

Monday March 8, 2010.

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You are here: [Sunday Vision](#) » [Sport](#) » [Details](#)

[» To The New Vision](#)

WEEKLY

[FRONT PAGE](#)

[EDITORIAL](#)

[HOME](#)

[NATIONAL](#)

[SPORT](#)

[LETTERS](#)

[SPECIAL REPORT](#)

[FEATURE](#)

[POLITICAL GOSSIP](#)

[POLITICS](#)

[KAWA](#)

[PERSONAL FINANCE](#)

[ALIVE](#)

[FAMILY LIFE](#)

COLUMNISTS

[DR. IAN CLARKE](#)

[THE WEEK THAT WAS](#)

[JOSEPH KABULETA](#)

[CROSSFIRE](#)

[ALDRINE NSUBUGA](#)

SUNDAY MAGAZINE

[FASHION POLICE](#)

[BAD IDEA](#)

[TURNING POINT](#)

[PEOPLE](#)

[FEATURES](#)

[VARIETY](#)

[TABLE TALK](#)

[PLACES](#)

[CHILDREN FICTION](#)

[LIFESTYLE](#)

Uganda's cream of female athletes

SPORTS over the years has been dominated by men the world over. But there are women who have broken the chain Uganda being no exception.

The country has a group that has defied the odds by making a mark in their respective disciplines on the domestic and international stage. *Sunday Vision's* Usher Komugisha, presents the achievements of the group's key members ahead of the International Women's Day that falls on March 8.

Dorcus Inzikuru

She was the first Ugandan lady to win a major medal for Uganda after a group of men that includes the late John Akii-Bua.

The former police officer grabbed a 400m hurdles gold, the first ever for the country at the 1972 Olympic Games in Munich.

Inzikuru, dubbed the Ugandan gazelle, rose from a humbe background to become a household name.

Born in Arua, Inzzi, a tag preferred by her admirers, made an international debut at the World Youth Championship in 1999.

At the 2000 World Junior Championships, Inzzi running in the 5000m, stepped up gear by winning her first gold medal.

Inzzi made her maiden appearance at the Commonwealth Games in 2002 but finished outside the 5000m medal bracket in 4th position.

Her best sporting year was 2005 when she got gold in the 3000m steeplechase at the World Championships and at the World Athletics Final. She grabbed another gold over the same distance at the 2006 Commonwealth Games.

She took a break to give birth in 2007, but is now back in action.

Beatrice Ayikoru

It is unheard of to hold a position in the first year of a student at Makerere University but Ayikoru defied all odds to become an assistant sports minister in 1989/90 representing Mary Stuart hall.

She was an all-round athlete playing table tennis, volleyball, basketball, netball, chess and lawn tennis.

She later zeroed in on running and represented the country at the 1991 All Africa University Games in Cairo and at other foreign events.

Ayikoru made her mark, setting a national record (34:03.41) over the 10,000m distance in 1989.

The record stood for ten years before it was broken by Adero Nyakisi with a time of 33:02.01 at the national championship last July.

Ayikoru is currently the Uganda Athletics Federation secretary.

Susan Muwonge

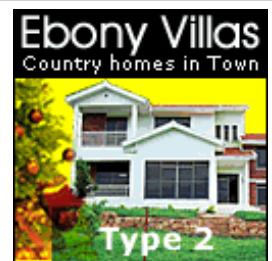
Muwonge is a teacher but to the rally fans, she is the most daring lady in the male dominated sport.

Muwonge made her first appearance in the sport in 2005 and two years later, she finished 5th overall in the Pearl of Africa Rally, a continental event with drivers from around the world. She won the Clubman championship the same year.

Muwonge, currently the leading lady driver referred to in rallying fraternity as the 'Super Lady' is keen to win the national championship title in future.

Peninah Kabenge

Being on the executive of over eight bodies is no mean achievement.



Kabenge, secretary of the Uganda Olympic Committee and a National Council of Sports member, got involved in sports while a student at Makerere University. She has another role as vice president of the International Woodball Federation.

Mary Musoke

She is the best lady table tennis player Uganda has event had.

Musoke has a rich collection of titles achieved mainly on the domestic front. The titles include the national championship. On the international stage, Musoke made three appearances at the Olympics, was at the World table tennis championship, the Commonwealth Games and at the All Africa Games.

Aya Nakitanda

The top lady swimmer has dominated the local stage and represented the country in several international events.

Nakitanda set a national record, clocking 29.38 in the 50m freestyle event at the Beijing Olympics in 2008. She also holds the East African women's 50m free style record.

There other achievers include Justine Bayiga, Judith Ayaa, Irene Ajambo, Farida Kyakutema, Margaret Bisereko, Hellen Alyek and Justine Bayigga.

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