

Para-swimmers travel to Italy with CWG hope

BY MAKHTUM MUZIRANSA

KAMPALA. Qualification for the Commonwealth Games (CWG) will be top of the agenda for the Ugandan team that will compete at the March 12-15 Para Swimming World Series in Lignano Sabbiadoro, Italy.

Husnah Kukundakwe, who will be competing in Lignano for a fourth time after 2021, 2022, and 2024, leads the team that has Condoleezza Nakazibwe, Enock Ssekintende, and Joshua Asiimwe Muyunga.

Kukundakwe will do a review of her S8 class before competing to set the tone for Commonwealth qualification.

"Review is important because someone can get used to the conditions (of disability) or they can even get worse or they can get worse," the team's coach Muzafaru Muwanguzi, shared.

"You might get a class at 10 years old but as you grow older, your body becomes heavy and the movement of the limbs, maybe your hand, can become weaker. The hand has to support the weight," Muwanguzi added as to why there have to be reviews of classes every two years.

At the heart of Kukundakwe's races will be the 100m breaststroke, which she also hopes to compete in during the Glasgow Games. "In Italy, the 100m breaststroke will be very competitive but I believe I have an opportunity to medal at it in the CWG.

"So, I will be trying (in Italy) to get to a time that will make me comfortable enough to think of a (CWG) medal. The para swimming events at the CWG are

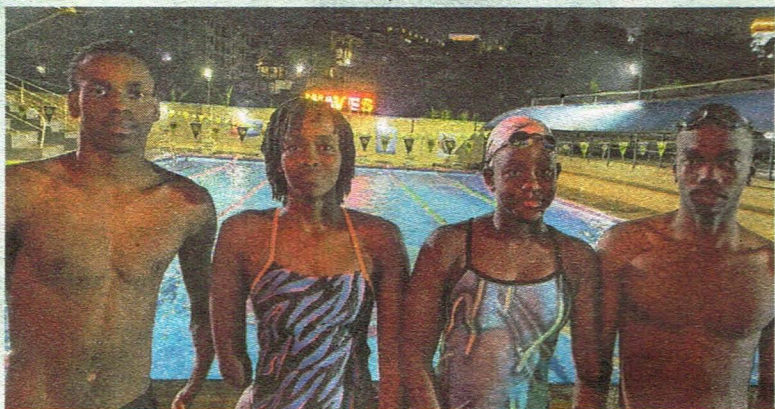
very limited, so I am really lucky that SB8 is there for the 100m breaststroke.

"I will also hopefully do the 100m freestyle in S9 and I think I can make it but that should be tight as New Zealand, Australia, Great Britain all have S9 swimmers. "I have to do those events really well in Italy but I have also not done the 100m backstroke in almost three years. I am looking forward to that as well and maybe, fingers crossed, after my review and Joshua's classification, a relay as we wait for allocated slots for the CWG," Kukundakwe, 18, said.

Meanwhile, 13 year old Nakazibwe is "feeling very good" ahead of the competition, where she hopes to improve on her profile of international events from last year's World Para Swimming Championships in Singapore (September) and the World Para Swimming Series in Indianapolis, USA (April).

"I am improving in what I like to do. Hope to be better in Italy and qualify for the CWG, that is the goal this year. "I am aiming at being in the top 10 in the S9's 50m fly S9 but I also have 100m breaststroke, 100m back, and 200m IM (individual medley) events." Ssekintende also did classification in Indianapolis last year, where he was confirmed as an S9 swimmer. Italy is a chance for him to get grinding.

"I am looking forward to cutting my times and hopefully getting a chance to compete at the CWG. USA was good because I made better times than what I expected and I hope Italy will be better," Ssekintende, whose arm was damaged after he was pushed by a friend in school, said.



Ready. Ssekintende, Kukundakwe, Nakazibwe, and Muyunga hope for good fortunes in Italy. PHOTO/MAKHTUM MUZIRANSA