



ATHLETICS

Perseverance pays off for Mamatu

Sprinter is fully fit and ready to fly down the track

SOUTH African sprint champion Tebogo Mamatu proved on Sunday that by winning the 100m in 11.04 seconds during the 40th Resisprint Meeting in La Chaux, Switzerland, that perseverance does pay off.

Her time is the second-fastest ever by a South African female sprinter behind Carina Horn, who ran 10.98 in Doha last year.

Currently, Mamatu is South Africa's fastest female sprinter while Horn improved her season's best time last week running 11.16s in France.

The Tuks sprinter admits to being shocked at her performance.

"At the moment I don't have the words to describe how it feels to at long last run the race I knew I could.

"I am wondering whether it is me that ran 11.04. It has not sunk in what I have achieved," said an elated Mamatu.

According to her she "blasted" her start and on reaching her top end speed never relented.

"I don't think I ever fought so hard not to slow down for a millisecond."

Grigora training group coach Hennie Kriel praised Mamatu's fighting spirit saying that 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 picking up injuries at crucial times, leading to her spending more time in a doctor's consulting room or at the physiotherapist.

Somehow she found the inner strength never to get disheartened by the continuous setbacks.



TEBOGO Mamatu showed that she is one of the best sprinters around on Sunday night when she won the 100m in 11.04, her best time ever. | BackpagePix

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 percent fit.

"In the past, it was a case of just when I felt like I am getting into to shape, I got injured.

"Mostly it was hamstring injuries that set me back.

"It was a big handicap because it means after you had recovered, you got to start the process of regaining your fitness and speed all over."

Proof of her indomitable spirit is that over the last four years she is one of few athletes to have managed to keep on getting faster. In 2015 she ran 11.88s; 2016 11.44s; 2017 11.34s; 2018 11.27s and now 11.04s.

The other Tuks athletes in action at the meeting were Thando Roto (10.31 in the 100m), LeRoux Hamman (50.13 in the 400m hurdles), Lindsay Hanekom (50.65 in the 400m hurdles) and Constant Pretorius (51.44 in the 400m hurdles).

| ANA

