Mwebaze seeks fresh start in India

Second Chance. After battling a stubborn back injury as a result of his mixed bowling action, young pacer Innocent Mwebaze is rebuilding his career far from home in India for a two-month stay.

BY INNOCENT NDAWULA

AT A GLANCE
Name: Innocent Mwebaze
Nickname: Inno
Date of Birth: August 24, 2003
Age: 22
Role: Bowler
Batting Style: Right-hand bat
Bowling Style: Right-arm medium-fast
Jersey Number: 76
Cricketing Idol: Dale Steyn

Career Snapshot:
T20Is: 2 matches, 1 wicket
T20s: 6 matches, 10 wickets
Best Bowling: 6/24
Known for: Raw pace, potential, and work-in-progress action

For Innocent Mwebaze, the journey to India is not just about rehabilitation but a shot at reclaiming a career that had stalled before it truly took off.

At just 22, Mwebaze had already broken into the Cricket Cranes setup, positioning himself as a backup option to Uganda's frontline seamers; Juma Miyaji, Cosmas Kyewuta and Bilal Hassan.

But a recurring lower back injury—linked to his mixed bowling action—halted that rise, limiting his appearances and slowing his development. He has been battling the injury for at least two years.

Road to recovery

Now based at the Omtex I Can We Can (ICWC) Cricket Institute in Maharashtra, Mwebaze is undergoing a structured two-month rehabilitation programme aimed at correcting both his body and technique.

The process is as much mental as it is physical - rebuilding confidence alongside strength.

Despite the setback, Mwebaze remains optimistic. "This opportunity has given me hope. I'm focused on recovering fully and coming back stronger."

Cricket Uganda have not lost belief in the young bowler.

High Performance head Richard Okia insists the investment reflects long-term planning.

"We see him as one for the future. If he gets past this injury, he has the ability to serve Uganda for a long time."

"Innocent is very much part of our national setup. He has been backup to our frontline and strike bowlers and we see him as one for the future."

"Taking him to India shows our commitment to ensuring players enjoy long and productive careers." Uganda's pace attack is evolving, with increasing competition for places. For Mwebaze, the India stint is more about relevance than just mere recovery.

The Nyakasura product travelled to 2024 World Cup in the West Indies as a reserve player and a successful return could see him re-enter contention and finally deliver on a promise that has long been evident.

Mwebaze's rehabilitation marks a key step in Uganda's broader high-performance strategy, with the aim of building a deeper, healthier, and more competitive player pool. If successful, the programme could see him return stronger and ready to compete.

REHAB FOCUS AREAS

- Lumbar spine recovery & pain management
- Core strength & spinal stability
- Bowling action correction
- Gradual workload reintroduction
- Return-to-play conditioning



Reconst the engine. The rebuild has started in earnest for young paceman Mwebaze in India under the watchful eye of pro-physiotherapists. PHOTO/ COURTESY

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