



Hanekom causes a big upset

The forgotten man of South African hurdling, Lindsay Hanekom, caused quite a surprise on Saturday when he won the 400m-hurdles at the South African Championships at Tuks.

In 2016 when Hanekom ran 49.03s to qualify for the Olympic Games in Rio, it was thought that he was going to be a dominant force in local as well as international 400m-hurdles racing. It did not happen. Instead, he disappeared.

Last year he hardly raced. It was due to no fault of his own that he got to spend more time in the waiting room of doctors and physiotherapists than on the track. Unfortunately in the long run that gets to work on an athlete's mind.

But thanks to his coach, Nico van Heerden and the support from Tuks/HPC who refused to lose faith in his abilities Hanekom is back to his winning ways.

Hanekom was quite emotional after winning his first South African senior title. His winning time of 49.17s is the second best of his career.

"It was always my dream to win a South African senior title. I owe so much to so many especially those who never lost faith in my abilities. I guess I was slightly lucky as there was no pressure on me going into the race. 'Oom Nico's' advice was to focus on what I control,



Lindsay Hanekom is back to his winning ways after his surprising victory in the weekend's SA Championships. **Photo: Reg Caldecott**

emphasising that he would be happy no matter what the outcome of the race is as long as I have given it my all," said Hanekom.

The 400m-hurdles final was a race of surprises as the world youth champion and world record holder, Sokwakhana Zazini from TuksSport High School, raced to a second place finish, improving on his personal best time by more than 0.50s. His time in the final was 49.32s. It was only his fifth race in senior athletics.

Last year's national champion and another local athlete, Le Roux Hamman, was third in 49.42s.