

Sports

Formula Seven

Backed The Formula Seven project is on the verge of passing that crucial test after attracting some funding through the Presidential Initiative. **P 38**

More money. For the professionals, there is more reason to intensify their practice after organizers enhanced their package. This year's kitty will be Shs27m, which represents a Shs10m increment from last year's competition. Grace Kasango, fresh from finishing second in this week's Kilelesi Golf Series is eagerly looking forward to it.

Kasango is man to watch

BY DARREN ALLAN KYEYUNE & INNOCENT NDWAULA

POA PRO WINNERS 2025

UGC: Marvin Kibirige

Entebbe: Herman Deco Mutebi

Lugazi: Ronald Rugumayo

AMATEUR WINNERS 2025

UGC: John Musiimenta

Entebbe: Michael Tumusiime

Lugazi: Joseph Kasozi

It's been ages since Ronald Rugumayo and Marvin Max Kibirige appeared on the same draw of a professional golf event in the country.

But with both exciting golfers on the draw, enthusiasts of the sport can expect some quality shot-making ahead of today's Pearl Of Africa (POA) Series tee off at the par-71 Entebbe Club.

Rugumayo and Kibirige, both winners of POA tournaments last year, will headline a draw that includes David Kamulindwa, Ronald Otile and Silver Opio.

With POA prize money increased to Shs30m in the kitty, a more competitive level of golf is anticipated at the par-71 course. The Entebbe POA Leg is the first for 2026 and a significant number of golfers is expected.

"When we gave to POA, this is what we had anticipated," said Juliet Anena, the founding Chairperson of the Series. "We wanted a tournament that could engage all stakeholders into working together for the success of the beautiful game at elite amateur or professional level."

The POA series, with an enhanced package from last year for the professionals, will be played at an Entebbe Course which can presently boast of possessing the best greens in the country.

Nonetheless it will be interesting to see how Kibirige and Rugumayo, who are competing in India and South Africa respectively, adjust to the pace of the Entebbe greens.

Missing

With another golf tournament taking place in Kabale this weekend, the draw will miss some key names including Deo Akope. But with Kamulindwa, Opio and the in-form Grace Kasango confirming participation, the gallery can expect some first-class entertainment.

"I am in the best shape I have been in a very long time," Kasango told Daily Monitor. "I feel like my swing is where I want it to be and in terms of confidence, I have a strong belief in my mental frame right now. But for the opening round, the plan is to be efficient without necessarily going aggressive," the lanky Jinja-bred golfer added.

However, it won't be only the professionals on the course. The elite amateurs, playing for a Shs5m kitty, will also be in the field to compete for both money and World Amateur Golf Ranking (WAGR) points.

"We have a rich field of the country's top amateurs," tournament director Paul Habyarimana noted. "If we can get some good weather between today and Saturday, you will not want to miss any action if you love golf because of the immaculate state of the course."

Favourite

Joseph Cwinya-ai has got to start as favourite but he will face competition from the formidable quartet of Anthony Otukei, Elton Thembo, Godfrey Kambale and Abdul Kakeeto.

The professionals will have a cut after tomorrow's second but the amateurs will play three rounds without a cut. On

Saturday, the final day for the pros, there will be a subsidiary round for both men and women. It will include side bets such as nearest to the pin and the longest drive.

It is a measure of POA's increasing popularity that the event continues to attract strong sponsorships and partnership. The latest is Exim Bank who joined the POA series on Monday evening.

"Our involvement reaffirms our commitment to sporting excellence, discipline and growth," remarked Primrose Kobusingye, the bank's marketing manager.

"As a bank, we want to enable progress, champion talent and strengthen connections that will project the country as a premier destination for sport and investment," she added.

Other brands supporting the POA series are Vivo Energy, Aquafina, Home Bliss, Uganda Golf Union, Entebbe Sports Club and Case Medical Services.

Two more POA events have been lined up for later in the year according to Anena. "Those two will be unique and quite different from the one teeing off in Entebbe," she said without divulging details.

Rich Field. Kasango sees the POA Series are timely for all. PHOTO/EDDIE CHICCO



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