

Excelling in sports

How Sebei College is nurturing athletics

The school's latest achievement came in December last year, in Algeria, where a 16-year-old Keren Chelimo, a Senior Three student at Sebei College-Tegeres, won a silver medal for Uganda in the 3,000 metre race. The school has established a serious sports camp with 42 athletes.

BY YAHUDU KITUNZI

Sebei College School in Kapchorwa District has emerged as one of the country's top nurseries of athletics talent, producing world-class runners and inspiring hundreds of students to pursue the sport.

Located on the slopes of Mt Elgon, the school benefits from a high-altitude environment that naturally conditions athletes for endurance running.

Teachers say this, combined with the region's hilly terrain and the culture of long-distance running, has given Sebei College a unique advantage.

Mr Johnson Limo, the head teacher, Set College-Tegeres, said athletics has become part of the school's identity.

"We encourage every student to participate in athletics not just to win medals, but to build discipline and resilience. Running is part of our culture here," he said.

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The school rose to prominence when Olympic marathon champion Stephen

levels, particularly in academics, games, football and athletics.

"The school is excelling nationally, and in athletics we are now competing internationally. Our latest achievement came last month in Algeria, where one of our students in Senior Three, won a silver medal for Uganda. Her return was celebrated with excitement by both students and teachers," Mr Limo said.

He said the school has established a serious sports camp with 42 upcoming athletes, all determined to compete internationally.

"Our goal is to become a breeding ground for local sports champions who can lift Uganda's name high in athletics. We offer students a structured programme and we have hired a professional coach to guide them," he added.

He acknowledged that world champion Joshua Cheptegei is supporting the camp, which he also heads, by offering mentorship to the young athletes. He urged the students to aim for excellence.

Ambrose Cherotich, the games master at Sebei College, said the school is nurturing talent in sports to compete locally and globally.

"We have the capacity to compete internationally and many of our students who have demonstrated great potential have already been identified," he said.

Cherotich explained that the school is sponsoring talented athletes, who balance academics with sports. He observes that training sessions are held in mornings and evenings.

He says the school has introduced more games to give students a wider platform to showcase their talents.

Agnes Chemutai, a parent, said Sebei's success in athletics is rooted in the supportive environment and the presence of role models.

Keren Chelimo, a 16-year-old Senior Three student at Sebei College, recently represented Uganda at the Under-18 and Under-20 championships in Algeria, where she won a silver medal in the 3,000 metres race. She had previously competed in Nigeria, finishing sixth in her first international race.

"I was number two in Algeria and I am ready to win more medals. I request well-wishers to support me with training kits," Chelimo said.

Chelimo, who hails from Chemukula village in Tukait Sub-County, Kween District, started practicing athletics at home before joining school competitions. In 2022, while in Primary Seven, she qualified for the national primary games. The following year, she advanced to the secondary school nation-



KEY

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als in Kabale District and later competed in the East African games in Bukedea District.

Her journey has inspired many, including her younger brother, Samuel Kipto, a Senior Two student at Sebei College, who is also a budding runner. Chelimo and other students at the school train every morning and evening immediately after lessons.

"My dream is to become another world champion," she said, while appreciating Sebei College for nurturing her talent.

Sebei College Tegeres is a government-aided mixed day and boarding secondary school, located in Kapchorwa District on Mbale-Sironko-Kapchorwa highway, nestled in the picturesque Tegeres Hills.

Set on the slopes of Mt Elgon, just six kilometres from Mt Elgon National Park, the school enjoys breathtaking scenery, surrounded by lush greenery and winding valleys.

Popularly abbreviated by students as SECT, Sebei College Tegeres is one of the oldest secondary schools in Uganda. It was established in 1956 as a junior school under the Kapchorwa County administration in Bugisu District and the Sebei community.

By 1980s, it had risen as an academic powerhouse within the Sebei sub-region. To this day, many prominent Sabiny proudly trace their roots of excellence to Sebei College.

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Athletics, in particular, has brought the school national and international recognition, with students consistently winning medals and shields at various levels.

Sebei College has runs a dairy farm with about 70 cows that supply milk to the school. Acres of land are cultivated with maize, bananas, beans, onions, and other crops to supplement meals for both learners and staff.

Additionally parts of the land are covered with eucalyptus and other trees, which provide firewood and timber for making furniture.

Inspired by Stephen Kiprotich, an alumnus, who won Uganda a gold medal at the 2012 London Olympics, students at Sebei College continue to demonstrate courage in academics and sports. The school's blend of academic excellence, sports and innovativeness, makes it a beacon of hope in the Sebei sub-region and beyond.

Moses Yeko, a religious leader, said the school has earned recognition for its achievement in sports in music and

Keren Chelimo, a 16-year-old student at Sebei College, recently represented Uganda at the Under-18 and Under-20 championships in Algeria, where she won a silver medal in the 3,000 metre race. PHOTO/COURTESY

PLANTING TREES Greening the school

Daily Monitor also learnt that Sebei College has launched an extensive tree-planting initiative.

"We have a tree nursery at the school and aim to supply seedlings to neighbouring schools. Our goal is to make the school greener. We are also working towards self-sufficiency in food production. Currently, we have enough maize and beans to feed the entire school for the next term," Mr. Limo added. The school aims at planting more than 4,000 traditional species of trees. They say the green, conducive learning environment

The students and a section of staff of Sebei College Tegeres in Kapchorwa District during assembly. PHOTO: YAHUDU KITUNZI

