

Tuks track on fire as top sprinters claim a host of new records

OCKERT DEVILLIERS

DO NOT be surprised if the world's fastest men and women start flocking to Pretoria to race on the hot Tuks track.

By yesterday, the University of Pretoria track had produced four national sprinting records at the SA Championships.

Once the African sun has baked the blue two-tone track, athletes glide rather than run over the Mondo surface.

On Friday it produced one of the greatest performances on South African soil when Clarence Munyai posted a new national record of 19.69 seconds.

The 20-year-old Munyai took a massive 0.15-second chunk off the previous mark, which world 400m record-holder Wayde van Niekerk had posted in Jamaica in June 2016.

"I knew the conditions were going to be good and I saw from Thursday the people are running really fast times," Munyai said.

"I'm just 20 and a 19.69 is a massive achievement and I never thought I was going to run that quick at this age."

He slashed almost half-a-second off his previous best – the South African junior record of 20.10 – he set a year ago at the same venue. He is just 0.01 seconds shy of Frankie Fredericks' African record.

Munyai was a no-show in the final yesterday with Luxolo Adams earning his first national title with a new personal best of 20.06 seconds.

Adams slashed a massive 0.37 off his previous best with junior sensation Thando Dlodlo second in 20.41, making it a sprint silver double.

Dlodlo set a new South African junior record of 10.11 on Thursday before winning silver in the men's 100m final with a time of 10.15.

He finished second behind Simon Magakwe, who made a comeback of note when he won a record seventh South African 100m title.

It is the first time since Magakwe had served a two-year ban for a doping violation that he has stepped onto the podium at the national championships.

"It feels good to be back. I was away struggling, but going to Cape Town was a good change for me," Magakwe said.

Former South African rec-



SIMON MAGAKWE

ord-holder Henricho Bruinjtjies had to be content with the bronze medal, finishing 0.01 behind Dlodlo.

The championships also saw South Africa's fastest woman Carina Horn break the 28-year-old 100m record with a time of 11.03 on Thursday.

"It is a great feeling. I am really excited, I've been waiting for a few years to race on my home track and I am glad I could do it here," Horn said.

"I can get to sub-11 because that is my goal. I feel it is coming now that I have the record."

Yesterday saw another long-standing record being shattered with World Youth champion Zeney van der Walt smashing the 35-year-old junior 400m hurdles record, previously held by Myrtle Bothma.

She pushed Olympian Wenda Nel all the way to the line, finishing second behind her in time of 55.05. Nel claimed the title with a time of 55.01.

"I ran my own race and focused on my own 10 hurdles... the last hurdle could have been better but I am happy," Van der Walt said.

"It gives me a lot of confidence and now I know I can reach the 55 seconds."



RECORD BREAKER: Clarence Munyai celebrates his new national 200m record at the South Africa Championships at Tuks Stadium in Pretoria on Friday. **PICTURE:** BACKPAGEPIX

