

USSSA: Amus College take crown but real test starts

Parity. The success story extends beyond the boys' team. Amus' women's side won the 2024/25 Fufa Women's Cup.

BY GEORGE KATONGOLE

ROAD TO THE FINAL

Final: Amus 1-0 Bukedea

Semis: Amus 0-0 Kitende (4-2)

Quarters: London 0-1 Amus

Last 16: Amus 1-0 Mentor

Last 32: Jipra 0-0 Amus (2-4)

Group stage

Mukono Kings 1-4 Amus

Amus 1-0 Standard High Ndejje

Amus 4-0 Abilomino

For years, school football revolved around a familiar axis. When the conversation turned to dominance, the names that rolled off every tongue were usually St Mary's Kitende, Buddo or Kibuli. Now there is a new power in the conversation and perhaps at the summit itself.

When Amus College edged Bukedea South 1-0 in the final of the USSSA Boys Football Championship in Lira City, it was not merely the crowning moment of a successful tournament campaign.

It felt more like the completion of a carefully engineered football revolution. The triumph announced Amus as the new kings of school football in Uganda.

Amus' 1-0 victory over Bukedea South in the final was not a flamboyant coronation. It was a grind, the kind of final that reveals more about character than talent. Across eight matches, Amus conceded just once.

They won three matches 1-0, survived two goalless draws and twice held their nerve in penalty shootouts. This was not dominance through spectacle.

It was dominance through control. Amus' rise has been con-



structed over years of careful planning, setbacks and rebuilding. The school has consistently featured at the national championship qualifying in 2015, 2016, 2017, 2019, 2022, 2023, 2024, 2025 and now 2026.

Beaten in final

They reached the 2024 final, losing to St Julian, but only after eliminating St Mary's Kitende in a penalty shootout (10-9) in the semifinals. Months later, they made history in East Africa by winning their first FEASSA title in 2024, beating Kitende 1-0 in the final.

At the heart of the current generation is captain Jamal Iddi Rashid, a tough defender whose calmness under pressure defined Amus' tournament run.

In tight knockout games especially the penalty wins against JIPRA and Kitende, Rashid acted as the emotional anchor.

"We believed from the first day in Lira that this was our tournament. Even when games were tight, we trusted each other. That belief carried us through penalties and pressure," he said.

The architect

Behind the scenes, youth coach Nimrod Kintu remains the central



Teacher. Richard Malinga (top), the head coach of Amus is carried shoulder high by his players after the final in Lira, among whom was striker Mudhasir Ijosi-ga. PHOTOS: GEORGE KATONGOLE figure in Amus' football identity.

Working under the guidance of school director Patrick Isiagi, Kintu has spent years building a structured football pipeline initially combining academy recruits from Kampala with homegrown school

talent.

At times, the journey has been unstable. Kintu briefly left to help establish St Andrew Kaggwa Gombe in 2022, guiding them to a national final in Arua before returning to Amus. There were also internal setbacks, including a Round of 32 elimination last year to Greenlight Islamic that triggered technical reshuffles.

Coach Richard Malinga also played a defining role in shaping Amus' recent identity.

In 2024, he guided the school to their maiden FEASSA title after beating Kitende 1-0, and also led them to the USSSA national final the same year, where they lost 3-0 to St Julian.

Malinga later moved on and won the 2025 crown with Buddo reinforcing his reputation as one of the most decisive tournament coaches. At Amus, his influence remains part of the foundation that built a winning culture.

A football factory in motion

Amus are no longer just a school team. They are an ecosystem. The institution now boasts five international-standard pitches and a 10,000-seater stadium with an eight-lane athletics track.

Their scouting network stretches across Uganda, feeding both senior and youth structures. The results are already visible beyond school football.

Attacking midfielder Allan Oyirwoth progressed from Amus to earn a senior national team call-up while still in school before moving to New England Revolution in Major League Soccer. Former Uganda U20 captain Toto Majub also came through the system and now plays for Atlanta United 2 in MLS NEXT Pro.

Amus contributed four players to the current U17 squad in Morocco — Kombi Eze, Geoffrey Mubiru, Henry Muhoozi and Hilal Ajiga.

The success story extends beyond the boys' team. Amus' women's side won the 2024/25 Fufa Women's Cup, reinforcing the school's growing sporting footprint.

In the Eastern Regional League, the school-affiliated side currently leads with 50 points, 20 clear of second-placed Busoga United, scoring 35 goals with a +27 goal difference. Forward Mudhasir Ijosi-ga leads the scoring chart with 19 goals.

Amus' strength is not flair, it is control. They are compact without the ball, disciplined in transition, and increasingly ruthless in game management.

Their defensive record in Lira, just one goal conceded in eight matches, reflects a system built on structure rather than improvisation. With a disciplined back line, Amus learned how to win tight games rather than simply play them.

How long can they reign?

Historically, school football dynasties have survived on renewal. St Mary's Kitende mastered it for nearly two decades.

Kibuli SS also built a system that outlived generations.

Amus now appear ready to enter that space. The school already has a strong U16 pipeline designed to feed future squads, suggesting the Lira-winning team may only be the beginning.

But the challenge is clear. Kitende remain the benchmark of consistency. Bukedea Comprehensive are investing heavily.

Kyaddondo SS is emerging as a serious disruptor.

The margin for error at the top is shrinking. But for now, school football has new kings in Sapir Hills.