



Clarence Munyai is setting the track ablaze. / SUPPLIED

# Munyai's got something very special

## Record-breaking spree points to bright future

By Daniel Mthowagae

At 19, sprinter Clarence Munyai has broken the barriers some of his senior peers in athletics can only dream of. His performances on the track belies the lad who broke into prominence only last year.

The Tuks High School matriculant has constantly proved why he's one for the future and he possesses the arrogance to go with for a sprinter. In a space of three months, Munyai broke the SA and African 200m records, the 300m world and African records, with his latest feat coming from the African Junior Championships in Algeria at the weekend.

With his 20.22 seconds winning time at the junior continental competition that ended in the city of Tlemcen last Sunday, Munyai smashed the 22-year-old championship record of 20.76 held by Ibrahim Meite of the Ivory Coast.

His gold medal helped SA to 12 gold in the team's 17-medal total haul that had four silver and one bronze. The Algeria triumph followed his exploits in the Czech Republic last week where his 31.61 in the 300m

set the world U-20 best and the African junior record over the rarely run event.

Although he came third in a race that Wayne van Niekerk clinched in a world best time of 30.81 in Ostrava last Tuesday, the 200m remains Munyai's favourite distance.

"I am really good at it; there isn't so much pressure like the 100m because the race is longer and there is more time to fix mistakes if there is any during the race," he told Sowetan from Fürth in Germany.

Munyai has been in Europe since June 12 and has been shuttling to races from the German town where he is in camp with fellow Tuks club mates Thando Roto, Cornel Fredericks and Leroux Hamman.

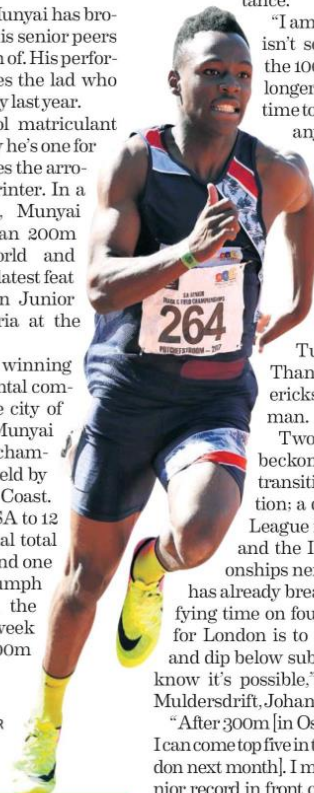
Two more major breaks beckon for Munyai in his transition in senior competition: a debut in the Diamond League in Morocco on July 16 and the IAAF World Championships next month, in which he

has already breached the 200m qualifying time on four occasions. "My plan for London is to make the 200m final and dip below sub-20 seconds because I know it's possible," vowed the lad from Muldersdrift, Johannesburg.

"After 300m [in Ostrava last week] I think I can come top five in the [200m] final [in London next month]. I mean, I ran the world junior record in front of 12 000-plus fans yet I managed to get third against very strong 400m guys like Wayne."

Munyai started off the season with a 20.10 new national record that shattered Riaan Dempers' 22-year-old SA junior record (20.16 seconds from 1995).

This performance elicited talk he could follow Usain Bolt as the second teenager in the history of athletics to run a sub-20 seconds 200m. "The Rio Olympics shaped me up to be ready for tough competition, against people from different countries," he said.



Clarence Munyai. / ROGER SEDRES / GALLO IMAGES

## Going places

### • Munyai at a glance

His personal bests are 10.20sec (100m); 20.10 (200m) and 31.61 (300m).

He has a twin brother in a family of two boys and four girls. His mother was a sprinter in her youth.

Munyai met his coach Hennie Kriel via Facebook in 2014.

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