

BY GEORGE KATONGOLE

KAMPALA. The Pool Association of Uganda (PAU) has shifted focus to secondary schools after pool's long-awaited breakthrough as a medal sport at the recently concluded Association of Uganda University Sports (AUUS) Games, calling the milestone a green light for grassroots expansion.

Pius Akampa, the head of the Schools and Institutions Committee at PAU, said the sport's successful transition from demonstration to full competition at the 19th AUUS Games has created urgency to anchor pool in schools.

"This milestone gives us confidence to move forward aggressively. If pool can thrive at university level, then it belongs in our schools as well," Akampa said.

Pool was first introduced as a demonstration sport at the AUUS Games hosted by the University of Kisubi in 2019 and retained that status in subsequent editions as the federation worked on participation, officiating, and equipment standards. Its transition to medal sport status in 2025 marked the end of that trial phase. "This is not just about competition; it is about recogni-

Pool turns to schools after university games breakthrough

tion. When universities embrace pool as a legitimate sport, they open doors for structured training, talent identification and long-term growth," Akampa said.

Akampa, who assumed office two years ago, has already introduced pool to some schools including St Charles Lwanga Bukeerere, Kyaddondo SS and St James SS Jinja, among others.

Immediate impact

Pool made an immediate impact at the AUUS Games held at Uganda Christian University (UCU), Mukono, in December 2025, attracting strong student interest. It was one of only two medal sports added at the 19th edition of the Games, alongside bridge. Akampa said the standard of play exceeded expectations.

"What we saw confirmed that universities are fertile ground for developing elite players when the right structures are in place," he noted.

Mountains of the Moon University (MMU) were among the standout performers, particularly in the women's



First cut in Mukono. Mountains of the Moon players won gold at the AUUS Games at UCU in December. PHOTO/GEORGE KATONGOLE

category. Their success in pool, alongside scrabble, lifted MMU to sixth place overall, behind Ndejje University, hosts UCU, Makerere University, Kampala International University (KIU) and Kyambogo University.

Zainab Namuli claimed the women's singles gold, months after narrowly missing out on the National Open grand finale. Teammate Oliver Loy Karungi took silver before the duo combined to win the doubles title. Alongside Helen Aluka, they also secured the women's team gold.

MMU Senior Sports Officer Mustapha Nsubuga said the achievement was especially meaningful.

"This gold medal means a lot to Mountains of the Moon University because it was our only gold at the Games. It shows that even with limited resources, emerging sports like pool can deliver results," he said.

The men's singles produced one of the tournament's biggest upsets, with Hillary Bukenya defeating favourite Jaalaalidin Batte of Makerere University Business School (MUBS) to claim gold.