

Uganda Rowing partner with North Green School for talent identification

BY MAKHTUM MUZIRANSA

KAMPALA. Uganda Rowing have found a willing partner in The North Green School (TNGS) to start on the development of the next generation of rowers.

Last week on Thursday, the federation, in collaboration with Uganda Olympic Committee (UOC) launched a talent identification initiative hosted by TNGS at Elite Swim & Gym, Ntinda.

The pilot dubbed "From Classrooms to Oars" forms part of a broader national pathway project titled "Grassroots to Podium: Building Uganda's Inclusive Talent Identification Pathway for Rowing." Uganda Rowing aims to introduce students across schools in Uganda to the sport through a structured screening process that combines education and performance testing.

"Rowing in Uganda has enormous untapped potential," the body's general secretary and also a national team coach Batenga Nakisozi, said.

"By introducing the sport in schools and applying structured talent identification methods, we can discover athletes who might otherwise never have the opportunity to participate," said Nakisozi, who is also conducting and applying knowledge from her International Coaching Enrichment Certificate Program (ICECP) - a program she calls "a great stepping stone for those who are ready to persevere."

After a video introduction to the sport, the TNGS students, most of whom have a background in swim-

ming hence commendable cardiovascular fitness and water confidence - attributes that support both safety and long-term progression in other water-based sports, went through some screening tests before observing a live demonstration of indoor rowing by national team rower Elijah Namunyu.

In the thick of it

Before measuring each student's rowing performance and power output on the ergometer, manned by Nakisozi and fellow coach Abubaker Mayanja, the students went through the anthropometric station manned by their swim coach Abel Ddamulira to measure their height, weight, and arm span to assess physical attributes suited to rowing. Then went to the broad jump station, manned by Namunyu, to evaluate their lower-body power and explosive strength plus the counter movement jump station to assess their explosiveness, relative strength index, symmetry, and peak force.

The latter station was supervised by Byron Okuba, a Uganda Rugby Strength & Conditioning (S&C) coach and World Rugby S&C educator with an aim of bringing specialized expertise in athletic performance testing to the initiative and S&C training backed with data.

"These are some of the tests we do professionally to assess your fatigue levels, things coaches need to work on, track injuries. And from what (data) we have, there is a lot of potential (for the rowing federation) to work with," Okuba said after assessing 32 students.



Preparing. Coaches Nakisozi (white) and Mayanja (black) take North Green students through ergometer lessons. PHOTO / MAKHTUM MUZIRANSA