



Manyonga straining to leap into Carl Lewis record territory indoors

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SOUTH AFRICAN long-jump king Luvo Manyonga's flight path will be directed at the 8.79-metre mark at the 2018 IAAF World Indoor Championships in Birmingham tomorrow.

The line represents the 34-year-old record held by American legend Carl Lewis and while it may seem daunting, Manyonga feels the gravity-defying leap is within reach.

"It will depend on how the body feels, and the travelling, but I am quite excited about going there to break the world indoor record," Manyonga said ahead of his departure for the championships.

"It is my first world indoors and it will be great to break the world record at my first world championships."

Manyonga posted a new continental record of 8.40m in Metz, France, last month which launched him into the top of the global indoor rankings.

World long-jump silver medallist Jarrion Lawson of the United States has put up his hand as Manyonga's main challenger, having soared to the second-best jump of the year at 8.38m.

Nineteen-year-old Cuban pretender Juan Miguel Echevarria has emerged as a real threat after finishing second behind Manyonga at the Metz meeting with a personal best of 8.34m.

Although world champs long-jump bronze medallist Ruswahl Samaai has not jumped in competition this year his pedigree alone should make him a challenger for a medal too.

South Africa will have a full complement of long-jumpers at the championships after legendary horizontal jumper Khotso Mokoena received a wildcard invitation for winning the 2017 European Indoor tour long jump title. Mokoena won the 2008 title while he also finished fifth at the 2006 edition in Moscow.

Women's 60m record-holder Carina Horn, who set a new SA 60m indoor record last month with a time of 7.09 seconds in Metz, also competes tomorrow.

Horn's time ranks her eighth in the world this year, which has instilled the belief she may stand a chance of returning with silverware. The Tuks sprinter said: "Now is the first time that according to the statistics I have a realistic chance to go through to the final eight."

