



# Mamatu makes history as the second-fastest SA woman yet

**A local emerging sprinting star has at last realised her potential by recording a world-class time in the 100m in Switzerland this past weekend.**

By winning the 100m in 11.04s during the 40th Resisprint Meeting in La Chaux, Switzerland this past weekend, the South African sprint champion, Tebogo Mamatu, proved that perseverance does pay off.

Her time is the second-fastest ever by a South African female sprinter.

Only Carina Horn, who ran 10.98s in Doha last year, is faster.

The time Mamatu ran in Switzerland was the best by a South African woman in the current athletics season. Horn improved her season's best time last week, running 11.16s in France.

Mamatu acknowledged being shocked about her performance.

"At the moment I do not have the words to describe how it feels to at long last run the race I knew I could. One moment I am happy. The next I am wondering whether it is me who ran 11.04s. It has not sunk in what I have achieved," explained an elated Mamatu.

According to her she 'blasted' her start and once she reached her top-end speed, she never relented.

"I do not think I ever fought so hard not to slag down for a millisecond," she said.

Her coach, Hennie Kriel, praised Mamatu's fighting spirit, saying lesser athletes might have given up on their dreams.

For years it has been predicted that the Tuks sprinter has what it takes to establish herself as an international sprinter, but somehow she always struggled to run that one perfect race.

It certainly was not due to a lack of trying. Mamatu's biggest frustration was getting injured at crucial times, leading to her spending more time than she wanted in a doctor's consulting room or on a physiotherapist's table.

Somehow she found the inner strength never to get disheartened by the continuous setbacks, but rather to remain focused on the "glass being half full rather than half empty".

Her often spontaneous laugh during Kriel's Grigora Training Group's sessions at the Tuks athletics track has become Mamatu's trademark.

At the start of the season she felt that, for the first time in four years, there was no need to worry about any injury, and that motivated her.

"It makes a difference being 100% fit. In the past, it was a case of just when I felt like I was getting into to shape, I got injured. Mostly it was hamstring injuries that set me back. That is a big handicap because it means after you have recovered, you have to start the process of regaining your fitness and speed all over again," Mamatu explained.

Proof of her indomitable spirit is that over the past four years she has managed to keep on getting faster.

In 2015, she ran 11.88s. In 2016, her best was 11.44s and in 2017, she ran 11.27s.

And now after her 11.04s, she can start dreaming of sub-11 seconds.



Tebogo Mamatu in action at this year's senior national athletics championships. Photo: Reg Caldecott

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