



# Zazini ready to take up baton

## Regional champs latest test for top young hurdles prospect

By **Daniel Mothowagae**

SA 400m hurdles prospect Sokwakhana Zazini is well aware of the high expectations placed on him.

Since he was crowned the world champion nine months ago, the 17-year-old has been the focal point each time he lines up at an athletics meet.

Such is Zazini's remarkable talent that L.J. van Zyl has touted the youngster as one of the rising stars able to fill the spot vacated by the now retired 400m hurdles specialist.

"I am ready to take the baton and make use of it," chuckled Soks, as the budding

hurdler is known to his peers.

"I guess a lot of expectations are around me and I have no choice but to deliver."

The Tuks Sport High School matriculant will again be one of the star attractions at the Confederation of African Athletics (CAA) Southern Region Youth & Junior Championships from tomorrow to Saturday at the Boksburg Athletics Stadium.

Zazini's time of 49.32 seconds is the leading mark in the global under-20 rankings.

"The biggest goal this year is the World

Zazini Sokwakhana of South Africa in the heats of the mens 400m hurdles during the IAAF World U18 Championship at Kasarani Stadium in Nairobi, Kenya last year. He went on to take the title. /ROGER SEDRES/ IMAGESA/GALLO IMAGES

Junior Champs [in Finland in July]. This one won't be easy as the [world] youth champs [in Kenya last year]. The Americans will be there," warned Zazini, who has already bagged national junior titles in the past few weeks.

He also gave the seniors a scare with his exploits in the SA Championships last month. "Competing against the seniors opened my eyes. I am now more than ready for the regional championships. I am super excited."

South Africa was handed the hosting rights to the regional championship last week after Zambia reported new cases of cholera last month. Central Gauteng Athletics president James Moloi said continental athletics governing body the CAA will fund the event.