

Recognition for athletes of Gauteng North

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It is no secret that Athletics Gauteng North (AGN) has been dominating athletics at all levels in South Africa for a number of years.

That is why it was not strange at all when several of South Africa's international athletics stars were among the athletes who were honoured by AGN last week at their annual awards event.

There is certainly no other province in the South African athletics ranks that can boast with two top athletes of the year who are both Olympic finalists and Commonwealth champions.

This was the case for AGN last week when Akani Simbine and Caster Semenya were named the province's top performers and athletes of the year.

AGN affiliated athletes on every level and in every possible category of sport were honoured for their achievements in 2018.

Several administrators and officials were also honoured for their contribution to AGN's

success.

It was especially the achievements of athletes at club level in track and field, road running and cross country that showed why the sport is currently so healthy in the province.

Among the other track and field athletes honoured were stars such as Margo Coetzee (hammer throw) and Chris Moleya (high jump) as the best field athletes of the year.

Juniors like Gontso Morake, Zeney van der Walt and Zazini Sokhwakana have also been recognised for their achievements.

Rikenette Steenkamp, who has improved one of the oldest track records in South African athletics this year (100m hurdles), has been honoured for this achievement as well as for her gold medal at the Athletics World Cup event in the same item.

Among the established and emerging stars honoured in the road race category were names like Glenrose Xaba, Temba Chauke, Gerda Steyn and the old warrior Stephen Mokoka.

The Fortis North club in Pretoria North again walked away with the laurels as the best cross-country club in Gauteng North.

Nadya du Toit (Hoërskool Garsfontein) and Abednico Choba (Tuks) were named as most promising cross-country athletes, while Camie Prinsloo (Hoërskool Montana) and Dais Malebane were honoured as cross-country athletes of the year.

Aleck Skhosana, president of Athletics South Africa (ASA) addressed the guests at the event and confirmed that South African athletics relies heavily on the performance of AGN at international meetings.

Skhosana pointed out that athletes from the ranks of AGN were this year responsible for nine new national records in track and field athletics.

AGN's president, John Mathane, said though the province was currently dominating all forms of the sport in South Africa, there was still one problem to be addressed for the further development of



Caster Semenya (right), who this year has had an outstanding year on the athletics tracks of the world, boasting the trophy as Athletics Gauteng North's female athlete of the year, handed to her by ASA's president, Aleck Skhosana. **Photo: ProShots Photography.**

athletics in Pretoria.

This problem is the state of the Pilditch stadium, the home of athletics in Pretoria.

He told guests at the awards ceremony that athletics authorities

in Pretoria would handle the upgrading of the Pilditch Stadium as a top priority in 2019 and that talks and negotiations with the Tshwane Metro had long been under way.