

Local

Nemostars strengthen with Okello

Heavy. Over 30 teams are expected to take part in the tournament and a 32-team format has been adopted for this edition.

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CAVB MEN'S AFRICA CLUB CHAMPIONSHIP

Nemostars squad

Setters: Smith Okumu, Hussein Adome

Opposites: Daudi Okello, Geoffrey Onapa

Outside hitters: George Aporu, Federicko Mujinya, Mark Omara, Derrick Tuwangye

Middle blockers: Bernard Malinga, Willington Talemwa, Fahad Zungu, Titi Okumu

Liberos: Emmanuel Elanyu, Happy Ayebare

Nemostars have strengthened their squad ahead of the CAVB Men's Africa Club Championship slated for April 20-May 3 in Kigali, Rwanda.



Big Star. Daudi Okello is arguably Uganda's greatest player having played having featured in leagues in Bulgaria, Turkey, Poland and South Korea. He will add so much quality to Nemo at the bi do. PHOTO/COURTESY

CAN THEY ECLIPSE SIXTH PLACE?

Nemo has been Uganda's most consistent representative on the continent and finished sixth in 2019, marking the country's best ever ranking in the tournament. And with Okumu boosting the coaching team, Okello and Elanyu adding the much-needed experience in the playing staff, Nemostars go into the tournament with high expectations. George Aporu, Smith Okumu and Bernard Malinga have been mainstays in the Nemostars team over the years and will be the leaders going into the event.

The six-time champions have confirmed the addition of Ugandan international Daudi Okello to their ranks in a bid to form a solid team for the competition. Okello travelled with Nemostars

to the last edition that was held in Libya in 2025 and will add his experience yet again. Born September 20 September, 1995, Okello is Uganda's best volleyball export ever and has played in Rwanda, Bulgaria,

Turkey, South Korea, Qatar and Indonesia. He is a scoring machine and will be expected to carry most of the load in Kigali, where his professional career started in 2015.

His inclusion will certainly see Geoffrey Onapa, the team's starting opposite, relinquishing that place in the lineup. The 30-year-old is not the only addition Nemostars have added. Experienced libero Emmanuel Elanyu, setter Hussein Adome, receiver-attacker Mark Omara and young middle blocker Titi Okumu have also been added.

Omara, who is the UCU Doves captain, was also part of the Nemostars team in Libya last year.

With George Aporu, Smith Okumu and Bernard Malinga still part of the team, there will be enough experience in the squad. Fahad Zungu, Willington Talemwa, Federicko Mujinya, Happy Ayebare and Derrick Tuwangye are the other players on the team. Another new face on the team will be Kenyan

tactician Godfrey Okumu, a High Performance FIVB Instructor, whose coaching experience will be handy in Kigali.

The former volleyball player has coached in Kenya, Japan and Philippines.

The club will have their last training session on Saturday before setting off for Rwanda on Sunday. Nemostars have spent the last two months training in the Lugogo Indoor Stadium in preparation for the continental showpiece.

Even with the playoffs yet to be played to completion, Nemostars have all their eyes on the event in Kigali.

It remains to be seen whether a decision will be made by the team returns in May.

Having qualified for the finals by beating Elyon 2-1 in the semifinals, the 2024 National Club Championship winners were disqualified on grounds of using two ineligible players following a petition by the opponent. The club wrote to the National Council of Sports seeking their intervention and the sports regulator asked the Uganda Volleyball Federation to furnish them with details of what transpired before the finals are played.

But all that will now have to wait. The focus is on Kigali as the club looks to improve their placement from last year.