

BY ANDREW KAGGWA

Whenever there is a marathon being advertised, different people show up ready to sweat it off. For some, the reasons are deeply personal. For others, HR sent an email saying participation was "optional but highly encouraged," which in corporate language means: see you there at 6am in branded T-shirts. Then there are the social runners, the networkers, and those still trying to tick off New Year resolutions in July.

On Friday, at Circuit Lounge in Kolo-lo, all these humans showed up for the Tusker Lite Kampala Run, which unlike most runs, starts at sunset and mainly happens at night.

Runners were clad in neon green sporty shirts with reflective elements, glowing beautifully in the dark like responsible adults making questionable fitness decisions.

There were two races to choose from: the 5km race, which most people sensibly went for, and the 10km one, where all those who take themselves too seriously ended up.

The 5km race came with silent disco headphones playing music by DJ on a moving truck, although the headphones only worked within a certain proximity. Meaning if you wanted to keep hearing the music, you had to stay suspiciously close to the DJ. Imagine chasing cardio and good signal at the same time.

It was after Tusker Lite Brand Manager Sandra Againe flagged off the race that everyone quickly discovered what kind of runner they really were.

Some former athletes showed up to flex and absolutely destroy the runt-ime. People were finishing 10km in un-

Of course we ran,glowed and danced



Whether for vibes or to actually run, one thing was guaranteed for these revellers – the glow. PHOTO/ANDRE KAGGWA

der 30 minutes, like how? What exactly were they chasing?

But not all of them were that good.

Some spent most of the race negotiating peace treaties with their knees. One man even showed up with two pace setters. Honestly, some stories write themselves.

He hired two men whose job was simple: make him look fast and important. But somewhere between the flag off and male ego, one pace setter became overzealous and sprinted ahead. The second increased speed to catch up, leaving the sponsor abandoned.

"I paid you to make me look good, where are you going?" the poor man seemed to gasp as both pace setters disappeared into athletic freedom.

Still, the athlete storyline could not outnumber the runners who showed up for vibes.

These were the content kings. Matching fits, fresh sneakers, sunglasses at sunset, and at least 47 Instagram stories captioned: No excuses. Just discipline.

Did they finish the race? No one knows. But the photo dump definitely crossed the line.

Then there were girls who signed up

for 5km but somehow, while following an overzealous boyfriend, took a wrong turn and found themselves in the 10km race. One of them met a friend along the route and immediately started discussing work, boys, and life. At some point, they were taking pictures in the middle of the road and singing Mercy Chinwo songs.

Why anyone would be singing gospel music mid-race remains between them and God.

These girls walked most of the race and arrived long after everyone had settled in, but one still had the audaci-

ty to kneel on the tarmac and kiss the ground.

Then there was me. A few months ago, I joined a group called Step Cousins. None of us are actually related, but what binds us together is walking and counting steps for fitness. We recently completed 10,000 steps a day for 90 days.

I signed up for the Kampala Run for the same reason I am signing up for the Tusker Lite Rwenzori Marathon: the kit and the bottle. I had no GPS watch. I did not stretch before flag off. Besides regular walking, I cannot say I prepared much for the evening.

Generally, I am not in the business of making suffering look expensive. So I walked.

Sometimes I became a motivational speaker, encouraging slay queens, senior citizens, and one couple who had shown up to work out together.

"We are almost there," I kept saying.

It was also something people kept telling me, though by then I had stopped believing it. These were just 5km. How were we still not done?

Eventually, we made it back to Circuit Lounge. I reached into my bag and pulled out an old medal from a previous race, ready to recycle glory. Before I could wear it, I noticed there were actual medals for finishers. Excellent.

We closed the night dancing in our medals. Everyone felt like a winner and probably had a strong Saturday morning story ready:

"How I conquered Kolo-lo."