STAR AWARD FIRES UP SHAMIKA

By Michael Nsubuga

PHOTO BY MICHAEL NSUBUGA



Chess player Mark Nyola (left) and badminton star Fadhila Shamika (centre) pose with their Real Stars Awards alongside Uganda Chess president Andrew Bakiza (3rd left) and the other sponsors' representatives at the Molecule Restaurant in Kololo yesterday

Following her golden performance during the All-Africa Senior Badminton Championships in Botswana last month, Uganda badminton sensation Fadilah Shamika Mohamed Rafi is setting her sights on even bigger accomplishments this year.

Shamika was one of three sportsmen, alongside Mark Wasswa Nyola (chess) and footballer Richard Basangwa, who plays for NEC FC in the Uganda Premier League, to be awarded for their strong showing in February in their respective disciplines.

Wasswa emerged as the clear winner after delivering a consistent performance across all 11 rounds, scoring 8.5/11 and finishing a full point ahead of the chasing pack in the national chess championship and earning himself a slot on the team that will represent the country in the Chess Olympiad in Samarkand, Uzbekistan, later this year.

On his part, Basangwa's brace against KCCA FC as he made his debut for his side in a thrilling StarTimes Uganda Premier League second-round opener at MTN Omondi Stadium in Lugogo earned him the award ahead of UPPC goalkeeper Rogers Omedwa and Vipers SC striker Milton Karisa.

bet Real Stars award at the Molecule Restaurant in Kololo yesterday, Shamika said she now has her sights set on qualifying for the world championship in India in August, on top of other international events that will help her continue developing her craft.

"I'm really grateful for this, and yeah, I'm happy with my performance and for retaining my title that I first won in 2020. Of course, it wasn't easy, as I had to battle in three

Shamika said.

"I'm looking forward to qualifying for the World Championship again this year. If I do, it would be my second time. And of course, the regular international tournaments hosted in other countries to keep my African rank as number one."

Wasswa, who was accompanied to the awards by Uganda Chess Federation president Andrew Bakiza, said the competition was tough because

prevailed because he trained harder than they did.

"The competition was a bit tough, because it was my second time in the event and I was seeded fourth, but I managed to beat everyone and emerged as the winner after the 12 rounds," Wasswa said.

"I would love to thank my sponsors, Kampala University, my parents, and all my friends who were with me during the tournament. "I'm looking forward to winning as many