

Sprinter eases his way back into form

ATHLETICS

By DAVID ISAACSON

ANASO Jobodwana wants to be the compete sprinter, but he's not sure he will win the race to be at his American wife's side for the birth of their child in the next few weeks.

"It's up to the US because [of] the visa situation," Jobodwana said after clocking an unofficial 100m best of 10.07sec at the Gauteng North championships at Tuks on Saturday.

"My baby is coming in three to four weeks so hopefully I'll be able to make it."

But if he doesn't get there in time, they're making contingency plans.

"We've already discussed it, Face-Time, you know, just to be part of that process."

Jobodwana's wife, Taylor, the daughter of 1976 Olympic 200m bronze medalist Dwayne Evans, has been encouraging her husband from afar.

"She was more worried about me because she knows the stress I've been through and everything else, so she was 'don't worry about me, just focus on just getting back and everything will take care of itself'".

Jobodwana was chuffed with his performance.

The overly strong tailwind denied him a personal best, but this was his best showing since winning the 200m bronze at the 2015 world championships in Beijing.

After losing the 2014 and 2016 seasons to injuries, and last year battling the fear of breaking down again, Jobodwana hasn't seriously doubled in the 100m and 200m since 2013, when he won both crowns at the World Student Games.

"I just want to get back into the 100, 200 and be like a complete sprinter instead of just doing the 200, because the 100 also helps me with my overall race."

In 2013 Jobodwana twice went 10.10sec as he tried to become the first South African to break the 10-second barrier in the 100m. Five compatriots have done it since then, while Jobodwana is still waiting to join the club.



ANASO JOBODWANA

Even at the 2015 world championships, when he made the 200m podium having clocked what was then a 19.87sec national record, he avoided doing the 100m because he didn't feel strong enough to cope doing both races at full tilt.

Last year Jobodwana trained by himself and he posted relatively poor times by his own standards – 10.19 for the 100m and 20.62 for the 200m.

But he explained he needed to be patient to avoid becoming a patient.

"Last year was a bit of a gamble because I knew I needed to be healthy, and if I was to go to a [training] group with a lot of good athletes I was going to push myself and I'd probably end up after the year with a broken body again. So it was just my decision to stay away from all these big groups and just focus on my health."

Now he is back in group at the the Tuks club under coach Thabo Mathebedi, and the results are showing almost immediately.

Next stop is Thursday, the first meet of the Athletix Grand Prix in Ruimsig where Jobodwana will do the 200m.

"I don't want to focus on times right now because it might just throw me off my game. I just want to focus on actually executing again like I used to execute because it's been a long time – and to get that mental block out in the 200m."