



DRUM News

8 STARS TO WATCH

Expect great things from these young South African heroes who are already making their mark in sport COMPILED BY RICHARD VAN RENSBURG



THE thwack of a cricket ball being hit for a six or a soccer ball thudding into the back of the net... They're electrifying moments guaranteed to send sports fans into orbit – and it's even more special when it's a talented newcomer who's making everyone cheer while grabbing the opportunity to shine.

While it's sad to see old legends bow out, the magic of sport is that there's always

new blood coming through the ranks to shake things up and delight fans. Here are a few budding SA stars who are getting noticed in the world of cricket, soccer, athletics, swimming and rugby.

AKANI SIMBINE (Athletics)

Age 24

Personal best times

100m – 9,89s (18 July 2016, Hungary)
200m – 19,95s (4 March 2017, Pretoria)

He was named the "world's fastest student" when he took part in the 2015 World University Games and he's been showing his mettle at the Gold Coast Commonwealth Games in Australia where he won gold in the 100m in a time of 10,03s. Last year he also had the chance to prove himself against heavyweights such as Asafa Powell, Andre De

Akani has won SA's first-ever 100m Commonwealth Games gold medal

Grasse and Justin Gatlin, beating them all when they faced off at the IAAF Diamond League athletics event in Qatar. With his personal best of 9,89 seconds in Hungary in 2016, the sprinter also trumped Powell and Kim Collins. After his extraordinary fifth place (9,94 seconds) finish in Rio – the first South African in an Olympic 100m final in 84 years – his personal best time this past season was 9,92 seconds (in Pretoria). Last year he also ran a personal best in the 200m event (19,95 seconds, Pretoria).

Fast fact Last year Akani graduated with a bachelor's degree in information science from the University of Pretoria.

LUNGI NGIDI (Cricket)

Age 22

Test debut 13 January 2018, against India

One-day international debut 7 February 2018, against India

T20 international debut 20 January 2017 against Sri Lanka

Cricket fans were in raptures watching the fast bowler in action during his debut for the Proteas against India earlier this year. As the world's top Test team, the Indians were full of confidence stepping onto the pitch for the second Test at Centurion but Lungi took the wind out of their sails by taking the wicket of Parthiv Patel followed by the sensational runout of Cheteshwar Pujara. But it was in the second innings that the paceman really showed his calibre with a 6/39 demolition of captain Virat Kohli's side. Last month he notched up an 3/51 in the second Test against the Aussies.

Fast fact He was a talented rugby player at school and played fullback.



AKANI SIMBINE: GUY LAWRENCE/GETTY IMAGES; LUNGI NGIDI: GUY LAWRENCE/GETTY IMAGES





TATJANA SCHOENMAKER (Swimming)
 Age 20
 Height 1,78m
 Weight 63kg

Not since the great Penny Heyns has there been such a buzz around a female swimmer in SA and Tatjana Schoenmaker hasn't disappointed at this year's Commonwealth Games in Brisbane, Australia. The Tuks student smashed Heyns' 1999 100m breaststroke African record, claiming the gold medal in a time of 1:06.41.

The dazzling feat followed another gold medal win in the 200m breaststroke event, another African record at 2:22,02, claiming her a 100m and 200m double in the process.

Last year Tatjana won silver at the world university games.

Fast fact She's the first able-bodied female swimmer to earn Commonwealth gold since South Africa was readmitted to international sport.

LUTHER SINGH (Soccer)

Age 20
 Height 1,71m
 Foot Right
 Debut August 2017, Sporting Braga, Ledman Liga Pro

The talented centre forward was awarded the golden boot award at both the U20 African Cup of Nations in 2017 and the U20 Cosafa Championships in 2016. He made his senior debut last year when he joined Portuguese club Sporting Braga and soon became his side's top scorer, netting eight goals in 23 games. Even though Luther, who hails from Soweto, has only made one appearance for Bafana – against Angola last year – big things are expected of him.

Fast fact Singh is a graduate of the SA-based Stars of Africa Football Academy which he joined when he was 11.



PHAKAMANI MAHLAMBI (Soccer)

Age 20
 Height 1,72m
 Foot Both
 Debut November 2017, El Ahly, Egypt

This young dynamo was snapped up last year by Egyptian club Al Ahly and proved himself by scoring two goals in his first match. His powerhouse performances for Bidvest Wits earned him the 2017 Absa Premiership young player of the season award.

Fast fact To date he's played only two games for Bafana Bafana.



CLARENCE MUNYAI (Athletics)

Age 20
 Personal best time 200m – 19,69s,
 16 March 2018, Pretoria

"I never thought I'd be running this fast at my age," the Johannesburg sprinter said after he smashed Wayde van Niekerk's 200m SA record last month with a time of 19,69 seconds. Wayde's old record is 19,84 seconds. Clarence's career highlights include winning gold in last year's Africa U20 Championships in Algeria with a time of 20,22 seconds.

Fast fact He has an identical twin, Terrence.



AIDEN MARKRAM (Cricket)

Age 23
 Test debut 28 September 2017, against Bangladesh
 One-day international debut 22 October 2017 against Bangladesh

Two centuries, two half-centuries and a best batting score of 143 – all in the space of his first five Test matches. In the most recent Test against Australia at the Wanderers Stadium Aiden scored 152 runs and became the first South African to reach the 1 000-run mark within 10 Tests.

With a Test batting average of 55,55 he's right up there with the likes of AB de Villiers.

Fast fact He got his first cricket set at age two.

BREYTON POOLE (Athletics)

Age 18
 Personal best achievement 2,24m

For years Breyton was told he was too short to compete in high jump. But he silenced his critics emphatically last July when at only 1,72m tall he slid over the cross bar with a sensational height of 2,24m at the IAAF under-18 world championship.

Bennie Schlechter, his coach, believes what he lacks in height he more than makes up for in speed and technique. Breyton's best jump this season so far is 2,2m – in Pretoria last month.

Fast fact At school he played rugby at national level as a scrum half.



THEY'RE ALSO MAKING WAVES

JEAN-LUC DU PREEZ (Rugby)

The Sharks loose forward made a big impact as a Springbok in 2017. Fans are keen to see him in the Bok starting 15 more often – and with his twin brother, Dan, who got his first chance to play last year on SA's European tour while Jean-Luc (22) was sidelined recovering from an injury. Their elder brother, Robert (24), is also in the Bok sights. The former Province star now plays as a fly half for the Sharks.



KIRSTEN MCCANN (Rowing)

The 29-year-old won the single sculls event at the world rowing championships in America in October, becoming the first SA female world champion in rowing.



BIANCA ZOONEKYND (Gymnastics)

The tumbling and trampoline star won gold at the world trampoline championships in Bulgaria last year. She's 26 and hails from Port Elizabeth.

SOURCES: SPORT24.COM, ENCA.COM, WISDEN.COM, YSN.CO.ZA, RUNRIDE.DIVE.COM

