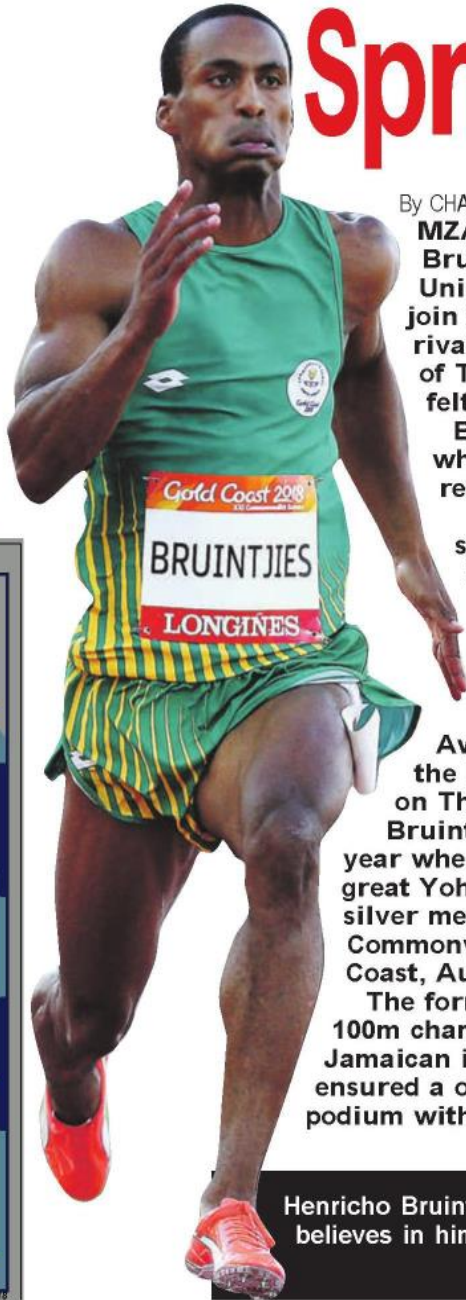




Sprinting to success!



By CHARLES BALOYI

MZANSI sprinter Henricho Bruintjies says he left University of Pretoria to join their neighbours and rivals Tshwane University of Technology because he felt unappreciated.

Bruintjies traded Tuks' white colours for TUT's red colours.

The 25-year-old sprinter's decision to switch base camps was rewarded when he scooped the Sportsman of the Year award at the TUT Sports Prestige

Awards ceremony held at the Pretoria main campus on Thursday night.

Bruintjies had a memorable year when he stunned Jamaican great Yohan Blake to steal a silver medal at the Commonwealth Games in Gold Coast, Australia in April.

The former South African 100m champion left the Jamaican in stitches as he ensured a one-two finish on the podium with champion Akani

Simbine Down Under.

Bruintjies said: "I was at Tuks initially when I came from Cape Town because there were people who were helping me and they were good at the time. But we started disagreeing on a number of things and stuff like that.

"It was best for my career to move away and TUT was the best option.

"Some things happen for a reason nothing happened for me at Tuks. But as soon as I moved to TUT, I won a Commonwealth medal."

There was a time when Bruintjies was just happy to rock up at major events just to compete.

Next year, his target is the medals in the 100m and 200m at the IAAF World Championships in Doha, Qatar.

He is coached by Morne Nagel and says they are on the right track.

Bruintjies said: "It's either now or never for me.

"I've decided that I'm going to approach next year with that mentality. It's time to step up a gear.

"I want to go out there and start collecting medals. I'm going for the big bite, I believe that I can make the podium.

"I used to undermine my own abilities, but now I believe in myself," he said.

Before the Commonwealth Games, Bruintjies didn't win a single race in South Africa last season in the build-up to the championships, but he rose to the occasion and silenced his critics.

Henricho Bruintjies says he now believes in himself as an athlete.

Photo by Getty Images

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