



# A middle distance star worth watching

A 19-year-old upcoming star from Tuks, could just be the athlete to start the revival of South African middle distance athletics.

George Kusche is described as an athlete who has all the attributes to become an international winner.

South Africa used to have a proud tradition in men's middle distance running winning no less than 11 medals between 1992 and 2013 at the Olympic Games and World Championships but for the last four years there were no real highlights. It will be a shame if the legacy of the likes of Mbulaeni Mulaudzi, Hezekiel Sepeng, Johan Botha and Johan Cronjé just fades away.

Botha, a two time world indoors medallist, is confident that it won't

happen. He backs Kusche as one of the athletes who has what it takes to become a world beater.

The Tuks/HPC athlete certainly has got the credentials. At the South African Junior Championships he won the 800m as well as the 1 500m. It is not a feat accomplished often.

So far this season Kusche has already improved his time in the 1 500m by 12 seconds.

At the moment his personal best is 3:41:18 however he is confident that he is capable of running even faster times.

Kusche ascribed his drastic improvement in the 1 500m to having done more distance work this season as well as dropping a kilogram in weight.

"It may not sound like much, but in racing one kilogram less can make a huge difference," explained Kusche for whom it made sense to try and be competitive in the 800m as well as the 1 500m.

Kusche's best time in the 800m is 1:47.40 but Botha expected this to improve on it in the next four weeks.

The 19-year-old Tuks/HPC-athlete had a victorious start on Sunday when he won the 800m at the Brussels Grand Prix-meeting in a time of 1:47.98.

George Kusche on the training course in preparation for his participation in Europe.  
Photo: Reg Caldecott

