

Baguma pick of young Kampala Hockey Club Stallions

BY MAKHTUM MUZIRANSA

AT A GLANCE

Name: Ian Baguma

Date of Birth: June 4, 2006

School: Ntare

Class: Senior Six

AFRICA CUP FOR CLUB CHAMPIONS

Today's Fixtures - St. John's College, Harare - Women
Ghana Revenue Authority vs. Bulawayo, **5pm**

Lakers vs. Hippo, **7pm**

Men - Pool A

Port Fouad (Egypt) vs. School of Excellence (Namibia), **9am**
Kampala vs. USIU Kenya, **11am**

Pool B

Hotspurs (Zambia) vs. Hippo (Zimbabwe)

Ghana Revenue Authority vs. Bulawayo (Zimbabwe)



Friendly Rivalry. Baguma (R) and his KHC teammate Fred Nuwashumbusha of Mbarara High turn out for different schools in a recent competition. PHOTO / JAMES MUGISHA

HARARE. Ian Baguma is just 19. He has played hockey for just five years. Yet his abilities on the ball and on pitch are the envy of many - younger and older than him.

He is daring to a fault when taking on defenders. But having honed his skills at Ntare School, who had to work their way to the top of schools' hockey with humility, Baguma knows that he has to put in defensive shifts too.

As he prepares to represent Kampala Hockey Club (KHC) at the 36th edition of the men's Africa Cup for Club Champions (ACCC) at St. John's College Astroturf in Harare, Zimbabwe, Baguma will have to prove himself at an arena that can be humbling for anyone.

In schools' hockey, he is a star. In the home National League, Baguma has shown potential to be decisive for his side. If he comes out of Harare with an enhanced reputation, he will be a dependable asset in the Stallions

team for years to come. "I am excited. This is not a mere opportunity for me, so I appreciate all the efforts the club has made to make it possible for me to travel," he said.

"I started playing hockey in my Senior Two in 2021. But after the Nationals in 2023, I joined KHC because one of our OBs (school alumnus) James (Mugisha - a Stallions' defender also headed for this trip) told us about the club and said we would get many opportunities to grow in the game if we joined. This (ACCC) is one of them," Baguma said.

Stories to tell

KHC's schools' programme has allowed them to find some of the budding talents ahead of everyone else. But making this 18-man squad sets Baguma apart among his peers.

While his attacking prowess in various positions is well known, Baguma has also been tried out in the less competitive defensive positions

as fullback and defensive midfielder. He has been open to learning all roles. "The selection and trust shows my hockey is elevating and I look forward to being one of the dependable players in the team in the coming years.

"Of course it is my first major tournament. So I expect a lot of competition (for places), but I have trained in many roles and I will do what the coach asks me to do.

Versatile player

"I feel I have the ability to do anything on pitch. I have done it in school, in the league, and I believe I can do it on the big stage," the teenager, who will return to finish his secondary school education starting next month, said.

Back home, his peers will be watching, wishing it were them but also wishing him all the best.

"This (playing at this level) is definitely the story to tell and my friends are waiting to know how everything goes. I believe they will hear good things in the end," Baguma said.