

TEN TEEN STARS READY TO RULE 2026



Golfer Elizabeth Mwagale



Golfer Banza Matsiko



Table Tennis Jeremimah Nakawala



Table Tennis star Sebatindira



Swimmer Peyton Suubi Mary

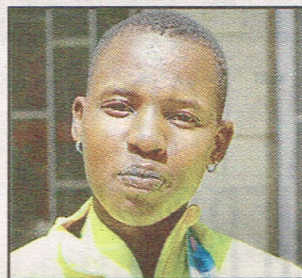
PHOTOS BY MICHAEL NSUBUGA



Basketballer Bushira Namayanja



Swimmer Zara Marie Mbanga



U20 bronze star Charity Cherop



Rising star golfer Gerald Olipa



He represents a new, aggressive era of Ugandan golf development.

9. Zara Marie Mbanga (Swimming)

A breaststroke and backstroke specialist, Mbanga's improvement rate was the highest in the country in 2025. Alongside Suubi, she forms a duo that will define Ugandan swimming for the next decade.

10. Bushira Namayanja (Basketball)

The defensive heartbeat of the Junior Gazelles, Bushira enters 2026 as the gold standard for student-athletes in Uganda. While maintaining elite academic grades at the prestigious, St Noa Girls school, she has simultaneously become a dominant force on the court.

Her standout performance at the FIBA U18 AfroBasket cemented her reputation as a versatile guard with a high basketball IQ, earning her a deserved fast-track into the senior women national team Gazelles conversations during last year's Zone V Qualifiers.

As she navigates high school, 2026 is the year Bushira is expected to transition into a permanent fixture for the Gazelles.

The rise of these ten teenagers proves that Uganda's greatest resource is not just our heritage, but our youth.

The success of Ssebatindira on the court or Bogere on the pitch will no longer be just a feel-good story, it is a demand for better facilities and stronger coaching.

These athletes have done their part by breaking onto the world stage, it is now our responsibility to ensure the systems behind them are as elite as the talent they produce.

By Hope Ampurire

Ugandan sport is currently undergoing a silent but seismic shift.

While the legends of the past decade like Joshua Cheptegei, Mary Nuba, Jacob Kiplimo, Peruth Chemutai, Micheal Wockrach paved the way, a new crop of athletes are no longer waiting for their turn, they are taking it.

From the table tennis, to football, athletics, cricket, and swimming, these teenagers are the blueprints for a future built on structural excellence rather than accidental success.

As the 2026 calendar unfolds, here are the ten teen stars primed to dominate.

1. Joseph Sebatindira, (Table Tennis)

At just 11 years old, Ssebatindira is a global phenomenon. Currently ranked as the World number one in his age category, he spent 2025 dismantling opponents twice his age. His technical ceiling is non-existent, and in 2026, he is the face of Uganda's "Hopes" program, set to become our first truly global table tennis superstar.

2. Charity Cherop (Athletics)

The World U-20 5,000m bronze medalist is the new engine of Ugandan distance running. She claimed bronze in the U20 category and was part of the U20 team that secured gold at the World Cross Country Championships in Tallahassee last month. Cherop is the tactical heir

to the throne. Her transition from junior dominance to senior contention is the most watched story in Kapchorwa last year.

3. James Bogere (Football)

The Cubs legend wrote his name in history by scoring Uganda's first-ever goal at a FIFA World Cup.

After a breakthrough 2025, Bogere officially joins Danish giants AGF Aarhus this February.

He is a lethal, 6-foot-1 finisher who represents the new professional standard of Ugandan football exports.

4. Jemimah Nakawala (Table Tennis)

She led Uganda to a historic semifinal finish at the ITTF Africa Senior Championship in Tunisia. By doing so, they secured Uganda's ticket to the 2026 World Team Championships in London.

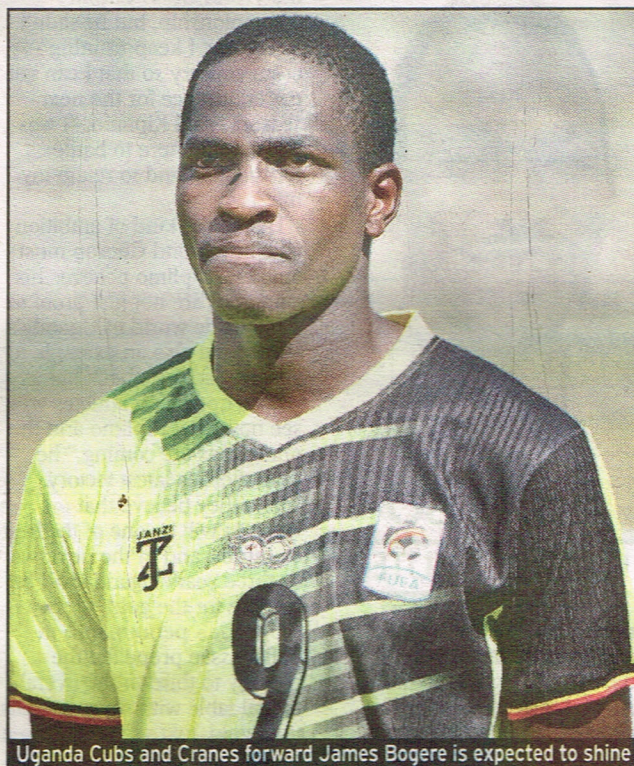
Nakiwala alongside Judith Mirembe and Parvin Nangonzi moved Ugandan table tennis from regional participation to a World Cup stage.

5. Elizabeth Mwagale (Golf)

Playing off a remarkable handicap of 3, Mwagale is the brightest prospect on the greens.

Her calm demeanour and smooth swing saw her dominate the junior series in late 2025. She is already raising Uganda's profile on the world junior golf map as she prepares for the 2026 international qualifiers.

6. Peyton Suubi Mary



Uganda Cubs and Cranes forward James Bogere is expected to shine

(Swimming)

The Jaguar of Ugandan aquatics, Suubi led Uganda to a third consecutive Zone 3 Championship in late 2025.

As a specialist in the 50m and 100m freestyle, she enters 2026 as the country's top female sprint prospect, aiming to shatter national records at the African Aquatics Championships.

7. Gerald Olipa (Cricket)

He is one of the rising stars in cricket, he's been heads and shoulders above his age group.

Olipa was the captain of the U19 qualifiers in Nigeria last year. For the last two

years, he was the MVP of the schools secondary boys cricket championship and also leading Mwiri College to a title last year as the captain of the team.

Olipa is rising in the category of batting that Uganda struggles in, hopefully Uganda Cricket can look after him well so can fulfill his potential as a top order batter

8. Banza Matsiko (Golf)

The rising king of the boys' junior circuit, Matsiko's near-par performance at the Uganda Golf Club last year showed a level of maturity that has professional scouts watching.

Nile Lions depart

By Johnson Were

Wednesday fixtures

Uganda v Angola
Algeria v Nigeria
Tunisia v Cameroon
Rwanda v Zambia

The national handball team (the Nile Lions) left this morning (Monday) to Kigali, Rwanda for the handball Africa Cup of Nations.

The 16-team tournament is a qualifier for the 2027 World Cup due January 13-31 in Germany that has Denmark as the defending champions.

Team coach Jimmy Orotin has named a 17-man team squad that face-off with Angola in their opening fixture on Wednesday with the main agenda of qualifying from the group stages.

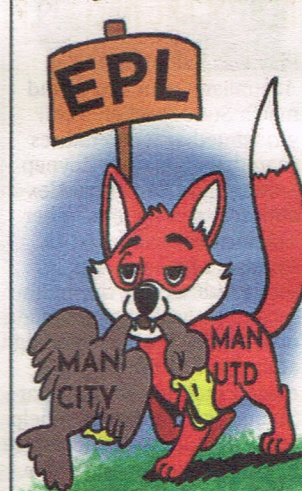
"Our agenda is making in the top four of the tournaments but our immediate target is top make it to the knockout stages and we are taking each game as a final," Orotin said.

"After vigorous training we had to give the players resting time for their bodies to recover, from fatigue and I'm confident they will give in their best to deliver," Orotin added.

The Nile Lions take on Angola, on Wednesday, then face Gabon the following day on Thursday and then end the group stages against defending champions Egypt on Saturday.

In the other group fixtures on Wednesday, Algeria take on Nigeria, Tunisia face Cameroon and hosts Rwanda play Zambia in the final game of the day after the opening ceremony.

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