



# Double blow for Team SA ahead of World Athletics Championships

## SPORTS CORRESPONDENT

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

Viljoen (pictured) confirmed the news via Twitter.

The 33-year-old is a two-time bronze medalist at World Championships, in 2013 and 2015, and called it the "most difficult decision I have had to make", but did not specify what the injury was.

Meanwhile, a roller-coaster week of emotion for 100m hurdler Rikenette Steenkamp has ended on a definite downer as she has been forced to withdraw from the World Championships that is starting in London on Friday.

She's been forced to follow Viljoen's decision to withdraw from the South African team.

Steenkamp received a late invitation 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.

"The timing is just heartbreaking 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 are going to 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 is 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 having come 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*

