



# Simbine plans to up track medal count

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A PODIUM finish at an international athletics meeting was one of Akani Simbine's targets this year and having failed to achieve that, he is determined to accomplish the feat next year.

Simbine, who had a brilliant domestic and international season, going under 10 seconds in the 100m five times, said he now must start collecting medals, beginning with the Commonwealth Games in Australia in April.

"I want to start better and faster, that's what I'm aiming to achieve. I always want to be faster, I always want to be better to improve myself as an individual and as an athlete," Simbine said.

"For me, it is always to run faster, to be better than ever before."

With the Commonwealth Games the main focus, Simbine is planning to use South Africa's newly launched Athletics Grand Prix, which boasts total prize money of R1.36m, to sharpen up.

The Grand Prix meetings are scheduled for Ruimsig on March 1, Tuks on March 7 and Paarl on March 22.

"I want to get medals as soon as I can.

"I see next year as an opportunity for me to begin increasing my medal count," Simbine said.

"I want to start collecting medals at the Commonwealth Games, the African Championship, the Continental Cup, going into the World Championships and the Olympics Games.

"So this is a great way for me to start everything that I wanted to achieve and I believe that I can do it.

"Right now, the next three years for me are the biggest years of my life and my athletics career."

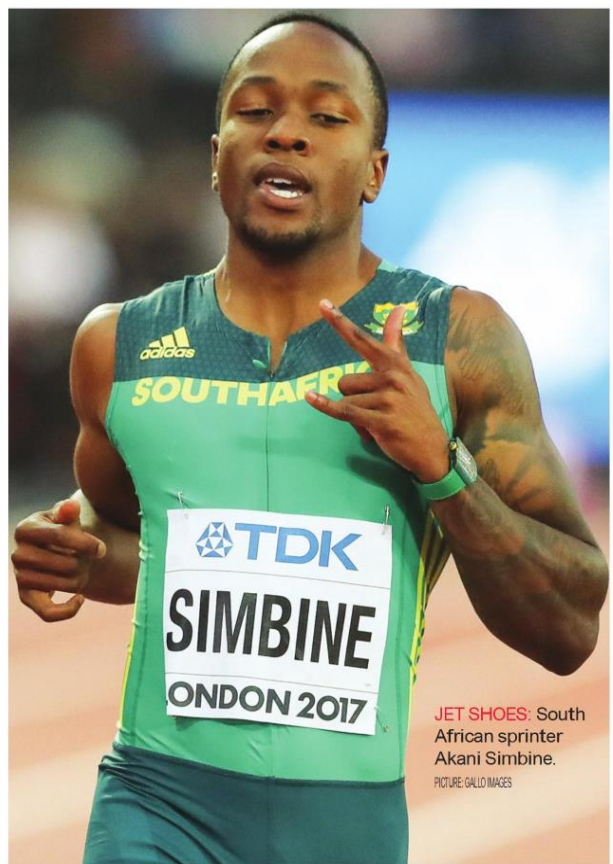
With Wayne van Niekerk to miss the Commonwealth Games due to injury, the pressure will be on Simbine to bring home silverware.

"The pressure will always be there, it will never change.

"So for me, nothing is going to be different I'm going to each an every competition trying to win and doing my best for my country.

"I'm not doing indoors next year so the local series works out perfectly because I don't have to rush anything in my training sessions."

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**JET SHOES:** South African sprinter Akani Simbine.

PICTURE: GALLO IMAGES

