



ZAZINI LEAVES RIVALS IN THE DUST

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This has been a breakthrough year for Sokwakhana Zazini, a rising star in South African athletics.

The 17-year-old sprinter collected international medals and broke the world youth record in 400m hurdles in Pretoria earlier this year.

His 48.84 second sprint also won him gold in the Gauteng North Championships at the University of Pretoria in March.

He also put South Africa on the world map when he won gold at the International Association of Athletics Federations World Under-18 Championships in Nairobi in July.

His impressive performance has earned him a nomination for this year's SASports Awards, which take place next Sunday at Emperors Palace in Kempton Park.

This week, Zazini couldn't hold back his glee, saying: "I feel excited. It's an honour to be nominated as the best newcomer."

The Pretoria-based sprinter has been nominated alongside tennis star Lloyd Harris and cricketer Keshav Maharaj for the newcomer of the year award.

"I trust God that everything will happen as planned and whoever wins, I will congratulate."

He said he worked hard this year and hoped that luck would be on his side.

"I was not really shocked about my performances, but I was aiming for more."

Originally from Burgersdorp in the Eastern Cape, the speedster moved to Pretoria last year after receiving a bursary from TuksSport High School.

"Last year, it was difficult to settle in, but now everything is going well. I don't regret the decision of coming to Pretoria because I get the best treatment here."

He said he received academic, emotional and physical support at the school, which helped with his overall development.

"I've always been in love with athletics, and hurdles was always my dream event. I started doing it from a young age and I was able to work on my technique."

Zazini also excels over the flat 400m. His performance at the SA Junior and Youth Championships in Germiston last year was remarkable.

In the space of an hour, he won the 400m in 47.23 seconds and finished second in the 400m hurdles final, finishing in 50.85 seconds.

Eighteen categories will be contested at the SA Sports Awards, including sportsman and sportswoman of the year, sports star of the year and team of the year.



HARD WORK PAYS OFF Sokwakhana Zazini is excited to be nominated for an SA Sports Award

PHOTO: REG CALDECOTT

