Ugandan basketball faces tough questions as BAL rivals invest big

By Charles Mutebi

National Basketball League

Women			
Victoria	56	Angels	42
Jaguar	80	KIU	47
JKL	78	Nabisunsa	69
KCCA	73	Stormers	54
Men			
Victoria	75	UMU	57
Rezlife	73	Rockets	57
Victoria	61	Sommet	58

PHOTO BY MICHAEL NSUBUGA



Namuwongo Blazers celebrate after winning the league

As Ugandan basketball shrugs through a second consecutive season outside the Basketball Africa League (BAL), those that qualified for the 2026 edition continue to raise the stakes with exorbitant investments in their squads.

Consider Rwandan representatives APR. The Rwandan champions have reportedly signed two-time NBA champion Quinn Cook for the upcoming BAL campaign, due March 37 – 31 May across Pretoria, Rabat, and Kigali.

Cook is just 32 and won NBA titles with the Golden State Warriors and Los Angeles Lakers in 2018 and 2020 respectively, before leaving the Cleveland Cavaliers in 2021 at the end of a four-year NBA career. Since then, he has had stints in Puerto Rico and China – far removed from the glorious days in the NBA but still good enough to make him an asset to any team in the BAL.

If Cook turns out less than advertised, APR's scouting, if not ambition, will once again come under scrutiny. The Rwandan outfit has reportedly committed $4m to the BAL campaign, which explains how they are in a position to attract a player of Cook's pedigree.

For Ugandan teams, such a level of investment is almost unthinkable, and it raises serious questions about the future of National Basketball League (NBL) teams in the BAL. Can Ugandan teams ever raise such funds?.