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SUNSHINE



Caster Semenya will no longer be coached by Jean Verster.
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CASTER THE BEST BY FAR!

Says coach as they part ways

By CHARLES BALOYI

MZANSI'S golden girl, Caster Semenya, has ended her three-year relationship with renowned athletics coach, Jean Verster.

The Olympics and world 800m champion left her training base in Potchefstroom to join the Tshwane University of Technology (TUT).

She enrolled her honours for Sports Science at TUT and will represent them in future races.

But the Limpopo-born star has made a request to train at the University of Pretoria's High Performance Centre (HPC).

Tobie Sutcliffe, HPC CEO, confirmed Semenya would be training at Tuks, but won't be running in their club colours.

Sutcliffe said: "No, she won't be joining Tuks. She has enrolled at TUT

and will run for them, but she's welcome to train here.

"Even though she doesn't run for us we'll still take care of her. She remains one of our own. I was the one who advised her to train in Potch in the first place."

Verster has coached top athletes including Nigel Amos from Botswana, Hezekiel Sepeng the 1996 Olympic 800m silver medallist and Elroy Gelant.

Verster wished his champion well on her new endeavours.

Said Verster: "She said she no longer required my services and that she had decided to go back to Pretoria. It's been three good years and I'll miss her. Caster was purely a talented, disciplined and hard-working athlete. She is, by far, the best athlete I've ever coached."

"Amos was talented and so was Sepeng, but Semenya has everything that the others didn't have in terms of qualities."

The first top athlete to leave Verster was Gelant, who said he wanted to be on his own.

Semenya is part of the three women's SA Commonwealth Games athletics team scheduled for Australia, Gold Coast, from 4 until 15 April. She's joined by Olympic silver medallist Sunette Viljoen and Wenda Nel.

Verster believes Semenya will be a force to be reckoned with in Gold Coast and said he's still available to offer her advice, if need be.

He said: "It's a relaxed year for her. She doesn't have much competition there, only the Kenyan middle distance ladies will put her to a test."

