



Caster Semenya during happier times with her former coach Michael Seme. Photo by Getty Images

Seme off to greener pastures



CHANGE IS GOOD!

By CHARLES BALOYI
RENOWNED athletics coach Michael "Sponge" Seme, left the University of Pretoria athletics set-up because he felt unappreciated.

Seme tendered his resignation to join KwaZulu-Natal Athletics as head of athletics.

After a decade-long service at Tuks Athletics, where he coached Mzansi's golden girl Caster Semenya to her first International Association of Athletics Federations 800m world title back in 2009, Seme has decided to call it quits. Seme, who coaches Shanghai International marathon four times winner, Stephen Mokoka, and prominent road running star Glenrose Xaba, has accused Tuks of not giving him the respect he deserves even though he served them with distinction for a decade.

Seme said his passion was to develop athletes, but he was not allowed to do that in Pretoria and that frustrated him to a point that he was open to a move.

KZN came to his rescue with an offer he couldn't refuse and they have appointed him as the head of their athletics academy and the head of coach of middle distance running.

Seme has already started in his new role and he has promised to take KwaZulu-Natal Athletics to places.

Seme said: "Tuks didn't see the value in me. I didn't feel appreciated any more and decided to pack and go."

"I was constantly overlooked for many years. I'm passionate about development and enjoy working with aspiring athletes, but I wasn't allowed to do that here."

"Black coaches aren't appreciated and don't seem to get enough support

from top management."

Seme added that it was up to Mokoka and Xaba to join him in KZN or look for a new coach.

He left the ball in their court as he has started a new chapter in his coaching career.

Seme went on: "It's up to them to decide. I won't force any of the athletes that I coached in Pretoria to come and join me here."

"I work with a new group of athletes and coaches, but the door is still open for athletes who worked with me to come and join us."

Athletes from Gauteng, the Western Cape, North West and the Free State have been making waves in athletics, while KwaZulu-Natal have been quite in recent years.

But Seme is there to change all of that and has promised to make an immediate impact.

