m that he posted a month earlier.

Up next, the Tuks Athletics jumper will resume his Diamond League campaign in Zurich, Switzerland on August 24, with another appearance at the IAAF World Challenge meeting in Zagreb, Croatia, five days later, according to Newton.

Manyonga is in line to land the \$50 000 (about R662 000) Diamond grand prize, having qualified for the finals in Zurich courtesy of his victories at the China and Sweden legs.

He is already sitting on the pounds seat having claimed the \$60 000 purse for his gold at the just-concluded IAAF World Championships in London.

Manyonga's 8.65m leap is still the leading distance in the world so far.