

Van Zyl sets fast time in Ostrava

“Long overdue!”

This is how LJ van Zyl (Tuks/HPC) described his victory on Friday night in the 400-hurdles at the Ostrava Golden Spike Meeting.

Van Zyl certainly had reason to be happy. He won in a time of 48.67s, which was his fastest time in five years. It was also the 66th time he ran a time faster than 49 seconds. Johnny Dutch (USA) was second in 49.01s and Patryk Dobek (Poland) third in 49.51s.

The way Van Zyl overpowered Dutch when they were going over the last two hurdles was impressive.

“I owed it to myself to run a good race for a change and now I have done it. Without the help of my coach, Irma Reyneke, it would not have been possible for me to run 48.67s. She is the one who believes in my abilities and who planned and strategized to get me in such good form.

“I have to admit that there seems to be something about Ostrava that brings out the best in me as an athlete. Ten years ago I finished second in a time of 48.99s; five years later I equalled my South African record, running 47.66s and now I ran 48.67s.”

Van Zyl added that one of the best decisions he and Reyneke made was to approach Hennie Kriel (Tuks/HP coach) to help him with his gym programme.

“When Hennie started to work with me in January, one of the first things he did was to let me do exercises in the gym which helped to improve my speed and agility. It is exciting to be training with youngsters like Clarence Munyai, Thando Roto and Tebogo Mamathu. Their youthful

enthusiasm and passion reminds me of myself when I started out and it motivates me to push myself that little bit harder.”

Van Zyl said his next goal is to win a gold medal at the African Championships in Durban next month.

“I may decide to compete in one more European race before then.”

***Clarence Munyai (TuksSport High School) finished 4th (15.69s) in the 150 metres at the Manchester Great City Games. Britain’s Harry Aikines Aryeetey won in 15.10s, with his compatriot Ojie Edoburun second in 15.26s and Norway’s Jaysuma Saidy Ndure third in 15.33s.