

Simbine took gold at Karlstad Grand Prix in 100 & 200m

Akani Simbine doubled up at the Karlstad Grand Prix meeting in Sweden last night. He started by winning the 100 metres in 10.09 seconds and, about an hour later, he went on to win the 200 metres in 20.64 seconds.

“I am pretty happy with my performance. The conditions were certainly not ideal for running fast times. Apart from the cold, there was also a crazy windy. But my main concern before each of my races was not the weather conditions.

“I have a slight niggle in my right hamstring. It is nothing to be concerned about yet, but I could not help being worried when I lined up for a race. In spite of not having the best of starts in the 100 metres, I was able to relax and put together a good race which enabled me to have a strong finish,” the Tuks/HPC athlete said.

“I will admit that I was slightly apprehensive before racing the 200 metres because I was not sure whether my hamstring would hold up till the end. Another reason for concern was that it was the first time since the South African Championships that I competed in the 200 metres. It was quite a relief to come through the race unscathed.”

Simbine said this was his last race before the World Championships (22-30 August).

“I am going to rest a few days before resuming my training in earnest.”

When asked if he knew whether ASA was going to select a 4x100 relay team for the Championships, Simbine said he had no idea.

It would be a pity if South Africa did not enter a team because a team consisting of Simbine (9.97s), Henricho Bruinjies (9.97s), Anaso Jobodwana (10.13s), together with one of South Africa's other good sprinters, would certainly have a realistic chance to reach the final. With a bit of luck the South Africans might even medal.

***Quite a few top South African athletes will be in action at the two-day Diamond League Meeting in London tomorrow and Saturday.

Tomorrow night (24/07) Wenda Nel will face the Czech Republic's world champion, Zuzana Hejnova, for the third time this season. The Tuks/HPC athlete's best time of 54.37 seconds this season puts her 10th on the IAAF-rankings.

Anaso Jobodwana (200m) and Elroy Gelant (3000m) will also be in action tomorrow.

Saturday South Africa's two top athletes in the 400-hurdles, LJ van Zyl and Cornel Fredericks, will race against each other for the first time this season. Fredericks (Tuks/HPC)'s performance will be especially interesting because it will be only his second race of the season. He has been hampered by an Achilles heel injury for most of the season, but in his first race of the season (in Madrid two weeks ago) he displayed his class by immediately running a qualifying time for the World Championships in Beijing.

Van Zyl (Tuks/HPC) is enjoying one of his best seasons for quite a while. Not only did he finish second in two Diamond League races, but he also ran times faster than 49 seconds in every Diamond League race in which he competed.

Wayde van Niekerk (400m), Khotso Mokoena and Zarck Visser (long jump) and Sunette Viljoen (javelin) are the other South Africans who will be in action on Saturday.

