

**THE STUDY OF THE MANDATORY REGISTRATION OF SPORTS
FEDERATIONS AND ITS IMPACT ON SPORTS GOVERNANCE IN UGANDA**

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DECLARATION STATEMENT.

I, **KIZZA JULIUS**, a law student at Uganda Christian University, Mukono, affirm that the work in this research study is founded on my own research, and that this work has never been submitted to any other university or institution of higher learning to obtain any academic qualifications.

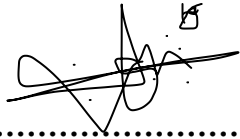
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APPROVAL.

This dissertation by **Kizza Julius** titled “**The study of the mandatory registration of sports federations and its impact on sports governance**” has been under my supervision and is approved for submission to the examining authority.



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ABSTRACT.

This research investigates the legal and practical implications of the mandatory registration of sports federations in Uganda as introduced under the National Sports Act, Cap. 151. The study critically examines the licensing procedures established by the Sports Act and the National Sports Regulations, 2025, highlighting both the intended improvements in sports governance and the significant challenges experienced by National sports federations during implementation.

Through analyzing of the National Sports Act, Cap 151, National Sports Regulations, 2025 and available literature on the topic. The study assesses the role of the National Council of Sports (NCS) and evaluates the impact of the registration of sports federations.

Key findings reveal that while the Act promotes national character, corporate legal status, and standardized governance, it also imposes heavy financial, administrative, and logistical burdens, particularly for emerging or underfunded federations.

The research concludes that although the legal framework has the potential to professionalize Uganda's sports sector, its effectiveness is hindered by implementation gaps, such as short compliance windows, lack of institutional support, and unrealistic coverage requirements.

The Study recommends a phased registration approach, fee restructuring, targeted government support and enhanced stakeholder engagement to ensure that the reforms genuinely strengthen sports governance and foster inclusive development across all sports disciplines.

DEDICATION.

This study is dedicated to my lovely my parents Mr. Muhiire Edward and Mrs. Nagawa Getrude, for their buoyancy and discipline they have imparted in me to finish this research study, special appreciation to the Robinson Family and Compassion International for all the support they have offered me during this academic journey. I also want to bestow this work to my Brothers and Sisters Peter Ssekaziga, Kembabazi Viola, Ssanyu Robinah, Nakalema Justine and Nassuna Gorret.

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LIST OF TABLES.

1. Table 1 List of registration and renewal Fees.
2. Table 2 List of Federations registered by the NCS.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS.

1. FIFA – FEDERATION OF INTERNATIONAL FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION.
2. FUFA – FEDERATION OF UGANDA FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION.
3. IFs – INTERNATIONAL FEDERATIONS.
4. IOC - INTERNATIONAL OLYMPIC COMMITTEE.
5. NCS – NATIONAL COUNCIL OF SPORTS.
6. NGBs – NATIONAL GOVERNING BODIES.
7. NSA – NATIONAL SPORTS ACT, CAP. 151.
8. SI – STATUTORY INSTRUMENT.
9. UGANDA OLYMPIC COMMITTEE

GENERAL BACKGROUND.

1.1 Introduction.

In the genesis, sport was just about leisure and recreation. Individuals and communities could gather to play different games. When sport gradually grew into a great aspect of unity and socialization around the globe, it necessitated the need to form sports federations as a way of promoting sports governance.

It is paramount to note that when persons unite for a sole or particular reason it is unavoidable to have people with differing interests¹, thus creating a need for regulating and registration of such sports federations to ensure that there is good governance of sport.

Governments worldwide have recognized the importance of the sports federations and have as such committed themselves to supporting the independence of these sports federations². This support, however is with the assumption that the sports federations and associations observe proper governance and licensing principles³.

Licensing in sport is aimed at ensuring that there is organization, transparency and quality in sports federations. Upon realizing this the Ugandan parliament passed a national sports Bill which was signed into law on 17th August 2023 marking a pivotal moment in Uganda's sports sector.

A national sports federation is defined as an organization registered under the act to develop, promote, manage and regulate a professional sport⁴.

¹ Jörg Krieger, Lindsay Parks Pieper and Ian Ritchie, 'International Federations and National Governing Bodies: The Historical Development of Institutional Policies in Response to Challenging Issues in Sport' (2020) 51 Sport History Review 1., page 17

² Jack Anderson, 'Sports Law' [2023] Sports Law 1, page 30

³ Sports Law in Uganda, How Sports Law Encompasses more areas of Law than any other Legal Discipline, by Kitaka Aziz. L.L.B, Makerere University, Page 2

⁴ National Sports Act, Cap 151.

Sports governance according to **Wauna Olouch**⁵ deals with coming out clear about the applied rules or procedure versus the commercial, social, and economic measures related to the management of the sport. Ascertain that sports need to achieve high standards in relation to transparency, democracy and accountability since the games are based on fair competition which are ethically conducted.

The licensing process of sports federations in Uganda is a crucial component in ensuring compliance with legal frameworks, fostering professionalism, and promoting sports law. In Uganda, the licensing process involves various regulatory bodies including National Council for Sports. However, challenges such as bureaucratic delays, lack of clear guidelines and financial constraints by the regulatory bodies affect the licensing process and governance of sports federations.

This study aims at examining the registration process of sports federations in Uganda, its impact on sports governance, identify challenges faced by sports associations and propose recommendations for improvement.

1.2 Background of the study.

Generally, at the genesis, sport and sports federations worldwide were not regulated or licensed. It was simply people playing a particular sport coming together and have fun. As time went on, the enthusiasts felt a need to organize themselves to guarantee security of play, make the games more interactive with winner and pride in sight⁶.

⁵ Wauna Oluoch, 'The Sport Legal Framework in Kenya' (2020) 8 Kenya Law 1 page 3 <www.humansciences.ku.ac.ke/images/stories/2016.>. Accessed on 26. March. 2025

⁶ Ian S Blackshaw, *International Sports Law: An Introductory Guide*. Page 23, pp 22 – 25.

After sport attracted a lot of attention from the public who now not only played but enjoyed the passive leisure of watching the sport. Sport enthusiasts started forming different sports organizations and federations. The main body within the historiography of sport focuses on the international Olympic committee (IOC)⁷.

The IOC first acknowledged the important role of international federations (IFs) in the 1910's. During the 1914 Olympic Congress, IOC president Pierre de Coubertin hesitantly accepted that the IFs would be the main bodies to determine amateur rules for their respective sports⁸.

The international sports federations (IFs) govern global sport. There are more than 100 IFs (members of the Global Association of International Sports Federations (GAISF), of which approximately sixty (60) have their headquarters in Switzerland. IFs range from the powerful FIFA (Federation Internationale de Football Association) which has been based in Zurich since 1932 to the international Washu Federations (IWUF), recently established its headquarters in Lausanne to govern the Chinese martial art also known as Kung Fu⁹.

International Federations act as Umbrella organizations for the national federations of their sport, in turn national federations and state federations oversee clubs, award championships, cities and counties, negotiate with sponsors and broadcasters and fight the excesses of sport such as doping and corruption¹⁰.

⁷ Jean Loup Chappelet, Josephine Clausen and Emmanuel Bayle, 'Governance of International Sports Federations' [2019] Routledge Handbook of Sport Governance, 197.

⁸ Krieger, Pieper and Ritchie (n 1).

⁹ Rocco Porreca, 'Chapter 16 Governance of International Sports Federations'. Pages 292

¹⁰ Ibid.9

Zeroing to the Ugandan legal landscape.

It is material to note that from way back, the natives of Uganda are believed to have engaged in games like boat racing, Omweso and wrestling which were largely played during the leisure time¹¹.

It is important to note, that most of the sports disciplines in their current form were introduced in Uganda by the British colonial government in the first half of the 20th Century¹².

After the colonization of Uganda, the Anglican Church introduced the game of football which is played until today¹³. The first sports association in Uganda was formed in 1924 under the name of **Kampala Football Association** which was later renamed **Federation of Uganda Football Association (FUFA)** in 1950¹⁴. After the independence in 1962, the government of Uganda began formalizing sports management, leading to the establishment of more sports federation.

The National Council of Sports Act, Chapter 48, Laws of Uganda, 1964 was the first Ugandan legislation enacted to govern specifically the sport. This has been replaced by the **National Sports Act Chapter 151**. The long title of this act provides for the registration of National sports federations and the continued existence of the National council of sports, to provide for the administration and management of sports in Uganda¹⁵.

¹¹ The rebirth of Omweso' (2012) The New Vision. www.newvision.co.ug, Accessed on 25.02.2025.

¹² Mwisuka A, Njororai, W.W.S & Onywera V, Contributions of Sports towards National Development in Kenya, available at www.humansciences.ku.ac.ke/images/stories/2016. Accessed on 1/3/2025.

¹³ Sports Law in Uganda, How Sports Law Encompasses more areas of Law than any other Legal Discipline, by Kitaka Aziz. L.L.B, Makerere University, Page 3

¹⁴ Swaiibu Kanyiike 'Tracing Uganda's Football history' The Daily monitor (Kampala 25th February, 2017).

¹⁵ National Sports Act, Cap 151.

Uganda has over 50 sports federations, all regulated by the National Council of Sports under the ministry of education and sports. These federations include the Federation of Ugandan Football Association (FUFA), Uganda Rugby Union (URU), Uganda Boxing Federation (UBF), Uganda Netball Federation (UNF), Federation of Uganda Basketball Association (FUBA), Uganda Luddo Federation and many others¹⁶.

The wording of the National Sports Act chapter 151, specifically sections 10 and 11, clearly introduces a policy of mandatory registration of all national sports federations. The act also provides that the National Sports federation applying for registration becomes a body corporate with perpetual succession and may, in its corporate name, acquire, hold and dispose of property, sue or be sued¹⁷.

1.3 Statement of the Problem.

The National Sports Act Cap 151, makes it a mandatory requirement for all the sports federations to register with the National Sports Council. ¹⁸.

Despite the licensing process of sports federation in Uganda being a crucial component in ensuring compliance with legal frameworks, there are a number of reported challenges faced during the process including bureaucratic delays, lack of clear guidelines for the licensing process, financial constraints on the side of the National Sports Council to expedite the process. The new federation registration requirements are also been considered by many sports stakeholders none viable. Thus, necessitating this research.

¹⁶ Isaac Christopher Lubogo, The Law of sports and Entertainment, First Edition 2021. Page 97 & 98

¹⁷ A condensed overview of the National Sports Act 2023, <https://kakuruadvocates.co.ug/blogs/condensed-overview-national-sports-act-2023> Accessed on 1st March. 2025

¹⁸ The National Sports Act, Cap, 151.

1.4 Objectives of the study.

This research study had both general objectives and specific objective.

1.4.1 General Objective of the Study.

The general objective of the study is to examine the registration process of the sports federation, the challenges faced by these federations during the process of registration and the impact of registration on the governance of sport in Uganda.

1.4.2 Specific Objectives of the study.

1. To examine the existing licensing procedures for the sports federations in Uganda.
2. To identify the challenges faced by the sports federations in acquiring licenses.
3. To assess the role of the National Sports council in facilitating the licensing process.
4. To analyze the National legal framework and the best practice in the registration of sports federations
5. To propose recommendations for improving the efficiency of the licensing process.

1.5 Research Questions.

1. What are the current licensing requirements and procedures for sports federations?
2. What is the role of the National Sports council in facilitating the licensing process.
3. What challenges do sports federations face in obtaining licenses?
4. What measures can be taken to streamline and improve the licensing process?

1.6 Significance of the study.

This research provides insights for policymakers, sports administrators, and stakeholders to streamline the licensing process and enhance the operational capacity of sports federations in Uganda.

This research shall add to the existing literature about the licensing and operation of sports federations, as the literature available is meant to inform the key stakeholders about the registration and operation of sports federations.

1.7 Justification of the study.

This study will examine the licensing procedure and the legal framework of sports federations and the role played by the National Council for Sports. The study shall also identify the different challenges faced during registration and the legal framework of sports federations and it will furthermore make recommendations to the challenges faced during the registration and operation of sports federations in Uganda.

By undertaking this study, the researcher aimed to contribute to filling the gap in the literature and to contribute to an improved understanding of the licensing process and legal framework of sports federations in Uganda.

1.8 Scope of the study.

1.8.1 Subject scope/content scope.

The study shall focus on examining the licensing process and legal framework of sports federations and it will rely on literature review, textbooks, research papers, research interviews and journals.

The subject of this scope involves current sports law regimes governing both national and international laws governing the registration and governance of sports federations but mainly focused on the National Sports Act, Cap 151.

1.8.2 Geographical scope.

This study will mainly be centered on Uganda and in order to have the proper global view, a comparison will be made on the neighboring countries and developed nations. It will analyze the

applicability and viability of the requirements of registration of sports federations under the National Sports Act, Cap 151 in Uganda.

1.8.3 Time scope.

This research will be conducted between February 2025 to May 2025.

1.9 Literature review.

This expanse focuses mainly on the exploration and analysis of the already available literature on the registration and the legal framework of sports federations that is to say how sports federation are licensed and registered, challenges faced in registration of sports federations and the literature relation to the regulation of sports federations, at the national, regional and international level.

It is paramount to note that there are already different scholars and writers who have already made literature expressing their views about the registration and governance of sports federations.

This literature followed the stepladders put down by **M. Ling Pan**¹⁹. This requires reading literature around the topic of study for an overview, establishing specific resolutions, evaluating and interpreting literature, synthesizing the literature, appreciating or critiquing the literature and showing how the proposed work will be different from the existing literature.

First of all, the **Olympic Charter**²⁰, is the most recognized legal document governing sport and sports federations/organizations. It is paramount to note that the Olympic Charter in recognition of the International federations asserts that in order to develop and promote the Olympic movement and sport, the IOC may recognize as IFs international non-government organizations governing

¹⁹ Ling P, Preparing Literature review: Quantitative and Qualitative Approaches. (2007) 3rd edition. Page 170

²⁰ International Olympic Committee, 'Olympic Charter' [2024] Olympic Charter 1 <www.olympic.org>.

one or several sports at the world level, which extends by reference to those organizations recognized by the IFs as governing such sports at the national level.

The charter also provides that the statutes, practices and activities of the IFs within the Olympic movement must be in conformity with the Olympic Charter.

The researcher in this study illustrated the extent of Ugandan federations have complied with Olympic charter statutes governing IFs.

The second literature reviewed by the researcher is by **Isaac Christopher Lubogo** in his book, **The Law of Sports and entertainment**²¹, wherein he defines a national sports association as an organization promoting and supervising a particular sport throughout the country and includes federations. The author in the above book does not give the difference between a sports association and a sports federation. This research aimed at differentiating the two and it will also focus on the differences between the sports associations and federations in regards to registration and governance.

Christopher Lubogo in his book on sports law, also notes that sports federations have been previously registered under Societies act and **Section 1(1)**²², was to the effect that trustees or a trustee may be appointed by anybody or association of persons established for any religious, educational, literary, scientific, social or charitable purpose, and such trustees or trustee may apply, in the manner hereafter mentioned, to the minister for a certificate of registration of the trustees or trustee of such body or association of persons as a corporate body.

²¹ Isaac Christopher Lubogo, *The Law of sports and Entertainment*, First Edition 2021, Page 81.

²² The Trustees Incorporation Act Cap 165

In addition to the above literature, the researcher also reviewed, **Isaac Christopher Lubogo**, notes that Regulations 3(1) and 4(4)²³ of National Council for Sports Regulations, 2014, made it mandatory for all sports associations to incorporate under the laws of Uganda, but not as companies respectively. It also provided that the council shall not register a national sports association unless that association meets the requirements of a national sports association specified in Regulations 3,5,6,7 and 8. The researcher has analyzed what the new National Sports Act adopted from the 2014 National Council for Sports Regulations in regards to registration and governance of the sports federations in Uganda.

The author in his book analyzed above did not envisage the current legislation and the requirements for the registration of sports federations. The research will put into considerations the new changes and requirements brought in by the National Sports Act, Cap.151.

Furthermore, **Bruyninckx**²⁴, reported that initially the sporting systems were able to govern themselves without government or political interference. However, nowadays, sporting systems have not been able to progress effectively as the government and the political environment have now commercialized the game and have interfered with stakeholder's autonomy in the decision making.

This study indicates how the autonomy of sports federations have been affected by the mandatory requirement of registration of sports federations in Uganda by the National Council for Sports.

²³ The National Council of Sports Regulations, S.I – 38 of 2014.

²⁴ Bruyninckx, H. (2012) Sports governance; between the obsession with rules and Regulation and the Aversion to being ruled and Regulated, page 152.

In the research paper by **Phillips**²⁵ he notes that the governmentalization of sport might seem inconsistent in a time after utmost academic works expresses of a departure of the state from the supremacy in game to the disadvantage of the old-style hierarchic self-governance. Thus, around is a swing from the definitive one-sided upright networks of specialist towards one horizontal procedures of networked governance.

In regard to the African region., sporting sectors have been seen as either cultural industry or an activity of leisure rather than a business activity and therefore the governments have not been in support in terms of resources needed. In addition, since in sporting, patriotic sentiments might be involved, they become very attractive to most politicians and they are given some exceptions and special treatments granted. In the Ugandan context where the government has not been giving a lot of funding to the sports sector this was noted in National Sports Council reports²⁶. This research will show how the registration of the sports federation will address this problem and give recommendations to the same.

In the research journal by **Pieth**²⁷, stated that recently, sports have been commercialized hence exposing governance failure in terms of bribery and corruption as well as being exposed to predatory and various ways of world capitalization. This has led to the highly questioning of the sports self – governance. More debate and arguments have increased and this has led to more oversight and control throughout the universal due to many rules and norms which are transgressive and with lots of scandals. This resonates with spirit behind the enacting of the National Sports Act Cap 151 in 2023, which under part 3 provides for the registration of the sports

²⁵ Phillips, R.O (2012). (Global governance and democratic accountability; In R.E Goodwin and P. Pettit (eds). Contemporary political philosophy; an anthropology. Oxford UK; Wiley – Blackwell, Page 47.

²⁶ Christy Davis and Tina Weyland, 'S Trategic P Lan , 2013-2014' 2013. Page 91.

²⁷ Pieth, B (Good governance (Paradima Baru Manajem Pembangunan) Jakarta; pernerbit Universitas Indonesia. UI – Press. (2011) Page 121.

federations in order to ensure transparency and accountability. This research will indicate how the mandatory registration of sports federations is going to improve on the sports governance.

The researcher also reviewed an International journal of sports policy by **Geeraert et al**²⁸, stated that fulfilling good governance requirements indicate being certain that the involved industry is able of taking sporting to the next level of development and make it competitive among worldly sports. In addition, Sports have various benefits including enhancing health among people in terms of physical exercises, being able to bring about values, increase coordination and organization among people, leading to group cohesion and providing recreation background. It is reported that the vital issues such as social cultural values which are brought about as a result of sporting are negatively affected by the corruptions among governance.

Currently worldwide is in pursuit of the good governance and the government have been debating about it in an increasing manner. Therefore, people have been constantly talking and urging the government to heed higher standards of democratic representation, accountability and transparency. Thus, good governance has been mentioned with characterized such as epitomized by predictable, entangled and open policy making, a bureaucracy entangled with professionals, accountability, a strong civil society participation in public affairs such as sports and all behaving under rule of law.

The new development has shown increasing influence on sporting by international NGOs which has led to lack of good governance in both local and international games thus leading to detrimental repercussion on the society as a whole.

²⁸ Geeraert, A. and scheerder, J. The Governance network of European Football: Introducing new governance approaches to steer football at EU level. International journal of sport policy, (2012), Page, 136

Sports federations need to take care of their respective sports in a transparent and responsible manner.

Katawa²⁹, reported that there is a lot of potential in sports federations producing even better governances through putting some corrective measures such as identification of the knowledge gaps to be filled. He added that principles behind good governance are that there should be account of how relevant an organization is in achieving the nation goals.

The researcher did not indicate the proper procedure on how these sports federations can account, in the current study the research will indicate how sports federations are supposed to furnish accountabilities currently to their regulatory bodies.

Edwards and Clough³⁰, argued that the operation standards in other sectors might not work in sporting sector. Therefore, sports federations must be able to sit together with other members of governance as well as other stakeholders and come up with elements which can be applied to sporting for their success.

Foster and Pope³¹, stated that regardless of many sporting stakeholders having effort to come up with principles of running the sporting, there are still some gaps which involves coming up with core and standardized principles on the same. He added that it is evidenced that there is no enough empirical evidence which indicates clear internal working procedures for sporting. High-profile

²⁹ Katwala, (2000), Governance as Theory: Five prepositions. International social justice journal, Vol 50, No. 1: 17 - 28.

³⁰ Edwards, C. J, & Cough C. (2005). Good Governance; developing effective board management relations in public and voluntary organizations, Page 204

³¹ Foster, L and Pope, M (1999), The scope of EU Government, In; H. Schmitt and J. Thomassen. Political representation and legitimacy in the European Union Oxford university press, Pages 245

scandals related to corruption teach us that there probably is something wrong, but we have no clear image of the magnitude of the structural organizational issues in the governance of sports.

The researcher in this study will indicate how the stakeholders are being involved in the governance and regulation of the sports federations in Uganda since the new law requires for the requirement of national character.

Hood and Lodge³², reported that the biggest failure in sporting which is associated with governance is the lack of transparency in most of the sporting operations and activities which has led to a lot of corruptions subsequently, the transparency is associated with accountability which is core functions and indicator of a good governance. Good governance should be accountable in that they are required to always inform the stakeholders of any decisions and the reasons for their choices of a given strategy.

Since these organizations are charged with taking care of a public good, **Henry and Lee**³³, argue that their inner workings should as far as possible be open to public scrutiny. Moreover, since sport, both at amateur and at professional level, relies heavily on public sector support, federations are also expected to demonstrate a high degree of accountability to their surrounding community.

The key concerns in relation to self – governing procedures in governance of sports are lack of members involvement. Arnstein³⁴, stated that involvement of the individuals who are government by their authority is the foundation of democracy, a noble idea which everyone appreciates and recognize. Sports industry, have traditionally kept their main constituencies away from the policy and procedures which help them make their decisions and forms rules that govern their operation.

³² Hood, C & Lodge, M (2006). Competency, Bureaucracy, and Public management reform, Page 333.

³³ Henry, M and Lee, I (2004) Audit sector public, (2nd edition), Page 111

³⁴ Arnstein, M. W. (2009). The United Nations and Global Commerce, New York: United Nations, Page 266.

In addition, as a result of procedural governance related to sporting, their policies are never formulated in consultation with stakeholders such as athletes.

Sports governance deals with coming out clear about the applied rules or procedure verses the commercial, social, and economic measures related to the management of the sporting. Ascertain that sports need to achieve high standards in relation to transparency, democracy and accountability since the games are based on fair competition which are ethically conducted.

Ethics Audits and Corporate Governance³⁵; The text begins by observing that despite the burgeoning literature on governance, little research effort has to date been devoted to examining the term in relation to the organization, administration and management of sports organizations. This elucidates the research at hand to build onto the still limited literature.

It is further noted that the raising interest in sports governance has also been cultivated by concerns about the management of amateur sports organizations in light of a significant shift from volunteer – run kitchen table operations to organizations with professional managers attempting to function in a highly rational, bureaucratic manner. But with the sports industry on a steady rise, there is a need to have a well-defined structure of its governance, and Uganda can't just seat back play the spectator role at the rest of the world.

In the research paper by **Rocco P. Porreca**³⁶, he notes that the evolution of sports has not only led to an increase in commercialization, but also an increase in the need to improve its regulations. He further writes that despite sports evolution and the complexities which come with it, the overall governance and regulations international Federations has not changed much.

³⁵ John M. Scott Fleming (2007) Page 147.

³⁶ .Rocco Porreca, 'Chapter 16 Governance of International Sports Federations'. Page 297

In the same research paper, the author proclaims that concept of good governance and registration of sports federations is not entirely new. The concept has been a topic of conversation surrounding governance and registration for a number of years. In 2001, it was the key component and discussion topic at the first conference on the governance of sport in Europe (FIA, 2001). The conversation on governance and registration of sports federations was a self-regulation of these initiatives.

The gap in this research paper is that it considered self-regulations of the sports federations which is no longer the case now. The research will elaborate more on how the sports federations are regulated currently.

The author also notes that the introduction of Key governance principles and Basic indicators by the Association of Summer Olympic international federation (ASOFI) exemplifies self-regulation.

Kenyan model.

In the research paper by Wauna Oluoch³⁷, he indicates that Sports Act, 2013 creates the office of the Registrar of Sports responsible for registration and regulation of sports organizations and multi sports bodies representing sports organizations, licensing of professional sports activities and professional sports persons and arbitration disputes that may arise between sports organizations.

He indicates that every sports organization must be registered with the office of the Registrar of Sports to acquire legality. Any sports organization that is not registered is unlawful entity and cannot benefit from the privileges and rights given under the Kenyan sports act³⁸.

³⁷ Oluoch (n 5).

³⁸ The sports Registration Regulations, 2016.

In the Kenyan context, addressing the challenges of poor governance of sports organization in Kenya, the act stipulates that certain minimum organizational and constitutional requirements must be met by every sports associations before it may be recognized by the Sports Council³⁹. Each constitution of a sports organizations in Kenya must contain the prescribed provisions set out in the act. Among them is the requirement that only Kenyan citizens can be officials of national sports organizations in the capacity of chairperson, secretary and treasurer. The constitution must also provide that elections of officials of the sports organization shall be held at regular intervals of periods between two and four years.

The registrar of sports has the power to cancel a certificate of registration of sports organization under the act where it is established to his or her satisfaction, upon giving the sports organization audience, that the registration was obtained through misrepresentation or non – disclosure of material facts, the organization has violated the conditions upon which the registration was granted and or the sports organizations is guilty of breach of the law.

The Kenyan Sports Act, 2013 is also to the effect that the Registrar has the duty to monitor the management and administration of all registered sports organizations to ensure compliance with their constitutions, rules and the law. To discharge this duty, the officer has power to inspect books, accounts and records of sports organizations⁴⁰.

The author however noted that the leadership and management of sports organizations in Kenya are still bedeviled with wrangles, personalization and lack of transparency and accountability.

³⁹ Section 4(b) of the Kenyan sports Act 2013.

⁴⁰ Section 52 of the Kenyan sports Act.

This research paper was concluded by the case of **Eliud Mutali Vs Registrar of Sports & Another**⁴¹, the sports tribunal observed that; it is an unfortunate feature of sports governance and sports disputes in Kenya. Too often, individuals see federations as their personal property to be controlled and used as they see fit, with no consideration for the interests of the athletes for whose benefit these federations are intended to exist. The tribunal will not countenance this. Where disputes of this nature exist, they must be shown to be bonafide disputes brought for the benefit of the federation and the athletes who play the particular sport and not ego fights for the control of a federation.

The work reviewed above focuses on the registration of sports federations and how it impacts the governance of sport and it has shown how this research will fill the gaps in the literature on the topic above.

1.10 Research Methodology.

This part of the study will cover the scope within which the data was collected and the different ways in which it was further analyzed to achieve the intended objective of this study. It will involve the different methods of data collection, data analysis and presentation of data.

1.11 Research Design.

This research shall employ a mixed research approach. The data to be collected will include both qualitative and quantitative data. The qualitative data will be mainly employed to net out facts, which will be subsequently proven by quantitative data. In some circumstances the figures will give an insight into the problem.

⁴¹ Eliud Mutali Vs Registrar of sports; (2019) eKLR, Page 101.

The main methods to be employed in data collection are, desk research from the available literature on the topic. Field research in form of interviews with stakeholders will also be set up to provide on ground information.

1.12 Data sources.

The data will be gathered from textbooks, research journals, e-resources, interviews with officials from sports federations, National council for sports, sports lawyers and sports journalists.

1.13 Research Ethics.

This research will fully comply with generally accepted ethical research principles to present original work. Where information is obtained from different literature the authors of the information have been duly acknowledged. The researcher will use the OSCOLA referencing style.

1.14 Chapter Synopsis.

This research study consists of four chapters. Chapter one covers the general introduction to the topic of study including the history of sports federations in the world and Uganda, it provides the background of the study indicating what the study is about, it also sets out the problem statement, significance of the study, rationale, scope and methodology, literature review, methodology and chapter synopsis. The second chapter discusses the non-legal framework of the study. The third chapter provides a detailed legal framework of registration and governance of sports federations. The fourth chapter provides for the findings, challenges and recommendations of the study.

CHAPTER TWO.

2 NON-LEGAL ASPECTS OF SPORTS FEDERATIONS MANDATORY REGISTRATION.

2.1 Introduction.

This chapter delves into the critical non-legal dimensions of this sports regulatory shift, examining the practical, financial, social and administrative consequences for sports federations and the broader sports ecosystem in Uganda. By analyzing these multifaceted aspects, the researcher aims at providing a comprehensive understanding of how mandatory registration is re-shaping sports governance and the challenges faced by the federations during registration on the ground.

2.2 Financial strain and Resource allocation.

One of the most significant non-legal aspects of the mandatory registration requirement of sports federations is the financial burden it imposes on sports federations⁴², this can be particularly challenging for the federations representing less popular niche sports that struggle to attract sponsorships or generate significant revenue. It is also paramount to note that the imposition of these fees raises concerns about equity and inclusivity within the sports sector. The debate surrounding these fees highlights a fundamental tension between the governments need for regulation and oversight and the financial realities faced by many sports organizations in Uganda.

2.3 The logistical challenge of National presence.

It is noteworthy that, beyond the financial implications, the requirement for sports federations to demonstrate a significant national presence presents a substantial logistical challenge. The National Sports Act stipulates that national sports federations must have participation in at least

⁴² Sports bodies beg for extension to comply with new law - Daily Monitor, 2025 <https://www.monitor.co.ug/uganda/sports/other-sport/sports-bodies-beg-for-extension-to-comply-with-new-law-5004728>. Accessed on 24. April.

75% of Uganda's districts. Achieving and maintaining such widespread coverage demands considerable effort and resources, particularly for sports that require specialized infrastructure or have a limited following in certain regions.⁴³

The National Council for Sports emphasizes the need for the perpetual need in these districts, requiring ongoing engagement rather than sporadic events. This expectation necessitates the establishment of sustainable structures and programs at the grassroots level across a vast geographical area, posing a significant hurdle for many federations, especially those that have historically been concentrated in urban centers⁴⁴.

The feasibility of enforcing such stringent national presence requirements has been questioned by various stakeholders, who argue that the government should provide more support for sports development at the local level.

2.4 Administrative Burden and Capacity.

The mandatory registration requirement of sports federations also introduces significant administrative burden on sports federations. It is paramount to note that the application for registration of sports federations requires the submission of a wide range of documents including constitutions, financial reports, membership lists, and activity reports. The annual renewal process further necessitates continuous compliance and regular updating of this information. The need to realign constitutions with the new act and establish governance structures that meet the stipulated

⁴³ National Sports Act 2023: A game changer or a challenge for - New Vision, https://www.newvision.co.ug/category/sports/national-sports-act-2023-a-game-changer-or-a-NV_203183 Accessed on 25th. April. 2025

⁴⁴ Sports Act to be tested with registration guidelines - Daily Monitor, <https://www.monitor.co.ug/uganda/sports/other-sport/sports-act-to-be-tested-with-registration-guidelines-4980686> Accessed on 27th. April. 2025

requirements adds to the administrative workload⁴⁵. Many federations have expressed concerns about their relatively short timeframe provided for compliance, especially considering the delayed commencement of the registration procedures.

2.5 Impact on Athlete Development and Support.

It is paramount to note that the mandatory requirement of registration of sports federations, indirectly impact athlete development and support. This comes in the way that if federations are struggling to meet registration requirements and cover associated costs, they may have fewer resources available to invest in the training programs, provide equipment, and support athlete's participation in competitions.

2.6 Conclusion.

In conclusion, the chapter mainly discusses the non-legal surrounding the mandatory registration of sports federations in Uganda and its impact on sports governance.

The next chapter which is chapter three majorly refers to the analysis of the legal framework governing the requirement of the mandatory registration of sports federations and its impact on sports governance.

⁴⁵ BMAU BRIEFING PAPER (2/22) November 2022 - Management of Uganda's Sports Economy - Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development, , <https://archive.finance.go.ug/sites/default/files/Publications/BMAU%20Briefing%20Paper%202-22-Management%20of%20Uganda%E2%80%99s%20Sports%20Economy%20-%20%20A%20passing%20opportunity.pdf> Accessed April 26, 2025

CHAPTER THREE.

3 ANALYSIS OF THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK GOVERNING REGISTRATION AND GOVERNANCE OF SPORTS FEDERATIONS IN UGANDA.

3.1 Introduction

This chapter will analyze the regulatory framework governing registration national sports federations and its impact on sports governance.

The realm of sports governance has gained increasing recognition for its pivotal role in fostering integrity, ensuring accountability, and promoting the holistic development of sports disciplines. Effective governance structures within sports organizations are essential for maintaining fair play, attracting investment, and ultimately elevating the standard of sports both nationally and internationally.

In Uganda the sports sector has historically been governed by outdated legislation, primarily the National Council of Sports Act of 1964, which was enacted during a time when sports were largely viewed as a leisure pursuit rather than the significant professional and economic force it has become today⁴⁶. Recognizing this paradigm shift, the Ugandan government enacted the National Sports Act, Cap 151, a landmark piece of legislation intended to modernize the regulatory landscape for sports in the country. It is trite law that this new act directly addresses the registration and governance of national sports federations, aiming to create a more structured and accountable environment for sports development.

⁴⁶ National Sports Act 2023: A game changer or a challenge for - New Vision, https://www.newvision.co.ug/category/sports/national-sports-act-2023-a-game-changer-or-a-NV_203183
Accessed on 22. April. 2025

This chapter undertakes a comprehensive analysis of the national and international legal regime and regulatory framework, focusing specifically on the provisions governing creation, registration and governance of sports federations.

3.2 LEGAL STRUCTURE.

3.2.1 The 1995 Constitution of Uganda as amended.

In the Ugandan context the 1995 Constitution of the Republic of Uganda⁴⁷ is the supreme law of the Land and its binding on all people and authorities.

The 1995 constitution provides for sport under **Objective XVII** and provides for recreation. It states in detail that the state shall promote recreation and sports for the citizens in Uganda.

In addition, the **Constitution under Article 8A (1)**⁴⁸, is to the effect that Uganda shall be administered based on the values of national interest and common good enshrined in the national objectives and directive principles and under Article 8A (2) stipulates that parliament shall make all relevant laws for purposes of giving full effect to clause (1) of this Article. Therefore, this article empowers parliament to make laws so as to put into force the different objectives that are postulated for in the 1995 Constitution of Uganda as amended has different provisions within the constitution that can be used to regulate the sports sector in the country.

It is pertinent to note that, **Article 29 of the 1995 Constitution** protects and promotes the fundamental rights and freedoms including the freedom of assembly and association. That is to say freedom of forming, and joining associations and civic organizations. It is this Article that grants the right to sports stakeholders to form sports federations.

⁴⁷ The 1995 Constitution of Uganda, as amended.

⁴⁸ The 1995 Constitution of Uganda, as amended.

3.2.2 The National sports Act Cap 151.

The cornerstone of sports regulation concerning the registration of sports federations in Uganda is the National Sports Act, Cap 151. Part (III) of this act is dedicated to the registration of national sports associations and federations. It lays out the criteria, processes, and obligations for the sports federations.

Section 10⁴⁹ of the Act outlines the **Eligibility of Registration**, establishing a fundamental requirement for a national sports federation to possess a national character. This national character is specifically defined by two primary conditions, that is to say participation of Ugandans in the respective sports discipline across at least seventy-five percent (75%) of all the districts in Uganda, and the election of the federation's leadership by an annual general assembly comprising individuals drawn from at least half (50%) of the country's district.

The process of **Application for Registration** is detailed in **Section 11 of the Act**⁵⁰. An eligible national sports federation must apply to the **National Council of Sports (NCS)** in the manner prescribed by regulations made under the **National Sports Act Cap 151** and upon payment of the stipulated application fee. It is trite law that the application necessitates the submission of comprehensive information, including the applicants name and address, details of its leadership and governance structure, the sources of its funds, the name and address of its accounting officer, the specific sports discipline it intends to manage, its official symbols and colors, and its national and international affiliations, where applicable.

Accompanying the application must be several mandatory documents, a certified copy of the federation's constitution, a certified copy of its certificate of incorporation, a comprehensive list

⁴⁹ The National Sports Act, Cap 151.

⁵⁰ The National Sports Act, Cap 151.

of the federation members, a detailed report of the sports activities conducted within the year preceding the application, a list of the annual general assembly at which the current leaders were elected and evidence of payment of the application fee.

Section 12 of the Sports Act⁵¹, governs the Consideration of Application by the Council. Upon receiving an application, the National Council for Sports is mandated to publish it in the Uganda Gazette and in a media outlet with wide circulation, thereby inviting objections from the public. The handling of any objections received is to be conducted as per the procedures outlined in the regulations.

The Council retains the authority to reject an application under specific circumstances⁵², including the existence of another national sports federation already registered for the proposed sports discipline, the applicant's failure to meet the eligibility criteria stipulated in section 10, the proposed name being deemed misleading or discriminatory, or the submission of false information by the applicant.

In the event of an applications rejection, the council is obligated to notify the applicant in writing, providing clear reasons for the rejection and offering an opportunity for the applicant to be heard.

It is worth noting that **Section 13**⁵³ is to the effect that, upon being satisfied that an applicant meets all the prescribed requirements, the council proceeds with **Registration of the Federation**. The council will register the national sports federation and issue a certificate of registration in the prescribed form. This certificate may include specific terms and conditions determined by the council and serves as conclusive evidence of the federations authorization to operate as the national

⁵¹ The National Sports Act, Cap 151.

⁵² Mandate | National Council of Sports, <https://www.ncs.go.ug/about/mandate>, Accessed on 22. April. 2025

⁵³ The National Sports Act, Cap. 151.

governing body for its sport in Uganda. It is key to note that the certificate of registration is valid for a period of one year from the date of its issuance.

In addition, **Section 14** of the Act addresses the **Renewal of Certificate of Registration**. A national sports federation wishing to renew its registration must apply to the council for renewal. The eligibility criteria, application process, and the considerations for the application are the same as those for the initial registration. This annual renewal requirement underscores the need for continuous compliance with the Acts provisions, particularly the maintenance of national character and adherence to governance standards.

Section 15 of the National Sports Act⁵⁴, provides for the **Cancellation of Certificate of Registration**. The Council is empowered to cancel a certificate of registration if it is satisfied that the national sports federation has violated the terms or condition of the certificate of registration requirements, has breached any provisions of the act or any other relevant law, procured registration through misrepresentation or non-disclosure of material facts, is no longer recognized by its international sports governing body, no longer serves its registered purpose, or has become insolvent. Prior to cancellation, the council must provide written notification to the federation, outlining the intention to cancel and offering an opportunity for the entity to be heard. Upon cancellation, the federation is legally obligated to cease its operations. Furthermore, in cases of cancellation, the council reserves the right to request the relevant international governing body to appoint a normalization committee to assume control of the federation's affairs. Finally, a federation whose registration is cancelled will be removed from the official register maintained by the council.

⁵⁴ The National Sports act, Cap 151.

It is worth noting that **Section 16** mandates the council to maintain a **Register of National Sports Federations**. This register will include all registered national sports organizations and will be kept in a format prescribed by regulations. Federations whose registration has been cancelled will be removed from this register. Registered entities are legally required to notify the council in writing of any changes in their registered information within twenty-one days of such a change occurring. The register is designated as open to public inspection upon the payment of prescribed fees, promoting transparency within the sector.

It is paramount to note that **Section 17** of the Act provides for the Annual Financial Report⁵⁵, All national sports federations are required to submit an annual financial report to the council within four months after the end of their financial year. This report must include comprehensive financial statements, audited accounts, estimates of revenue and expenditure for the upcoming year, a detailed report of activities undertaken during the financial year, minutes of the annual general assembly, any amendments made to the constitution, a complete list of the federations members and management personnel, a statement outlining planned activities for the following year, a list of all sponsors, and any other information that the Council may specifically request. The Council is empowered to thoroughly examine these reports and may issue directives to the federation as deemed necessary based on its review.

It is trite law that **Section 18 of the National Sports Act** mandates every National Sports Federation must include in their constitution a provision explicitly recognizing the jurisdiction of arbitrators appointed under the Act for the purpose of settling any sports related disputes that may

⁵⁵ Sports federations race to meet new registration requirement - New Vision, https://www.newvision.co.ug/category/sports/sports-federations-race-to-meet-new-registrat-NV_204511
Accessed on 26th. April 2025

arise between the federation and its members or the council. The constitution must also unequivocally recognize the decision of these arbitrators as final and legally binding, obligating both the federation and its members to fully respect and comply with the arbitral decisions. The council is legally prohibited from registering any national sports federations whose constitution does not include these mandatory provisions regarding arbitration⁵⁶.

3.2.3 National Sports Regulations, 2025.

It is noteworthy that **Section 79 of the National Sports Act Cap, 151**⁵⁷, confers power upon the minister responsible for sports and in consultation with the board council, to make regulations governing the enforcement and governance of the Act.

It is paramount to note that a new era of sports governance in Uganda has been ushered in with the operationalization of the National Sports Act, through the recently gazette **National sports Regulations, 2025 (Statutory Instrument No. 24 of 2025)** and the **National Sports Act (commencement of section 7) Instrument, S.I No. 23 of 2025**⁵⁸. It is worth noting that these new legal instruments, which came into effect on March 14th .2025, mandate a comprehensive re-registration process for all national sports federations with a deadline set of 20th. June .2025.

Minister Peter Ogwang, the Minister of State for Education & Sports⁵⁹, noted that the new regulations implemented by the National Council of Sports (NCS), aims to enhance transparency,

⁵⁶ All sports associations to be re-registered - New Vision, <https://www.newvision.co.ug/news/1339667/sports-associations-registered>, Accessed on April 28, 2025.

⁵⁷ The National Sports Act Cap, 151.

⁵⁸ National Sports Regulations, 2025.

⁵⁹ Sports Federations race to meet new registration requirement - New Vision, https://www.newvision.co.ug/category/sports/sports-federations-race-to-meet-new-registrat-NV_204511, Accessed on 22nd April. 2025

accountability, and governance within the sports sector. He further noted that sports bodies have a truly national character and robust structures.⁶⁰

The **National Sports Regulations, 2025** lays out stringent requirements that sports must meet to gain legal recognition and be eligible for government support and international affiliations.

Regulation 5 provides for the application for registration of a national sports federation. It provides that a person who intends to register a national sports federation shall apply to the Council in Form 3 prescribed in Schedule 2 to these Regulations, and pay the application fees prescribed in Schedule 3 to these Regulations. Furthermore, the Council shall, in determining an application for registration of National sports federation, consider the requirements under Section 10 and 11 of the Act⁶¹.

Regulation 6⁶², is to the effect that every constitution of a national sports federation must be revised and aligned with the provisions of the National Sports Act. The Regulation provides that the constitution of the National Sports Federation shall include; the composition of the general assembly, consisting of members duly registered by the national sports federation, the procedure for admission, suspension and dismissal of members, the mandatory general meeting or assembly, the composition of the executive committee, mandatory quarterly executive committee meetings, the powers and obligations of the executive committee and publication of the audited books of accounts in media of wide circulation.

⁶⁰ The National Gazette, National Sports Regulations to strengthen governance and compliance – By Minister Ogwang, , <https://kawowo.com/2025/03/27/gazetted-national-sports-regulations-to-strengthen-governance-and-compliance-minister-ogwang/> Accessed April 26, 2025

⁶¹ Regulation 5 of the National Regulations, 2025

⁶² Regulation 6 of the National Sports Regulation, 2025.

Regulation 7, provides for the consideration of application for registration of national sports federations. It is to the effect that the Council shall, publish an application received under regulation 5 and 6 in the Gazette and in media of wide circulation in Uganda and invite objections to the application from the public. In addition to that regulation 7(2), provides that an objection made under this regulation shall be submitted to the council in writing within thirty days from the date of publication in the Gazette. Regulation 7(3), is to the effect that upon receipt of an objection, the Council shall notify the applicant of the objection and instruct the applicant to provide a written response within fourteen days from the date of notification. Regulation 7(5) is to the effect that the Council shall consider the objection and communicate to its decision to the parties within seven days from the date of receipt of the written response of the applicant.

Regulations 8, 9 and 10 provides for the Certificate of Registration, Renewal of the certificate of Registration and Revocation of the Certificate of Registration respectively.

Regulation 11⁶³ provides for the transformation into a national sports federation. It provides that a registered national sports association that meets the requirements of regulation 6 may; apply to the council for transformation into a national sports federation in Form 5 prescribed in Schedule 2 to these regulations and pay the fees prescribed in Schedule 3 to these Regulations. Where the council is satisfied that the association in sub regulation (1) meets the requirements of regulation 6, the Council shall within thirty days, revoke the certificate of registration of the association, remove the association from the register and issue a certificate of registration as a federation.

⁶³ National sports federation, 2025.

It is trite law that **National Sports Regulations under Schedule 3⁶⁴** provides for the financial obligations that must be met by the sports federations. It is noteworthy that the registration process of sports federations comes with substantial fees.

Below are some of the required registration and renewal fees to be paid by the federations.

Table 1.

Fee Type	Amount (UGX	Frequency.
Application for Declaration of National Sport	7,000,000/=	Once
Application for Registration of National Sports Federations	1,000,000/=	Once
Certificate of Registration of National Sports Federations.	2,000,000/=	Once
Application for renewal of certificate of registration of National Sports federation	1,000,000/=	Annually
Certificate of registration of National Sports Federation at renewal	1,000,000/=	Annually.

⁶⁴ Schedule 3 of National Sports Regulations, 2025

Inspection of Register of Sports Organizations.	200,00/=	Annually.
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3.2.4 Regulatory Framework of sports federations in other East African Nations.

3.2.4.1 Kenya.

The registration of Sports organizations in Kenya is governed by the Sports Act⁶⁵ and its accompanying regulations⁶⁶.

The Sports Act, 2013 creates the office of the Registrar of Sports responsible for registration and regulation of sports organizations and multi sports bodies representing sports organizations, licensing of professional sports activities and professional sports persons and arbitration disputes that may arise between sports organizations.

The Act indicates that every sports organization must be registered with the office of the Registrar of Sports to acquire legality. Any sports organization that is not registered is unlawful entity and cannot benefit from the privileges and rights given under the Kenyan sports Act⁶⁷.

Similar to Uganda, Kenya also places emphasis on national presence, with national governing bodies required to demonstrate evidence of branch offices in at least twenty-four countries at the time of application, with progressive achievement of presence in more counties expected within three years⁶⁸.

⁶⁵ Sports Act No. 25 of 2013

⁶⁶ Sports Registrar Regulations (Legal Notice 158 of 2016)

⁶⁷ The sports Registration Regulations, 2016.

⁶⁸ Sports Registrar Regulations - Kenya Law,

<http://kenyalaw.org:8181/exist/kenyalex/sublegview.xql?subleg=CAP.%20223> Accessed on 01 .03. 2025

It is pertinent to note that Kenya also employs a structured system of registration fees, with varying amounts depending on the category of the sports organization, including multi-sport organizations, national sports organizations, county sports associations, and affiliated clubs⁶⁹.

3.2.4.2 Tanzania.

The registration and governance of sports federations in Tanzania is governed by the National Sports Council Act ⁷⁰ and its regulations.

It is noteworthy that every application for registration of sports federations in Tanzania must be submitted using a prescribed form and accompanied by a statement of particulars, along with the federation's constitution and rules⁷¹. Similar to Uganda, Tanzania also requires sports associations to specify the districts or regions where they carry out their activities. Regulations also outline the prescribed fees for registration and exemption from registration.

In comparison to these legal frameworks from other East African, they all suggest a general trend towards formalizing the registration and regulation of sports federations, often with a focus on ensuring a degree of national representation and establishing financial obligations through registration fees.

However, the specific details of these requirements, such as the percentage of national coverage mandated and the amount of fees levied, can vary significantly between countries indicating that Uganda's 75% district presence requirement for federations is a particularly high bar compared to Kenya's phased approach and Tanzania's requirements.

⁶⁹ Ibid 64

⁷⁰ National Sports Council Act, Cap 49.

⁷¹ National Sports Council (Registration of Sports Associations) (Forms and Fees) Regulations.

3.2.5 International framework of sports federations registration.

3.2.5.1 United Kingdom.

It is vital note that the United Kingdom's landscape is underpinned by a complex regulatory framework that governs how sports federations, often known as National Governing Bodies (NGBs), are registered and managed⁷².

Key to note is that there isn't a single mandatory registration for all sports federations in the UK. However, a formal recognition by the UK's Sports Councils (Sport England, UK Sport, Sport Wales, Sport Northern Ireland, and Sport Scotland) is crucial for NGBs.

The key criteria for recognition include demonstrating pre-eminence within the sport and maintaining adequate organizational and governance standards.

Sport federations in the UK can adopt various legal structures, each with its own implications for liability, governance, and administration. These include Unincorporated Associations, which are formed through an agreement between members, Company limited by Guarantee, this is a widely preferred structure for sports associations, Company limited by shares, Charitable incorporated organizations and community Amateur Sports Organizations⁷³.

The regulatory law is mainly a Code for Sports Governance developed by the Sport England and UK Sport. It mandates specific levels of transparency, diversity and inclusion, accountability, and integrity.

The is applied proportionately through a tiered system (Tier 1, 2 and 3) based on organizations size and level of public investment it receives.

⁷² Jörg Krieger, Lindsay Parks Pieper and Ian Ritchie, 'International Federations and National Governing Bodies: The Historical Development of Institutional Policies in Response to Challenging Issues in Sport' (2020) 51 Sport History Review 1.

⁷³ Ian S Blackshaw, *International Sports Law: An Introductory Guide*.

3.2.6 What are the Current sports Federations on NCS register?

According to the National Sports Council register as of March⁷⁴, there is a total of 51 National sports federations on the register. Most of these federations had registered with the National sports Council before the coming of the National Sports Act, Cap. 151 and many of them have not yet re-registered as per the new requirement.

Below are some of the National Sports Federations on NCS register;

Table 2.

Number	NAME OF FEDERATION
1.	Federation of Uganda Football Association. (FUFA)
2.	Uganda Athletics Federation (UAF)
3.	Federation of Uganda Basketball Association (FUBA)
4.	Uganda Rugby Union (URU)
5.	Uganda Boxing Federation (UBF)
6.	Uganda Netball Federation (UNF)
7.	Uganda Cricket Association (UCA)
8.	Uganda Swimming Federation (USF)
9.	Uganda Volleyball Federation (UVF)
10.	Uganda Badminton Association (UBA)

⁷⁴ National Sports Council Annual Report, 2023/2024

11.	Uganda Tennis Association (UTA)
12.	Uganda Table Tennis Association (UTTA)
13	Uganda Hockey Association (UHA)
14	Uganda Weight Lifting Federation (UWF)
15	Uganda Juddo Association (UJA)
16	Uganda Taekwondo Federation (UTF)
17	Uganda Archery Federation (UAF)
18	Uganda Chess Federation (UCF)
19	Uganda Golf Union (UGU)
20	Uganda Paralympic Committee (UPC)
21	Uganda Deaf Sports Federation (UDSF)
22	Uganda DanceSport Federation (UDSF)
23	Uganda Skating Federation (USF)
24	Uganda Woodball Federation (UWF)
25	Uganda Darts Association (UDA)
26	Uganda Draughts Federation (UDF)
27	Uganda Luddo Association (ULA)

28	Uganda Squash Rackets Association (USRA)
29	Uganda Floorball Association (UFA)
30	Uganda Fencing Association (UFA)
31	Uganda Rowing Federation (URF)
32	Uganda Canoe Kayak Federation (UC-KF)
33	Uganda Cycling Association (UCA)
34	Uganda Sports Climbing Federation (USCF)
35	Uganda Dragon Boat Federation (UDBF)
36	Uganda Roll Ball Association (URA)
37	Uganda Ultimate Frisbee Association (UUFA)
38	Uganda Baseball and Softball Association (UBASA)
39	Uganda Kabaddi Federation (KFU)
40	Uganda Zurkhaneh Sports Association (UZSA)
41	Uganda Handball Federation (UHF)
42	Uganda Gymnastics Association (GAU)
43	Uganda Body Building and Fitness Association (UBFA)
44	Uganda Wrestling Federation (UWF)

45	Association of Uganda University Sports (AUUS)
46	Scrabble Association of Uganda (SAU)
47	VX Uganda
48	American Football Federation of Uganda (AFFU)
49	Pool Association of Uganda (PAU)
50	Federation of Motorsports Clubs of Uganda (FMU)
51	Uganda Lacrosse Association (ULA)

3.3 Conclusion.

In conclusion of this chapter, the National Sports Act, Cap, 151 represents a significant stride towards modernizing the regulatory framework of sports federations in Uganda, with the clear potential to enhance transparency, accountability, and overall good governance within the sports Sector.

By establishing a comprehensive registration process for sports federations, the Act aims to create a more structured and responsible environment for sports development. The emphasis on national character and the requirement for annual financial reporting are particularly commendable aspects of the framework, promising to foster greater representation and financial oversight within these sports federations.

However, the effectiveness of this regulatory framework is likely to be significantly influenced by the practical challenges associated with its implementation. The stringent national presence of requirements, particularly the 75% district coverage for federations, pose a considerable hurdle for many sports, especially those with limited resources or niche appeal⁷⁵. While the attention to ensure national wide impact is laudable, the immediate imposition of such high thresholds may inadvertently exclude legitimate sports bodies that are still in the process of expanding their reach. The financial implications of the registration fees annual renewal costs also raise concerns about affordability, potentially creating a barrier to entry or sustained compliance for federations that lack substantial financial backing.

⁷⁵ Sports federations race to meet new registration requirement - New Vision, https://www.newvision.co.ug/category/sports/sports-federations-race-to-meet-new-registrat-NV_204511 Accessed on 5th. 05. 20225.

To optimize the effectiveness and ensure the positive impact of the National Sports Act, Cap 151 on sports governance in Uganda, several recommendations warrant consideration. A phased implementation of the national presence requirements could provide federations with more realistic timeline to expand their operations across the country, accompanied by government supported development programs to facilitate this expansion. A review of the fee structure in the Sports regulations⁷⁶ is also advisable to ensure affordability across all sports disciplines, perhaps through the introduction of tiered fees based on the size, revenue, or popularity of the sport. For niche sports facing inherent limitations in achieving widespread geographical presence, specific guidelines or alternative criteria for demonstrating national character could be developed. Enhanced government funding and targeted support programs aimed at assisting federations with the costs of compliance and broader development initiatives would also be crucial.

Finally establishing clear and regular mechanisms for dialogue and collaboration between the NCS, Sports Federations, Uganda Olympic Commission, and other stakeholders is essential to address emerging issues, foster a shared understanding of the Acts objectives, and ensure its effective and equitable implementation, ultimately leading to thriving and well governed sports sector for all disciplines in Uganda.

⁷⁶ National Sports Regulations, 2025 Schedule 3

CHAPTER FOUR.

4 FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION.

4.1 Introduction.

This last Chapter presents the findings of this research study on the mandatory registration of sports federations in Uganda and its impact on sports governance.

It details the outcomes of the investigations and deep research into the existing licensing procedures, the challenges encountered by sports federations during this process, the role of the National Council of Sports (NCS), and the overall impact of mandatory registration.

In addition, based on these findings, the researcher offers recommendations aimed at improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the registration process and enhancing sports governance in Uganda. Finally, the researcher in conclusion summarizes the key takeaways of the study under this chapter.

4.2 Findings of the Study.

4.2.1 The licensing requirements and procedures of Sports federations.

The research study has revealed that the requirements needed for every sports federation to register include, establishing that it has the national character. This implies that a National sports federation is supposed to possess a national character, which is defined by participation of Ugandans in the respective sports discipline across at least seventy-five percent (75%) of all the districts in Uganda, and the election of the federation's leadership by an annual general assembly comprising individuals drawn from at least half (50%) of the country's district.

The study also revealed that all the eligible national sports federation must apply to the **National Council of Sports** (NCS) upon payment of the stipulated application fee. The researcher also

found out that attach documents reflecting the name and address, details of its leadership and governance structure, the sources of its funds, the name and address of its accounting officer, the specific sports discipline it intends to manage, its official symbols and colors, and its national and international affiliations. This implies that the study has achieved its objective of establishing the requirements and procedures needed in the registration of Sports Federations.

4.2.2 The positive impacts and Challenges of the mandatory Registration of federations.

4.2.2.1 Positive impacts and intentions of Mandatory Registration.

The enactment of the National Sports Act, Cap 151, and the subsequent passing of the National Sports Regulations, 2025 with the mandate by the National Sports Council to register all sports federations signify a pivotal moment aimed at modernizing Uganda's sports sector Below are the positive intentions and impacts the research found out.

i. Promotion of National Character.

It is worth noting that, the National Sports Act, Cap 151 emphasizes the need for national sports federations to have a national character. This is defined according to the act by participation across 75% of Uganda's districts and management from 50% of Uganda's Districts. The rationale behind this requirement is ensuring broader sports development and inclusivity across Uganda.

ii. Enhanced Governance, Transparency and accountability.

It is paramount to submit that, the primary aim of the mandatory registration of sports federations is to instill principles of good governance, transparency and accountability within the management of sports federations. The requirement for submitting detailed application documents, including a constitution, financial reports, and activity reports. Mandatory registration then becomes a step towards achieving this goal.

iii. Legal Recognition and Structure.

As submitted above, Sports Federations have been facing a challenge of the proper legal structure and legal recognition. The registration of the national sports federations under the Act, grants them with the corporate status with perpetual succession, allowing them to own property, sue, and be sued in their corporate name. This formalization is intended to create a more structured and professional operational environment of sports federations.

iv. Standardized Operations.

It is good to submit that the National Sports Act and National Sports regulations, 2025, provide a framework for standardized operational procedures recognized by International sports Federations (IFs). These include proper management, financial reporting and accountability and dispute resolution mechanisms.

4.2.2.2 Negative impacts/ Challenges identified in the Mandatory registration process.

It is important to note, that despite the positive impacts and intentions of the statutory requirement of mandatory registration of sports federations, the research study identified several significant challenges associated with the mandatory registration of national sports federations as analyzed below;

a) Financial Burdens on the sports derations.

It is worth noting that the imposition of high exorbitant registration and renewal fees for the application, registration, and annual renewal presents a significant financial burden to many sports federations. This is mainly challenging to federations representing less popular sports disciplines that struggle to attract sponsorships or generate revenue from their sports activities. This raises concerns about equity and inclusivity within the sports sector.

b) Logistical and Administrative Hurdles.

It is trite law that the different sports federations stakeholders have reported quite a number of logistical and administrative hurdles while trying to comply with the new regulatory requirements and these include;

c) Lack of Clear regulatory guidelines.

Its noteworthy that the different stakeholders reported a greatest concern of lack of proper guidelines to follow while complying with the statutory requirement of mandatory registration and re-registration of sports federations with NCS. It's key to submit that the regulatory requirements guiding the application of the National Sports Act, have just been passed in March 2025 despite the act being passed in 2023. This contributed to frustration of sports federations while trying to comply with the requirement of mandatory registration.

d) Short Compliance Timeframes.

Concerns have been raised by a number of sports federations managements, about the relatively short timeframe provided for federations to comply with the new Act and regulations, especially given the fact that there were previous delays in the commencement of registration procedures.

e) None viability of some requirements.

It is worth noting that some registration requirements like stringent national requirement national presence requirement are considered non-viable by the many sports stakeholders.

The stipulation that National sports federations must demonstrate participation in at least 75% of Uganda's districts is a substantial logistical challenge and none viable.

Achieving and maintaining such widespread coverage demands considerable resources and effort, especially for sports requiring specialized infrastructure or those with limited regional following. This requirement for perpetual presence in numerous districts is a significant hurdle, and notably high compared to the requirements in the neighboring East African countries like Kenya and Tanzania.

f) Governance and Operational Challenges.

It is good to note that the mandatory registration and the oversight of sports federations by the national sports Council raises autonomy concerns. It is key to note that international sports federations always want to ensure that there is autonomy of the sporty. This new requirement comes with a lot of state involvement in the management and the governance of the sport which is contrary to the sports autonomy.

The research study has also achieved its objective of analyzing the positive impacts and challenges of Mandatory registration of Sports Federations and a Mandatory requirement of all sports federations in Uganda.

4.3 Recommendations.

Based on the findings of this study and the analysis presented, the following recommendations are proposed by the study to improve the efficiency of the licensing process and enhance governance of national sports federations.

4.3.1 Recommendations to the National Sports Council.

First of all, the Government and the National Council of Sports should consider a phased approach for meeting the 75% district requirement. This can involve setting incremental targets over several years, allowing federations a more realistic timeframe to expand their reach within the country organically.

In addition, the National Sports Council needs to do a comprehensive review and tiering of the mandatory registration and application fees. Consideration should be given to introducing a tiered fees system based on factors such as size of the federation, its revenue generation capacity, and the popularity/developmental stage of the sport. This will make mandatory registration of the national sports federations more affordable and equitable.

The National Sports Council and Government should also develop some special considerations for the merging and niche Sports. It is good to note that, for Sports with inherent limitations in achieving widespread geographical presence or those that are newly developing in a country, specific guidelines or alternative criteria for demonstrating national character should be developed. This will prevent the exclusion of legitimate but smaller sports bodies.

The National Council of Sports should also conduct capacity building sessions for sports federations. Initiatives focused on building the administrative and governance capacity of sports federations should be implemented. This can include trainings on the financial management, strategic planning, and governance best practices.

The National Sports Council should also strengthen stakeholder Dialogue and Collaboration. It is paramount to note that the Council needs to establish and maintain clear, regular mechanisms for dialogue and collaboration between the National Council of Sports, Sports federations, the Uganda Olympic Committee, and other relevant stakeholders. This platform will facilitate the addressing of merging issues, foster a shared understanding of the National Sports Act's objectives, and allow for adaptive management of the regulatory framework.

The National Council of Sports, should conduct a Longitudinal Monitoring and Evaluation of the sports federations. This can be done by implementing a system for the ongoing monitoring and

evaluation of the impact of the National Sports Act and its Regulations. This will help in identifying unintended consequences and allow for timely adjustments to the framework.

4.3.2 Recommendations to the Government and Ministry of Education & Sports.

I also recommend the Government of Uganda through the Ministry of Education and Sports, to come up with Enhanced Government funding and Support programs for sports federations. It is worth submitting that, increased government funding and establishment of targeted support programs are essential for the management and smooth running of sports federations. This support should aim to assist federations with compliance costs and broader sports development initiatives at the grassroots level to help meet national presence requirements. For example, Administrative support grants.

The Ministry of Education and Sports and the National Sports Council should streamline the administrative processes and provide clear guidelines for the registration of sports federations. The National Council of Sports should work to simplify the administrative procedures for registration and renewal of sports federations. Provide a clear, concise, and easily accessible guidelines, potentially with templates and workshops, should be provided to federations to ease the compliance burden. Conclusively, efforts should be made by the National Council of Sports to minimize bureaucratic delays in the registration process.

Finally, the Government of Uganda should also increase on the funds allocated to the National Sports Council and the Department of sports at the ministry of Education. The Government in doing this should ensure that the National Council of Sports is adequately resourced financially and in terms of human capital to effectively carry out its expanded mandate under the new Act.

4.4 Conclusion.

In conclusion, mandatory registration, the mandatory registration of sports federations, as stipulated by the National Sports Act, Cap. 151, represents a significant and largely positive legislative reform aimed at modernizing sports governance in Uganda. The Act's emphasis on transparency, accountability, legal recognition, and national character has the clear potential to create a more structured, professional, and responsible sports sector.

However, this study found that the path to realizing these benefits is incumbered by substantial practical challenges. These include significant financial burdens imposed by registration fees, demanding logistical and administrative requirements related to National presence and documentation, and potential concerns regarding the capacity of both the federations to comply and the regulatory bodies to efficiently manage the process.

It is paramount to note in my conclusion that if these challenges are not adequately addressed, there is a risk that the new regulatory framework could inadvertently stifle the growth of some sports, particularly those with limited resources, or lead to a compliance focused approach that detracts from genuine sports development and governance enhancement.

The successful transformation of sports governance in Uganda hinges not just on the legal text of the National Sports Act, but on its pragmatic, supportive and adaptive implementation. By embracing the recommendations outlined in this chapter particularly those focused on phased implementation, financial review, capacity building and stakeholder collaboration, Uganda can navigate the identified challenges. This will help to ensure that the mandatory registration process becomes a catalyst for a truly thriving, well governed, and inclusive sports sector that benefits all sports disciplines and contributes effectively to national development, aligning with the constitutional objective of promoting recreation and sports for all citizens. However,

this journey requires a concerted effort from the government, the National Council of Sports, and the sports federations themselves to work collectively towards these shared goals.

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