



# Young sprinters ready for 2018

By CHARLES BALOYI

THERE is a sprint revolution happening in South African athletics and it's certainly not limited to the senior ranks.

Mzansi's youngsters are also on the rise and the future of the sport looks bright.

Teenagers Sokwakhana Zazini, Retshiditswe Mlenga and Tshenolo Lemao have already started planning for next year.

The 17-year-old trio, who all study at the Tuks Sport High School, have a big year ahead in 2018.

Zazini (400m hurdles), Mlenga (200m) and Lemao (100m) have been included in South Africa's preliminary squad for the IAAF World Under-20 Championships in Finland in July next year.

But the trio are especially excited about the newly launched Athletix Grand Prix Series that will take place in three South African cities in March next season.

The prospect of rubbing shoulders with big-name athletes in their own country has them all fired up.

Stillwater Sports and Athletics SA (ASA) will present the three-legged Grand Prix Series in Johannesburg, Pretoria and Paarl in March 2018.

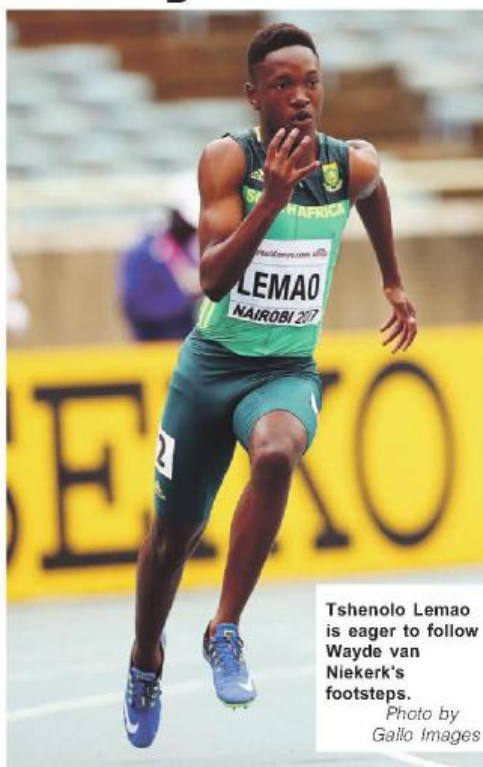
ASA will invite choice guest athletes from overseas to spice things up, with R450 000 in total up for grabs for athletes in the different categories every night.

That makes for total prize money of R1,36 million to be shared by the top athletes over the three legs.

While all eyes will be on the big name athletes such as sprint king Akani Simbine, golden girl Caster Semenya and world long jump champion Luvo Manyonga, the young athletes are also eagerly anticipating the big events taking place in their own country.

Lemao said: "The Grand Prix is a big thing for us as young athletes. It could give us a head start and is ideal preparation for the World Juniors (U-20 Championships)."

Mlenga says their goal is to do better and raise the bar next year: "We are inspired by what Akani



Tshenolo Lemao is eager to follow Wayde van Niekerk's footsteps.

Photo by Gallo Images

and Wayde van Niekerk have achieved and want to follow in their footsteps. The U-20 Championships are a big event on the calendar and we want to keep doing what we do to the best of our ability."

The three athletes are good friends and train together as their quest to be the best continues.

