

# Top 400m hurdlers chase fast times at Tuks track

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PROVINCIAL athletics championships hardly produce fireworks but the current high standard of South African track and field means that assumption no longer exists.

The two Gauteng provincial athletics unions will be hosting their championships over the weekend and would be looking to build on the hype and success of last year.

At last year's Athletics Gauteng North Championships records tumbled left, right, and centre including Luvo Manyonga's continental long jump mark of 8.62m.

Akani Simbine and Thando Roto became the first South Africans to dip below 10 seconds in the same race with times of 9.92 and 9.95 respectively.

Neither Manyonga or Simbine will be in action over the weekend but there could still be some pyrotechnics on the fast Tuks Athletics track.

The 100 metres promises flashes of lightning with four of

the country's top sprinters set to line up against each other on Saturday.

Former South African 100m record-holder Henricho Bruintjies will back into the blocks where he could face 2015 World Championships 200m bronze medallist Anaso Jobodwana and Rio Olympian Clarence Munyai.

Bruintjies is one of only five South Africans that have dipped below 10 seconds in the 100m, boasting a personal best of 9.97 he set back in 2015.

Jobodwana will be the second fastest in the field with his PB of 10.10 while Munyai has hinted at lowering his best of 10.20.

"If I can come close to running the perfect race I know I am capable of clocking a fast time," said Munyai, who is a Tuks-athlete.

The men's 400m hurdles promise to be one of the major events at the championship with four Olympians set to line up against each other over the weekend.

Former world bronze medallist LJ van Zyl and 2014 Com-

monwealth Games champion Cornel Fredericks will have targets on their backs with South African champion Le Roux Hamman and Lindsay Hanekom challenging for the provincial title.

The race over the barriers will also include Constant Pretorius, who dipped below 50 seconds for the first time, will also be in action.

The one-lap hurdles has been one of South Africa's strongest events in international athletics but none of the country's athletes has dipped below 49 seconds in a local race since 2014.

Van Zyl will be aiming for his fourth Commonwealth Games in April and will be dreaming of repeating his gold-medal run from the 2006 Melbourne showpiece.

Meanwhile, the Varsity Athletics series will be held for the fifth consecutive year and will be hosted at Tuks on March 2 and 23.

The event will see the top eight universities in the country battle it out for track and field bragging rights.

