



# Gatlin set to fire up in Pretoria

OCKERT DE VILLIERS

REIGNING world 100m champion and 2004 Olympic gold medalist Justin Gatlin will make his maiden run on South African soil after he was revealed as a marquee athlete for the Athletix Grand Prix Series on March 8.

The controversial American sprinter will line up in the men's 150m race at the fast Tuks Stadium track but it is yet to be confirmed who he will go up against.

The fifth fastest sprinter in the history of the 100m shocked Jamaican legend Usain Bolt in his swansong at last year's world championships in London when he raced to victory in a time of 9.92 seconds for his first world title since 2005.

Gatlin has been a divisive figure in track and field athletics, having served bans for two doping offences earlier in his career.

The mouthwatering prospect of Gatlin lining up against South Africa's sub-10 machine Akani Simbine in Pretoria will remain a pipe dream with the two sprinters scheduled for different events.

Simbine will back into the blocks in the 100m on his favourite track while Gatlin will race through the half bend.

Meanwhile, world long-jump champion Luvo Manyonga added the South African indoor record to his list of accolades at the Meeting Paris Indoor on Wednesday.

The outdoor record-holder improved the national record by 14 centimetres at his first indoor event.

His jump of 8.32m on his second-last attempt was just four centimetres short of the African record of Ignisious Gaisah set in 2006.

