



Medal hope blow for SA Worlds bid

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SOUTH Africa's medal chances at next month's IAAF World Athletics Championships in London took a significant dip at the weekend after Rio Olympics javelin silver medallist Sunette Viljoen pulled out with injury.

Viljoen confirmed the news via Twitter. The 33-year-old is a two-time bronze medallist at World Championships, in 2013 and 2015, and called it the "most difficult decision I have had to make".

She did not specify what the injury was.

Meanwhile, a rollercoaster week of emotion for 100m hurdler Rikenette Steenkamp has ended on a definite downer after she was forced to withdraw from the World Athletics Championships starting in London on Friday.

She was forced to follow Viljoen's decision to withdraw from the South African team. Steenkamp received a late invite from the IAAF to be part

of the World Championships team, but pulled up with a hamstring injury.

The 24-year-old Tukkies student, a national 100-metre hurdles champion at every age-group level, told Team SA: "I was busy training, actually preparing for World Student Championships, not worlds."

"My second-last run I felt it pull slightly. It's not a severe injury but full recovery is very important to me so I had to withdraw.

Miracle season

"The timing is just heart-breaking as I've had a great season, actually it's a miracle season.

"Since January to now I've performed beyond my expectation, so I'm still smiling," said Steenkamp.

"I haven't decided yet on World Students (in Taiwan)... I'll give it a few days."

Steenkamp is refusing to let her bad news get to her and remains steadfastly behind

her fellow South Africans who would be competing in London

"I won't fight what happened and (I) understand that everything happening is happening for a purpose. I'll give my body the rest it needs."

Invited by the IAAF to the Worlds' along with Steenkamp was discus thrower Victor Hogan.

The pair were invited by the global body to participate in their specialist events after being selected to fill "quotas" in order to complete the fields in these respective disciplines.

Hogan is rapidly finding form after recently coming out of suspension for testing positive for an illegal stimulant.

But there's still no news on distance track ace Dominique Scott who was controversially left out of the team despite meeting the IAAF qualification criteria, which would see her advancing directly to the final of the 10 000m as it's a no-heats event. – Additional reporting ANA

