



TRULY
UNMATCHED
WITH 22
GOLD
AWARDS



#UnmatchedInGold



TRUE UGANDAN
REWARD FROM
THE SOURCE

GAMES GUIDE

FOUR IN ONE: ONE TEAM ONE NATION ONE GOAL

July-August 2022

VISION GROUP
NATIONAL PRIDE • GLOBAL EXCELLENCE



Profiles
of Team Uganda
Preview of Uganda's
medal chances

www.tapintoyourbeer.com



FOR PEOPLE OVER THE AGE OF 18 ONLY.



ENJOY A FRESH EXPERIENCE

Get the latest news, stream live TV and radio, share your news stories and much more.



Download Now:



Vision
Digital Experience

READ MORE FOR LESS.

Have The New Vision and Bukedde newspapers in the palm of your hands for only UGX 2,000 daily

To subscribe visit
epapers.visiongroup.co.ug



The New Vision newvisionwire



THIS SUMMER IS ONE OF A KIND



Following a disastrous two years (2020 and 2021) that saw the majority of sports events postponed, this year has surely revived the souls of the sports fraternity.

From the West Coast of the USA (Oregon) to the UK (Birmingham), Columbia (Cali), the Turkish city Konya, and finally to Qatar in the Middle East, an eventful summer and exciting end to 2022 awaits sports fans across the globe.

The FIFA World Cup (November 21-December 18) will lower the curtains on a six-month cycle of sports events that roll off with the World Athletics Championships (July 15-24, 2022) before shifting to the Commonwealth Games (July 28-August 8, 2022), then to World U20 championships (August 1-6, 2022) and then to the Islamic Solidarity Games (August 9-18, 2022).

Clearly, this summer is immeasurably rich in sporting events and will not leave even the most demanding fans unfulfilled.

And as has been over the years, Vision Sports – the sports hub of Vision Group – will satisfy your interests with this historic Games Guide that previews all the summer events and one for the ages.

Vision Sports has traditionally produced sports magazines ahead of major events but this must-read Games Guide should be quite an experience.

In this epic issue, we guide you through all four events; profile all the athletes, offer in-depth analysis and previews to the Games.

It is hard to imagine that the 2022 World Athletics Championships are the first of their kind to be hosted in the United States.

Eugene, Oregon's second-most

populous city after Portland should have hosted these championships way back. Hayward Field at the University of Oregon is the ultimate track and field experience. It has been the site of some of the most incredible moments in the history of the sport but not on a stage at the magnitude of these championships.

Global stars Joshua Cheptegei, Jacob Kiplimo and Halima Nakaayi will lead an enthusiastic group of athletes hoping to realise a lifelong dream on the track and in the marathon – the majority of whom will head to Birmingham for the Commonwealth Games.

Just as is with Oregon, it is hard to imagine that the Commonwealth Games will be hosted in England for only the third time since 1930 after London 1934 and Manchester 2002.

One of the youngest cities in Europe, Birmingham is vibrant and richly diverse.

In a bid to emphasise the magnitude of these Games, the government provided shs7.1b to support Team Uganda's participation at the Games.

Uganda's biggest contingent to the Games (over 100 athletes and officials) will find the wealth of existing sports venues and arenas quite spectacular and unlike any other.

An enhanced and refurbished Alexander Stadium will be pivotal to the Birmingham Games. Already established as an internationally renowned athletics venue and home to UK Athletics, Birmingham will strengthen its reputation as the 'City of Running'. But so will Konya in Turkey and Cali in Columbia.

Enjoy the Games Guide!

FRED KAWEEESI
fkaweesi@newvision.co.ug

Editor

Fred Kaweesi, Head of Sports

Writers

Charles Mutebi, Johnson Were, Faith Kiai, Michael Nsubuga, Fred Kisekka, Olivia Nakate, Silvano Kibuuka, Laurian Lubulwa

Photography

Richard Sanya, Michael Nsubuga, Johnson Were, Agencies

Design and layout

Brian Ssekamatte, Cynthia Nankumba, Diana Kambedha, Irene Besigiroha, Lillia Babirye, Phillip Nsamba

Chief Executive

Don Wanyama

Editor in Chief

Barbara Kaija

Head of Sales

Hope Nuwagaba

Head of Marketing

Rogers Anguzu

Head of Printing

Umar Luyimbazi

Advertising Manager

Isaiah Mwalye

Circulation Manager

Bruce Byaruhanga

Printed and published in Kampala by the New Vision Printing and Publishing Company, P.O. Box 9815, Kampala. Tel: 0414-337000. Advertising Department, Pike House, First Street, Industrial Area. All rights reserved. Reproduction in whole or in part without written permission is strictly prohibited.

**VISION**
PRINTING
delivering value

WE SUPPORT OUR TEAM

MRS JANET KATAAHA MUSEVENI
First Lady and Minister of Education and Sports

I greet you all my fellow citizens and residents in our beloved homeland, Uganda.

Our sportsmen and sportswomen will once again be lifting our national flag high on the international stage as they join the rest of the world to showcase their talents in various sports and athletics disciplines on a busy sports calendar during the months of July and August 2022.

Like other global sectors, the sports sector was not spared by the effects of COVID-19. As such, July and August 2022 are rather congested because several events had been postponed because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Some of the sports and athletics events that our national teams shall be participating in during the July and August 2022 calendar include, but are not limited to the following:

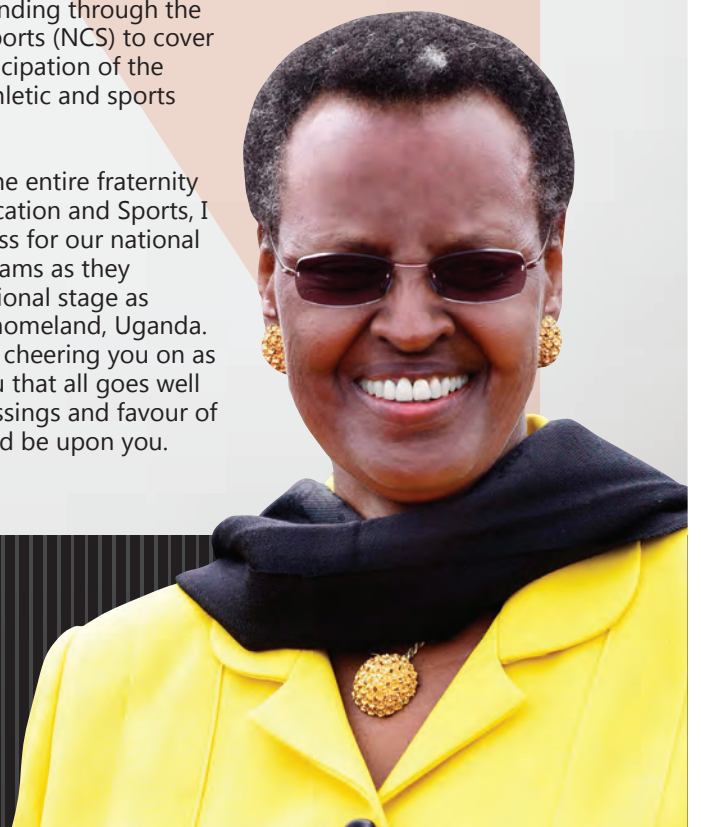
- African Senior Women Cup of Nations (AWCON) in Morocco, July 2 - 23.
- International Federation of Sports Climbing World Games in Birmingham City Alabama, USA, July 14 - 16.
- Wood ball World Cup, July 23-28 in Malaysia.
- World Athletics Championships, July 15-24, in Oregon, USA. This is the biggest Athletics event in which our son Joshua Cheptegei and daughter Halima Nakaayi

won gold medals in 2019.

- Commonwealth Games 2022, July 28-August 8, in Birmingham, UK.
- World Athletics U-20 Championships, August 1-6 in Cali Colombia.
- Islamic Solidarity Games, August 9-18, in Konya, Turkey.
- World Rugby Challenger Series, August 12-15 in Chile.
- FIBA U-18 Afrobasket finals, July 23 -August 7 in Madagascar.

As government, we are committed to support our respective national sports teams as they lift our national flag high at these sporting events. The government has planned to support our teams' participation in these games by availing reasonable funding through the National Council of Sports (NCS) to cover preparations and participation of the respective national athletic and sports teams.

On my behalf and the entire fraternity at the Ministry of Education and Sports, I wish the best of success for our national athletics and sports teams as they take onto the international stage as ambassadors for our homeland, Uganda. Know that we shall be cheering you on as well as praying for you that all goes well with you. May the blessings and favour of God go before you and be upon you.





IT IS TIME TO PRESENT TEAM UGANDA

HAMSON DENIS OBUA
State Minister for Sports

The Ministry of Education and Sports has supported the respective sports disciplines in qualification, preparation and presentation for the different international sporting championships. Uganda has assembled teams to participate at the Commonwealth Games 2022 in Birmingham, World Athletics Championships in America, Islamic Solidarity Games in Turkey and the U-20 World Athletics Championships in Columbia.

From January – July 2022, six Ugandan teams have qualified for international competitions in various disciplines. These include: the netball She Cranes, the Rugby Sevens, the men's cricket U-19 team, Lacrosse, Kabadi and swimming.

In a short time, we have assembled a number of teams that will represent Uganda. These teams are a mixture of those with experience – the senior members – and new kids on the block.

We are optimistic that these teams will be able to bring glory in their respective competitions. We know there are those who will compete in the World Athletics Championships and then go to the Commonwealth Games, but we have hope that Uganda will be able to maintain its recent record of performance on the world stage in different sporting disciplines.

We are optimistic that a number of medals will come to Uganda. We hope and pray that just as sports has united the country in the past, Ugandans should take keen interest in supporting their teams such that our athletes can be able to put on a show that will bring glory to the country and market it internationally.

Sports talent is a raw material and we should therefore market our athletes at these international competitions.

I have hope that our teams will succeed at the four major sporting competitions happening over the next two months. I do not want to anticipate how many medals will actually be won. I believe that we shall cross the bridge when we get there.

We are sure that the teams we have assembled are good enough. They have gone through tests over time and have been tried and not found wanting.

In terms of government support for the upcoming major championships and games, much as we have the full commitment of government, I would like to say we have achieved all that we achieved in the past with resources that may not be commensurate with what other countries are investing in sport.

However, with the budget appropriation of sh7b, we have successfully supported our teams to meet all the three phases of participation in a competition. Many of those who have qualified are in training camps – now it is time for us to present Team Uganda.





EVERY STEP IS SUCCESS

DONALD RUKARE,
Uganda Olympic Committee
President

After the disruption of the COVID-19 pandemic, national sport is slowly getting back to normal and this year will see wonderful opportunities for Uganda to showcase its talent in a six-week period with four major sports events.

Starting with the World Athletics Championships (July 15-24), then Commonwealth Games (July 27-August 7), U-20 World Athletics Championships (August 2-7) and World Islamic Solidarity Games (August 9-18), Uganda can hit several targets at the four events, from developing talent to rewriting history.

But for all these, the measurement of success is at different levels. Getting there in itself is a success. Measuring success, however, starts with what the objectives for each event are. So for the World Athletics Championships, success is first of all getting there. Then if we can get podium performances, that would be the best. But also if we have national records, season bests and personal bests that would be success. In some cases, success is whether an athlete got to the semifinals or finals of their respective competition.

At the Commonwealth Games we would like to see, depending on the availability of athletes, performances in terms of podium finishes,

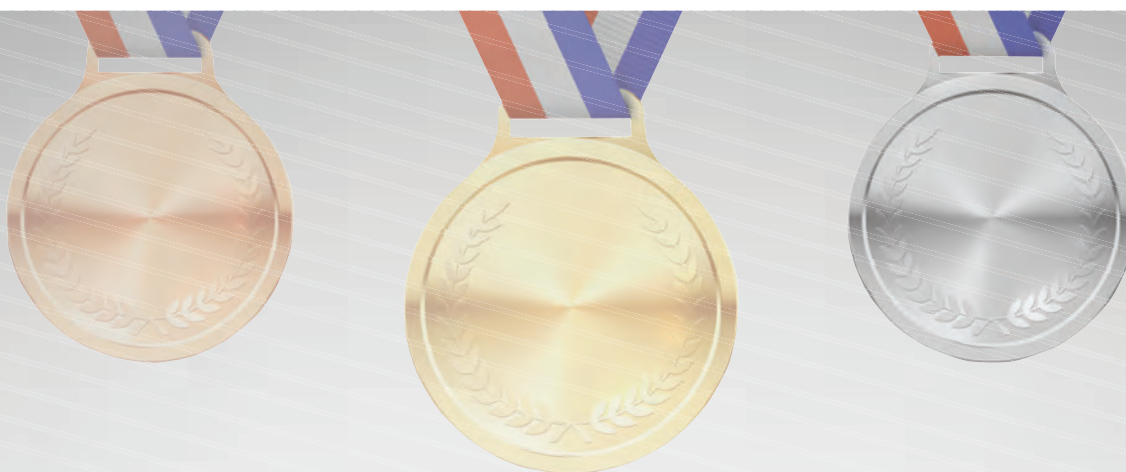
then also personal bests, season bests and national records.

It is realistic to get a medal in netball at the Commonwealth Games if we have the right support and training. Even in rugby we can; our team is good. It is possible to get a bronze. But it needs purposeful planning and support. It is very possible.

But sometimes you have to think about comparative advantage and know where you have that advantage. It is about investment. Most countries only invest in one or two sports disciplines and that is where they get their medals, like Fiji in rugby, Ethiopia and Jamaica in athletics. So if we increase investment in more sports disciplines, we will increase our chances of winning medals outside athletics and boxing.

The Islamic Games are for development. Our performance at the Islamic Games will depend on the team we will send. You may want to use the Games as an opportunity to expose young athletes as they prepare for next year and the Olympics. I think it is an important event to attend because it helps in the development of athletes. Then U-20 Games are also developmental Games; so the question is do we have the pipeline to take the right people at that age to go and begin the exposure.

There are many things that Ugandan sport still needs to develop but it is getting there.



WE WILL DO WELL

AMBROSE TASHOBYA
Chairman, National Council of Sports

First and foremost, these major championships and games coming up between July and August 2022 are routine fixtures on our calendar that we always look forward to participating in. One, they are an avenue for our own to improve their skill but also showcasing what they have so that we can know where we lie as far as the world stage is concerned.

Of course, every country would want to win medals at these events, but what I would love to see is upcoming athletes that are promising to fill the shoes that are currently filled by the top stars, especially in athletics.

I am hoping that these events will help us identify and know who's coming next, and also see where we are. These events act as a checkers, to help us see whether we are doing anything for continuity or not.

As a country, we will try to take advantage of these championships and try to send as many teams as we can to whichever competition. We will have the biggest delegation to the Commonwealth Games ever and I'm optimistic we will do well there.

There is no pressure to win medals. First of all, our performance will depend

on the team that we are fielding, especially at the Commonwealth Games. The question is: are we going to field all our top athletes or some may not come and opt to compete in the World Athletics Competitions? It is not realistic to expect all our top athletes to be in every competition.

They will run in some competitions and others they won't. So that will determine how well we perform in a given competition.

My belief is we have had fairly adequate preparations. We have not had those choking points of almost no activity because there is no funding and the like. If you look at the athletics teams, they have structures that are very sound, both locally and internationally. They have activities that have kept them busy. Actually my worry is the workload. You hope that they do not have too much workload that is going to wear them out.

For the other team sports, they have all had and are having activities to help get them ready for the Commonwealth Games.

We have managed to keep all of them active even if we have had some challenges in the delayed release of finances. The National Council of Sports has made every effort to ensure we have a well prepared and well facilitated team Uganda.

So from where we started, things are looking much, much better. In the final analysis, we should have good performances, especially in athletics. I also expect the teams - rugby and netball - to play well.



SH48B BUDGET IS THE BEST FUNDING EVER

The general secretary of the National Council of Sports (NCS), **Patrick Ogwel**, gives an insight of what the increased funding means for the sports sub-sector among other things and about Team Uganda to the Commonwealth Games, writes **Michael Nsubuga**.

MICHAEL NSUBUGA, WRITER



How has the Government invested in each of the four world events; the Commonwealth Games, the World Athletics Championships, the Islamic Solidarity Games and the U-20 Athletics Championships?

I must say we have met our target. Out of the 13 disciplines which the National Organising Committee had approved with the Government, we have qualified in 11 disciplines. Team Uganda, has over 85 athletes, which is the highest number ever as a country for the Commonwealth Games. Government has been supportive to all our preparations and qualifiers.

We have supported Uganda Athletics Federation with sh276m, boxing (sh244m), swimming (sh185m), Uganda Paralympic Association (sh149m), weightlifting (sh117m), Uganda Table Tennis Association (106m), Squash (sh20m), wrestling (sh14m), Rugby (sh354m), Netball (sh566m.)

I observe that this is a very highly-billed period which is congested with many high-profile competitions that require a lot of funding from the government. The World Athletics Championships budget is sh960m, the Commonwealth Games with a budget of sh7.1b, World U-20 Athletics Championship sh300m, Islamic Solidarity Games sh1b, Rugby sh531m for their various tournaments, basketball for the Silverbacks and U-18 Junior Gazelles, Chess for the Olympiad; all these require government funding.

All the teams earmarked for the Commonwealth Games were supported, and therefore we have successfully executed our plans in terms of qualifying teams. Government funding was forthcoming and all activities for all sports were funded and we eventually embarked on supporting residential and non-residential training.

I would like to extend my special appreciation to our Minister of Education and Sports, the First Lady Maama Janet Museveni, the state minister for sports Hamson Obua, my council, the secretariat team and all the presidents of the various federations and the Uganda Olympic Committee for putting this together and the entire government that prioritised our need for funding besides reinstating our budget. This shows the solidarity,

the prioritisation and commitment by the Government in supporting sports.

As we appreciate our triumphant entry to the current financial year with so many events set in this quarter, the demand for more funding remains a significant area for us to achieve. I thank God for what has come. All the 51 federations deserve support and the council is happy that the additional resource of 29.7b will strengthen our planned



THE WORLD ATHLETICS CHAMPIONSHIPS BUDGET IS SH960M, SH7.1B FOR THE COMMONWEALTH GAMES, SH300M IS FOR THE WORLD U-20 ATHLETICS CHAMPIONSHIP, SH1B IS FOR ISLAMIC SOLIDARITY GAMES.

PATRICK OGWEL, GENERAL SECRETARY, NCS

activities to the extent we think will offer support to the federations and council to achieve its mandate.

On the other hand, our targets for Olympics were achieved and they remain a curtain raiser for all these games. We are going for the World Athletics Championships with all the world record holders, Halima Nakaayi, Joshua Cheptegei and not forgetting the young crop of athletes like Kiplimo and others.

In your view, do you think our teams have had adequate preparations for all these games.

Arising out of the COVID-19 period and when the government opened up sports activities, I think we have had enough time for the federations to plan and ensure that they participate in the different qualifiers and different residential camps.

What are your expectations from all these teams you have funded?

Our position is that Uganda will compete and come back with more medals than the previous time because we are building from where we have come from. From the Olympics, from the various world championships, our athletes have been in many competitions all over the world. Most of our teams have been in camps, so I see a better, organised, focused and well-prepared team than in the past where funding was a challenge and many federations had given up. Our assembling was always at the last minute - two weeks to the games. This time, preparations for teams that qualified earlier started as early as January. We believe we are going as competitors and hopefully we can leave a mark in Oregon. From Oregon our team will head to the Commonwealth Games and all the high-profile athletes have confirmed participation in these games. As a country, we are proud of what we are doing with our athletes and with what kind of support the government is offering for us to go to these games.

Apart from the Olympics and Commonwealth Games is NCS obliged to support other national teams in international competitions?

The budget of the Government comes when the financial year starts. The Government, through Parliament appropriates resources which go to the federations so the funds will be used for activities of national importance which we approve as council. Approval of expenditure of national federations is the work of NCS. Federations with approved plans are always funded in line with the planned activities of the council.

What are some of the successful stories you can share since becoming general secretary in the same period the First Lady was also appointed Minister of Education and Sports?

One of the key issues I am very proud of is streamlining the respective responsive structures of the Government in charge of sports development which are now respected. Gone are the days when federation heads would run to state house for solutions for their problems; all those have

been referred back now to council. The other attribute is the level of organisation NCS has adopted in terms of better planning and the advocacy roles we did together with our political leadership to ensure that sport is given priority. Even during COVID-19, most of our activities were cleared by the Government and our athletes were able to participate. You remember how Joshua Cheptegei won the world championships and set the bar high in Monaco and Valencia. All these big events happened during the COVID-19 lockdown because of the attention given to the sports sub-sector. But also, when our athletes Joshua Cheptegei, Jacob Kiplimo and Peruth Chemuta performed well, you could see the kind of recognition given to them by the government. I think the reward was motivating.

In terms of funding, I think this is one of the best periods in the history of this country where we are starting the financial year with a budget of sh48.8b. It has never happened; I know of a time when council was operating with only sh50m.

We have been able to support all the major championships where Uganda has participated, which has offered our athletes opportunities in future and to get exposed and improve on their strength. We have also seen presidents of federations being appointed to international boards, which to us counts because it means they are already doing some work for this country.

Athletics is currently the golden sport of the country. Don't you think they deserve more from the sports budget unlike what they are getting now?

From what I know they deserve more funding because they have produced world champions but they also have programmes that are aligned to our national development strategies of talent identification and development all over the country. Their national teams are always in camp, so this is something I am proud of about athletics. We look forward to stability for all federations because that could lead to so many other good things to follow.

I also want to warn that now that the government has given more resources than ever before (160% increment); this is unprecedented and therefore should not be taken for granted. So, my call as a leader and accounting officer of the government for NCS, I request the leaders to put strong internal financial control systems to avoid any leakage in how they spend and account for government money. The government arms will now be more visible on how these monies are being used. Nobody should relax thinking this is money for eating. They will have to spend it in line with the priorities of the government.

How are federations going to be supported in line with their various activity plans?

We have always asked them to submit their action plans. In the Government system you first indicate and justify what you need money for and this is supported by the action plans which have output, objectives and out-turns that come with it because everything must have value on investment. So, we have always prepared them for the same but this time we shall strengthen it.

FOUR-STAR MENU

With four major games coming up, what are the opportunities for Uganda, beyond the medals and accolades? **Charles Mutebi** explores the lay of the land



SUCCESS ON THE
GLOBAL STAGE IS THE
HIGHEST JUSTIFICATION
OF GOVERNMENT
FUNDING, AND IN TURN
THE BEST CASE FOR
INCREASED SUPPORT.

The profuse praise and grand prizes bestowed upon Uganda's top performers from the Tokyo Olympics was a timeless reminder of just how far sports heroes travel. Olympic glory is especially delightful, and there is quite nothing like it, but in the five-week period between July 14 and August 19 that will see the World Athletics Championships, Commonwealth Games, World U-20 Championships and World Islamic Solidarity Games, Uganda will have a rich menu to feast from.

And of course there is more to winning medals than mere joy. Success on the global stage is the highest justification of government funding, and in turn the best case for increased support. With pressure on the national budget at an all-time high, scrutiny on sports funding has never been more intense. Except the performances have been too good to criticise.

Medals at the four championships would simplify the auditing process of the sh7.2b the government spent on the Commonwealth Games and the rest of the three championships. Uganda won six medals at the 2018 Commonwealth Games, finishing 15th on the overall table, while the performance at the 2019 World Athletics Championships was even better, with the two gold medals won worth ninth position on the final standings. Matching or even surpassing those returns at this year's editions would be seen as success.

Medals are the definitive measure of success but there are other criteria, such as the unveiling of new talent. The U-20 World Athletics Championships is the ideal platform for this task, and Uganda will be counting on the likes of Prisca Chesang, Tarsis Orogot, Peter Maru and Dan Kibet to show how much they have grown since their world junior debuts last year.

Chesang won bronze in the girls 5,000m at last year's Championships while Orogot finished

fourth in the boys' 200m in Uganda's top two performances at the event held in Kenya, but the general expectation is more than one medal will be won at this year's edition.

For Uganda's elite athletics stars, the World Athletics Championships are a special opportunity to make money. Cash prizes await the top eight finishers in each of the disciplines at the World Athletics Championships and the Oregon event will mark the beginning of world athletics governing body's \$1m cash prize increment. Each individual event will see an increment of \$23,000 in prize money, something that should act as an incentive for the likes of Joshua Cheptegei and Halima Nakaayi, who won \$60,000 each at the 2019 Championships after clinching the men's 10,000m and women's 800m titles respectively in Doha.

Title-winning performances of Uganda's elite runners don't only do wonders for their pockets but they inspire hundreds of young and aspiring athletes back home, who see idols and mentors in their world-conquering countrymen and women.

The all-world feats of Uganda's top athletes over the last 10 years have sparked mass entry into the sport, especially in the Sebei sub-region, and new triumphs in Oregon, Birmingham and so on will only increase the numbers. Uganda's global sports feats do not merely sell the country to the rest of the world, they market individual sports back home. Again, Ugandan athletics is most suited to capitalise on the four looming championships, as it bears by far the brightest prospects of success.

Then there are the benefits to Uganda's relations with foreign states that will be the inevitable outworking of participation in the Commonwealth Games and World Islamic Solidarity Games. As much these two events are about success on the field of competition, they also lay bricks on the partnerships that Uganda has in the two umbrella bodies that support the related Games.

800M, 1500M & 10,000M RACES

CRUCIAL

HOW ATHLETES WERE SELECTED



MICHAEL
NSUBUGA,
WRITER



The Uganda Olympic Committee is tasked with overseeing the selecting teams to participate in national and international sports games. This year, they have to select teams for four major international games. **Michael Nsubuga** talked to **Beatrice Ayikoru**, the UOC general secretary about the task at hand.



This must be the most difficult period for the Uganda Olympic Committee (UOC). Trying to organise and send teams to the World Championship, the Commonwealth Games, the World Junior Championship and the World Islamic Solidarity Games in a space of one month. How are you handling?

The biggest challenge is that we shall not be able to have some of our athletes for both the World Championships and the Commonwealth Games. For example, we cannot have some of our marathoners for both events. And you might find these are some of our best athletes, yet we have to choose quality athletes for both events, so it will have an impact on the performance of athletes for those particular events. For the World U-20, we would have athletes who would also be at the Commonwealth Games but these events happen at the same time. Both events will be held between August 1-7 so it means a young athlete that has qualified for both events will have to forego one. The World Islamic Games which also fall under our docket is around the same time; so this means to some level the quality of players we are going to send in some events is going to be compromised.

The World Championships is at the level of the

THERE ARE MANY THAT QUALIFIED BUT WE HAD TO TRIM THE NUMBERS TO FIT IN OUR QUOTA OF **18 ATHLETES (NINE MEN AND NINE WOMEN)** FOR BIRMINGHAM.

BEATRICE AYIKORU

Olympics; it is like the World Cup of athletics which means you cannot divert athletes who qualified for those games. So for the Islamic Games we are going to have that could not make it to the other games. So, our best will be in Oregon for the World Championships. Our second level athletes plus one or two from those that will compete in the World Championship will go to Birmingham while the U-20 will go to Colombia, while those who have not had a chance to go for any of the other championships will go to the Islamic Solidarity games.

How is UOC facilitating each of these teams?

The Commonwealth Games and the Islamic Solidarity Games are under the UOC or Commonwealth Games Association of Uganda because these are multi-sport games while the Uganda Athletics Federation (UAF) will support athletics for the U-20 and the World Championships. So, the facilitation and funding is coming from two sources; one from UOC and the local organising committee and the other from UAF through National Council of Sports (NCS).

What are your expectations from the different teams to the various games?

We are rating the Commonwealth Games from our previous performance in Australia where we managed to win six medals five from athletics and one from boxing. The target is to get at least five from Birmingham but this will depend on the quality we send to these games.

We have three to four athletes that we hope can compete both in the World Championships and in the Commonwealth and we only hope they can be able to get both visas for the US and UK otherwise we might have to replace them, which will also mean little hope for medals because these are our top athletes.

We hope our athletes in the 800, 1,500 and 10,000m races can compete in both events.

We had a very successful Olympics campaign. What are your expectations in the Commonwealth?

Every athlete goes to these games with the hope of winning a medal but we cannot predetermine until we see the progress from the preliminaries but our projection is based on the previous games. Generally, we have never come back without medals from the Commonwealth Games and we hope this will not be different.

What yardstick was used to select who goes to the World Championship and the Commonwealth Games?

For Oregon, it was through qualification, so for whoever qualified the first option was the World Championship. For the Commonwealth, we looked at athletes who were close to qualifying for Oregon. Recently in Mauritius, we were able to assess those who we think will be very competitive in Birmingham. There are many that qualified but we had to trim the numbers to fit in our quota of 18 athletes (nine men and nine women) for Birmingham in the UK.

Do you think we have upcoming talent in the under 20s that could be the next Cheptegei?

That is the plan for every country. For example, Cheptegei started competing in the World U-20 in 2014 and he picked up from there. Even all our other current stars like Nakaayi, Nanyondo and Kiplimo started at that level. So, we think our youngsters, if molded well and are focused, can be the next stars after the Cheptegeis. We expect some of them to go for the Paris 2024 and 2028 Los Angeles Olympic Games.

Are there partners outside the government that have come up to support the different teams?

At the moment it is only Sanlam Insurance that has come on board to support health insurance for the athletes. They are going to provide 80 percent of the health insurance which is something positive because in the current situation of the pandemic, it is important for these athletes to be insured. The economic situation has kept the rest away but we are hopeful that others will join, though we are left with a few days to the games. For athletics, we have the sponsors MTN Uganda.

Uganda has had no representation in field events at major championships. How can this be changed?

The field events are very technical. It requires a lot right from the structure of the athlete, you need to identify them early enough, have the right coaches who are fully paid, have the right training equipment and have the opportunities for them to be able to compete. But there are athletics events that easily get the athletes motivated.

What motivates the middle-distance runners for example is they look at it as a source of income so they put in personal effort and only require a kit, vest and running shoes, which is affordable. But there are also many opportunities for middle and long-distance athletes; they run both on track and on the road, while it is very difficult to get field athletes invitations to go out and compete unless for events funded by the federation like the African championships, though they also have to first qualify. So, the level of competitiveness for field events has stagnated and it requires a lot of investment; having training camps, providing gym services and the nutrition aspect has to be looked into, so it will take some time for us to get there.

All these events are there in all national championships but we need to do much including motivating participants.

How about the hurdles?

We do not have equipment. If you go to Namboole at the moment, you cannot set up a 400m hurdle race, not even for 110 metres because the number of hurdles is not enough, many are broken and worn out. We hope that under the current renovations, all these will be replaced including the electronic timing system, pole vault and the throwing cages among others.

SEND-OFF

MUSEVENI, FIRST LADY GIVE SUCCESS TIPS

President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni together with the First Lady and Minister of Education and Sports, Hon. Janet Kataha Museveni flagged off the Ugandan teams set to participate in the upcoming Commonwealth Games in Birmingham City, UK and the World Athletics Championships in USA. The colourful ceremony took place at Kololo Independence grounds in Kampala recently.



Kirabo Namutebi, a swimmer, receives the National Flag from President Yoweri Museveni as Tendo Mukalazi witnesses



Husnah Kukundakwe, a paralympic swimmer receives the flag from Museveni as First Lady Janet Museveni witnesses

PRESIDENT YOWERI MUSEVENI'S SPEECH

THE ADVANTAGES

"Whenever I get a chance to speak about sports, I speak about its advantages. These include being good for fitness, building character and part of the character is not giving up. The discipline of sports is that you should not give up.

ON TEAMWORK

"You should emphasise sports for teamwork. Many people fail in the world because they do not want to work as a team. As sports people you cannot work alone, you need teamwork. If you have this talent of sports, you should not misuse it. It is a good talent.

"Sports needs all your organs to be working well. I.e. the heart, lungs, liver, intestines, etc. All these are at risk with alcohol. Having known the value of sports for you and the country, you now need discipline to guard that talent.

BE DISCIPLINED

"The point I want to make is that once you have the talent, don't fear! There is nothing you can't achieve if you have good training and have discipline. Once you have the talent you can achieve a lot with good training and discipline.

"I want to thank Maama and her team for the teamwork spirit in that ministry. Because of her team spirit, you can now see we are moving. It is now my pleasure to send off all teams, I wish you God's blessing."

FIRST LADY MRS JANET MUSEVENI'S SPEECH

"Do not let the success of today become the obstacles to your dreams of tomorrow. Stay with discipline and focus on what lies ahead. I call upon you to exhibit exemplary character and a spirit of patriotism as you represent your country on the world stage.

"Please remember to keep our flag flying high, show the pride of being Ugandan and remember there can never be any better country for you other than your God-given country."

Mrs Janet Museveni, First Lady and Minister of Education and Sports



Denis Obua, the state minister for sports, receives the flag from President Yoweri Museveni and First Lady Mrs Janet Museveni. Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Sports, Ketty Lamaro and Ambrose Tashobya of National Council of Sports witness



1



2



3



4

1. Athletics team captain Joshua Cheptegei receives the National Flag from President Yoweri Museveni at Kololo Ceremonial Grounds

2. Rugby 7s captain Micheal Wokorach receives the flag from Museveni

3. Netball captain Joan Nampungu receives the flag from the President

4. Isaac Zebra Jr, a boxer, Coach Twaib Mayanja and Joshua Tukamuhebwa during the flag off ceremony of team Uganda to the World Athletics Championship and Commonwealth Games at Kololo

SEND-OFF

MUSEVENI, FIRST LADY GIVE SUCCESS TIPS

President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni together with the First Lady and Minister of Education and Sports, Hon. Janet Kataha Museveni flagged off the Ugandan teams set to participate in the upcoming Commonwealth Games in Birmingham City, UK and the World Athletics Championships in USA. The colourful ceremony took place at Kololo Independence grounds in Kampala recently.



Kirabo Namutebi, a swimmer, receives the National Flag from President Yoweri Museveni as Tendo Mukalazi witnesses



Husnah Kukundakwe, a paralympic swimmer receives the flag from Museveni as First Lady Janet Museveni witnesses

PRESIDENT YOWERI MUSEVENI'S SPEECH

THE ADVANTAGES

"Whenever I get a chance to speak about sports, I speak about its advantages. These include being good for fitness, building character and part of the character is not giving up. The discipline of sports is that you should not give up.

ON TEAMWORK

"You should emphasise sports for teamwork. Many people fail in the world because they do not want to work as a team. As sports people you cannot work alone, you need teamwork. If you have this talent of sports, you should not misuse it. It is a good talent.

"Sports needs all your organs to be working well. I.e. the heart, lungs, liver, intestines, etc. All these are at risk with alcohol. Having known the value of sports for you and the country, you now need discipline to guard that talent.

BE DISCIPLINED

"The point I want to make is that once you have the talent, don't fear! There is nothing you can't achieve if you have good training and have discipline. Once you have the talent you can achieve a lot with good training and discipline.

"I want to thank Maama and her team for the teamwork spirit in that ministry. Because of her team spirit, you can now see we are moving. It is now my pleasure to send off all teams, I wish you God's blessing."

FIRST LADY MRS JANET MUSEVENI'S SPEECH

"Do not let the success of today become the obstacles to your dreams of tomorrow. Stay with discipline and focus on what lies ahead. I call upon you to exhibit exemplary character and a spirit of patriotism as you represent your country on the world stage.

"Please remember to keep our flag flying high, show the pride of being Ugandan and remember there can never be any better country for you other than your God-given country."

Mrs Janet Museveni, First Lady and Minister of Education and Sports



Denis Obua, the state minister for sports, receives the flag from President Yoweri Museveni and First Lady Mrs Janet Museveni. Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Sports, Ketty Lamaro and Ambrose Tashobya of National Council of Sports witness



1



2



3



4

1. Athletics team captain Joshua Cheptegei receives the National Flag from President Yoweri Museveni at Kololo Ceremonial Grounds

2. Rugby 7s captain Micheal Wokorach receives the flag from Museveni

3. Netball captain Joan Nampungu receives the flag from the President

4. Isaac Zebra Jr, a boxer, Coach Twaib Mayanja and Joshua Tukamuhebwa during the flag off ceremony of team Uganda to the World Athletics Championship and Commonwealth Games at Kololo

WE EXPECT MEDALS

DOMINIC OTUCHET,
Uganda Athletics Federation
President

The World Athletics Championships in Oregon from July 15-24 will be Uganda's first global athletics event since the 2022 Tokyo Olympics.

Joshua Cheptegei won his first and second Olympic medals after taking gold in the men's 5000m and silver in the men's 10,000m. Peruth Chemutai became the country's first female Olympic medalist by winning gold in the women's 3000m steeplechase and Jacob Kiplimo also won a bronze medal in the men's 10,000m. It was by far Uganda's greatest performance at the Olympics or any other major world games. It was something for athletics and the whole nation to celebrate, so we thank God for that type of performance. The way we performed in the Olympics has set the bar very high. But we are not about to lower it.

We shall go to Oregon for the World Athletics Championships for success. We shall go there for gold and other medals. We will do everything it takes to make that possible. My expectation is that we are likely to come back with two medals in the men's 10,000m, like in the Olympics. But this time, the first medal will be gold; the next one will either be silver or bronze. In the men's 5000m we shall also win a medal; it will be one.

I am also tipping Peruth Chemutai for a medal in the World Championships. I don't know which colour of medal but she will win a medal. I am sure of that. In the women's 800m, I expect Nakaayi to win a

medal. It may not be gold this time. It is going to be tough, given the quality of runners in that discipline, but I know she can. I have a lot of faith in Nakaayi; she's a fighter. And when the occasion calls, she knows what to do at the right time.

Then anything is also possible in the marathon, especially in the men's category. We have Stephen Kissa, who has a 2:04:48 and Victor Kiplagat who has a 2:05:09. Kissa's time is the new national record in the marathon. Even Kiplagat's time is better than the previous national record. It was almost dipping to 2:04.

An athlete needs 3-4 weeks to recover from a marathon so, Kissa and Kiplagat would have recovered by the World Athletics Championships. Both set those times at last month's Hamburg Marathon.



SCHEDULE OF UGANDAN ATHLETES

AT THE WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS 2022

Friday	Time	Event	Round	Athletes
15 JULY 2022	18.10	1500m W	Heat	Winnie Nanyondo

Saturday	Time	Event	Round	Athletes
16 JULY 2022	10.35	3000m Sc W	Heat	Peruth Chemutai
	12.20	10,000m M	Finals	Joshua Cheptegei Kiplimo Jacob Kissa Stephen
	18.30	1500m M	Heats	Roland Musagala
	19.05	1500m W	Semi Final	Winnie Nanyondo

Sunday	Time	Event	Round	Athletes
17 JULY 2022	06.15	Marathon M	Final	Jackson Kiprop Felix Chemonges Fred Musobo
	13:00	10000m W	Finals	Stella Chesang Mercyline Chelangat
	19.00	1500m M	Semi Final	Roland Musagala

Monday	Time	Event	Round	Athletes
18 JULY 2022	06.15	Marathon W	Final	Immaculate Chemutai
	17.05	200m M	Heats	Tarsis Orogort
	19.50	1500m W	Finals	Winnie Nanyondo

Tuesday	Time	Event	Round	Athletes
19 JULY 2022	18.50	200m M	Semi Finals	Tarsis Orogort
	19.30	1500m M	Finals	Roland Musagala

Wednesday	Time	Event	Round	Athletes
20 JULY 2022	16.25	5000m W	Heats	Esther Chebet
	19.45	3000m Sc W	Finals	Peruth Chemutai

Thursday	Time	Event	Round	Athletes
21 JULY 2022	17.10	800m W	Heats	Halima Nakaayi
	18.10	5000m M	Heats	Joshua Cheptegei Peter Marus Oscar Chelimo
	19.50	200m M	Finals	Tarsis Orogort

Friday	Time	Event	Round	Athletes
22 JULY 2022	18.35	800m W	Semi Final	Halima Nakaayi

Saturday	Time	Event	Round	Athletes
23 JULY 2022	18.25	800m W	Finals	Esther Chebet

Sunday	Time	Event	Round	Athletes
24 JULY 2022	18.05	5000m M	Finals	Joshua Cheptegei Peter Maru Oscar Chelimo
	18.35	800m W	Finals	Halima Nakaayi

NOTE

- In the events that begin with 'Heats', the athletes have to run well to qualify to the next round.
- The first batch of the team will leave on Wednesday 13th July 2022 and the second and last group will depart on Sunday 17th July 2022.
- Flag off for both Wcs and Cwg teams will be on Monday 11th July 2022 at Kololo.
- Halima, Winnie and Musagala have had their preparations from Netherland while Tarsis Orogort has prepared from the USA. They will join the team in Oregon.

A CASE OF STEADY

Since her first win at the World Athletics Championships in 1997, Uganda has slowly made successive gains that are a source of pride and hope.

BY CHARLES MUTEBI

Davis Kamoga's greatness in national sports history is underlined by his silver medal at the 1997 IAAF World Athletics Championships in Athens, as it is the first Uganda won at the event.

Seven years later, Dorcus Inzikuru plundered Uganda's maiden gold medal at the Championships, claiming the first-ever women's 3000m steeplechase world title at the Helsinki showpiece.

That triumph excited great expectations of dominance by Inzikuru, but a series of unfortunate events put paid to her enormous talent, which would never win a medal on the world stage again.

Before Uganda's next gold medal eight years later, Moses Kipsiro chipped in with a bronze at the 2007 Osaka World Athletics Championships. Like Inzikuru, however, a lot more was expected from Kipsiro than he would eventually accomplish.

Relatively unexpected was the source of Uganda's second gold at the global athletics event. Sure, Stephen Kiprotich was the reigning marathon Olympic champion when he claimed gold in Moscow but no one really expected him to go on and do it.

The 2015 IAAF World Athletics Championships delivered Uganda's second consecutive marathon medal, with Solomon Mutai scooping bronze, but it was a downgrade from the previous edition.

Then the 2017 iteration arrived and, with it, Joshua Cheptegei's maiden senior medal - in the men's 10,000m.

That piece of silverware perhaps had greater significance to Cheptegei than Uganda, as it came five just months after the lowest moment of his career - the epic collapse in the World Cross Country Championships at Kololo.

PROGRESS

UGANDA AT WORLD ATHLETICS CHAMPIONSHIPS

2019

Joshua Cheptegei, gold, Halima Nakaayi, gold, Doha



2017

Joshua Cheptegei, silver, London



2015

Solomon Mutai Bronze, Beijing



2013

Stephen Kiprotich, Gold Moscow



2007

Moses Kipsiro, Bronze, Osaka



2005

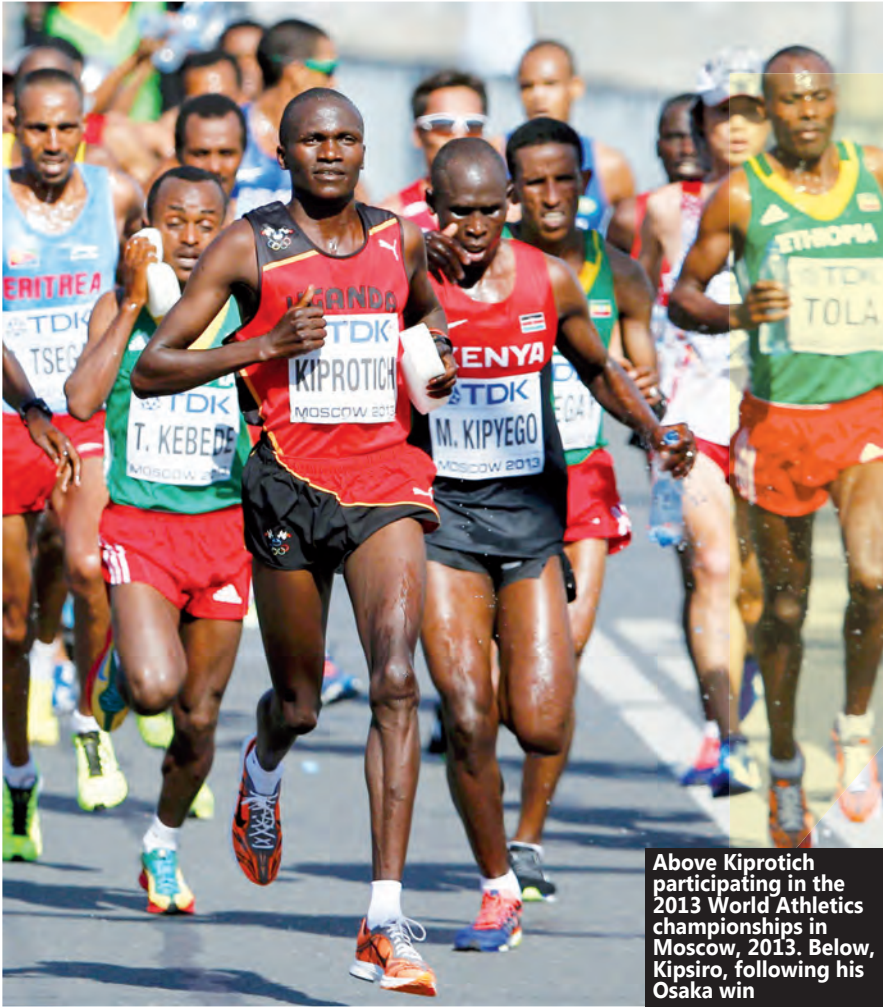
Dorcus Inzikuru, Gold, Helsinki



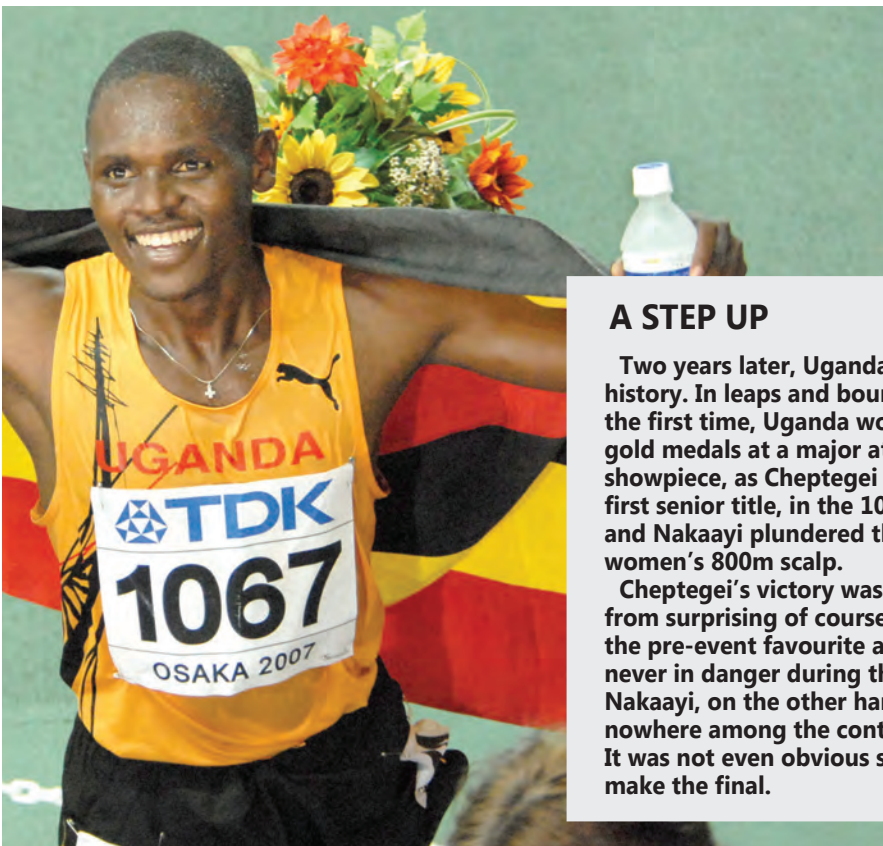
1997

Davis Kamoga Silver, Athens





Above Kiprotich participating in the 2013 World Athletics championships in Moscow, 2013. Below, Kipsiro, following his Osaka win



“Kampala wasn’t my day,” said Cheptegei after winning silver. “Today is my day.”

When asked whether his display was the start of his dominance of long-distance athletics, Cheptegei responded “absolutely!”

Few could have imagined the potency of Cheptegei’s assured prediction. And in a sense, the legacy of the 2017 World Athletics Championships from a Ugandan perspective is its contribution to the making of Cheptegei, a man who has gone to drive the country deeper into the annals of sport than any other.

That silver was the beginning of the greatest ever expedition in Ugandan sports history, one that is still adding to its layers of success.

Uganda’s team for the 2017 Champions had 22 athletes, with 12 male and 10 female, including Solomon Mutai, winner of the country’s sole medal at the previous edition. It also had Jacob Kiplimo, Halima Nakaayi, Peruth Chemutai and Winnie Nanyondo – names that would go on to grow in significance in subsequent years.

Kiplimo, of course, had won gold in the junior category at the World Cross Country Championships, but at the senior World Athletics Championships, he could not go beyond the 5,000m heats, finishing with a time of 13:30.92.

Nakaayi made it past the heats but dropped out at the semis of the women’s 800m while Chemutai fell in the 3000m women’s steeplechase. Albert Chemutai was Uganda’s second-best male performer, with 10th place in the men’s 3000m steeplechase, while Mercyline Chelangat’s 13th-place finish in the women’s 10,000m was the highlight among the women. Of course, Uganda had no representation in the field events and could only fill two of the three slots in both the women’s and men’s 5000m, and men’s marathon. In the women’s 10,000m, Chelangat was the sole representative.

A STEP UP

Two years later, Uganda rewrote history. In leaps and bounds! For the first time, Uganda won two gold medals at a major athletics showpiece, as Cheptegei won his first senior title, in the 10,000m and Nakaayi plundered the women’s 800m scalp.

Cheptegei’s victory was far from surprising of course. He was the pre-event favourite and was never in danger during the race. Nakaayi, on the other hand, was nowhere among the contenders. It was not even obvious she would make the final.

Cheptegei and Nakaayi’s heroics catapulted Uganda to its highest finish in the event with ninth position, only Kenya and Ethiopia faring better in Africa.

Although there was no change in the total number of athletes between the 2017 and 2019 Championships, there was immense growth among many of the athletes who were breaking through at the former edition.

Leni Shida’s participation at the 2019 edition meant that unlike in 2017, Uganda had a sprinter on the team.

'WE ARE UNDER PRESSURE TO DELIVER'

Having gotten to something like the topflight of world athletics with the epic display at the 2020 Tokyo Olympics, Ugandan athletes coach **Benjamin Njia** is feeling the pressure of aiming higher so as not to disappoint Ugandans. **Charles Mutebi** had a chat with him in Kapchorwa.

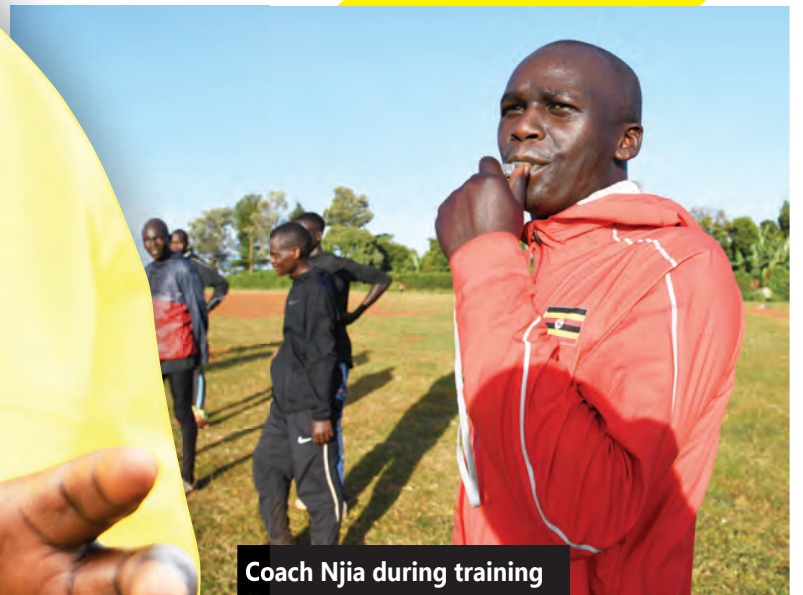
Nothing, as the old maxim goes, succeeds like success. To put it in the context of Ugandan athletics, the all-time great performance at the 2020 Tokyo Olympics led not only to great bliss but a great appetite for more success.

National athletics coach Benjamin Njia sums it up in one word, which, in light of the upcoming World Athletics Championships in Oregon, bears great significance.

"Our athletes have that pressure, as well as coaches and officials to deliver the same results," Njia admits.

"When you are used to something and you drop from that position it gets disappointing."

Having gotten to something like the topflight of world athletics with the epic display at the 2020 Olympics, Ugandans are coming to terms with the difficulty of staying up there. The weight of expectation ahead of the World



Coach Njia during training



Njia during training with Halima Nakayi and Winnie Nanyondo



Njia gesturing

"WE HAVE JUST STARTED INTERNATIONAL TRACK COMPETITIONS LIKE THE DIAMOND LEAGUES," SAID NJIA. "SO OUR ATHLETES ARE TESTING THEMSELVES TO SEE WHERE THEY ARE."

PETER CHELANGAT, COACH

Athletics Championships is unlike any Uganda has ever felt going into major athletics championships.

Hope is not the defining character of Uganda's medal chances anymore.

"We really do not want to disappoint Ugandans," Njia says. "That's the pressure we have now. We have to see that we maintain the status quo now that we have shown Ugandans that athletics is a golden sport. In Tokyo we showed that we can ably compete against the Kenyans and Ethiopians."

The obvious follow-up is interrogative: will that be shown again, or maybe even surpassed in Oregon? Njia's response is not exactly liberal.

"It is a bit tricky to predict whether we will have more medals in Oregon than in Tokyo," he says.

Uganda's medal hunt at the World Athletics Championships will, of course be led by Joshua Cheptegei, who won gold and silver in the 5000m and 10,000m races respectively at the Tokyo Olympics and is expected to do the double in Oregon.

At his peak, Cheptegei is two gold medals guaranteed, but as Tokyo showed, any lapses will be quickly exploited by his formidable opposition.

Njia's take on Cheptegei's medal chances is what one might expect from a shrewd coach. Njia owns Cheptegei's favourite status but adds that the outcome will ultimately depend on his tactical execution on the day.

Cheptegei will have "to get the calculations right," Njia tips.

It is the kind of cautious view aimed at warning against the assumption of a repeat of Uganda's performance in Tokyo at the World Athletics Championships. It is different from the general tone of optimism that pervaded the lead up to the Tokyo Olympics, but it is the right approach.

Cheptegei, Peruth Chemutai and Jacob Kiplimo will all be part of Uganda's World Athletics team and all three are capable of repeating or even improving upon their medal-winning performances from Tokyo, but, on the other hand, beating an Olympic champion should serve as a huge motivation for the competition.

Then there is the simple fact that a lot can change in the last weeks leading up to the World Athletics

Championships, a fact that left Njia indisposed to settle on precise predictions for Uganda with over a month, and plenty of build-up races to the global showdown.

"We have just started international track competitions like the Diamond Leagues," said Njia. "So our athletes are testing themselves to see where they are."

May's Prefontaine Classic, held in the same stadium where the World Athletics Championships will take place, was one such test. And if it said anything about Uganda's medal chances at the 2022 World Athletics Championships, it is that they would need significant improvement in the six weeks leading up to the event.

Cheptegei looked far from his sharpest in the 5000m, going for a world record attempt but only managing a 12:57:99, a whole seven seconds slower than what Ethiopian Berihu Aregawi posted on the second day.

"That was his first track event for him this year," explained Njia. "Then, secondly he wasn't feeling well. If he is in good condition at the World Athletics Championships he will race much better."

Then there was Chemutai, who finished fourth in the women's 3000m steeplechase with a slow, albeit season best, time of 9:05.54.

"Her performance was good; it was her second track competition of the season," Njia reasoned.

"We were trying to assess and gauge where we are and what we should step up in training."

Njia's review of the Prefontaine Classic results, which is also obviously applicable to Halima Nakayi and Winnie Nanyondo's sixth and eighth place finishes in the women's 800m and 1500m respectively, is comforting.

Or at least it is intended to be.

It implies that Uganda's top guns will be ready when it matters most. And it gets even better because in the marathon, Njia warned, "anything can happen".

"We are in the levels of the Kenyans and Ethiopians; our athletes are running 2:04, 2:05."

Those athletes are new national record holder Stephen Kissa and his training partner Victor Kiplagat.

Remember those names!

ADVERTORIAL



GO AND MAKE US PROUD

Police has assembled teams for the three major sports events as follows:

WORLD ATHLETICS TEAM

1. ASP Joshua Cheptegei
2. IP Chemutai Peruth

COMMONWEALTH GAMES

1. ASP Joshua Cheptegei
2. IP Chesang Stella
3. IP Chemutai Peruth
4. AIP Shida Leni
5. Nyamahunge Jacent
6. Victor Kiplagat

WORLD U-20 ATHLETICS EVENT

1. SPC Kiplagat Victor
2. SPC Chesang Priscar
3. SPC Chemistu Janat

POLICE TRANSFORMS SPORTS

BY CHARLES MUTEBI

Joshua Cheptegei, Peruth Chemutai and three other members of Uganda's historical 2020 Olympics team returned home to career-changing news from Uganda Police chief IGP Martin Ochola.

Cheptegei, Chemutai, Leni Shida, Mercyline Chelangat, Immaculate Chemutai and Uganda athletics coach Benjamin Njia learnt that they had received significant promotions by the force following their participation and or outstanding performances at the Olympics.

The move was expected, of course. But it was still a huge reminder of the Uganda Police's

commitment to sports and its sportsmen. And, even more importantly, it was massively welcomed by the beneficiaries.

But it is not just rewarding success, the Police has always invested in making it. Two months ago, IGP Ochola handed a cash boost to Cheptegei and the rest of the 11 Police athletes who will be part of Uganda's Commonwealth team.

The cash injection was an incentive to lift the athletes' preparations and *hmm*, a not-so subtle signal that there was more where that came from.

"The IGP has appreciated your efforts, endurance and discipline exhibited as you participated in different track trials," said SSP



Some of the Police athletes

Abu Kalule, who presented the token to the athletes on behalf of Ochola.

"Continue being disciplined, focused and supportive to one another," added Kalule. "This will help you achieve more as you build your career on track and in Uganda Police Force."

It is hard to overstate the importance of such gestures to any athlete, let alone those in a still largely amateur setting like Uganda, where funding remains a robust hindrance. Ugandan runners compete against the *crème* of the globe and often fail to match them despite being more talented.

What the commitment of the Police to its athletes means is a narrowing of the financial gap between them and better supported rivals that is often the drawback.

Of course, this Police policy is an enforcement of a directive from the President of Uganda Yoweri Museveni that government institutions should support Uganda's sportsmen by founding and supporting teams in national leagues and competitions.

"From very early on, I told our people, anybody who has potential, recruit him in the Police force or the army," said President Museveni at the State reception of Uganda's Olympic team from Tokyo last year.

"Let them be recruited so that they have got a base, so that they have got a small salary where they can train... that is a low-cost plan of how to maintain and encourage our sports people without spending too much money."

As the Uganda Police has shown, it is a successful plan.

ATHLETES' BIGGEST FAN

If an institution is as good as its leadership, Police Athletics Club is a sterling reflection of the highest echelons of the law enforcement organ. That is, you cannot correctly assess the countless successes of the Police athletes without taking into account the commitment and support of the Inspector General of Police Martin Ochola.

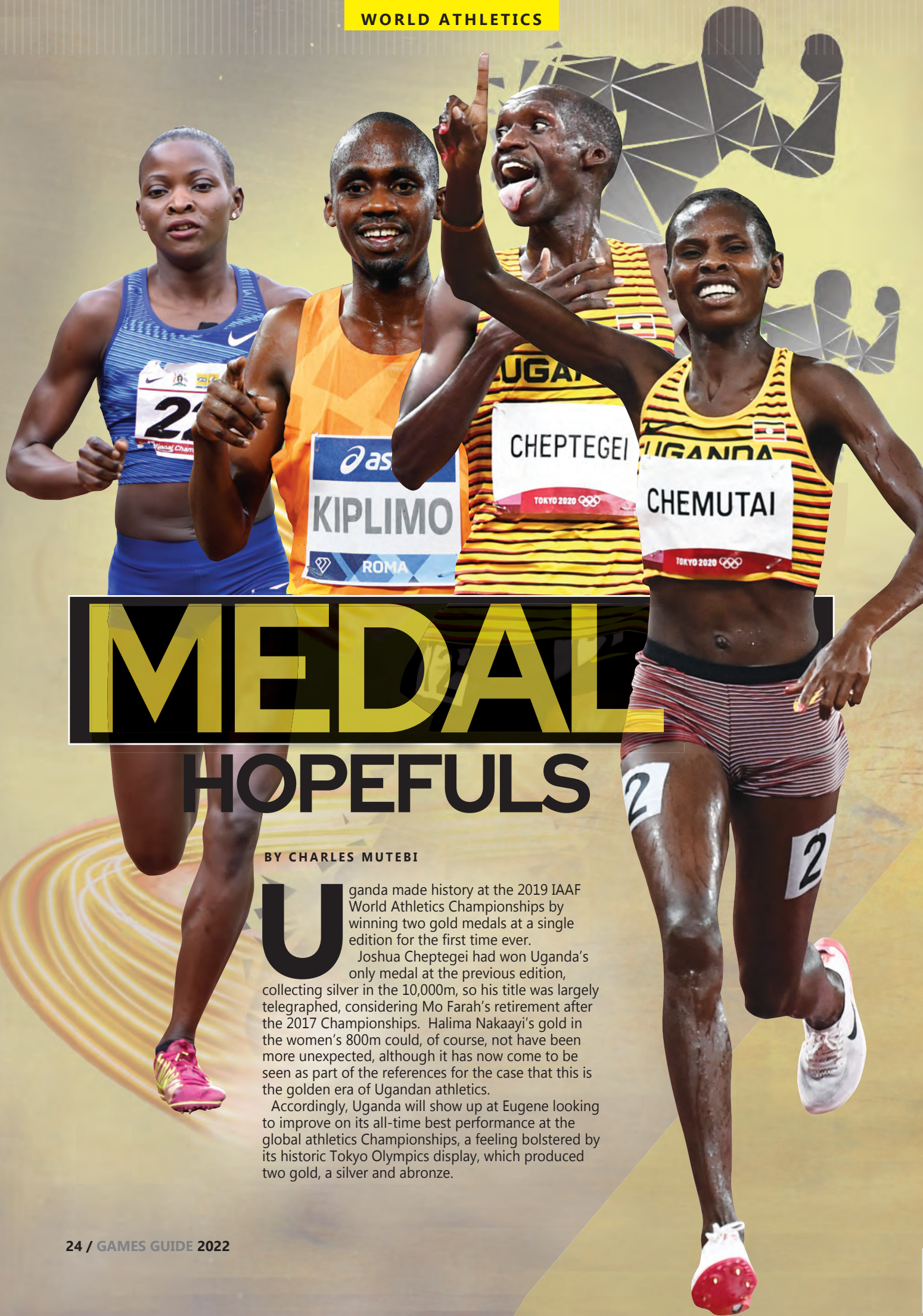
Ochola has been a profound proponent of Police athletes during his tenure at the helm of the force and it is no wonder no local athletics club boasts track record close to that of Police in recent years. From the willingness to recruit the country's finest athletes on the best possible terms to the creating of a conducive environment for them to succeed once they are part of Police Athletics Club, Ochola's support has been impressive.

There are the promotions, liberally given to Police athletes who win medals on grand stages. Following his double medal haul at the Tokyo 2021 Olympics, Joshua Cheptegei was promoted from Inspector of Police to Assistant Superintendent of Police. Peruth Chemutai, who claimed gold in the women's 3000m steeplechase, was promoted to Inspector of Police from constable, while coach Benjamin Njia was promoted to ASP.

At the function to celebrate the Olympic performances of Police athletes, Ochola said, "Even those who did not win at least showed the spirit of competition and will be victors next time.

"Use your ranks to lure youths from engaging in criminality but into constructive work like sports," said the IGP.

Ahead of this year's Commonwealth Games, the IGP gave Police Athletes in Team Uganda a cash injection to boost their preparations. It was yet another sign of his enviable support.



MEDAL HOPEFULS

BY CHARLES MUTEBI

Uganda made history at the 2019 IAAF World Athletics Championships by winning two gold medals at a single edition for the first time ever.

Joshua Cheptegei had won Uganda's only medal at the previous edition, collecting silver in the 10,000m, so his title was largely telegraphed, considering Mo Farah's retirement after the 2017 Championships. Halima Nakaayi's gold in the women's 800m could, of course, not have been more unexpected, although it has now come to be seen as part of the references for the case that this is the golden era of Ugandan athletics.

Accordingly, Uganda will show up at Eugene looking to improve on its all-time best performance at the global athletics Championships, a feeling bolstered by its historic Tokyo Olympics display, which produced two gold, a silver and a bronze.

CHEPTEGEI HUNGRY FOR MORE GLORY

Of course, 5,000m and 10,000m world record holder Joshua Cheptegei is the brightest medal prospect for Uganda in Eugene, a place of great significance to the mega star. Eight years ago, in the same stadium that will host the World Athletics Championships, Cheptegei claimed the world junior 10,000m gold medal, a crown that few could have imagined would be followed by countless honours.

Cheptegei has blossomed into the prince of long distance athletics, and after winning gold and silver at the Olympics – a return that was considered a bit disappointing in some quarters – he will be expected to pick up gold at Oregon.

“For now, my greatest dream for next year is to go to the World Championship and defend the title that I won in Doha two years ago,” Cheptegei told *New Vision Sports*.

Claiming the 5,000m and 10,000m double would further cement the Ugandan among the greats of long distance athletics, although there is a likelihood he might settle for just the 10,000m, his favourite but the one he unsurprisingly failed to win at the Olympics.



OTHERS

If there are any surprises, Stella Chesang, Stephen Kissa or even Victor Kiplagat are among the most likely sources.



Chesang and Kissa

WILL CHEMUTAI DO IT AGAIN?

When Peruth Chemutai posted a fifth-place finish in the women’s 3000m steeplechase at the 2019 World Athletics Championships, her display was greeted with much warmth because it was largely unexpected. Two years later in Tokyo, Chemutai shattered the most optimistic outlook by winning Olympic gold. Point is, write off Chemutai at your own peril.

“I want to finish in the medal bracket in any race I go for,” Chemutai told *New Vision Sports*. “I want a medal from the Commonwealth, World Championships and Olympics.”

A medal in Oregon would make her the only Ugandan female to win a medal at the two major championships.



RUITER CALLS FOR CAUTION

Global communications and Uganda athletics coach Addy Ruitter acknowledges that Ugandan athletics has taken a major leap in recent years and considers the performance in Tokyo as evidence. He cautions against raising expectations for more silverware from the Oregon Championships.

“More medals will be difficult because also for Eugene, medals must come from (Jacob) Kiplimo Cheptegei, (Halima) Nakayi, (Peruth) Chemutai,” Ruitter told *New Vision Sports*.

“Those are in my opinion the only athletes that can win medals at Oregon. So if we win four medals again, then we have a very good result.”

The Dutchman explains, “You have to be also realistic. It takes years to build up an athlete to the world-class level. I started six years ago with Joshua. So people must also be patient; because we need time. For next year it will be wonderful when we can have three, four medals again.”

NAKAAYI MUST BELIEVE

Halima Nakaayi’s gold at the 2019 World Athletics Championships remains one of Ugandan sports’ most miraculous moments. Nakaayi has frankly not made much progress since that historic day in Doha but her professionalism, humility, hunger and faith have never wavered.

Oregon does not hold much promise for a Nakaayi medal it seems, but her’s remains the heart of a champion.



KIPLIMO OUT FOR FIRST STRIKE

Jacob Kiplimo will certainly do the 5000m and 10,000m double, and his chances of success in both disciplines are, in theory, only bettered by Cheptegei’s. Kiplimo claimed his first Olympic medal with the 10,000m bronze in Tokyo and then went on, two months later, to shatter the half marathon world record, adding the honour to his half marathon world title.

Although he does not hide his bias for the road, Kiplimo is just as competent on the track and Eugene will be an opportunity to win his first medal at the World Athletics Championships. Kiplimo did not progress past the 5,000m heats at the 2017 World Athletics Championships, before missing the 2019 edition because of injury. In Oregon, a fully fit Kiplimo should be in medal contention in the very last laps of the 5000m and 10,000m.





BACK TO THE START

The 10,000m men's 2020 Olympic final is a good reference for any discussions about Joshua Cheptegei's chances at the 2022 World Athletics Championships in Oregon.

For starters, Cheptegei will start the 10,000m final in Oregon as favourite to win the gold medal, just as he did at the Olympics. The same logic holds true in the 5000m.

Secondly, you can expect his rivals, particularly the Ethiopians, to have a plan attack specifically crafted to frustrate, confuse and, if possible, defeat the Ugandan ace.

The key question then, just as it was in Tokyo, is what will Cheptegei do?

Will he respond to their schemes and adapt to their strategies, or will he run his race and back his superstar quality to overcome whatever is thrown at him?

Elite athletics is as much about the mind as it is the feet, and Cheptegei paid dearly for erring on the side of caution in the 10,000m when the whole world knows he is at his best leading from the front.

His coach Addy Ruiter summed it up best when reviewing the race.

"For the 10,000 meters, the mindset (of Cheptegei) was not totally 100%," Ruiter told New Vision Sports. "So he made the decision not to make the race like he did with the 5,000m, but to look how it was going. And, yeah, that was maybe (a mistake). But he learnt from that also."

Top, Cheptegei (centre) celebrating his 5,000m 2018 Gold Coast Commonwealth win

2014

Beats a field of 37 runners to win 10000m gold at the World U20 Championships in Eugene, US.

2018

Wins the 5000m and 10000m gold at the 2018 Commonwealth Games in Gold Coast, Australia.

2019

Becomes the first Ugandan to win the Senior Men's title at the World Cross Country Championships in Denmark.

2019

Claims gold in the men's 10m000m at the 2019 World Athletics Championships in Doha, Qatar.

2021

Takes the gold in the grueling men's 5,000m final at the Tokyo Olympic Stadium.

"And you know, it was not the first time that he was running at the Olympics, but the first time like the favorite, and there was a lot of pressure also from the media, the country. So you have to deal with that also. And he was struggling a little bit with that in the 10,000 metres."

Cheptegei, as Ruiter mentioned, learnt from his mistake. In other words, expect a wiser, self-assured Cheptegei in Oregon, who will look to take charge of proceedings in both the 5000m and 10,000m, who will dare his rivals to catch him if they can. Or at least one who should.

Cheptegei was at his peak in 2020, breaking the legendary records of Keninisa Bekele in the 5000m and 10,000m, which at the time took the number of world records in his possession to four. His 5,000m world record attempt at the 2022 Prefontaine Classic fell way of short of expectations, and, in fact, his time at the event would go on to be eclipsed by Ethiopian Berihu Aregawi, who played a key tactical role in the outcome of the men's 10,000m final at the Olympics.

In other words, Cheptegei's rivals will have a lot of encouragement that the gold medals in the 5000m and 10,000m are far from done deals in the Ugandan's favour.

National coach Benjamin Njia, as knowledgeable and confident about Cheptegei as anyone, says it will come down to execution.

"Races are tricky," Njia said. "Cheptegei will be in shape to win the double but sometimes an athlete has to get the calculations right. But we are confident and praying that he will be able to win the double."

Far from a resounding affirmation, Njia's description of Cheptegei's medal chances underlines the sting of doubt that still lingers from the 10,000m Tokyo final.

For his part, Cheptegei told New Vision Sports that he considered the Olympics, its disappointments notwithstanding, as an all-round "success".

"And I don't want to go back there," he added. "For me now it's history; I'm



Cheptegei and Kiplimo at the last Olympics

"...I DON'T WANT TO GO BACK THERE (OLYMPICS). FOR ME NOW IT'S HISTORY; I'M LOOKING AT NEW CHALLENGES."



looking at new challenges."

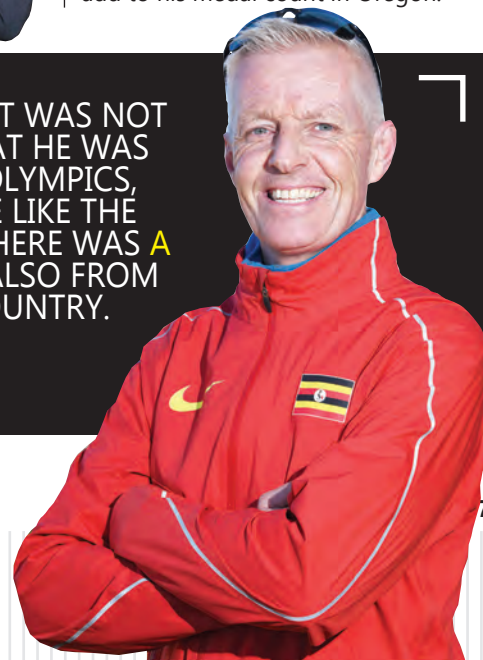
Eugene is exactly that. A place that represents not just new opportunities but also offers a reminder of great memories. Eight years ago, Cheptegei won his first world title, in the 10,000m junior category, at Hayward Field, an achievement that convinced him and his family that the athletics calling was worthy. Before that, Cheptegei's father was adamant that he should concentrate on his studies but that view was rightly suspended in the wake of global success. Cheptegei did both the 5000m and 10,000m in the junior championships but finished two places outside the medal bracket in the 5,000m.

Of the six medalists from the two races, only Cheptegei has gone on to win a world title. Ethiopia's Yomif Kejelcha, who won the 5000m world junior title, has been the closest to Cheptegei, winning silver in the 10,000m at the 2019 IAAF World Athletics Championships.

Of the two, only one is a sure bet to add to his medal count in Oregon.

"AND YOU KNOW, IT WAS NOT THE FIRST TIME THAT HE WAS RUNNING AT THE OLYMPICS, BUT THE FIRST TIME LIKE THE FAVOURITE, AND THERE WAS A LOT OF PRESSURE ALSO FROM THE MEDIA, THE COUNTRY."

ADDY RUITER, COACH





Nakaayi celebrates after winning 800m at the World Athletics Championships in Doha

NAKAAYI

WILL FIGHT FOR IT



NAKAAYI WILL WIN A MEDAL IN OREGON, ALTHOUGH I DON'T KNOW WHAT COLOUR...

DOMINIC OTUCET, UAF PRESIDENT

Halima Nakaayi's defence of her 800m world title has had to wait for an extra year, time that has certainly allowed the Ugandan to fully recover from the injury setback that cost her a strong showing at the Tokyo 2022 Olympics.

Nakaayi will finally get the shot to defend her crown, although admittedly it's as precarious a defence as you will find at the 2022 World Athletics Championships.

The women's 800m has undergone an explosion of talent in the three years since Nakaayi won her world title that it almost feels like the baton has passed from one generation to another.

From the Nakaayis and Ajee Wilsons and Raevyn Rogers', the sport has given rise to a new breed, led by Keely Hodgkinson and, of course, Athing Mu. The two won Olympic gold and silver in Tokyo aged just 19, with

Mu leading from gun to tape on the way to setting a national record.

Nakaayi, of course, didn't qualify for the final after posting a truly slow 2:04:44 in the semis that summed up the extent of her battle with injury. That she has subsequently slashed her times to consistently fall under two minutes is proof she has put her woes behind her.

Nakaayi added a world indoor medal to her collection, winning bronze at the 2022 World Athletics Indoor Championships in Serbia to take her tally of major accolades to three – she also boasts a bronze from the African Games.

"Halima is a fighter," says Uganda athletics body UAF president Dominic Otucet.

"I believe she will win a medal in Oregon, although I don't know what colour it will be. I know the women's 800m will be tough, but Halima is a fighter."

Re-watch her title-winning run in Doha and

2021

2:04:44 in the semis at the Tokyo Olympic games

2022

2:02.81 in 800m at the World Athletics Indoor games in Karlsruhe, Germany

2022

1:59:55 World Athletics Indoor Tour Silver event in France

you will see what Otucet means. From having no chance at the title, Nakaayi found herself with a real shot when the leading pack started bombing down the homestretch. With glory beckoning, Nakaayi reached out and grabbed it.

"When we completed the first 600m, I felt I was still strong," Nakaayi tells New Vision Sport. "That's when I said to myself, this is the time to give everything. I knew this was the opportunity God had given me to market Uganda, so I threw everything at it."

Nakaayi found herself with a title shot that nobody had imagined but she still had to seize it. Wilson and Rogers were and are still much faster runners, with personal bests that are seconds faster than Nakaayi's. And yet once the race developed in such a way that grit rather than speed would have the final say, it was Nakaayi who came up trumps.

Nakaayi's goal after her Doha success was to lower her personal best to the 1:55.odd territory, but that title-winning run remains the fastest of her career.

Consequently, she understands how the medal odds for the World Athletics Championships are structured.

But she maintains, "It's about believing in yourself; everything is possible."

Nakaayi clocked a promising 1:59.94 at the Wanda Diamond League Prefontaine Classic in May and the hope was that her fitness would improve through the different build-up competitions ahead of the World Athletics showpiece.

Mu won the Olympics with a time of 1:55.21, while Hodgkinson posted 1:55.88; so a medal in Eugene may not be possible with anything above 1:56.81, which is what Rogers needed to win bronze in Tokyo.

Put differently, Nakaayi will need a massive PB to have a shot at a medal in Eugene if proceedings go according to the form book. For Nakaayi's coach Addy Ruiter, that should not be too much to ask of a world champion.

"Halima must also learn to handle the pressure to run races as a world champion," Ruiter told New Vision Sports. "For some athletes the pressure is not a problem, and you have athletes who need some time to deal with pressure like that."

Still, Ruiter believes Nakaayi's best years are ahead, even as he acknowledges the shift in power in the women's 800m.

"I'm very positive about the future for Halima," explained Ruiter. "But I have to say compared to two years ago, the level of competition in the 800m meters is much, much higher. So she has to deal with that also."

"I HAVE TO SAY COMPARED TO TWO YEARS AGO, THE LEVEL OF COMPETITION IN THE 800M IS MUCH, MUCH HIGHER."

ANDY RUITER, COACH



Halima Nakaayi is reigning 800m world champion

WORLD ATHLETICS CHAMPIONSHIP

ATHLETE PROFILES

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT THE CHAMPIONSHIPS

CASH PRIZES

World Athletics will use \$2m in doping fines it has received from Russia to increase the prize pool at the next two world championships.

It means each of the 44 events will have \$23,000 added to the pool. Usually, the top eight finishers receive money.

MEDALS

It will be an unmissable experience with 16 sessions across 10 days of action and 49 gold medals up for grabs.

TICKETS

More than 100,000 tickets to the event have already been sold, with some sessions selling every ticket that was made available.



JOSHUA CHEPTEGEI

Event: 10,000m & 5,000m
Personal Best: 26:11.00 and 12:35.36
Season Best: 26:49 (10k) and 12:57.99

Joshua Cheptegei will be looking to defend his 10,000m title on top of winning the 5000m crown at the World Athletics Championships. Cheptegei is the world record holder in both events and won the 5000m final at the Tokyo Olympics in addition to silver in the 10,000m. At his best, he should win the double.

JACOB KIPLIMO

Event: 10,000m
Personal Best: 26:33.93
Season Best: TBD

Jacob Kiplimo has opted to do only the 10,000m even if he would have been a medal threat in the 5000m as well. Kiplimo claimed 10,000m bronze at the Tokyo Olympics and finished fifth in the 5,000m final despite suffering an injury in the course of the race. He is capable of winning his first World Athletics Championships title.



STEPHEN KISSA

Event: 10,000m
Personal Best: 27:26:46
Season Best: 27:26.46

Stephen Kissa has made enormous strides in recent years to emerge as one of the country's most reliable long distance runners. He holds the national record in the men's marathon but he will be running the 10,000m in Oregon instead. One thing is certain, his presence in the men's 10,000m will boost Uganda's medal chances.



WORLD ATHLETICS

FRED MUSOBO

Event: Marathon
Personal best: 2:06.56
Season best: 2:12.10

He was Uganda's top performer in the men's marathon at the Tokyo Olympics, finishing 44th with a time of 2:18:39. For him to get close to the podium at the World Athletics Championships, Fred Musobo will have to run a time much closer to his personal best, which is over 12 minutes faster.



FELIX CHEMONGES

Event: Marathon
Personal best: 2:05.12
Season best: 2:12.14

He is the third fastest Ugandan ever in the marathon and he will need to run close to his personal best to have a shot at a medal in Oregon. Chemonges set what was then the national record just less than three years ago, so he is still well capable of putting in a competitive shift. It will take a special effort because his last outing, in the Seoul Marathon, ended in a time of 2:12:14.



PETER MARU

Event: 5,000m
Personal best: 13:07.48
Season best: 13:07.48

Few upcoming athletes have excited local athletics observers like Peter Maru. The youngster looks like a great find and his presence on the World Athletics Championships team at such a tender age proves that. Maru's best years are ahead but competing with the seniors will be such a valuable learning experience.



RONALD MUSAGALA

Event: 1,500m
Personal best: 3:30.58
Season best: 3:38.31

He will be eager to make amends for his disappointing campaign at the Tokyo Olympics, where he dropped out of the heats due to injury. Musagala must contend with one of the most competitive athletics disciplines at the moment but making his first 1,500m major final should not be such a huge ask.



JACKSON KIPROP

Event: Marathon
Personal best: 2:08.28
Season best: 2:08.28

Jackson Kiprop is the third ranked of Uganda's three-man marathon team, being in 145th position in the world. The veteran has been in impressive form this year, posting 2:09:43 in the Daegu International Marathon in South Korea two months ago. That time is a minute and 25 seconds shy of his personal best – proof he's on fire.



OSCAR CHELIMO

Event: 5,000m
Personal best: 13:06.79
Season best: 13:11.16

Oscar Chelimo can reflect on his performance at the Tokyo Olympics, his first, with great satisfaction. That he was able to reach and complete the final is a notable achievement for one so young. In Oregon, which will be his second World Athletics Championships, Chelimo will be looking to display the benefits of his development.



ESTER CHEBET

Event: 5,000m
Personal best: 15:02.15
Season best: 15:02.15

Ester Chebet has never run faster than she currently is. Her personal best in the 5,000m came last month at the P-T-S Meeting in Slovakia, where her display was good enough for third spot. That time is nine seconds faster than what Chebet managed at the Tokyo Olympics, where finished 24th, which underscores just how much improvement she has made.

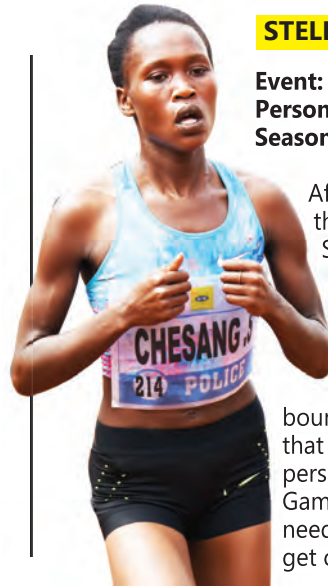
MERCYLINE CHELANGAT



Event: 10,000m
Personal best: 31:15.05
Season best: 31:52 (10k)

Her career highlight remains the bronze-medal finish in the 10,000m at the 2018 Gold Coast Commonwealth Games, but as Chelangat's performance at her lone appearance in the World Athletics Championships five years ago showed, she has the potential to impress. She finished 13th in the 10,000m final at the 2017 showpiece with a time of 31:40.48.

STELLA CHESANG



Event: 10,000m
Personal best: 31:13.72
Season best: 31:13.72

After winning 10,000m gold at the 2018 Commonwealth Games, Stella Chesang was expected to go on and become a major force in women's long distance athletics. It didn't quite work that way, as she took time off to give birth. But she has bounced back with such great force that she recorded her 10,000m personal best at last month's FBK Games in Hengelo. She will, however, need to be even faster in Oregon to get close to the medals.

IMMACULATE CHEMUTAI

Event: Marathon
Personal best: 2:28.30
Season best: 2:28.30

Ranked 127th in the world, Immaculate Chemutai will be making her World Athletics Championships' in Oregon. Chemutai finished 16th at the Tokyo Olympics after posting a time of 2:32.23. Notice how much improvement she made between the Olympics and Abu Dhabi Marathon four months later where she set her personal best of 2:28.30, which would have been good for fourth place at the 2020 Olympics.



WINNIE NANYONDO

Event: 1500m
Personal best: 3:59.56
Season best: 4:00.25

She will be going for her third World Athletics Championships so Winnie Nanyondo needs no lectures on what to expect. Nanyondo came closest to her first world medal at the 2019 edition, although that was in the 800m. Nanyondo finished 7th in the 1,500m Olympic final in Tokyo, going against the same class of opponents she will encounter in Oregon.



HALIMA NAKAAYI

Event: 800m
Personal best: 1:58.03
Season best: 1:58.68

She will start the World Athletics Championships among the few with the honour of defending champion, but, of course, Halima Nakaayi will be under no illusion about what truly lies ahead. The 800m is so loaded Nakaayi could not even make the final at the Tokyo Olympics, due in part to her injury struggles. She has fully recovered now and should give a better account of herself in Oregon.



PERUTH CHEMUTAI

Event: 3000m SC
Personal best: 9:01.45
Season best: 9:05.54

It was at the 2019 World Athletics Championships in Doha that Peruth Chemutai first gave notice of her big-stage capabilities. No one, of course, could imagine the extent of that ability until the Tokyo Olympics, where she claimed gold in the women's 3,000m steeplechase. Chemutai is certainly a medal contender in Oregon.



OREGON

It is hard to fathom that the 2022 World Athletics Championships will be the first of the kind held in the US. No wonder, Eugene was selected host without the usual bidding process, something that caused concern in European cities that had bid for the Championships. In response, then IAAF president Lamine Diack argued that the unusual selection of Eugene was justified by the need to enable the athletics body to “take advantage of a unique opportunity to host a financially successful tournament that may never arise again”.

And perhaps no location in the US could have been as apt for the occasion as Eugene, which had lost the 2019 bid to Doha.

Self-styled as “A Great City for the Arts and Outdoors”, Eugene is also known as Tracktown USA or the Track Capital of World, in tribute to its long history in track running, particularly at the University of Oregon’s Hayward Field, which will host the 2022 World Athletics Championships.

Then there is the small matter of Nike, the most dominant athletics brand. It had its origins in Eugene, Oregon’s second-most populous city after Portland. Eugene has no more than 180,000 residents, who are called Eugeneans.

Visitors to Eugene can expect to be drawn

in by its natural environment, recreational opportunities, and focus on the arts, which includes a history of civil unrest, protests and green activism. Eugene boasts miles of running trails that are among the most of any city in the US, snaking through its enormous park system and also established along the Willamette River and Amazon Creek.

Jogging was introduced to the US through Eugene by athletics great and New Zealander Bill Bowerman, who went on to coach the University of Oregon to several national titles, and, with Oregon alumnus Phil Knight, founded Nike.

Oregon was the home state of the late Steve Prefontaine, the legendary long distance runner who died in a car crash in 1975, and who is the inspiration behind the Prefontaine Classic Diamond League meeting, held annually at Hayward Field.

Opened in 1919, Hayward Field is the track and field Stadium located at the University of Oregon. Newly-renovated two years ago, the Stadium has a capacity of 30,000 and is one of only five World Athletics Class 1 Certified tracks in the whole of the US. The venue has been host to countless sports contests during its 103-year history, but its greatest day is due with the 2022 World Athletics Championships.

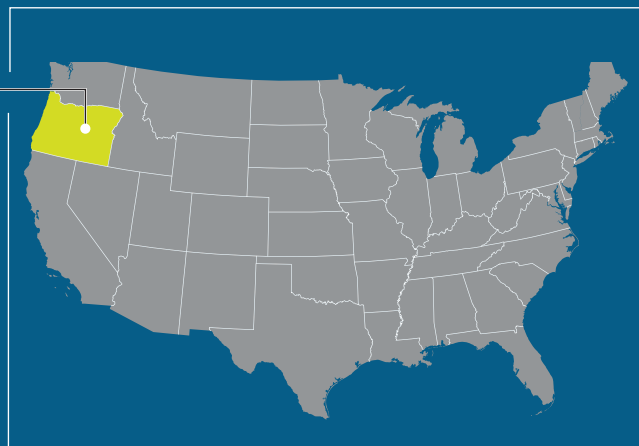
OREGON, EUGENE

Located in OREGON STATE
in United States of America

Eugeneans (residents): 180,000



US (United States of America)



85

ATHLETES FOR
COMMONWEALTH

**MICHAEL
NSUBUGA,
WRITER**

Uganda will send its biggest contingents to this year's Commonwealth Games set for July 28-August 8 in Birmingham, in the UK. **Michael Nsubuga** spoke to Uganda's Chef De Mission (CDM) Moses Mwase about the team.

How have the general preparations of the various Uganda teams been?

The national organising committee, headed by the minister and the technical team, which I lead have been engaging in preparatory activities, by ensuring that we have all the teams selected by the federations as per the different quarters allocated to each of them.

First of all, we had what we call 'open slot allocation'. We received 40 slots from the Commonwealth Games Federation which was the quarter for Uganda for these games. But we also have teams that had to qualify. We had to allocate the 40 slots among the seven sporting disciplines; swimming, athletics, boxing, badminton, cycling, squash and wrestling accordingly. Swimming has four (two males and two females), athletics - 18 (nine males and females females), squash two (males), cycling two males, wrestling - two (one male and a female). Other sports disciplines that went through the qualifiers include Table Tennis where four females qualified,

weightlifting (three males), badminton (mixed team of three each), netball (12 players), Rugby 7s (12) and para sport (athletics, powerlifting, swimming, and para tennis). We could have had 3x3 basketball and cricket 20-twenty for women but they did not qualify. We shall have a contingent of about 85 athletes (the biggest ever) and if you add officials our numbers should come to about 125. So, all these teams gave us their preparation plans. We have been getting reports on how each one of them is preparing. Of course, preparations meant the government giving support, which was done through the National Council of Sports (NCS).

Did the athletes get adequate funding for preparations ahead of the games?

I cannot speak for the government (NCS) and all the others but as president of the Uganda Swimming Federation, I am aware that we have been supported by NCS to prepare. We ensured that everyone would have adequate preparations. We want to have the best results for Uganda because as you recall our biggest medal haul was five in Gold Coast (two gold and three bronze). In Glasgow we had four. We want to do better.

Most of our medals have been coming from athletics. Do you see that changing in Birmingham?

It might not change considerably but as a country we have to diversify a bit. But it also depends on how much the different games are able to produce on that kind of platform. We are optimistic that there will be some medals from the other sporting disciplines.

Should we expect more medals from our biggest contingent ever?

It is our desire to have more; we have all the ability to do that but of course you should be aware that athletics have the world championships in Oregon and many of our champions will be there. We want to ensure that they participate in both events although this is a challenge. For a sportsman, it is difficult to do events at the high level which are at the same time, so that is one of our biggest dilemmas.

Is this your first time as Chief De Mission (CDM) and what does your role entail?

I was assistant CDM in Gold Coast and have been CDM on many other occasions like for swimming and other smaller outings. The CDM role is very long and has been summarised in our general sports selection policy. The CDM is the head of the technical team. He coordinates the activities of all the general team officials but ensures that the team is well taken care of before, during and after the games. Special attention is paid to preparations, facilitation, ensuring that their accommodation is sorted, ensuring that the team travels and most importantly

coordinating all these activities with the national organising committee.

You was the pre-games tour you went for about?

The official name is Commonwealth Games Association Open Days. We had this from March 28-30 in Birmingham. The purpose was for us to be able to see exactly where our teams will stay, to see the sports facilities that they were going to use, but also to understand the different challenges that come with the model that is being used. There are multiple sites where the teams will be staying; games will be conducted in many locations and the teams will also be staying in many locations. We have to ensure that we have in place the logistical support for all our teams in the different locations where they will be. The other purpose was for us to also understand where exactly our teams will stay to facilitate them which we did very well. We also needed to understand how they were going to be transported because transport determines how early the teams arrive for competitions, when they set off and the like. We also got a briefing about how to mitigate against COVID-19 and the challenges around so that teams are not inconvenienced. That was the purpose of our visit.

Government has funded the team with sh7.1b. Does this come with pressure to deliver medals?

The pressure is always there, but we need to invest in teams a lot earlier. These games have a four-year cycle, like the Olympics, but because of the two-year break due to COVID-19, all the teams and countries are in the same predicament. We lost two years and it is understandable that athletes did not work hard as they ought to have but preparation should follow the cycle at the tail end of the games and this is the challenge that we always face. The pressure is there, everyone wants to see medals because when they are won, everyone is happy.

Is the sh7.1b sufficient?

The money is never sufficient, but we need to survive with what is available. If we had our way we would for example charter Uganda Airlines to take us to the games, but the money is never sufficient. People want to be in camps, etc; but the government has been telling us that even with little resources we have been able to get medals, so it can also work like that.

What are your expectations as CDM?

These games are coming after a COVID-19 lockdown. We had the Olympics, but we now have the first multiple major games after the world has understood how to handle the pandemic, so the expectation is the games will bring about a celebration of humanity and culture in the Commonwealth. But they will also give our athletes an opportunity to engage in sports at that level.

WE RECEIVED 40 SLOTS FROM THE COMMONWEALTH GAMES FEDERATION FOR THESE GAMES. WE HAD TO ALLOCATE THE SLOTS AMONG SEVEN SPORTING

MOSES MWASE, CHEF DE MISSION



ADVERTORIAL

ALL THE BEST!



**Sanjay Rughani, CEO,
Standard Chartered Bank**

As Standard Chartered Bank, we are joining the rest of the country in wishing our Uganda Athletes the very best of success during the forthcoming 2022 World Athletics Championship and the Commonwealth Games.

As a bank, we have over the years been one of the greatest supporters of athletics and sports in Uganda and the world, and for good reason. Sports is increasingly playing a significant role in our economies by creating gainful employment, transforming the lives of the disadvantaged through Paralympics, promoting healthy living and mental wellbeing, promoting talent, uniting the masses and bringing hope, joy and pride to many of us.

Don't we all love that moment when our flags are hoisted at international sporting and our anthems are played? I personally feel an elated sense of patriotism and pride during those moments.

So, if harnessed and invested in, sports offers cross-cutting benefits and can become a huge earner of foreign exchange for our countries and that is why Standard Chartered partnered with Liverpool FC in 2010, making it the second-longest sponsorship deal in the Reds history.

We went on to cascade this global Liverpool sponsorship to our clients and staff we launched the popularly known "Road to Anfield tournament" in 2015 which later on came to be known as the Standard Chartered Cup tournament. Through this programme we have been able to reward several of our

Best wishes to the Ugandan athletes at the 2022 World Athletics Championships and Commonwealth Games



Liverpool match viewing party



Participants stretch during the Standard Chartered Home Run

customers, staff and media who had the opportunity to win the famous "Money can't buy," all-expenses paid trips to visit Liverpool and play on a Premier League pitch – Anfield among other benefits.

Other than football sponsorship through the Liverpool FC, we have over the years also supported relay marathons through the Greatest Race on Earth where we gave opportunities to budding Ugandan marathoners in partnership with Uganda Athletics Federation to compete in marathons across the world. Several young and upcoming Ugandan athletes used these races

as a starting ground to move on to the global scene and gave them a chance to win huge prize monies that enabled them to earn a decent living through sports.

Furthermore, we have for years been title sponsors of the renowned Dubai Marathon, the single richest marathon in the world, the Singapore marathon and the Standard Chartered Nairobi Marathon, a premier international running event and the only IAAF Africa accredited event hosted in Kenya.

Since the inauguration of the Nairobi Marathon in 2003, it has



Over 40 teams have annually participated in the Standard Chartered Cup tournament



Roofings jubilates win in Road to Anfield tournament



A throwback to our "Ride for the Future" event which aimed at raising money for our Futuremakers programme



Schools trained by professional basketballers in the Success by Choice programme

since grown to become the largest single day mass participation sporting event on the African calendar with several Uganda elite athletes using it as a springboard to launch their international careers.

In the past we have also supported Basketball in Uganda through our 'Success by Choice' programme which focused on

youth development, infrastructure development, capacity-building, positive lifestyle messaging and saw the refurbishment of 20 basketball courts and equipment distribution in 28 schools around Kampala.

While in the recent past we annually hold a Home Run global virtual volunteering and fundraising challenge by the Standard Chartered

Foundation which raises funds for the Futuremakers programme. The participants either individually or as a team run an aggregated long-distance walk or run and run a fundraising campaign to support their effort. The funds they raise help tackle inequality and promote greater economic inclusion amongst young people.

As I conclude, our track record is clear, we are a bank that has for decades heavily invested and strongly supported the development of sports in Uganda and we continue to do so by championing causes like the GOAL project, a programme that empowers adolescent girls using a mix of sports and life skills education modules, among others.

So as our athletes take on this challenge, we applaud you for your dedication and commitment to your various disciplines that ensures we have a team representing us and we implore you to go ahead and shine as you lift the Uganda flag high!

Standard Chartered Bank Uganda stands with you!

WHAT ARE UGANDA'S CHANCES IN BIRMINGHAM?

Uganda's best performance so far at the Commonwealth Games has been three gold medals in a single competition. Can she top that?

Charles Mutebi explores.



THE 2020 TOKYO OLYMPICS MARKED UGANDAN ATHLETICS **FINEST HOUR** WITH AN ALL-TIME BEST MEDAL OUTLAY.

Uganda has not won more than three gold medals at a single Commonwealth Games, a feat it has twice managed. The second time was, of course, at the last Games in Australia, where Joshua Cheptegei's 5,000m and 10,000m double combined with Stella Chesang's women's 10,000m title to highlight a medal haul that also included one silver and two bronze.

Four years is a long time but, fortunately for Uganda, that time has largely been progressive as far the country's medal prospects at the 2022 Commonwealth Games is concerned. Athletics, which accounted for five of Uganda's six medals in Gold Coast, has never been in better health, with every other week seeming to produce a notable conquest for the sport in one part of the world or another.

Needless to add, the 2020 Tokyo Olympics marked Ugandan athletics finest hour with an all-time best medal outlay. It is no stretch to thereby see

the dance floor as set for Uganda's finest hour at the Commonwealth Games in Birmingham, even if Cheptegei will, in all likelihood, play no part in defending his titles.

If Cheptegei should stick by his original design, which he says was partly based on the desire to give younger athletes an opportunity to win, the burden will shift to Jacob Kiplimo to maintain Uganda's tradition of winning the 5000m and 10,000m Commonwealth Games double, a tradition that started with Moses Kipsiro in 2010.

Kiplimo's quest for this

Commonwealth double is unique because one could say it needs him more than he needs it. Kiplimo is already a mega star: he has

Rugby's Isaac Masa



Minister of State for Sports Denis Hamson Obua launching the Games countdown in Kampala in May

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

Tickets: Tickets start from £8 (sh36,000) for under 16s and £15 (sh69,000) for adults. Tickets for Aquatics - Swimming, Cycling - Mountain Biking, Cycling Time Trial, Cycling - Road Race, Gymnastics - Artistic and Triathlon & Para Triathlon are now resale tickets only.

Venues: The Games will be based in Birmingham, Cannock Chase, Coventry, Royal Leamington Spa, Sandwell, Solihull, Warwick, Wolverhampton, and London.

Transport: There are different transport options available for each. Walk, cycle, games shuttle bus, local bus, train, tram and taxis.

a half marathon world title, a half marathon world record, 10,000m Olympic bronze and silver in the men's senior world cross. Winning the double would make headlines even if it would not rank above his aforesaid triumphs in global competitions.

Still, for a youngster like Kiplimo, Commonwealth glory would be a feather in his decorated cap – a milestone of great significance to a nation that holds Commonwealth



Netball's Mary Nuba (with ball) is one of those to watch

success in high regard.

A Kiplimo double would also put Uganda in strong position to better its all-time best Commonwealth Games campaign – the 1970 Edinburgh Games – because Peruth Chemutai, Halima Nakaayi and Stella Chesang all represent bright medal prospects.

Of course, it is worth noting that all these stars will compete at the World Athletics Championships first, a fact that could be as decisive as any other in determining performances at the Commonwealth Games.

While the risk of fatigue and injury is heightened by having to compete in two major events separated by just a single week, the flip side could be an uptick in form and competitive rhythm by the time of the Commonwealth Games.

What has been fascinating for Ugandan athletics authorities is

the eagerness to compete in the Commonwealth Games displayed by the country's top athletics stars. The fear that many would opt for the World Athletics Championships alone has not come to fruition, and the resulting willingness to compete in both has created a selection headache for athletics authorities, who have a cap of 18 athletes for the Commonwealth Games.

Six is the number that will constitute Uganda's boxing contingent at the Commonwealth Games looking to maintain the long tradition of success at the Games.

The all-male Bombers squad will be in the hunt for boxing medal number 22 for Uganda, which will also have representation in netball, men's sevens rugby, weightlifting, swimming, squash and badminton.

Only athletics and boxing have contributed to Uganda's Commonwealth medal success since the country's debut at the Games in 1954, and that trend is not expected to change at the Birmingham Games.



16

**YEARS OF
UGANDA AT
THE COMMONWEALTH**

Uganda will mark its 16th appearance at the Commonwealth Games this year looking to take its medal tally near or even possibly into the 60s. Since Patrick Etolu claimed Uganda's first ever Commonwealth Games medal with silver in the high jump at the 1954 Vancouver Games, a respectable record at the quadrennial event has been amassed, currently standing at a total of 53 medals. Put differently, Uganda has won 3.5 medals per Commonwealth Games, a record that is good for 18th place on the all-time medal table.

The Commonwealth Games have been good to Uganda, a point somewhat captured in the fact that Etolu's historic medal came in the high jump. No one would have guessed it then, but Etolu is the only Commonwealth Games medalist in Uganda's history outside boxing and track athletics. It is a unique fact but one that also clearly illustrates the greater failure to maximize the country's potential across the sports field. It is almost unfathomable that Etolu's feat remains without equal despite Uganda having taken part in 14 Commonwealth Games since the 1954 edition.

Etolu was one of seven who made up Uganda's team at the 1954 Games, which competed in the men's 100 yard, 220 yard, 4x110 yard relay, long jump and of course high jump. Etolu's silver-medal winning jump was 1.99 feet high.

Four years later, Etolu scaled 1.98 metres but it was not good enough for a second consecutive podium appearance for Uganda, who once again managed silver – from welterweight Thomas Kaweere from the entire Games.

WOULD GOLD EVER COME?

Yes, at the next Games, with heavyweight George Oywello winning the Commonwealth title in Perth. Oywello's boxing crown would pave the way for a golden sport that would deliver three champions – James Odworo, Mohamed Muruli and Benson Masanda at the 1970 games. Welterweight Muruli even went on to defend his title at the 1974 Christchurch Games, where Ayub Kalule also struck gold in the lightweight category.

Sixteen years later in Auckland, Justin Juuko and

CONTINUED ON 40

1970

The year Uganda secured three champions – James Odworo, Mohamed Muruli and Benson Masanda

1954

The year Uganda got her first medal at the Commonwealth Games - a silver won by Patrick Etolu in high jump

2006

Dorcus Inzikuru and Boniface Kiprop won the women's 3,000m steeplechase and men's 10,000m titles respectively



Justin Juuko punches his opponent

53

The number of medals Uganda has won at the Commonwealth Games, (16 gold, 16 silver and 21 bronze)



Muhamed Muruli got gold in 1970

COMMONWEALTH PROFILES

TEAM

ATHLETES

It is the question on everyone's mind: how good are Uganda's athletics teams for the World Athletics Championships in Eugene and the Commonwealth Games?

Well, let's just say there is real optimism in the names that have made both lineups.

On one hand, there's undeniable star wattage powered by multiple global titles and medals. On the other, there's rising potential that Uganda is eager to introduce to the world.

The World Athletics Championships are the first global athletics championships — with apologies to the 2022 World Indoor Championships — since Uganda's all-time great performance at the 2020 Tokyo Olympics where two gold, one silver and one bronze medal were plundered.

Undoubtedly, the World Athletics Championships and Commonwealth Games will be an assessment of where Uganda stands post Tokyo Olympics.

Did the success propel the sport to a greater dimension that can be expected to deliver consistent success at the major championships? Or was the performance at the Olympics an exception?

To be clear, Uganda's displays at the last editions of the World Athletics Championships and Commonwealth Games were anything but lousy, and all the mega stars responsible for the silverware that Uganda claimed at those two events are back.

Here's a closer look at what to expect from them and the rest of Uganda's athletics contingent at the World Athletics Championships and Commonwealth Games.

JACOB KIPLIMO

Event: 5,000m & 10,000m
Personal Best: 12:48.36 & 26:33.93
Season best: TBD

He missed the 2018 Commonwealth Games because of injury so, Kiplimo will be making his debut in this quadrennial event. And for somebody who is the world champion in the half marathon and, of course, the world record holder, for somebody who boasts 10,000m Olympic bronze and world senior cross silver, Kiplimo's Commonwealth introduction promises to deliver medals in both the 5000m and 10,000m.



PERUTH CHEMUTAI

Event: 3,000m SC
Personal Best: 9:01.45
Season best: 9:05.54

She has already reached the pinnacle of the women's 3,000m steeplechase by winning gold at the 2020 Tokyo Olympics, but a Commonwealth medal represents something worth the chase for the highly ambitious Peruth Chemutai. Her profile exploded with Olympic success, but a Commonwealth medal would do no harm to Chemutai's respectability.

HALIMA NAKAAYI

Event: 800m
Personal best: 1:58.03
Season best: 1:58.68

In winning bronze at the World Indoor Championships earlier this year, Halima Nakaayi took her medal collection to a new high, having already claimed the women's 800m title at the 2019 World Athletics Championships and bronze at the 2019 African Games. Adding a Commonwealth medal to the list would make her the most decorated female athlete in Ugandan history, certainly in terms of variety of success.



COMMONWEALTH GAMES

WINNIE NANYONDO

Event: 1,500m
Personal best: 3:59.56
Season best: 4:00.25

Eight years ago, Winnie Nanyondo won a Commonwealth Games bronze medal (in the women's 800m), which remains the most important achievement of her career to date. At the 2018 Games, Nanyondo missed out on another bronze with a fourth-place finish in the same race while finishing 10th in the women's 1500m. More battle-tested, Nanyondo is a strong contender for her second medal at the Commonwealth Games.



VICTOR KIPLANGAT

Event: Marathon
Personal best: 4:05:09
Season best: 4:05:09

He broke the national men's marathon record set by Filex Chemonges at the Haspa Marathon in Hamburg in June, except the race was won by a compatriot — Stephen Kissa — who went on to set the new national record. Either way, Kiplangat had sent out the message that he is one to watch. And in that form, he is a contender for a marathon medal at the Commonwealth Games.



TARSIS OROGOT

Event: 200m
Personal best: 20.32
Season best: 20.32

He will be making his Commonwealth Games debut and for Orogot, this is all about garnering experience. The youngster is a promising talent who finished fourth in the 200m at last year's U-20 World Championships and has since made remarkable strides in his development, thanks in no small part to the training benefits of his scholarship at the University of Alabama.



ABU MAYANJA

Event: 800m
Personal best: 1:45.73
Season best: TBD

The hard-working runner has struggled to hit the kind of form that facilitated his qualification for the 2017 World Athletics Championships but an appearance at the Commonwealth Games may be just what the doctor ordered. It might prove the timely confidence-booster and competitive trigger needed to get his career back on track.



HARON ADOLI

Event: 400m
Personal best: 46.07
Season best: 46.07

His personal best in the 400m is 46.07, which must significantly improve for him to become a consistent presence on the big stage. But for Haron Adoli, the Commonwealth Games is precisely the sort of showpiece he needs to conceptualise just how much improvement he must make if he is to go to the next level.



TOM DRADIGA

Event: 800m
Personal best: 1:46.84
Season best: 1:50.09

Not only will this be Dradiga's Commonwealth Games debut, it will also be his first appearance on such a grand stage. That means, among other things, the experience of a lifetime for the 800m runner. Dradiga's profile is populated with activities on the Ugandan circuit, with his personal best in the 800m coming in 2019 at Mandela National Stadium, Namboole.

EMMANUEL OTIM

Event: 1500m
Personal best: 3:43.43
Season best: 3:43.43

He is another who will be in uncharted waters with his debut in the Commonwealth Games, so Emmanuel Otim will be a winner no matter how well he performs in the 1500m. Otim's personal best in the 1500m (3:423.43) came in a race in Mauritius last month, which is the grandest stage he has been to thus far. Needless to add, the timing of his career-best performance cannot be lauded enough.



SCOVIA AYIKORU

Event: 200m
Personal best: 28.84
Season best: 28.84

She has spent the past five years at Georgia Southern University where, in addition to pursuing a bachelor's degree in interdisciplinary studies, she honed her sprinting skills to a near-elite level that will be subjected to its toughest test yet at the Commonwealth Games in Birmingham. Ayikoru has her finest years in front of her so the pressure of immediate success at the Commonwealth Games is uncalled for.



RACHEL ZENA CHEBET

Event: 10,000m
Personal best: 32:17.16
Season best: 32:17.16

In winning silver at the Africa Senior Athletics Championships last month, Rachel Chebet Zena fired clear warning shots to the rest of the competition ahead of the women's 10,000m at the Commonwealth Games. Zena won the medal in a personal best time, which will only boost her confidence of a strong performance at the Games, where she will be fully aware that the last winner of her discipline was a Ugandan.

**CHEBET TOROITCH LINET**

Event: Marathon
Personal best: 2:26.22
Season best: 2:26.22

She turned in a career race at the Rock and Roll Madrid Marathon in Madrid in April, which convinced the selectors that she was the right candidate to shoulder Uganda's hopes in the women's marathon at the Commonwealth Games. Whether she can reward the selectors with a podium finish in Birmingham is, of course, the question.

**SARAH CHELANGAT**

Event: 5,000m
Personal best: 15:00.61
Season best: 15:37.68

Sarah Chelangat's best performance in the 5000m this season was good enough for fifth place at the African Senior Athletics Championships in Mauritius but, of course, compared to her career-best display, it almost pales into insignificance. Chelangat's finest 5000m showing of course ended in a national record time of 15:00.61, a mark which she must get close to if she is to have a chance of winning a medal at the Commonwealth Games.

**STELLA CHESANG**

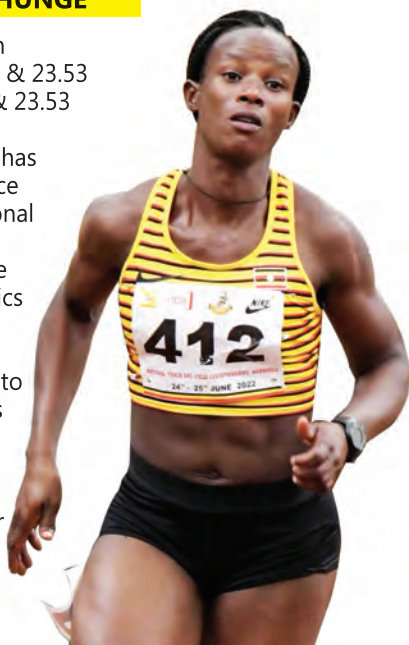
Event: 10,000m
Personal best: 31:13.72
Season best: 31:13.72

She became only the second Ugandan female to win gold at the Commonwealth Games when she stormed to the 10,000m at the Gold Coast edition in 2018. Chesang immediately took time off athletics to have her first child, a decision that ultimately cost her participation in the Tokyo Olympics. But her return to the track has been nothing short of remarkable, with her personal best (31:13.72) coming just last month. That time is 31 seconds faster than what she posted in her gold medal run.

**JACENT NYAMUHUNGE**

Event: 100m & 200m
Personal best: 11.57 & 23.53
Season best: 11.57 & 23.53

Jacent Nyamuhunge has been a dominant force in the sprints at national level for the past three years but as the African Senior Athletics Championships last month showed, she has her work cut out to replicate that success on bigger stages. The Commonwealth Games will reinforce that fact although for a first-timer at the event, it will be all about exposure.

**JOSHUA CHEPTEGEI**

Event: 5000m
Personal Best: 12:35.36
Season Best: 12:57.99

Now this is a welcome surprise. Joshua Cheptegei had no interest in returning to the Commonwealth Games, something he put on record as recently as last year. But it now seems likely that he will attempt to defend his 5,000m Commonwealth title. Reports indicate that the turnaround was based on, among reasons, the belief that he can juggle the load of competing in the World Athletics Championships and the Commonwealth Games. If anyone can, it is probably Cheptegei.



ADVERTORIAL



Nile Special reaffirmed its status as the number one fan of Uganda Rugby with a staggering sh9.8b commitment to Uganda Rugby Union for four years. **Amou Majok, the country marketing lead, Nile Breweries, speaks out.**

Nile Breweries, the leading beer manufacturer in Uganda, this year celebrates 71 years this year since launching in the country. How do you rate the company's journey over the years?

Our journey has been built on several pillars that include building and maintaining a strong reputation, being a force for good, leading with bold initiatives and comprehensive economic value-addition.

Our bottom-line performance has been key, especially during the past two turbulent years and the ongoing inflation and it is a great measure of our ability to perform during a crisis and emerge stronger than before. We have continued to deliver solid growth without sacrificing the world-class profitability we possess. We have also been able, through our corporate social responsibility initiatives, to support our communities and help them thrive.

The journey has not been without challenges but like an athlete with their eyes firmly fixed on winning gold, so have we been. There have been distractions, and some are still with us such as the illicit trade, but we have managed to rise above them as we continually engage the authorities.

Nile Breweries' most awarded beer Nile Special has over the years received international recognition at the annual Monde Selection Awards by the "International Quality Institute" in Belgium. What's the secret behind this?

The secret is simple. At Nile Breweries, quality and safety are uncompromising pillars of our day-to-day operations. Quality is a process owned by every employee of Nile Breweries. This ensures that we deliver the freshest and best tasting beer to our consumers and explains why Nile Special is unarguably Uganda's Most Awarded beer brand, having recently bagged its 21st Monde Selection Award for



Amou Majok

its consistent quality and taste. The brand has also just won its 22nd Gold and an International Quality Trophy for consistency over the past three years.

To our valued consumers this is an assurance of Nile Special's uncompromised quality because it is world-class beer that is proudly and authentically Ugandan, brewed from the source of the River Nile with 99% local material.

On November 25, 2021 Nile Special launched a new campaign dubbed "Unmatched in Gold."

What is this campaign about?

When Nile Special won its 21st Gold Award in 2021, we felt that the brand had truly earned its place among those who have brought pride to Uganda on the global platform. The Unmatched in Gold campaign was therefore a celebration of its consistent and globally recognised quality.

It is also a celebration of other Ugandans that have brought pride to the country and those who through their individual efforts continue to put the country on the world pedestal.

Most recently we celebrated the Uganda Rugby 7s that qualified for the Africa 7s World Cup in September. We are certain of more gold medals at the Commonwealth Games and the World Athletics Championships in USA.

During Peruth Chemutai's crowning ceremony at the 2021 Olympics Games, celebrated British sports commentator Robert Joseph Walkers offered glowing tribute when he stated: "What unadulterated joy this win would have triggered back home in Uganda..... The Nile Specials will be flowing in all the bars in Uganda tonight." What did this mean to you as a company?

Firstly, the moment was about Uganda and the pride the athlete brought the nation by flying our flag high on such a grand stage and in one of the greatest moments in sports. It was a moment to savour and still lives fresh in the minds of many Ugandans. For Nile Special to be mentioned in the same breath, was a glowing testament of the investment sunk into sports in the country.

Nurturing, supporting and cheering Ugandans that bring pride to the country is a huge element of what Nile Special stands for. It is not a flash in the pan, it is who we are. Our hope is for more of such moments during both the Commonwealth Games and World Championships with Uganda's flag being flown high.

Nile Special reaffirmed its status as the number one fan of Uganda Rugby with a staggering sh9.8b commitment to Uganda Rugby Union for three-four years. Earlier on, the company offered sh100m for the Cheptegei facility. And all this follows sponsorships for the Uganda Cranes. Why invest this much in local sports?

Sports is a big and powerful industry with a huge economic potential. Beyond a single athlete, there is always a team that supports them and there are many more whose livelihoods depend on the earnings of those employed within the sports sector.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 46

ADVERTORIAL



Nile Special reaffirmed its status as the number one fan of Uganda Rugby with a staggering sh9.8b commitment to Uganda Rugby Union for four years. **Amou Majok, the country marketing lead, Nile Breweries, speaks out.**

Nile Breweries, the leading beer manufacturer in Uganda, this year celebrates 71 years this year since launching in the country. How do you rate the company's journey over the years?

Our journey has been built on several pillars that include building and maintaining a strong reputation, being a force for good, leading with bold initiatives and comprehensive economic value-addition.

Our bottom-line performance has been key, especially during the past two turbulent years and the ongoing inflation and it is a great measure of our ability to perform during a crisis and emerge stronger than before. We have continued to deliver solid growth without sacrificing the world-class profitability we possess. We have also been able, through our corporate social responsibility initiatives, to support our communities and help them thrive.

The journey has not been without challenges but like an athlete with their eyes firmly fixed on winning gold, so have we been. There have been distractions, and some are still with us such as the illicit trade, but we have managed to rise above them as we continually engage the authorities.

Nile Breweries' most awarded beer Nile Special has over the years received international recognition at the annual Monde Selection Awards by the "International Quality Institute" in Belgium. What's the secret behind this?

The secret is simple. At Nile Breweries, quality and safety are uncompromising pillars of our day-to-day operations. Quality is a process owned by every employee of Nile Breweries. This ensures that we deliver the freshest and best tasting beer to our consumers and explains why Nile Special is unarguably Uganda's Most Awarded beer brand, having recently bagged its 21st Monde Selection Award for



Amou Majok

its consistent quality and taste. The brand has also just won its 22nd Gold and an International Quality Trophy for consistency over the past three years.

To our valued consumers this is an assurance of Nile Special's uncompromised quality because it is world-class beer that is proudly and authentically Ugandan, brewed from the source of the River Nile with 99% local material.

On November 25, 2021 Nile Special launched a new campaign dubbed "Unmatched in Gold."

What is this campaign about?

When Nile Special won its 21st Gold Award in 2021, we felt that the brand had truly earned its place among those who have brought pride to Uganda on the global platform. The Unmatched in Gold campaign was therefore a celebration of its consistent and globally recognised quality.

It is also a celebration of other Ugandans that have brought pride to the country and those who through their individual efforts continue to put the country on the world pedestal.

Most recently we celebrated the Uganda Rugby 7s that qualified for the Africa 7s World Cup in September. We are certain of more gold medals at the Commonwealth Games and the World Athletics Championships in USA.

During Peruth Chemutai's crowning ceremony at the 2021 Olympics Games, celebrated British sports commentator Robert Joseph Walkers offered glowing tribute when he stated: "What unadulterated joy this win would have triggered back home in Uganda..... The Nile Specials will be flowing in all the bars in Uganda tonight." What did this mean to you as a company?

Firstly, the moment was about Uganda and the pride the athlete brought the nation by flying our flag high on such a grand stage and in one of the greatest moments in sports. It was a moment to savour and still lives fresh in the minds of many Ugandans. For Nile Special to be mentioned in the same breath, was a glowing testament of the investment sunk into sports in the country.

Nurturing, supporting and cheering Ugandans that bring pride to the country is a huge element of what Nile Special stands for. It is not a flash in the pan, it is who we are. Our hope is for more of such moments during both the Commonwealth Games and World Championships with Uganda's flag being flown high.

Nile Special reaffirmed its status as the number one fan of Uganda Rugby with a staggering sh9.8b commitment to Uganda Rugby Union for three-four years. Earlier on, the company offered sh100m for the Cheptegei facility. And all this follows sponsorships for the Uganda Cranes. Why invest this much in local sports?

Sports is a big and powerful industry with a huge economic potential. Beyond a single athlete, there is always a team that supports them and there are many more whose livelihoods depend on the earnings of those employed within the sports sector.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 46

RUGBY CRANES

COUNTING ON EXPERIENCE

BY JOHNSON WERE

Rugby Cranes are determined to register a decent performance at the Commonwealth Games in Birmingham.

The team first played in the Commonwealth Games in 1998 with the inclusion of a men's competition, in which New Zealand defeated Fiji to take the gold medal. The inaugural women's rugby sevens competition took place in 2018 when New Zealand beat Australia in the final.

Uganda, South Africa and Zambia will carry Africa's flag in the tournament of nations that were under the political affiliation of Great Britain.

The men's and women's rugby sevens will be played on July 29-31 with two sessions played on all three match days.

The 16 teams at the games are Uganda, Fiji, Australia, double defending champions New Zealand, Samoa, Canada, Tonga, Wales, Malaysia, Scotland, Jamaica, Sri Lanka and hosts England.

This will be the fourth outing for Uganda in the Queens Games since their first appearance in 2006.

During the 2018 Games in Australia (Gold Coast), Uganda finished 12th overall, four places behind, neighbors Kenya who finished in the eighth position out of the 16 teams. The Rugby Cranes hope to better that performance in this year's edition.

Coach Tolbert Onyango believes his squad that managed to qualify for both the Rugby Sevens World Cup and the Commonwealth Games, will leave an impression in Birmingham.

"I'm convinced this is the time we are



Coach Tolbert Onyango gives tips to rugby players during a match



JOHNSON WERE, WRITER

going to compete. The boys are in high spirits, their fitness levels are perfect and the Rugby Africa unbeaten record has given them that confidence to believe in themselves," Onyango said. Team captain Michael Wokorach reiterates the confidence. "This is our turn to shine. I'm confident we shall deliver."

Wokorach is the only Ugandan rugby player to feature in four Commonwealth Games out of the five appearances Uganda has made this far and holds reasonable experience in both the 7s and 15s versions of the sport.

Of the 12 players that represented Uganda in Gold Coast, six will return for this year's edition in Birmingham. These include Timothy Kisiga, Desire Ayera, Philip Wokorach, Wokorach (Cpt), Aaron Ofoywroth, and Adrian Kasito.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 45

The knock-on effect is therefore huge. Investment, even in just a single athlete or team has a domino effect that goes beyond the track or field.

Lastly, the ability of sports to galvanise the country as one cannot be underestimated. It is such moments that Nile Special lives for, moments that make us proud of our country. We support

and cheer such occasions across the board, both big and small.

What are your expectations from the Rugby Cranes team going into the Commonwealth Games in Birmingham?

We have pretty good hopes in the team especially on the back of such a dominant display during the just concluded Africa Rugby 7s. The team did not just win the tournament, it made a statement

especially after defeating global 7s powerhouse Kenya.

We expect our team to do well, building on the momentum from the Africa Rugby 7s to even do better. Over the years the team has grown in leaps and bounds for moments like this; to compete against the world's best sides. No matter the results, as the No.1 fans of Uganda Rugby we shall be cheering the boys, to make Uganda proud.

RUGBY CRANES

COUNTING ON EXPERIENCE

BY JOHNSON WERE

Rugby Cranes are determined to register a decent performance at the Commonwealth Games in Birmingham.

The team first played in the Commonwealth Games in 1998 with the inclusion of a men's competition, in which New Zealand defeated Fiji to take the gold medal. The inaugural women's rugby sevens competition took place in 2018 when New Zealand beat Australia in the final.

Uganda, South Africa and Zambia will carry Africa's flag in the tournament of nations that were under the political affiliation of Great Britain.

The men's and women's rugby sevens will be played on July 29-31 with two sessions played on all three match days.

The 16 teams at the games are Uganda, Fiji, Australia, double defending champions New Zealand, Samoa, Canada, Tonga, Wales, Malaysia, Scotland, Jamaica, Sri Lanka and hosts England.

This will be the fourth outing for Uganda in the Queens Games since their first appearance in 2006.

During the 2018 Games in Australia (Gold Coast), Uganda finished 12th overall, four places behind, neighbors Kenya who finished in the eighth position out of the 16 teams. The Rugby Cranes hope to better that performance in this year's edition.

Coach Tolbert Onyango believes his squad that managed to qualify for both the Rugby Sevens World Cup and the Commonwealth Games, will leave an impression in Birmingham.

"I'm convinced this is the time we are



Coach Tolbert Onyango gives tips to rugby players during a match



JOHNSON WERE, WRITER

going to compete. The boys are in high spirits, their fitness levels are perfect and the Rugby Africa unbeaten record has given them that confidence to believe in themselves," Onyango said. Team captain Michael Wokorach reiterates the confidence. "This is our turn to shine. I'm confident we shall deliver."

Wokorach is the only Ugandan rugby player to feature in four Commonwealth Games out of the five appearances Uganda has made this far and holds reasonable experience in both the 7s and 15s versions of the sport.

Of the 12 players that represented Uganda in Gold Coast, six will return for this year's edition in Birmingham. These include Timothy Kisiga, Desire Ayera, Philip Wokorach, Wokorach (Cpt), Aaron Ofoywroth, and Adrian Kasito.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 45

The knock-on effect is therefore huge. Investment, even in just a single athlete or team has a domino effect that goes beyond the track or field.

Lastly, the ability of sports to galvanise the country as one cannot be underestimated. It is such moments that Nile Special lives for, moments that make us proud of our country. We support

and cheer such occasions across the board, both big and small.

What are your expectations from the Rugby Cranes team going into the Commonwealth Games in Birmingham?

We have pretty good hopes in the team especially on the back of such a dominant display during the just concluded Africa Rugby 7s. The team did not just win the tournament, it made a statement

especially after defeating global 7s powerhouse Kenya.

We expect our team to do well, building on the momentum from the Africa Rugby 7s to even do better. Over the years the team has grown in leaps and bounds for moments like this; to compete against the world's best sides. No matter the results, as the No.1 fans of Uganda Rugby we shall be cheering the boys, to make Uganda proud.



RUGBY

PLAYER PROFILES



16 COUNTRIES

INCLUDING UGANDA, WILL TAKE PART IN THE COMMONWEALTH GAMES IN BIRMINGHAM (JULY 29-31). THE FOLLOWING RUGBY PLAYERS WILL REPRESENT UGANDA.

4

The number of times the Uganda Rugby team has played in the Queens Games since their first appearance in 2006.



MICHEAL WOKORACH **1**

TEAM CAPTAIN

Age: 32 years
Club: Heathens RFC
Debut: 2009
Nickname: Gonya
Position: Prop/ Centre
Strength: Fast, strong, good ball carrier and hard tackler

The experience in the previous three editions is an added advantage to Wokorach.

EXPECTATIONS: "I have high expectations of the team and I trust we shall perform exceptionally well. We want to continue with victory but if that fails, then the semi-final or at worst quarterfinal stage would be good for us."



IAN MUNYANI **2**

ASSISTANT CAPTAIN

Age: 29 years
Position: Backs
Debut: 2014

Munyani is an experienced player who boasts of good ball carrying skills. He is a good tackler, has a good command and excellent leadership skills.

EXPECTATIONS: "We want to continue our winning form, but if we settle for the knockout stages, especially the quarterfinals, it will be good enough to motivate us ahead of the August World Sevens qualifiers in Chile."



CLAUDE OTEMA **3**

Age: 22 years
Club: Heathens
Debut: 2018 Rugby Cranes 7s Academy, later 2021: Safari 7s Nairobi

He is aggressive, focused and a team player. He has enough experience to match the world standards. "I know there is no celebration better than when we win. It will be tough to win but we will be grateful if we make it to the knockout stage. Yes, winning the tournament is another difficult thing. We just need to believe in ourselves but if the worst comes to the worst, the knockout stages will be okay for us."



ISAAC MASSANGANZIRA **4**

Age: 26 years.
Club: Stanbic Black Pirates
Debut: 2018
Position: Hooker

With his speed and strong passes, Massa plays a much supportive role on the team on the pitch.

EXPECTATIONS: "Winning gold is everyone's dream on our team. We did it by qualifying for both Commonwealth Games and World Cup while unbeaten and that is what we will try to do in Birmingham." However, Massa believes that finishing in a top eight position would be a great improvement considering the past results.



RUGBY

PLAYER PROFILES

6

The number of players that will return for the edition in Birmingham out of the 12 players that represented Uganda in Gold Coast. These include Timothy Kisiga, Desire Ayera, Philip Wokorach, Michael Wokorach (Captain), Aaron Ofoywoth, and Adrian Kasito.


12

The position Uganda finished at in the 2018 Games in Australia (Gold Coast).



PHILIP WOKORACH **5**

Age: 29 years
Position: Backs
Debut: 2014

He is one of the strong-hearted players on the team. A fast player and one of the most experienced. Wokorach brings professionalism and experience to the team, having played in Europe.

EXPECTATIONS: "We have done it at the continental level thrice, and head to Birmingham to emulate those results."



AARON OFOYWROTH **6**

Age: 25 years
Position: Backs
Debut: 2016

He has been a regular on the team since 2016 and only missed the Monaco 7s. Ofoywoth, popularly known as double black, was the most performing player in the qualifiers. His dream has always been to play professional rugby and he will use that as motivation to play harder. However, he will be grateful if they got into the knockout stages most especially the semi-final or final.



ADRIAN KASITO **7**

Age: 27 years.
Club: Kobs
Debut: Africa 7s 2016 in Nairobi
Position: Backs

He is a fast player, with an eye for tries. With the slogan, "It is not the size of the dog, but the fight that matters", indeed Kasito is a one small man in size but with a big heart.

EXPECTATIONS: Kasito targets playing in the final of the Commonwealth Games, but to feature at any knockout stage of the tournament would be good.

48 / GAMES GUIDE 2022



NORBERT OKENY **8**

Age: 24 years.
Club: Heathens
Position: Backs

He debuted in the 2019 Safari 7s and has featured in two challenge Series in Dubai and the World Cup and Commonwealth Games qualifiers. He is a strong and hard-tackling player.

EXPECTATIONS: "In the previous Commonwealth Games, we finished 12th but qualifying for the knockout stages would be a good achievement and that is my expectation."



RUGBY

PLAYER PROFILES



**DESIRE
AYERA**

9

Age: 23 years
Position: Forward
Club: Stanbic Black Pirates
Debut: 2017 October-fest in Germany.

Ayera is a fast, hard-tackling and a team player. He is one of the experienced players on the team and was part of it in the 2018 edition in Gold Coast. Like any other player, winning the tournament is a dream come true. However, realistically, Ayera believes that finishing in the top eight, preferably in the semi-finals or quarters, will be good enough.



**TIMOTHY
KISIGA**

10

Age: 25 years
Club: Stanbic Black Pirates
Debut: Hong Kong 2017
Nickname: Mukodo
Cups in 7s: 12
Position: Centre/ Flyhalf
Strength: Ball handling, passing, and speed.

Kisiga is a fast and hard-tackling player despite his small size. He returns to the Commonwealth Games a more experienced player. He has been part of the 2018 team and was part of the qualifiers. Kisiga eyes playing a final, but at worst, making it to the knockout stages and settling for the top eight positions will be a dream come true.



**KARIM
ARINAITWE**

11

Age: 23 years
Position: Backs
Club: Kobs
Debut: Safari 2021.
Strength: A young talented and future player.

EXPECTATIONS: "Winning the tournament, but also as a person, I want to give my best so that I can be regular on the team for the remaining campaigns."



**ALEX
ATURINDA**

12

Age: 25 years
Position: Hooker /prop
Debut: Rookie
Strength: He is a hard tackler, good ball carrier and perfect 'step-in' for the forwards.

EXPECTATION: "To play in the knockout stages would be a dream come true, most especially the semi-finals. Finishing 8th would be a good motivation for us."



**WILLIAM
AMPEIRE NKORE**

13

Club: Stanbic Black Pirates
Position: Back
Debut: 2020 Challenger series.
Strength: He has very good-game awareness, good ball handling and is good at counterattacking. He is also a good team player with excellent leadership skills to command his teammate in the absence of the team captain.

EXPECTATION: He would be very grateful to play in the final, but getting to the knockout stages will be a good achievement for the team and good motivation ahead of the challenger series.



SWIMMING



**MICHAEL
NSUBUGA,
WRITER**

Olympian Kirabo for the second time won a heat at a World Championship event when she clocked 26.26 in the 50m freestyle to win heat 6.

LOOKING TO SET NEW RECORDS

After their dazzling display at the International Swimming Federation (FINA) World Swimming Championships in Budapest, all eyes will again be on siblings Kirabo Namutebi and Tendo Mukalazi, and most especially on whether they can set new records and personal bests from their events.

It is not very long since the duo returned from a FINA training camp in Russia. The tricks they picked from the training there will be called into play at the Sandwell Aquatics Centre.

Already there is a new national record for the 50m breaststroke (30.03) set by Mukalazi in Budapest. This and others he set at the African Championships, including the 50m freestyle (23.87), 50m backstroke (28.41) and the 100m freestyle (53.18), will be some of the records to rewrite in Birmingham. He also had a 24.58 in the 50m freestyle in Hungary.

Olympian Kirabo for the second

time won a heat at a World Championship event when she clocked 26.26 in the 50m freestyle to win heat 6, but finished 36th out of 82 participants overall.

Kirabo has a number of national records set at the FINA Swimming World Cup in Russia 2021 including in the 50m freestyle (25.84), 50m breaststroke (33.25), 50m butterfly (29.23) and 100m freestyle (01:00.21). She made 26.63 in Tokyo where she made her Olympic debut.

The other female swimmer Avice Meya also warmed up for the games with a 1:03.16 in the 100m freestyle and a 32.94 (50m back) in Budapest.

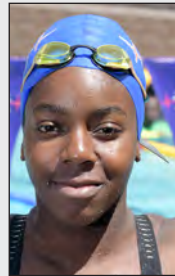
Olympian Atuhaire Ambala is the other Uganda swimmer at the games who will also be looking to better his time. He clocked 54.23 to finish 7th out of eight swimmers in one of the 100m freestyle heats at the Tokyo Aquatics Centre. The 20-year-old's time was 34 micro seconds short of the national record that stands at 53.89 over the distance; but it was an improvement on his 2021 season's best of 54.93, by 70 microseconds.



TENDO MUKALAZI

Event: 50m+100m freestyle
Personal best: 50m breaststroke (30.03) FINA World Championships
Season best: 50m Freestyle (26.45) CANA Zone IV 2022 Zambia

Mukalazi is a beneficiary of a FINA training camp in Russia last year. He participated in the FINA World Championships in Gwangju South Korea in 2019 and broke the national records for both the 50m backstroke and 50 breast stroke.



KIRABO NAMUTEBI

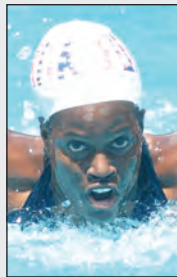
Event: 50m back+100m freestyle
Personal best: 50m freestyle (25.84)
Season best: 24.58 in the 50 freestyle in Hungary

A beneficiary of a one-year FINA training camp in Russia, On her Olympic debut in Tokyo, she clocked 26.63 in the 50m freestyle race. She holds over seven national records over several distances including in the 50m Freestyle (26.45) set at the CANA Zone IV 2022 in Zambia.

AVICE MEYA

Event: 50m+100m freestyle
Personal best: 32.94 (50m back)
Season best: 1:03.16 in the 100m freestyle, Budapest

Meya is one of Uganda's 'senior swimmers' and holds several records over the long distances including a 3:20.09 in the 200m breaststroke. This will be her second time at the Commonwealth Games having been part of Uganda in the 2018 Gold Coast. She clocked 29.09 in the 50m freestyle and 32.50 in the butterfly events in Australia and also made her debut at the 2019 Fina World Championship where she made 29.55 in the 50m freestyle and 1:19.69 in the 100m butterfly races.



AMBALA ATUHAIRE

Event: 100m breast
Personal best: 54.23 in the 100m freestyle

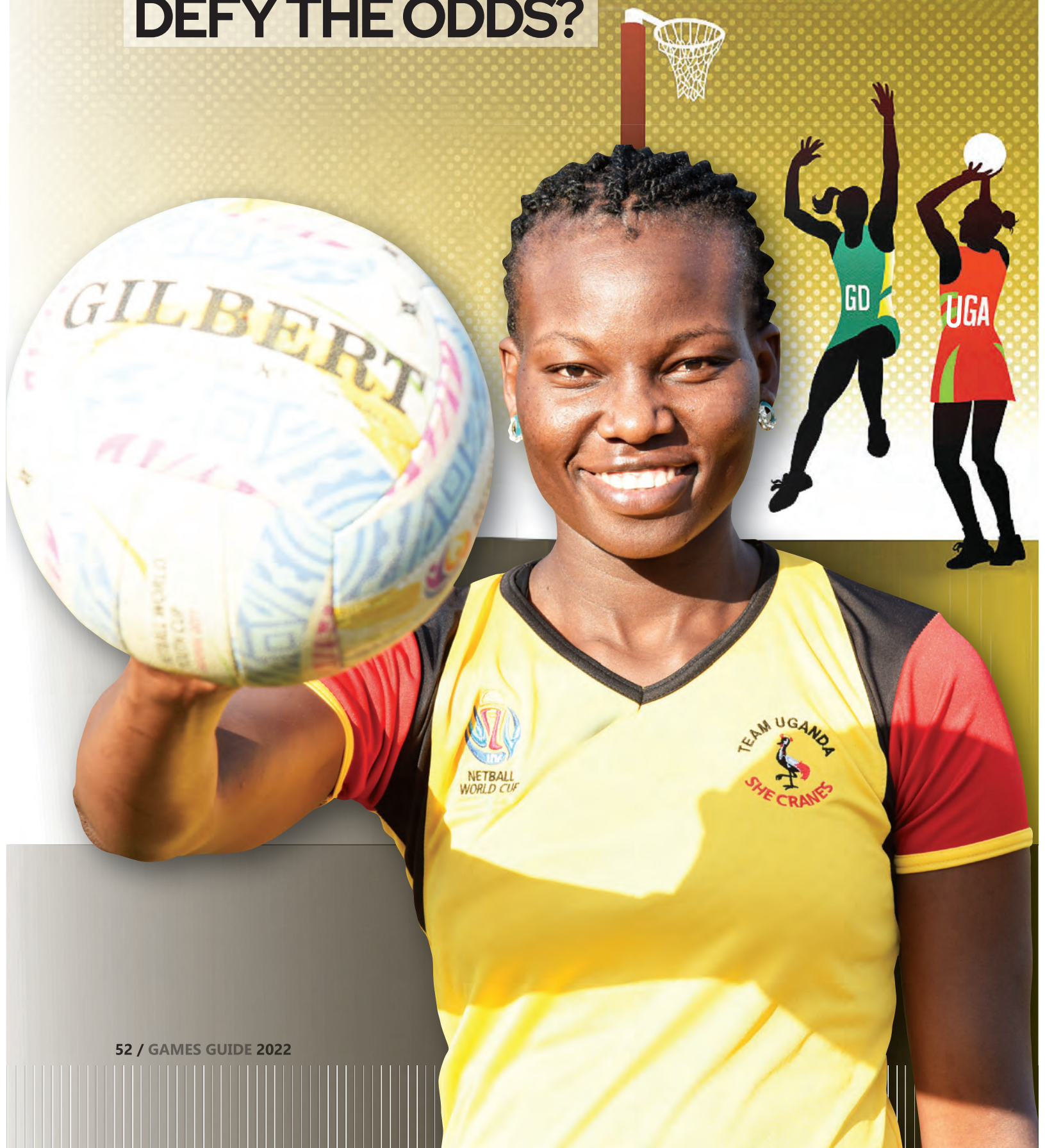
Ambala is another Ugandan swimmer on the rise. The Olympian competed in the 100m freestyle event in Tokyo where he clocked 54.23. He also represented Uganda at the 2019 World Aquatics Championships in Gwangju. Earlier he had competed in several events in the 2018 African Swimming Championship in Algiers.



THE GOVERNMENT HAS ALLOCATED
 SH185M TO SWIMMING

PATRICK OGWEL, GENERAL SECRETARY, NCS

CAN SHE CRANES DEFY THE ODDS?





**FAITH KIAI,
WRITER**

The She Cranes finished sixth at the Commonwealth games in the Gold Coast in Australia but this time the aim is to improve on that performance. This team is without a good number of the players from the 2018 games but this gives a chance to the new players to soar. Under the guidance of captain Peace Proscovia this will be the first time many of these players will take part in a championship this big. Proscovia, Stella Oyella and Joan Nampungu are the remnants of the 2018 squad, which means they will not only act as leaders but guides to the new players. The Commonwealth Games offer an opportunity for the team to improve their ranking and with 2023 a year away, intentionality has to start now.

Uganda is currently ranked sixth in the world and they stand to gain a lot if they can set a cat among the pigeons with a victory against the higher ranked nations.

Uganda is ranked in Group B alongside hosts England, Newzealand, Malawi, Trinidad and Tobago and Northern Ireland. Unlike in the World Cup where there is wiggle room, the Commonwealth Games do not offer that because only the best two nations advance to the semifinals.

New Zealand and England look impossible to beat but the squad has changed a lot so they may offer a different challenge to the two teams.

Uganda can probably fancy their opportunities against Northern Ireland and Trinidad and Tobago but Malawi is a different ballgame if Mwai Kumwenda and Joyce Mvula are available.

The difference on our end is that Peace Proscovia and Mary Nuba are used to the more modern style of play so they will make life complicated for any defence.

The success story of this team will also lie in the fact that Fred Mugerwa has the opportunity to take the team through a major championship after missing his opportunity in 2015.

WORLD NETBALL RANKINGS - TOP 7

RANK	COUNTRY	PLAYED	WEIGHT	POINTS
1	Australia	30	19	3,698
2	New Zealand	37	24	4,553
3	England	40	25	4,556
4	Jamaica	23	15	2,638
5	South Africa	54	38	5,975
6	Uganda	42	31	3,951
7	Malawi	39	28	3,430



**NETBALL
COACH,
FRED
MUGERWA**



**PEACE PROSCOVIA (CAPTAIN)**

Age: 32 years
Club: Surrey Storm
Position: GS

She is the most talented of the goal shooters in the country. She brings experience, class and a competitive edge to the team. Her leadership has never been in doubt and it is clearly one of the reasons why Uganda excels every time she is around. Proscovia has a lot of experience playing in England, the Suncorp Super Netball in Australia, the Sunshine Coast Lightning and currently she plays for Surrey Storm in the Vitality Netball Superleague.

**MARY NUBA**

Age: 25 years
Club: Loughborough Lightning
Position: GS

Mary is one of the best goal shooters in the Vitality Netball Super League. Even though she had injuries throughout the season, she still managed to finish in the top five of the scoring charts. At 6ft7 inches, she towers over most defences. Her height alone is a cheat code that the national team could use against some of the bigger nations. She has grown by leaps and bounds. She has morphed into one of the most fierce goal shooters for both club and country.

**NORAH LUNKUSE**

Age: 24 years
Club: KCCA
Position: WA/C

She is a growing spark in the national team. She joined KCCA in 2019 and has been in the national team since 2021. She is among the new brand of players to make it into the senior ranks in the team and can play in many midcourt positions. Lunkuse will be learning on the job because this is just her second big tournament. The good thing is she takes advice well. She will have her little sister in the team (Margaret Baagala) so she will be motivated.

**MARGARET BAAGALA**

Age: 20 years
Position: CENTRE/ WA

She was the biggest discovery in the Super League Division 1 last season. Her speed, vision and passing ability makes her one of the players to watch and was deservedly voted best centre player last season. She transitions the ball so well from defence to attack which will be a serious asset at the games. Her positional sense puts her in many scuffles but she remains focused and is slow to anger for a young player.

**IRENE EYARU**

Age: 25 years
Club: KCCA
Position: GA/GS

If you are looking for reliability, Eyaru is your woman. She has been in the national team set up for years but will finally get her chance at her first Commonwealth Games. As a goal attack she is very fit, has accuracy and can be paired with anyone in attack. She is very selfless on court and will try to work hard for the team both with and without the ball. When called upon she will do her best.

**HANISHA MUHAMEED**

Age: 21 years
Club: KCCA
Position: GS

At 6ft2 Muhameed has a lot to offer the national team. She is a handy goal shooter who towers over many domestically but she is still a work in progress. This championship promises a lot for Muhameed especially when it comes to exposure to bigger and better competition. Although she is an out and out shooter, she can be deployed as a stand in goal keeper simply because of her physical attributes. The games will indicate if the coaches are brave and ready to take her on.

**SANDRA NAMBIRIGE**

Age: 20 years
Club: KCCA
Position: GD/ WD

Nambirige is a young, tenacious and exuberant defensive player. She always has an eye for intercepting balls. That may at times get her in foul trouble but she makes up for it with her success rate. She has a high growth ceiling by virtue of the fact that she is a raw talent. She is very unassuming and does not act as a know-it-all, if her energy is channeled well, there is no saying how far she can go. All she needs to do is keep a calm head and the rest will be easy.

**ALICE WASAGALI**

Age: 30 years
Club: Prisons
Position: WA/ Centre

Wasagali is a versatile player with agility. For a tall midcourt player, she has perfected the art of playing in tight spaces and can be handy when it comes to getting turnovers. She will add much-needed height in the midcourt especially when Uganda faces off against countries with a bigger size advantage. As a multisport athlete (basketball and netball), she can match up physically against any team not forgetting her contributions towards the team from an attacking perspective.

**SHAFFIE NALWANJA**

Age: 31 years
Club: Prisons
Position: Centre /WA/WD

Nalwanja is very dynamic in defence and her ability to play in almost any defensive position makes her an asset on the team. She has become the main woman for club and country and she was able to take advantage of the gap in the goalkeeping department to cement her own place. She is a departure away from the traditional goal keepers Uganda has employed before. She is more explosive on her feet and moves quickly, a trait that will come in handy because of her smaller frame in the department.

**JESCA ACHAN**

Age: 31 years
Club: Prisons
Position: Center/WA/WD

Achan is arguably the most battle-ready and hardened player on the team. She is more of a go-getter in all aspects of her game. She does not back down from a challenge and will always look for a way to beat any opponent. Her tenacity and competitive nature are a bonus to the team and is one of the remnants of the 2019 World Cup squad. Her experience in the midcourt will come in handy considering this will be the first time many in the squad have played outside the continent.

**SHADIA NASSANGA**

Age: 21 years
Club: KCCA
Position: GA/GS

She is a young player with great ability to shoot from long range. She likes to take on opponents and will be experiencing first class opponents in real time. Her better gift is refusal to be flustered in stressful situations. She will play in a position that has been made iconic by Rachel Nanyonga. Her role will be supportive but her fighting spirit will come in handy.

**JOAN NAMPUNGU (VICE CAPTAIN)**

Age: 23 years
Club: NIC
Position: GD/GK/WD

Nampungu is a player who leads by example. She is by far one of the best defensive specialists in the country. No opponent is too big for her and in one way or the other she always finds a way. Her game-reading is head and shoulders above the rest which makes her a great addition to any team. Like many young players Nampungu wants to make it into the professional ranks. Her maturity and discipline have propelled her to vice captaincy, a role she has fully embraced.

Transforming Youth and Sports in Uganda...



Badminton



Table Tennis MUTAZ OPEN

GO AND MAKE US PROUD!

WOMEN TEAM FOR TABLE TENNIS

Only women will represent Uganda in table tennis at the 2022 Birmingham Games.

Uganda's men did not get the opportunity to participate in international engagements, among other reasons. The Ugandan team of Florence Seera, Parvin Nangonzi, Ritah Nakhumisa and Jemimah Nakawala participated in the India Commonwealth Games qualifiers in February this year, the African championships in Cameroon in April, where they won a bronze medal, not to mention the East African Championships in Ethiopia.

These international engagements enabled the team to climb to 13th in the Commonwealth rankings and ninth in Africa. Robert Nyaika and Halima Nambozo represented Uganda at the 2018 edition, with both dropping out of the first round.

SEERA FLORENCE

Age: 25
Club: Mbale Tigers TT Club

I started at 12 years in Mbale schools and have enjoyed scholarships throughout my studies at university.

I have won many tournaments both local and international. I am going to the Commonwealth Games for the first time and this is the biggest assignment.

I am all out to make the country proud and looking forward to a podium finish.



PARVIN NANGONZI

Age: 14 years
Club: Nakasero Table Tennis Club

I am happy to be in the Commonwealth Games at my age. I will learn many things.

I have won many events in Uganda and Kenya, most of which have been courtesy of my club.

RITA NAKHUMITSA

Age: 23 years
Club: Mbale Tigers

I started playing table tennis in P4 and I am among those who have grown into the game. I am now in the third year pursuing a bachelor of procurement and logistics degree at UCU in Mukono and I also play in the university team.

My ambition in the Commonwealth Games is to push Uganda from the 13th position to 8th out of the 54 countries in the club games.



JEMIMAR NAKAWALA

Age: 12 years
Club: Nakasero TT Club.

I just picked interest in the game after seeing them playing. I was greatly supported by my father.



BADMINTON COUNT ON LADY LUCK



Just as was the case with the 2010 New Delhi Commonwealth Games, Uganda will be represented by eight badminton players.

The team has four men and four women.

The players and Uganda Badminton Association (UBA) are all positive and think they have had enough training to put up a spirited challenge at the Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games.

The team has Captain Daniel Wanagalia, Brian Kasirye, Friday Atama and Kenneth Mwambu for the men while Husina Kobugabe, Fadilah Shamika, Tracy Naluwoza and Sharifah Wanyana make up the women's team.

Team Uganda hopes to make a mark in Birmingham especially in the team and double events according to the coach William Kabindi.

"The motivation comes from their



**SILVANO
KIBUUKA, WRITER**

performance in the Africa Senior Championships where the women won a silver medal as the men got a bronze in the team events. We have got the longest training period to prepare for the club games.

We have also had good exposure as some of the players

have been at the Africa University Championships in Kenya while Kasirye and Shamika have had training on scholarship from the Badminton World Federation (BWF) and the Badminton Confederation of Africa (BCA)," noted coach Kabindi

Kasirye, currently the continental seed one feels his progress will depend on how he will be seeded.

"If you are seeded with one of the top seeds, surely you cannot go far in the single and team events," Kasirye noted. In the team events, Uganda is grouped with Scotland, Canada and Malvid

where the best two will qualify to the round of 16.

Uganda started participating in badminton at the Melbourne Commonwealth Games in 2006 according to long serving coach and now the CEO of Uganda Badminton Association (UBA) Simon Mugabi. The Melbourne Games had two men Edwin Ekiring and Abraham Wogute while the women had Phiona Ssozi and Sandra Nabaweesei.

In 2010, four men Edwin Ekiring and Abraham Wogute, Wilson Tukire and Brian Suuna and four women Shamim Bangi, Daisy Nakalyango, Gloria Najjuka and Mega Nankabirwa represented Uganda.

Glasgow 2014 had two men, Ekiring and Wilson Tukire with two women, Margaret Nankabirwa and Aisha Nakiyemba.

The 2018 Gold Coast Games had Nakiyemba and Bangi making up the women's team while Ekiring and Brian Kasirye combined to make up the men's team.



WILLIAM KABINDI
Team coach

Like the 2010 New Delhi Commonwealth Games, Uganda will be represented by eight badminton players: namely Daniel Wanagalia, Brian Kasirye, Friday Atama, Kenneth Mwambu among the men and Husina Kobugabe, Fadilah Shamika, Tracy Naluwoza and Sharifah Wanyana for the women.

Uganda coach William Kabindi is confident of success following encouraging signs in the build-up, particularly the performance on the continent.

"The motivation comes from their performance in the Africa Senior Championships where the women won a silver medal as the men got a bronze in the team events," said Kabindi.

The coach's confidence is further bolstered by what he describes as the "longest training period" in the lead-up to the Commonwealth Games.



DANIEL WANAGALIA

(Team Captain)

Age: 23 years.

Club: CFK Badminton Academy.

I am happy to be at the Commonwealth Games for the first time. I shall use all my energy, experience and tactics to push the team into the medal brackets. I started the game at the age of 8 years old, courtesy of my mother Grace Auma who introduced me to the game.

I have been training for five hours a day, which has assisted to up my game.



KENNETH MWAMBU

Age: 22 years

Club: Mbogo Warriors.

I will use my hand skills and speed to be aggressive to hunt for points at the Commonwealth Games where I am appearing for the first time.

My first dream was joining the national team, play in the continental championships that I have done twice and I am part of the team that won a bronze medal this year at Lugogo Indoor Arena. I am now going for the Commonwealth Games and still vying for the Olympics. I want to be among the top 50 players in the world.



BRIAN KASIRYE

Age: 22 Years

Club: Sharing Youth Centre Nsambya.

Experience is my tool.

I started the game in 2013 when my sisters switched me from table tennis and started representing Uganda in 2016. I first went for the 2018 Gold Coast Commonwealth Games and reached the best 18 players, only to fail making it to the quarter finals.

With that experience he will build on the previous achievement of winning a silver medal in the Africa Seniors Championship in April in Uganda.

I have also had training from scholarships from Badminton International, the continental body this year, which has also pushed up my game.



FRIDAY ATAMA

Age: 22 years

Club: Uganda Christian University (UCU).

I was a former footballer at school but shifted to badminton after a knee injury. Aggressiveness, agility and confidence are my tools on the court.

This is my first time to be on the Commonwealth court. I hope to register the best.

Edwin Ekiring is my model.



CITY TYRES

**HUSINA KOBUGABE**

(Captain women)

Age: 21 years

Club: Ndejje University

I am a third- year student at Ndejje University. I am looking to be more explosive on the court once in Birmingham. I am now training for power, consistency and persistence. I will be using the confidence I had when we won a silver medal at the All-Africa championships in Kampala in April this year, the gold medal I won in the singles in the recently concluded African University Championships in Kenya in June in both the single and double events.

**SHARIFAH WANYANA**

Age: 21 years

Club: Ndejje University.

I started the game at Mbogo High School, inspired by the coach William Kabindi. It was just a choice as badminton was popular at school. Many Ugandans did not trust us at the All- Africa Senior Championships but we won a silver medal. I have improved on my power and skills on the court. Working out in the gym has improved our power. The camp has improved all of us and I know we shall go far in the doubles and team events.

**FADILAH SHAMIKA**

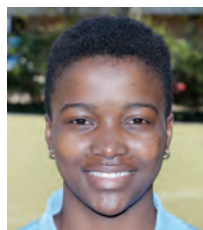
Age: 17 years

School: S4 student at Rubaga Girls.

Achievements – Bronze at All Africa Championships.

I am inspired by my dad, Mohammed Rafi. I have played badminton for six years now and I am now seed number 2 in the U-18 years.

The long preparation and scholarship in Dubai have lifted my game and I hope to explode in the Commonwealth Games, where I am appearing for the first time.

**TRACY NALUWOOZA**

Age: 16 years

Club: Mbogo Warriors Club.

I have experienced the international stage before when I was in the World Junior Championships twice. I was in Canada and Russia in 2018 and 2019 respectively.

I am an all-round player with the strength I have on court that gives me the upper hand in attacking. I am looking for more exposure to perfect my talent that I started training at seven years.



WRESTLING

MAKING HISTORY

Finally an appearance in the Commonwealth Games for Uganda!

After participating in the world and continental championships for years, Uganda will rewrite sporting history when wrestlers Jacob Ntuyo and Veronica Ayo compete in the 2022 Commonwealth Games.

This might have been the result of an open invitation from the International Wrestling Federation (IWF) but it still counts as a special opportunity for Ntuyo and Ayo.

Ntuyo, is a former weightlifter who turned a wrestler participated in Saudi Arabia, Nigeria in 2017 and the last competition was in Kazakhstan in 2019.

On the other hand, Ayo is a newcomer to the sport and will be making her debut on the international stage. The hope is her skill in taekwondo should come in handy.

Due to a lack of resources, the two wrestlers missed the Africa Championships in May, which would have massively aided their build-up for the Commonwealth Games.

VERONIKA AYO

Age: 27 years
Competition category: 57kg
Club: Kisugu Unified Club

I am a new to wrestling as I joined just a year ago with Kisugu Unified Club. My biggest challenge so far has been the lack of competitors and training partners. My technique was partly developed from playing taekwondo as my first sport. This is my first time to wrestle at such a big stage but I am ready to showcase my skills.



JACOB NTUYO

Age: 27 years
Club: Jinja Black Monster
Weight category: 74kg

I started out as a weightlifter but switched to wrestling. I first stepped onto an international mat in 2012 at the Africa Youth Championships in Morocco.

The lack of competition and funds has hindered the growth of the game for many years but I am happy we are back on board.

Experience and love of the game are my strongest points. My target at the Commonwealth Games is to win at least a bronze medal, which would inspire more athletes to join the sport.



THE BOXERS



FRED
KISEKKA

Uganda will field six elite national team boxers for the Commonwealth Games in Birmingham.

Of the six boxers, five make up the men's team with flyweight Teddy Nakimuli destined to make history as Uganda's first female pugilist to participate in the Commonwealth Games.

In the build-up to the Games, the Bombers travelled to Tanzania for the Zone 3 Africa championship dubbed the 2022 Mount Kilimanjaro International Boxing Championship, where they plundered six medals.

SUMMARY OF UGANDA'S MEDAL COLLECTION IN TANZANIA

1. Joshua Tukamuhebwa won gold after defeating Emmanuel Katema (Zambia) by RSC round 3
2. Yusuf Nkobeza won gold after defeating Kevin Kipinge (Tanzania) by RSC round 2
3. Jonah Kyobe won gold after defeating Emmanuel Marwa (Tanzania)
4. Owen Kibira settled for silver after losing 2:1 against Shaft Mandwe (Zambia)
5. Teddy Nakimuli claimed silver after losing her final bout to Magreth Itembo (Zambia)
6. Isaac Zebra Ssenyange clinched bronze after losing the semifinals bout against Kassim Mbudwikr (Tanzania) in a 2-1 split decision.



**TEDDY NAKIMULI
(FLYWEIGHT)**

The 20-year-old, a member of the University of Pain Boxing Club, is ready to announce her arrival on the international stage.

Nakimuli made her mark when she was named the best youth female boxer at the 2019 National Open boxing championship after clinching gold in the flyweight category.

In 2020, Nakimuli fell in the pecking order after losing 3-2 to her role model Catherine Nanziri during the national team eliminations ahead of the Africa Olympic boxing qualifiers in Dakar, Senegal.

She, however, bounced back, defeating her seniors including rival Jalia Nali of Lukanga boxing club, Police boxing club's Sarah Nantongo, Flavia Auma of Zebra boxing club before booking her ticket to Birmingham.

Trained by vocal coach Addes Sero, brother to Mayweather promotions-based Conelius Edward Boza, one of the five Ugandans to win world boxing titles, Nakimuli can't wait to fight in Birmingham.

**JONAH KYOBE
(FEATHERWEIGHT)**

Another debutant on the Bombers team.

Over the years, Kyobe has lived in the shadow of Isaac Masembe, the 2019 Africa games silver medalist.

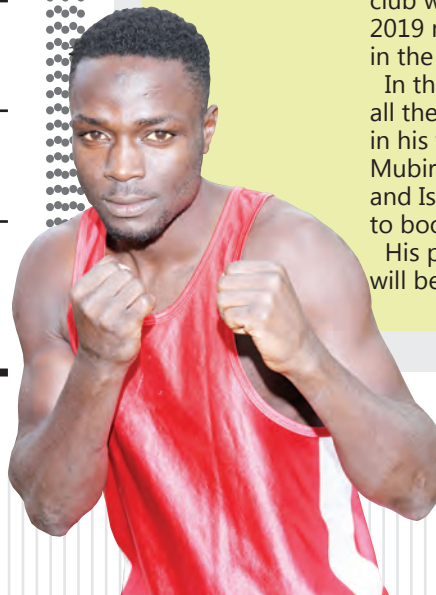
Masembe's decision to boycott signing for the Uganda Boxing Federation (UBF) Champions League paved way for Kyobe's selection to this year's Commonwealth Games.

The Champions League was UBF's solitary qualifier for the games.

Kyobe who features for Lukanga boxing club won gold at youth level during the 2019 national open boxing championship in the welterweight category.

In the Champions League, Kyobe defied all the odds, defeating his opponents in his weight such as COBAP's Derrick Mubiru, Zebra boxing club's Marvin Ssali and Isaac Kamoga of Sparks' boxing club to book his way to Birmingham.

His powerful punches and confidence will be key if he is to register success at



**JOSHUA TUKAMUHEBWA
(LIGHT WELTERWEIGHT)**

He is the most experienced in the Bombers bound team to Birmingham granting him the armband as the new bomber's captain.

Tukamuhebwa bowed out at the quarter stage of the 2019 Morocco Africa Games after suffering a 5-0 unanimous decision loss to Mauritius' Richarno Colin.

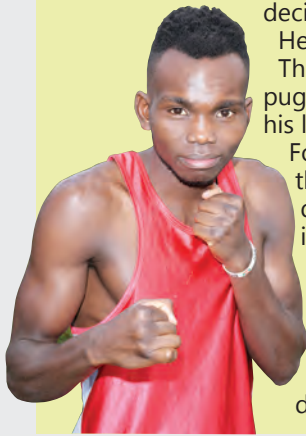
He is Uganda's biggest medal hope.

The southpaw East Coast boxing club pugilist has registered six knock outs in his last seven bouts.

Four of them (knockouts) came in the Champions league with the rest during last year's national team trials in Lugogo.

No wonder, Tukamuhebwa is nicknamed the hard puncher.

In Tanzania, Tukamuhebwa stunned Joseph Jones 3-0 of Tanzania and Zanzibar's Alex Isendi in a 3-1 split decision.

**OWEN KIBIRA
(WELTERWEIGHT)**

The 21-year-old pugilist who represents Lukanga boxing club, has a lot to prove.

He is expected to fill the void left by Olympian Shadir Musa Bwogi who represented Uganda in the same weight at the previous games held in Gold Coast, Australia.

Kibira's presence in the team surprised many considering that his only achievements include winning gold and silver at the 2017 and 2019 national schools boxing championships respectively before finishing at the quarter final stage of the 2019 national novices boxing championship.

In the Champions league, Kibira has outclassed all his opponents defeating rival Ukasha Matovu of Luby boxing club, Umar Nvule, and Simon Ssande.

In Tanzania, Kibira stopped his first two opponents of Tanzania prison Shaban Hamadi and Francis Sabura winning them by RSC (referee stops contest).

**ISAAC SSENYANGE JR
(LIGHT MIDDLEWEIGHT)**

The saying that history repeats itself fits Isaac Ssenyange Junior's story to this year's Commonwealth Games.

For starters his late dad Zebra 'Mando' Ssenyange was part of Uganda's 2002 Commonwealth Games team in England, the same country that hosts this year's games.

Secondly, Ssenyange Jr will be competing in the light middleweight category same way it was with the late Zebra at the 2002 games.

Since the passing of his father in December 2020, Ssenyange Jr who represents his late father's club Zebra boxing club, has publicly vowed to keep Zebra's legacy alive.

Although the odds favored UPDF's John Owino in the Champions league, the fearless Ssenyange Jr, a 2019 youth gold medalist at national open boxing championship, has since proved his worth as one of Uganda's medal hopes. In Tanzania, he registered two wins –defeating Burundi's Nestroy Nduwarugira 3-1 before securing a walkover after Tanzanian Yusuf Ali failed to show up.

**YUSUF NKOBEZA
(MIDDLEWEIGHT)**

Nakawa boxing club's Yusuf Nkobeza is regarded as the next big prospect in Uganda boxing.

The 2016 Cadets national boxing silver medalist is one of the exciting prospects to watch in Birmingham.

His powerful punches have seen him match established fighters such as Olympians Bwogi and David Ssemujju in the last three years.

Nkobeza is also a 2017 gold medalist at national Intermediates.

His path to the Commonwealth Games saw him defeat Gulu boxing club's Ronald Okello, Rashid Yiga and Denis Okello respectively.

His debut in Tanzania saw him defeat Tanzania's JKT club Francis Marko by RSC.



WEIGHTLIFTING

WHO'S WHO?

Since making its debut in the Commonwealth Games in 1998, Ugandan weightlifting has not missed an edition.

And the trend lives on in Birmingham, where Davis Niyoyita, Godfrey Baligeya and Mubarak Kivumbi will lead Uganda's hopes in the sport. Baligeya (105kg) is the most experienced on the team, having been at the 2010 Delhi Games. Uganda had just one more weightlifter at the last edition with Hakim Ssemperera, who finished 9th in the 69kg category the best performer.

Positions rather than medals have been all that weightlifting has achieved up to this point and it is not fair to expect a change on this occasion.

GODFREY BALIGEYA

Age: 44 years
Weight Category: 109+
Club: Jinja Black Monster

I participated in the 2010 Delhi Commonwealth Games and finished 8th out of the 16 participants in my weight category.

I was then in the 77kg category. My biggest achievement in the sport was winning a silver medal in the 2012 World Championships in Moscow.

I had left the sport but came back in 2020 because of my passion for the game.

I have trained well for the Commonwealth Games and coupled with my experience and knowledge of some of the competitors, I am looking at finishing on the podium.



DAVIS NIYOYITA

Age: 22 years
Competition category: 55kg
Club: Kisugu Unified

I am participating in the Commonwealth games for the first time. I am confident to be a podium finisher because of the way I qualified for the games. I won a silver medal in the world championships in December 2021 in Tashkent and that gives me the gauge on the forthcoming games. I have also had good and consistent training and am ready to represent the country.



MUBARAK KIVUMBI

Age: 35
Weight Category: 61kg
Club: Kasubi Physique

I took part at the 2006 Melbourne Commonwealth Games and did not deliver well due to the lack of experience then. Despite being a trained coach, I have not abandoned competing as a player. As a result, I performed well in the continental championships in Nairobi in 2020 and the world championships in Tashkent last year, which helped me qualify for Birmingham.



SQUASH

CHANGING STRATEGY

The Uganda Squash Rackets Association has religiously sent competitors to the Commonwealth Games and it will not be different at the 2022 Birmingham Games as two of the most experienced players Michael Kawooya and Ian Rukunya go for their fourth Commonwealth Games respectively.

Apart from the experience they gain from the different outings, their performance in the singles and doubles events has not been up to scratch, the reason they have decided to change strategy for this year's Games which might be the last for each one of them, before they fully take to coaching.

Kawooya and most recently Rukunya and Paul Kadoma, who might step in as coach, have been the face of the sport in the country with many local and regional titles to their names, and despite slowly ageing out, remain the best in the craft.

At the 2018 Gold Coast, Australia Games, it was Kawooya, 38, and Rukunya, 34, that carried the Ugandan flag but both could not go past the Round of 32 despite winning their Round of 64 matches against Papua New Guinea's Madako Suari and Fiji's Henry Stephen respectively with uniform 3-0 victories.

Kawooya's best outing at the Games was at the Glasgow 2014 games, where he managed 3 wins in the men's singles round of 128; and in the men's plate rounds of 64 and 32 respectively. But since then, Ugandans have never gone past the first round in the games.

In 2018, Kadoma went to Australia as the coach but will be making his third appearance in the Games, having paired with Kawooya in Glasgow where they finished 8th.



MICHAEL NSUBUGA, WRITER

PROFILES

MICHAEL KAWOoya

Seed: 3

Age: 38 years

Events: Men's singles & Men's Doubles
Best games outing: Won 3 games in the Glasgow 2014 games in Scotland

Kawooya has for decades been the face of squash in Uganda, representing the country in three previous Commonwealth Games among other international and regional championships. He is a four-time USPA squash Player of the Year Award winner. He is also the only certified squash coach in the country.



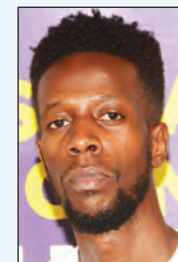
IAN RUKUNYA

Seed: 1

Age: 34 years

Events: Men's singles & Men's Doubles
Best games outing: Beat Fiji's Stephen Henry in the Round of 64 in Gold Coast, Australia.

Rukunya is a three-time winner of the USPA Squash Player of the Year Award (2016, 2018, 2019). He has represented Uganda at 3 Commonwealth Games in 2010, 2014 and 2018 and has a number of local and regional accolades to his name since starting out as an eight-year-old.



PAUL KADOMA

Seed: 2

Age: 35

Events: Men's singles & Men's Doubles
Best career moment: Winning the Parklands Open in Nairobi in 2017

He was an athlete and tried his hand at boxing before squash won him over. He has since gone on to win a number of local events as well as a few regional ones, especially the 2017 Parklands Open in Nairobi and the 2018 Nakuru Open.



CYCLING

THROUGH THE YEARS



**SILVANO
KIBUUKA,
WRITER**

Uganda has fielded cyclists since the 2010 Commonwealth Games. The Birmingham Commonwealth Federation (CWF) has offered Uganda two slots for a male and female cyclist. However, Uganda will send one rider Charles Kagimu, based in Germany to represent the country in Birmingham.

Kagimu, who has now joined professional cycling, was at the Gold Coast Australia Commonwealth Games for the first time alongside Hussein Sekkanga. Kagimu finished 20th out of the 200 athletes that competed.

The president of Uganda Cycling Association (UCA) Sam Muwonge Mahaba, is optimistic Uganda will perform better this time.

"We have been following all our athletes outside the county and Kagimu is doing well. He was outstanding in the continental championships in Egypt in 2021 and 2022," noted Muwonge.

The Delhi 2020 games have had the biggest number of Ugandan participants.

They included David Matovu, David Magezi, Achilles Katumba, George William Kisenyi and Marion Ayebale, a female participant. In Glasgow 2014, Uganda had Sebastian Kigongo and Leone Twaha.



CHARLES KAGSIMU.A

Age: 23 years
Club: Pro-Touch South Africa

He is currently training in Iten, Kenya. Kagimu started cycling with Super Cycling Club in Kawempe and was scouted by the late Robert Kiwendo in 2015. Has participated in the Rwanda Cup twice and Tour De Machakos in Kenya before joining Bike Aid in Germany in 2018. He was transferred to Pro-Touch South Africa in 2021 and has participated in Tour De Egypt in February this year. Was on team Uganda for the Gold Coast Commonwealth Games. Coach Ssakka Bukonya says they have much hope in the individual time trials.



SARAH NANYANZI

Age: 25 years
Club: Kyanja Cycling

She is number two on the table of Ugandan women cyclists. "I competed in Kenya and Tanzania in 2016 and 2017 respectively. I am looking to make a good mark at the Commonwealth Games especially if I get a good bike," she said after a last-minute call to join the team. Nyanzi last competed in the Umoja Championship in Fort Portal in March this year and finished second.



2 PARA ATHLETES

At the 2022 Commonwealth Games, Uganda will be represented by two para athletes; para swimmer Husnah Kukundakwe and para powerlifter Denis Mbaziira.

For the first time in history, Uganda will have a para swimmer at the Games.

Uganda Paralympic committee general Secretary Innocent Tumwesigye

explains that they had a goal of qualifying 14 athletes. However, the dream was shattered after a number of athletes failed to meet the qualification standards.

"GAPS had sponsored a number of athletes for training camps in Birmingham to make their qualification for the Games easy. It is a result of this campaign that Mbaziira was classified," Tumwesigye emphasised

Mbaziira will be competing in the 88kg category and is confident that the medal is already his.

"I am happy because my dream has come true. I have never competed in any international tournament but I was the one selected. I am coming back with a medal. I have trained very well. I received the best training using the best equipment," Mbaziira explained

Kukundakwe's mother Hashima Batamuriza, who doubles as her manager is overwhelmed.

"Achieving such a big milestone at a tender age shows that Husnah has a bright future. First, she was at the Paralympics and now at commonwealth Games. If the government continues funding her, she will be one of the best Para swimmers in the world.

Kukundakwe believes that with the exposure she got at the 2020 Tokyo Olympic Games, she is likely to improve her time.

"I am going into the Commonwealth Games knowing how it feels to compete with the best athletes in the world. I know I will be the best athlete one day," Kukundakwe said.

At the 2018 commonwealth Games held in Gold Coast Australia, Uganda did not field any para athletes.

Uganda had last qualified para athletes at the 2014 Glasgow Commonwealth Wealth Games. Paralifter Vaster Kyalimpa and discus thrower Ismail Mulumba made Uganda's team then.



**OLIVIA NAKATE,
WRITER**

PROFILES



HUSNAH KUKUNDAKWE

Age: 15

Discipline: 100m Freestyle

Husnah Kukundakwe is the most decorated para swimmer in Uganda, making her debut at the Commonwealth games. At 15 years, she is the youngest athlete on Team Uganda at the Commonwealth games. Kukundakwe whose main purpose is to inspire other para athletes improving her personal best will be her main target this year.

DENIS MBAZIIRA

Age: 36

Discipline: Para powerlifting
Weight: 88kg

At 36, Mbaziira will be making his debut at the 2022 Birmingham commonwealth games. Surprisingly Mbaziira has never represented the country at any international engagement. Being at such an international level, it is a dream come true for him.



Birmingham

Birmingham is eager to present its new face to the world when it hosts the 2022 Commonwealth Games July 28-August 8. "The Games are a platform for us to show the world what Birmingham and its people are about and what we can deliver," said Councillor Ian Ward, Leader of Birmingham City Council.

Birmingham was chosen to host the Commonwealth Games over Liverpool after Durban pulled out, but the Games will actually take place across the West Midlands. The venues being used for the Games stretch from Coventry, Solihull and Royal Leamington Spa to Cannock Chase Forest, Sutton Coldfield and Wolverhampton.

In recent years, many areas of the city have been redeveloped, removing much of the old architecture it was once famed for. The aquatics will be hosted at a new state of the art centre in Sandwell.

Since Birmingham won the right to host the Commonwealth Games in 2017, it has warmed up by holding the IAAF World Indoor Athletics Championships, Badminton Open Championships and Gymnastics.

The success it has enjoyed on all those occasions only bodes well for the Commonwealth Games, which will have over 5,000 competitors across 19 different sports disciplines.

Birmingham's Alexander Stadium in Perry Bar will be the centre of the action. It will host athletics events and Games opening and closing ceremonies. It has been reconstructed, with a new residential neighbourhood, redeveloped railway station and changes to major roads also made to create a legacy for Perry Bar.

Ward rightly explained that the biggest Games Birmingham has ever had to host will be "a huge economic booster for the wider region. In excess of a billion pounds will be generated as a result of these Games."

In addition to the world-class venues, event organisers will need 13,000 volunteers to help manage the event, which will be complemented with an Urban Festival that embraces youth and diversity with music, free running, skateboarding, BMX, street dance and sport climbing.

Over £750m in total is expected to be spent on organization, with the athletes' village due to be set up in Perry Bar. The early years of preparation for the 2022 Commonwealth Games were overshadowed by the COVID-19 pandemic, with doubts often expressed about whether the event would actually go ahead.

But the gloom has subsided and the Birmingham Games will become the first multisport event with fans since the outbreak of COVID-19. And the response has been high, with over a million tickets by January 2022.

BIRMINGHAM, ENGLAND



England (United Kingdom)



West Midlands



Rev Can Duncans Mugumya, Physical education commissioner



Ketty Lamaro, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Education and Sports

MORE THAN JUST SPORTS



HOPE AMPURIRE, WRITER

Uganda will be participating at four different major tournaments in the next four weeks. The World Athletics Championships (July 15-24, 2022), the Commonwealth Games (July 28-August 8, 2022), the World U20 championships (August 1-6, 2022) and the Islamic Solidarity Games (August 9-18, 2022).

For the World Athletics Championships, it is another opportunity for the likes of Joshua Cheptegei to do what he does best. To be specific, breaking records. Winning gold in the men's 10,000m at the 2019 IAAF World Championships in Doha made him a predictable winner in every tournament he participates in.

Another notable name among the ten athletes representing Uganda is Halimah Nakaayi who claimed gold in the women's 800m at the same event. Even though Nakaayi's recent performances have been on a slump, she is no athlete to undermine when it comes to such tracks.

The next event on schedule among the four most anticipated event among global events will be the 2022 Commonwealth Games that will take place in Birmingham, UK. Uganda will send over 80 athletes to this event. Its biggest contingent ever. This is the third biggest sports tournament in the world after the Olympics and FIFA World Cup and who does not want to be there.

Uganda's participation at these major events is a great way to increase brand visibility for our athletes and marketing tourism of the country. From a marketing standpoint, Uganda has never been in a better position to market her tourism using sports as a platform and secondly exposing our talent to all audiences.

More importantly for the millions of fans watching from stadiums, online, all the content will be shared by different media houses. Obviously, no one can quantify how worth these global events are to Uganda in terms of tourism or how can they impact the sector if harnessed properly.

Think of Cheptegei, Jacob Kiplimo,

Nakaayi or Winnie Nanyondo taking the centre stage at the World Athletics Championships, the description of their childhood stories, previous records or least to say fans using their Google searches to find out more and where these athletes come from.

Do not underestimate the power of athletes. We often ask ourselves, how can Uganda gain more value from athletes participating at different events. This sounds like rocket science but it is not. Using athletics as an example of growing Uganda's tourism sector at the global stage is a no brainer. It is the second prominent sport in Uganda because of its recent performance records.

There was a time when Uganda was unheard of in the world of sports but for the last couple of years, she has become a mainstay among the consistent participants at the global stage and we can use that and the credible performances to grow the tourism image indirectly.

NEXT GENERATION STARS



Prisca Chesang's medal saved Uganda from a disastrous campaign at the World Athletics U20 Championships in Nairobi, Kenya last year, which the authorities admit they were not adequately prepared for in the first place. In Columbia, there will be an opportunity to make amends and test all the great declarations about the quality of talent in the generation being considered the stars of tomorrow.

With only 10 entrants, Uganda was not exactly in position to leave an indelible mark on last year's U-20 World Athletics Championships in Nairobi, Kenya. Uganda was unable to assemble a competitive team. It was little known Prisca Chesang who saved Uganda's face with bronze in the girls' 5,000m.

Chesang was part of Uganda's memorable team at the Tokyo Olympic in 2021, underscoring just how gifted she really is. Her Olympic debut ended at the first time of asking, in the 5,000m heats, but it is at the U-20 Championships where the youngster was always going to make her mark.

Chesang may have been Uganda's only medalist but there were loads of talent through the entire team, which ultimately never lived up to expectations at the U-20 Championships because of inadequate build-up.

"The preparations were not all that good last time because we did not have enough time to prepare for the championships, but facilitation and everything was there," Peter Chelangat, Uganda's manager at the championships said.

Prisca Chesang

For Chelangat, the Kenyan experience should serve Uganda well at this year's edition in Colombia.

"We learnt a lot of things in Kenya and out of that experience we are likely to improve because the boys tasted Kenya and this time will be their second appearance in the competition."

OPTIONS

Chesang will be a strong contender for a medal again, but hope is high that she will have company this time.

For long distance races, there is confidence in Peter Maru. The latter finished fifth in the 1500m at last year's U20 World Championships but he is expected to contend for medals in the 3,000m and 5,000m this time.

"When you look at the way he has been running of late you see a certain kind of improvement, which gives us a picture that he will be a strong competitor at the (2022) world U-20," says Chelangat.

"We expect a medal from Maru in 5000m and 3000m," Uganda Athletics Federation president Dominic Otucet said.

Tarsis Orogot finished fourth in the 200m at last year's edition and has since made notable strides as part of the athletics programme of the University of Alabama. In fact, he even qualified for the senior World Athletics



" I THINK UGANDA IS SENDING A STRONGER TEAM THIS TIME BECAUSE THE ATHLETES WHO WILL BE GOING HAVE BEEN SERIOUSLY TRAINING."

PETER CHELANGAT, COACH

Championships in Oregon.

"This time we are hopeful Orogot will win a medal because he is now senior," Otucet reasoned.

Emmanuel Rwothomiyo, a student in Jamaica, will join Orogot in leading Uganda's hopes of a sprint medal in Colombia.

"The sprints are tough but Rwothomiyo can fight; his times have been good."

Dan Kibet, who finished eighth in the 3,000m at last year's championship, has similarly made strides in the past few months. With the two Kibets - Dan and Rogers and Dismus Yeko, who won gold at the World University Cross Country in March, Uganda should boast of one of the strongest 3,000m teams at the world juniors' event.

"I think Uganda is sending a stronger team this time because I know the athletes who will be going have been seriously training and this time they will be in position to do something for the country. We have a lot of engagement with them," Chelangat said.

Chesang's medal saved Uganda from a disastrous campaign last year, which the authorities admit they were not adequately prepared for in the first place. In Colombia, there will be an opportunity to make amends and test all the great declarations about the quality of talent in the generation being considered the stars of tomorrow.



Tarsis Orogot

UNDER 20 TEAM

WOMEN

5000m

- Prisca Chesang
- Scarlet Chebet

3000m steeplechase

- Loyce Chekwemoui

800m

- Maureen Chebet

3000m

- Scarlet Chebet ▼



MEN

5000m

- Peter Maru
- Rodgers Kibet

3000m

- Rodgers Kibet
- Dan Kibet

3000m steeplechase

- Eliphias Ndiwa
- Leonard Chemutai

400m

- Emmanuel Rwothomio

1500m

- Hosea Kiprop



Rogers Kibet