

■ ATHLETICS

Sunette on the comeback trail



SUNETTE Viljoen. | Backpagepix

SOUTH Africa's star javelin thrower Sunette Viljoen appears to have shaken off her back injury and other niggles that have hampered her career in recent years.

This was apparent over the weekend when the University of Pretoria (Tuks) athlete, took part at a meeting at Pilditch and threw 61.64m.

"To start my season with a throw of 61.64m is exciting. I can feel that the hard work I have done during the second part of last year is starting to pay dividends.

"I know as I get more competition fit and my technique sharpens up I will be able to throw further," she said.

With regards to her injuries, in 2017 she missed competing at the World Championships due to a back problem.

Last year her campaign started off promisingly when she won a bronze medal at the Gold Coast Commonwealth Games but unfortunately before the inaugural World Cup in London she was again sidelined with an injury.

A lesser athlete might have decided enough was enough and Viljoen would have had just reason to quit at the age of 35.

But she pressed on and won a silver at the 2016 Olympic Games in Rio, as well as a silver and bronze at the 2011 and 2015 World Championships.

She has also won four medals at the Commonwealth Games and her best throw of 69.35m placed her sixth on the IAAF ranking-list.

However, she makes it clear that she still has some unfinished business on the run-up.

"I would love to win gold at the Olympic Games as well as having a real go at Barbora Spotakova's (Czech Republic) world record of 72.28 metres."

Viljoen's best was the 68.38m she threw at the World Championships in Daegu, South Korea in 2011

Being in a constant quest to find those extra valuable centimetres with each throw is not Viljoen's only passion. Nowadays she is also an avid cricket supporter.

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