

Vianney Nsimbe: Despite huge following, Fuba misses the point

Sports

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Tashobya

Bebe Cool will be launching his Kamwa ko music album tomorrow at Kyadondo rugby club; just a stone throw away from where the basketball play-offs will be held at the MTN arena, Lugogo.

Seeing how far Bebe Cool and the music industry has come in becoming lucrative, basketball can only copy and embrace the professionalism in the music industry. First and foremost, a number of teams in the basketball league are University teams.

Nkumba Marines, Ndejje Angels, KIU Titans, UCU Canons and Victoria Heaters, which was previously Makerere University Youth Heaters. Even Warriors' roots are at Kyambogo University.

But no structures to project a bright future for these teams is in place. Yet, they've an untapped resource that can ensure that happens. You see, most Universities have thousands of students, many of whom are willing to spend to associate with basketball.

Astute basketball promoters should have been focusing on how University councils can make their teams professional companies to ease on the money they spend to sustain them.

Just imagine if these University teams were companies limited by guarantee; able to convince at least 5000 to 10,000 of their students to contribute Shs 10,000 each per academic semester. This would be Shs 50 to 100 million to the team.

Here, with a 15-man squad, Shs 7.5 million would be required to settle a salary scale of Shs 500,000 for each player a month. Jobs would be created in the sport, hence professionalism.

Even after graduating, a player would stay since he has an income. The University can have a youth team of the upstarts that play in inter-University games before they graduate to the senior team.

If Norman Blick and company had stayed at Nkumba Marines, the 2005 and 2006 league champions wouldn't have been struggling as they're not being in the play-offs since 2007.

Of course there's a muted complexity in as far as how a University team can be a business entity. Well, I don't think there is anything that forbids a University from owning a company to do business. Victoria University registered its football team in the Super League as a company.

But for as long as basketball continues in its amateurism, stagnation is due. Yet this model would help create an enduring attachment between the students (fans) who raise the money and their team.

Indeed, it's a good way of building a fan-base. Because of these students' contribution, even after they've graduated, they would always remain affiliated. Right now, because most of these University teams haven't such a plan, their own students support the likes of Falcons and Power instead of their University teams.

That said, I noted with much dismay during the opening weekend of the play-offs that there was hardly any basketball fan with a replica jersey of their team. Through some of the funds collected from a supporting cast of students (fans), replica jerseys can be made and sold.

The multiplier effect of this is that these other teams not attached to Universities would now be indebted to go out and get fans too. Power had started growing a fan-base in 2009 on Facebook but nothing tangible has been realised since Peter Mubanda, the club's former administrator left.

All in all, Fuba, basketball's governing body has to take the initiative to steer change like Bebe Cool in his Kamwa ko album launch will inspire people especially our leaders to watch what they blurt out.

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