

The Uganda Secondary School Sports Association (USSSA)

A Glimpse into National Competitions and New Developments

The Uganda Secondary School Sports Association (USSSA) plays a pivotal role in shaping the landscape of school sports in Uganda. With a healthy structure and a wide array of sports categories, USSSA ensures that students from across the nation have the opportunity to showcase their athletic talents and compete at various levels. Here's an in-depth look at USSSA's national sports categories, tournaments, and exciting new developments for the current year.

National Sports Categories and Tournament Structure

USSSA oversees 18 distinct sports categories at the national level, ensuring a comprehensive representation of different athletic disciplines. The competition calendar kicks off at the district level each February, with Uganda's 160 districts engaging in preliminary matches. Successful teams advance to the zone level, which comprises 19 zones, with these qualifying rounds taking place in late March and early April.



Key National Tournaments

USSSA organizes four major national tournaments that highlight the competitive spirit and skill of Uganda's student-athletes:

1. National Football Boys Championship: This tournament spans 11 days and features 64 teams divided into 16 groups of four. Teams engage in a rigorous schedule of eight matches each, culminating in classification games to determine the finalists.

2. Ball Games 1: This championship covers a diverse range of sports, including football for girls, basketball 5x5, rugby 15, hockey, badminton, table tennis, and tennis. Approximately 5,500 students participate in this event, showcasing their talents across multiple disciplines.

3. Ball Games 2 and Athletics: Held concurrently in July, this tournament features athletics, netball, volleyball, rugby 7, handball, basketball 3×3, and cross-country. With around 6,000 students participating, it highlights the breadth of talent in both team and individual sports.

4. National Swimming Gala: This event serves as a qualifying tournament for the FEASSSA games, emphasizing the importance of swimming in the broader competitive landscape.

The FEASSSA Games

Top performers from USSSA tournaments have the chance to represent Uganda in the FEASSSA games. This year's FEASSSA games will be hosted by Uganda in Bukedea District, Mbale city, from August 16th to 27th. The games will attract 3,500 to 4,000 student-athletes from Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania, Rwanda, and South Sudan, creating a vibrant platform for international competition and cultural exchange.



New Developments and Initiatives

USSSA continues to evolve by introducing new sports categories and age groups. This year, the association has incorporated mind games into the sports roster and merged them with non-FEASSSA games. Additionally, new age category games (U16) in volleyball, basketball, and netball have been introduced. These games will take place from September 1st to 9th in Tororo city, further expanding the opportunities for young athletes.



Capacity Building and Training

A cornerstone of USSSA's approach is capacity building. The association conducts training courses in coaching, umpiring, refereeing, young reporting, and first aid. Each participating team is required to bring four additional students to engage in these courses, emphasizing the role of student involvement in sports administration. Currently, 60% of USSSA games are officiated by fellow students, and each team's assistant coach must be a trained student, reinforcing the commitment to student development and engagement.

USSSA Guiding Principles:

1. Mass Sport: Promoting widespread participation among students.
2. Exposure: Offering opportunities for students to compete at national and international levels.
3. Cost Sharing: Partnering with parents, schools, and the government to support sports programs.
4. Capacity Building: Training students and teachers to manage sports programs cost-effectively.
5. Age Category Sports: Implementing age-specific categories to cater to various developmental stages.



As USSSA continues to drive excellence and inclusivity in school sports, it remains dedicated to nurturing young talent and expanding the horizons of student-athletes across Uganda.