



RECORD: Caster Semenya in action.

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## Caster has an eye on Zola's record

FRESH off her 1000m SA record, Caster Semenya will be chasing the women's 1500m South African record at the Dal Josaphat Stadium in Paarl on Thursday at the third and final Liquid Telecom Athletix Grand Prix Series Meeting.

In fine form, Semenya broke the 35-year-old record of Ilse de Kock-Wicksell 10 days ago at the second Grand Prix Meeting at Tuks.

She will face USA-based Dominique Scott in the 1500m in Paarl. Scott won the SA 5000m title on Thursday, clocking 16:55.05.

Semenya has already come close to the SA record of 4:01.81, set as far back as 1984 by Zola Budd-Pieterse, when she clocked 4:01.99 in Durban in June 2016 at the Africa Championships. The bronze medalist over 1500m at last year's world champs has already raced the metric mile once in 2018, clocking 4:23.26 in Tshwane last month. Not much should be read into this performance though, especially after her blistering 2:35.43 SA 1000m record.

Scott has raced the 1500m twice this season on the indoor circuit, where she first ran a national record of 4:05.25 (Boston, February 10) and 4:09.81 (Birmingham, March 2). That 4:07.25 lowered her previous national record of 4:10.90. The indoor track is very different to running outdoors, which makes it difficult to extrapolate how good the 1500m indoor time is in comparison to the outdoors one.

With no pacemaker on Thursday, Semenya will have to do the work herself. She will need to go through the 300m mark in around 46-48sec, the 400m in roughly 62-64sec with 2:08 targeted for 800m if she hopes to break the record. A tough ask for someone to do on their own.

"At SA's it is all about the title," says Semenya, who recently graduated in Sports Management. "So the race is more likely to be tactical. I am really looking forward to chasing Zola's record. I have the 800m and the 1000m record so it will be good to get the 1500m record too."

Semenya is raw speed, while Scott seems to get better as the race progresses, making the 1500m an exciting tussle. Semenya will be seeking an 800m/1500m double at the National Championships, a feat she last achieved in 2016, where she also won the 400m title.

