



# A 100 years of high performance at Tuks

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CELEBRATING a century of Tuks athletics, some of the country's top track and field stars from different eras gathered under one roof on Wednesday evening.

The club boasts some of the greats in South African athletics over the 10 decades of its existence.

Three-time world 800m champion Caster Semenya and retired one-lap hurdler LJ van Zyl were named as the Tuks Athletes of the Century.

Semenya, who started her career in Tuks colours when she won the 2009 world title in Berlin, has since established herself as one of the world's greatest middle-distance athletes.

Two Olympic titles, three world gold medals and a bronze, the 800-1500m Commonwealth Games double gold tells just a part of her incredible career up to this point.

Van Zyl, in turn, is one of the male stalwarts of South African track athletics boasting the 2002 world jun-

ior title, 2006 Commonwealth Games gold medal and the 2011 World Championships bronze medal.

Three eras of top SA men's 400m hurdles competitors were assembled at the function – Van Zyl, Sydney 2000 bronze medallist Llewellyn Herbert and junior sensation Sokwakhana Zazini. Van Zyl and Zazini are both world junior champion recipients while Herbert won silver at age-group level at the 1996 championships.

"Llewellyn Herbert set the bar with a sub-48, the first South African hurdler to do that," Van Zyl said.

"I really hope that Llewellyn and myself have set the example for Soks to be a role model and a mentor in the sport. And there is no doubt he will follow in our footsteps."

Zazini looks like continuing Tuks and South Africa's proud 400m hurdles tradition on the international stage after winning both the youth and junior world titles in 2017, and earlier this year. And while Tuks has a proud hurdles legacy, it is becoming a sprinting mecca spearheaded by South African 100m record holder Akani Simbine.



Hot-shot hurdler LJ van Zyl

Simbine was honoured as the Tuks Male Athlete of the Year after he managed to translate his blistering speed into silverware in 2018, winning both the Commonwealth and African 100m titles.

The club has some of the world's fastest men in their midst which includes national 200m record holder Clarence Munyai and Thando Roto, one of only five South African men to have dipped below 10 seconds in

the 100m.

The centenary celebrations also brought some of Tuks' female sprinters from the past and the present together.

The club boasts the fastest, third fastest and fourth fastest female sprinters in SA athletics history. Carina Horn, who was honoured as Tuks' Female Athlete of the Year, tops the list with the South African record of 10.98 seconds she clocked earlier this season.

Host on the night, Geraldine Pillay's personal best of 11.07 from 2005 is the third fastest time while Marcel Winkler's 11.16 from 1990 ranks her fourth on the all-time list.

Among the top athletes that have represented the club is former high jump phenom Jacques Freitag, one of a select few athletes in history to have won the world youth, junior and senior titles. He is the only South African to have achieved this feat, winning the 1999 World Youth title, the 2000 World Junior and 2003 World Senior titles.

Olympic long jump silver medallist Luvo Manyonga also represented Tuks but has since left the club.

