

Uganda turns focus on continental events in Accra

BY ABDUL-NASSER SSEMUGABI

TEAMS

Female

Jemimah Nakawala, Parvin Judith Nangonzi, Patience Anyango

Male

Joseph Sebatindira, Joshua Magaya, Enoch Balyewunya

KAMPALA. By now we would have known whether the Ugandan female team had defended their gold medal at the ITTF-Africa East Regional Championships in Port Sudan, but the tournament was postponed due to instability in Sudan until a safer venue is found.

After two weekends of trials at Kololo SSS in April, Jemimah Nakawala, Parvin Judith Nangonzi and Patience Anyango had qualified for Sudan among women, while Joseph Sebatindira, Joshua Magaya and Enoch Balyewunya were the best among men. But Uganda followed countries that withdrew from the regional event in Sudan, prompting ITTF Africa to halt the event as they look out for a host where participants' safety is guaranteed.

"This decision [to withdraw] follows comprehensive safeguarding assessments and guidance received from the National Council of Sports. In line with international best practices in high-performance sport, UTTA has prioritised the welfare, safety and well-being of athletes, coaches, officials and the entire delegation," an earlier statement from the UTTA read in part. This came as a successive disappointment to Uganda, whose team of three teenage girls: Nakawala, Nangonzi and Judith Mirembe had qualified for the just-concluded 2026 ITTF World Championship in London only to be denied UK visas last month.

Now the Uganda Table Tennis Association (UTTA) has redirect its technical focus, high-performance programmes, and national team preparations toward the ITTF-Africa Youth Championships and the ITTF-Africa Youth Cup set to take place in Accra, Ghana from July 20-29th.

However, no quantity or quality of words would have duly consoled a player like Balyewunya, who had after missing his first assignment on a national team.

"But the good thing is that in Ghana we are going to use the same players who had qualified for Port Sudan, because they fit in the youth age bracket, and are good enough," UTTA president Cryus Muwanga told *Daily Monitor*. "So, my message to all the players is to stay focused because even the regional championship could be rescheduled anytime, if Africa finds a better venue."