

ASSESSING THE ROLE OF SPORTS LAW IN ADDRESSING THE GOVERNANCE CHALLENGE IN UGANDA'S SPORTS SECTOR

ERNEST MATAYO SSETTUBA

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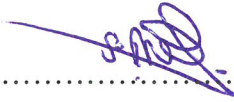


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DECLARATION

I SSETTUBA MATAYO ERNEST declare that this research paper is my original work and has not been presented to any institution before for any award of a degree or published by any person. All sources on which reliance is placed have been gratefully acknowledged.



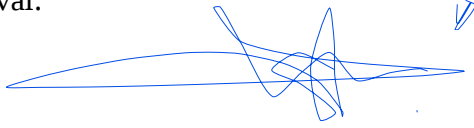
SSETTUBA MATAYO ERNEST

20th May, 2026

DATE

APPROVAL

This research paper was written under my supervision and has been submitted with my consent and approval:



.....

MR. KAJJA TIMOTHY

SUPERVISOR

20th May, 2026

.....

DATE

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

- | | |
|-----------|---|
| 1. WADA | World Anti-Doping Agency |
| 2. NCS | National Council of Sports |
| 3. FUFA | Federation of Uganda Football Association |
| 4. UOC | Uganda Olympic Committee |
| 5. IOC | International Olympic Committee |
| 6. LBT | Legal Brains Trust |
| 7. FUBA | Federation of Uganda Basketball Association |
| 8. MTN | Mobile Telephone Networks |
| 9. ECJ | European Court of Justice |
| 10. URU | Uganda Rugby Union |
| 11. ASBL | Association Sans but Lucratif |
| 12. CAF | Confederation of African Football |
| 13. AFCON | Africa Cup Of Nations |

ABSTRACT

This research assesses the role of Sports Law in addressing the governance challenge facing the sports sector in Uganda. The sports sector in Uganda if well tapped into could bring about social and economic growth especially when it comes to government revenue. Sports in Uganda still faces a number of challenges due to poor governance. This research therefore elucidates the legal framework of the Sports sector in Uganda and how it has addressed the poor governance challenge. Most importantly, the research provides for different solutions to this challenge.

CHAPTER ONE

1.1 Introduction

Sports can be defined as an institutionalized competitive activity that involves two or more opponents and stresses physical exertion by serious competitors who represent or are part of formally organized associations.¹ Sports is a physical activity that is governed by set of rules or customs involving specific administration, governing body, organization and an historical background and often engaged in competitively. Included in the definition of sport are all forms of physical activity that contribute to physical fitness, mental wellbeing and social interaction, such as play, recreation, organized or competitive sport and indigenous sports and games.²

In my opinion, Sports refers to activities organized either competitively or for leisure that involve physical and mental activity their major purpose being for fun and leisure. The Constitution of the Republic of Uganda 1995, as amended, does not specify the right to sports in Uganda expressly but however states that the state shall promote recreation and sports for citizens of Uganda.³ Article 45⁴ also provides that the rights, duties, declarations and guarantees specifically mentioned shall not be regarded as excluding others not specifically mentioned. This therefore means that the government of Uganda recognizes sports in the country and the legal framework that governs the same. Sports Law in Uganda is majorly governed by the National Sports Act, Cap 151.

The Act addresses some challenges such as ethical issues like Sports betting, doping, match fixing, and so on. However, the sports sector in Uganda continues to meet governance challenges. Such challenges are not provided for by the legal framework but that does not mean that they should be ignored.

1.2 Background

¹ Kitaka Aziz, Sports and the Law in Uganda, Research Article 3 (2019), page 1

² The African Union Policy Framework for the Sustainable Development of Sport in Africa (2008-2018), Second session of the African Union Conference of ministers of sports 10-14-October 2008 Accra, Ghana

³ Objective XVII of The Constitution of the Republic of Uganda 1995 as amended.

⁴ Ibid,.18

Uganda has embraced a number of sports such as tennis, golf, swimming, cycling, cricket, motor sport and badminton, among others. But when it comes to sheer popularity, football is the king followed closely by rugby and basketball.⁵

This explains why the country only participates in very few games when it comes to international competitions such as the main event which is the Olympics. A case in point is the just recently concluded 2024 Paris Olympics where Uganda was represented by 25 sports men and women that competed in just 4 sports which included swimming, Rowing, cycling and athletics.⁶

Such low representation on the international stage denies Uganda revenue that would be as a result of medals and prizes won. It further denies the country the ability to host such games.

Uganda has not invested enough in the Sports sector and this is evident by the fact that among the various games we play in the country, the county and the citizens only gain from a few sports and the rest left simply for leisure. This is as a result of inadequate governance.

1.3 Problem Statement.

The Sports Sector in Uganda today faces a governance challenge which is not exhaustively addressed by the National Sports Act, Cap 151. If this challenge is not addressed, it may lead to the under development of the sports sector in Uganda and further render the would be benefits such as government revenue.

1.4 General objectives

The general objective was to assess the governance challenge in Uganda's sports sector.

1.5 Specific objectives/Questions

The specific objectives of the study were:

1. To describe the legal framework governing sports in Uganda.
2. To assess the extent at which the National Sports Act, Cap 151 has addressed the governance challenge facing the sports sector in Uganda.
3. To identify areas of improvement and provide recommendations for better governance of Uganda's sports sector.

⁵Kitaka Aziz, Sports and the Law in Uganda, Research Article 3 (2019), page 1

⁶ Team Uganda to 2024 Olympics lauded at Parliament, <https://www.parliament.go.ug> accessed 25th November 2025

4. To critically evaluate the governance challenges facing Uganda's sports sector.

1.6 Significance of the study

The study critically explicates the legal framework that governs sports in Uganda. This therefore educates citizens together with sports men and women on the availability of such laws together with their rights and freedoms.

The study further highlights the role Sports Law plays in promoting a well-regulated, fair and sustainable sports environment.

The study addresses the governance challenges that are facing the sports sector in Uganda and further informs policy makers on how such challenges can be addressed and worked on.

The findings of this study also educate the government and other stakeholders in the sports industry on how we could use sports as a channel to create wealth not only for individuals but also as a country as evidenced in developed countries.

1.7 Justification of the study.

The sports sector in Uganda is rapidly growing though in a few specific Sports such as football. This therefore means a lot of work still has to be done to create a balance and diversification of games. The study is justified by various challenges that stand between the development of the sports sector and the level we are now.

Such challenges are as a result of poor governance.

1.8 Scope of the study

The study majorly focused on elucidating the available Sports Laws in Uganda and how they have addressed governance challenge facing the sports sector in the country. The study majorly focused on governance challenge and provided solutions and recommendations to them with the hope of having a developed sports sector in Uganda.

1.9.1 Geographical scope

This study focused on the sports sector of Uganda.

1.9.2 Time scope

The study was conducted for the years between 2022 and 2025. For these years the sports sector in Uganda has been growing and would be far developed if not for poor governance.

1.10 Literature Review

1.10.1 Introduction

This section majorly focuses and analyses already existing literature on the role of Sports Law towards addressing the governance challenge facing the sports sector in Uganda. This will be a stand-alone type of literature review. It should be undisputed that there are scholars who have identified setbacks as regards the leadership in the sports industry and further gone ahead to publish them and make recommendations.

The aim of such literal work is to compare and contrast ideas from different scholars and further give different opinions which will provide a variety of options to the intended audience and purpose.

1.10.2 Body

To begin with, Emanuel Sebata and Yanli Li write that whereas the government attaches a lot of value to mass participation and sporting success in elite sport events such as the Olympics and other international sporting events, some scholars assert that Uganda should instead focus on availing adequate capital, human and organizational resources baskets to sport programmes at the grassroots levels, with special focus on talent identification, coaching development and development of grass-root sporting infrastructure. They agree this is pertinent because, Uganda has not only experienced a lack of access to modern and standard sport facilities, equipment and training facilities but also an absence of strategic sports development planning.

This somehow concurs with Valenti, Scelles and Morrow, whose research pointed to youth participation, expansion of competitions, improvement of sporting venues, increased financial investment, provision of highly specialized coaching and related human resource, provision of appropriate sporting environment for the players, officials and fans as some of the key factors that not only influence success of international success in women sport but also in the whole

elite sport space.⁷ The government should work on the development of sports facilities first before searching for talent at grass root levels. This is so because with the availability of state of the art facilities, sports men and women participate comfortably in the areas of sport.

Secondly, The Budget Monitoring and Accounting Unit further lays out different challenges facing the sports sector in Uganda and these include; Inadequate legal framework as the NCS Act, 1964 is obsolete and oblivious to the modern development trends in sports as it addresses only amateur sports and is silent on the development of national sports. This is complicated by the absence of a National Sports Policy which should provide the basis for the Act.

This significantly constrains effective implementation of the national sports, Inadequate technical capacity of sports personnel to meet international accreditation standards, Inadequate and dilapidated sport facilities, as evidenced by the state of all regional stadia in the municipalities, Rampant encroachment on sports land is partly attributed to lack of land titles on public sports grounds, Inadequate funding of the Sports Sub-Sector with glaring mismatch between the country's ever growing sports potential and the downward financing of the sports sub-sector, Corruption and embezzlement of sports funds, Unfair taxation of donated sports equipment from international sports federations and donors to aid development of respective sports is a hindrance to the growth of sports.⁸ These challenges stem from poor governance of the sports sector in Uganda.

Thirdly, Kitaka Aziz in his article elucidates what Sports Law is and the substantive laws therein. He states that Sports law represents nothing more than an amalgamation of various substantive areas of law that are relevant in the sports context. In line to this perspective, the term "Sports law" is a misnomer given that sports represents a form of activity and entertainment that is governed by the legal system in its entirety.⁹ However, this is affected by poor governance which is evidenced by embezzlement of funds and absence of internal control systems. In my opinion, sports law refers to a series of laws that govern sports. Sports law further represents other areas of law such as contract law, tort law, criminal law, constitutional law among others.

It is also worth noting that the Daily Monitor Newspapers of Thursday October 9th 2025 wrote about the 63 successes and challenges of Ugandan Sport. Among the successes were

⁷ Emmanuel Sebata and Yanli Li, Country profile: Sport policy in Uganda (2022), page 761

⁸ The Budget Monitoring and Accounting Unit Briefing Paper (2/22) of November 2022

⁹ Kitaka Aziz, Sports and the Law in Uganda, Research Article 3 (2019), page 5

participation in the Olympics and multiple world records made. I agree with the achievements but our participation on the international stage is still low compared to other states. The paper cited a number of challenges such as athlete welfare, lack of trained sports personnel, corruption, safe guarding concerns, talent drain, lack of equipment, limited access to good facilities, lack of financial literacy, life after sport. Legends have poor standards of living, lack of accountability, arbitration struggles, administrative conflicts, broken trust, limited access to good facilities.

Almost every sport has been forced to make do with the bare minimum of space that can host its activities. Sport, especially at lower league level is still being played on red-dirt pitches or concrete courts. The expensive ones like swimming, archery, can barely be spread to areas beyond the central region, insufficient reward scheme, inability to generate income for those involved. Ugandan Sport struggles to make money especially at club level where the majority of human resource (players, coaches, referees) is involved. Most competitions are organized by federations so even the meagre income from gate collections goes to federations. There is barely merchandise to sell and commercial rights are hard to exploit to ensure sport generates income for the people involved in it.¹⁰ This is evidence of inadequate funding towards Uganda's sports sector.

Furthermore, Nelson Mandela in his article on PML Daily about Uganda's Sports industry: Challenges and opportunities wrote that some of the challenges we have to overcome are media coverage and broadcasting. Sports are popularized and promoted by the media, which is crucial in their widespread appeal. Increased domestic and international media coverage can boost the visibility and recognition of Ugandan athletes and sporting events. Broadcast partnerships and digital streaming platforms provide access to a global audience, attracting sponsors and advertisers.

Local sports journalism can also play a significant role in telling the stories of athletes, coaches, and sports organizations. Highlighting their achievements and struggles can inspire the nation and further ignite the passion for sports.¹¹ Uganda's broadcasting and media coverage for sports is not yet up to standard. A case in point is FUFA TV that was given exclusive broadcasting

¹⁰ 63 successes and challenges of Ugandan sport. <https://www.monitor.co.ug> accessed 26th November, 2025

¹¹ Uganda's sports industry Opportunities and Challenges. <https://pmldaily.com> accessed 26th November, 2025

rights by UBC, the national television. The quality of its broadcast is poor and citizens can barely watch the games.

1.10.3 Conclusion

Conclusively, the above existing literature elucidates the idea of the availability of a right to sports, the availability of Sports Law in Uganda and further the governance challenge facing the sports industry in Uganda for instance issues of embezzlement of funds, inadequate funding, the lack of standard and modern sports facilities, corruption and the media and broadcasting challenge. The overall implication of my findings therefore is to ensure that this challenge is addressed and solved. Whereas the government has taken some steps to develop sport, a lot still has to be done. The major solution is that the government ought to increase or inject more money and invest in the sports sector.

1.11 Methodology

1.11.1 Introduction

This part of the research will show the methods or techniques that were used for the conducting of the research in order to fulfil its objectives.

1.11.2 Research Design

The study adopted a qualitative type of research using tools such as surveys, correlation, use of websites, interviews, and handing out semi-structured questionnaires to collect information from the key stakeholders in the sports industry and some citizens of Uganda. This type of research is important in a way that it enabled the collection of information from different sources for an informed study.

1.11.3 Data Collection

The data of the study was collected through carrying out particular surveys from the stakeholders of the sports sector. The data was further collected by use of the available legal framework governing sport in Uganda. In addition, the data of the study was collected through interviews and handing out semi-structured questionnaires to the concerned parties.

1.11.4 Data sources.

The study was based on both primary and secondary sources. The primary sources were the interviews, the available legal framework, the semi- structured questionnaires. On the other hand, the secondary sources were the newspaper articles, the use of websites, academic journals, published articles and case law.

1.11.5 Data Processing and Analysis

The study involved the use of methodology and thematic analysis for data processing. The responses from the interviews and semi-structured questionnaires were recorded and analyzed to bring out the different challenges facing sport in Uganda. The study further involved documentary and chronological analysis of the data collected from the academic journals and published articles. Documentation was also applied for the data collected from case law concerning Sports Law.

1.11.6 Ethical Considerations

The study involved the three major principles of research ethics which include; respect for persons, beneficence and justice. The study also considered integrity and objectivity.

Under respect for persons, one of the ethical considerations was voluntary participation. Participants were not forced to contribute to the research. They did so out of their own will. The respondents to the semi-structured questionnaires and interviews all did so out of their own will.

Secondly, informed consent was sought from the respondents. The participants had to decide to participate in the study.

Thirdly, anonymity was put into consideration for respondents that did not want to be identified.

Lastly, confidentiality was also put into consideration. The respondents were not permitted to reveal confidential information about themselves. The questionnaires had no provisions for confidential information.

In addition, under beneficence, all possible sources of harm towards the respondents were put into consideration and avoided.

Justice was also considered in the study through distribution of harm and benefits. The study considered utmost integrity and objectivity.

The research adhered to all relevant ethical and legal research standards.

1.11.7 Limitations

The study involved a number of limitations. First of all, there was delayed response from some of the respondents. There was delayed response with the semi-structured questionnaires.

Secondly, it was hard to get consent from respondents to do the interviews. Some of the respondents did not want to participate in giving interviews.

In conclusion, the study gathered information on Sports law and the challenges facing sport in Uganda and how these challenges can be addressed and worked on.

CHAPTER TWO

2.1 THE INSTITUTIONAL AND LEGAL REGULATORY FRAMEWORK OF SPORTS IN UGANDA

Sports plays an important role in Uganda's social, economic and cultural development contributing to national unity, youth empowerment, public health and international representation. The institutional and legal framework of sports in Uganda consists of constitutional provisions, statutes, policies, regulations, and institutional mechanisms that govern the organization, administration, and regulation of sports in Uganda. These also further aid in addressing issues such as doping, betting and match fixing thus promoting fair competition in sports. This chapter is going to give an overview of the legal and institutional framework of sports in Uganda.

2.1.1 The Constitution of the Republic of Uganda 1995 as amended

The constitution of the Republic of Uganda 1995 as amended is the Supreme law of the country. The Constitution does not expressly provide for a right to sports under Chapter four. However **Objective XVII**¹² provides that the state shall promote recreation and sports for the citizens of Uganda. This implies that the state recognizes sports in the country. The Constitution provides for governance under **Article 29**¹³ which provides for freedom of association. This enables the creation of sports federations and associations which bodies govern sports in the country.

Secondly, **Article 8A**¹⁴ provides that Uganda shall be governed based on the principles of national interest and common good enshrined in the National objectives and directive principles of state policy. This proves the relevance of the Objectives in the Constitution.

Thirdly, **Article 45**¹⁵ provides that the rights, duties, declarations and guarantees relating to the fundamental and other human rights and freedoms specifically mentioned in this chapter shall not be regarded as excluding others not specifically mentioned. This means that despite the fact that the right to sports in Uganda is not specifically mentioned in the Supreme Law of the land, it is still a right that Ugandans ought to enjoy and have.

¹² The Constitution of the Republic of Uganda 1995 as amended

¹³ Ibid., 15

¹⁴ Ibid

¹⁵ Ibid.,18

It is also worth noting that **Article 21**¹⁶ provides for equality and freedom from discrimination. It explains that all persons are equal before and under the law and shall enjoy equal protection of the law. It further provides that a person shall not be discriminated against on the grounds of sex, race, colour, ethnic origin, tribe, birth, creed or religion, social or economic standing, political opinion or disability. Under Sports, this implies that sports in the same way is for all people. No one shall be discriminated against in sports basing on gender, religion and so on. This explains why we have both male and female football leagues in Uganda. In the case of **Legal Brains Trust (LBT) LTD V Attorney General and National Council of Sports**¹⁷, the applicant was seeking prerogative reliefs to prevent the implementation of a set of Regulations known as Statutory Instrument No. 38 of 2014 of the National Council of Sports Regulations which had been enacted by the respondents. The applicant claimed that they violated the provisions of the National Council of Sports Act Cap 48 and that they violated or threatened to violate the Constitutional rights such Article 29(1) on freedom of association, Article 21 on the right to equality and freedom from discrimination and Article 45 which relates to emerging rights that may not be explicitly listed in the Constitution of the Republic of Uganda 1995 as amended. Hon. Lady Justice Elizabeth Ibanda Nahamya held that the applicant demonstrated that the application had merit and that it ought to succeed. The application was therefore allowed. The law in Uganda therefore provides that everyone regardless has a right to participate in sports of their choice without discrimination.

Furthermore, **Article 26**¹⁸ provides for deprivation of property. It provides that every person has a right to own property either individually or in association with others. It also provides that no person shall be compulsorily deprived of property or any interest in or right over property of any description unless otherwise provided in the exceptions. In the case of **Proline Soccer Academy LTD V MTN Uganda LTD and Others**¹⁹, Justice Stephen Mubiru stated that the mere fact that a football player has joined the National team does not mean that they have automatically given away their image rights. He further stated

¹⁶ Ibid.,11

¹⁷ Miscellaneous application No. 638 of 2014 (Arising out of Miscellaneous Cause No. 54 of 2014)

¹⁸ Supra note 12

¹⁹ Proline Soccer Academy LTD V MTN Uganda LTD and Others (Civil Suit No. 0317 of 2011).

that players have a right to own their image rights and no one can take them away from them. These are considered under Article 26 at the property of the players.

In addition, **Article 29**²⁰ provides for freedom of association. It stipulates that every person shall have a right to freedom of association which shall include the freedom to form or join associations or unions, including trade unions and political and other civic organizations. In Uganda we have the Federation of Uganda Football Association (FUFA), Federation of Uganda Basketball Association (FUBA), Uganda Rugby Union (URU), Uganda Boxing Federation among others. These are provided for under Article 29. In the case of **Union Royale Belge des Societes de Football Association ASBL V Jean-Marc Bosman**²¹, this was also known as the Bosman ruling. In this case, the European Court of Justice (ECJ) held that the transfer system at the time which demanded a fee even after the expiration of a contract violated European Union (EU) law. The transfer rules placed a restriction on a player's freedom of movement due to the unduly financial implications.

More so, **Article 34**²² provides for the rights of children. It provides that children are entitled to basic education which shall be both the responsibility of the state and the parents of the child. The National Sports Act Cap 151 provides for education in Sports for children such as Physical Education. This is important because it enables children to participate and get involved in sports at a young age thus talents are spotted early enough. It is also important to keep children physically fit and healthy.

2.1.2 The National Sports Act Cap 151

The National Sports Act Cap 151 was enacted by Parliament and assented to by the President of Uganda on 17th August, 2023 thus becoming law governing sports in Uganda. The Act is a fundamental change from the National Council of Sports Act 1964 which was widely accepted as outdated. Its long title states that it's an Act to provide for the declaration of national sports, to provide for the registration of national sports associations and national sports federations, to establish the National Anti-Doping Organization, to

²⁰ Supra note 12

²¹ Royale Belge des Societes de Football Association ASBL V Jean-Marc Bosman (1995) C-415/93

²² Supra note 12

provide for the role of the Uganda Olympic Committee, to provide for the settlement of sports disputes, to repeal the National Council of Sports Act, Cap 48 and for related matters.

Section 16²³ provides for the area of governance in sports. It expounds that the functions of the national sports associations and national sports federations shall for the sports discipline for which it is registered, for both team sports and individual sports, develop, promote and manage sports clubs, teams of the sports discipline and athletes. They shall further promote and coordinate sports activities, develop and promote amateur and professional sports, organize and manage national sports competitions, train the athletes, represent Uganda on the international governing body, maintain a register of its members, constitute a national team, protect the interests of its members and certify the agents, promoters, managers of athletes and management of contracts of athletes.

Secondly, the Act provides for some of the key integrity issues in sports such as sports betting, match fixing and doping. **Section 61**²⁴ provides for prohibition of unauthorized use of sports result in betting. It interpretes that a person licensed under the Lotteries and Gaming Act, shall not allow betting on a sports activity or use results of a sports competition without the written authorization of the national sports association or the national sports federation. **Section 62**²⁵ further provides that betting is prohibited for match officials, referees, umpires, coaches, athletes, owners of sports clubs, and members and employees of the national sports associations and federations.

Thirdly, **Section 63**²⁶ provides for match fixing. It provides that a person shall not manipulate a sports result or the course of a sports competition. In **George Nkurunziza V FUFA Ethics and Disciplinary Committee**, George Nkurunziza a referee was handed a 10- year ban by FUFA after being found guilty of participating in match-fixing. He was found guilty of violating several Articles of the FUFA Ethics and Disciplinary Code. In **John Bosco Kalibbala V FUFA Ethics and Disciplinary Committee Case**, John Bosco Kalibbala another referee was banned from taking part in any football-related activity for

²³ The National Sports Act Cap 151

²⁴ Ibid.,23

²⁵ Ibid

²⁶ ibid

15 years after being found guilty of manipulating results for at least two Uganda Premier League games.

It is also worth-noting that **Section 3**²⁷ defines doping to mean the use of prohibited substances and methods in any sporting activity whether competitive or recreational in order to artificially enhance performance. **Section 59**²⁸ provides for prohibition of doping. It stipulates that an athlete shall not use, consume or have in his or her possession a substance or uses a method of sport banned by the World Anti-Doping Agency. (WADA)

In addition, **Section 7**²⁹ provides for the establishment of the National sports associations and national sports federation. It states that they shall be registered under this Act to manage a sports discipline at national level.

Furthermore, with the idea of developing sport from the grassroots, **Section 46**³⁰ provides for sports activities for schools and institutions of higher learning. This enables pupils and students in schools and institutions of higher learning to participate in sports. It further states that a school and an institution of higher learning shall offer at least fifteen sports activities for the pupils or students, which shall be sports activities authorized by the Council.

More still, **Section 47**³¹ provides that a pupil and a student shall be entitled to participate in the sports activities offered by the school or institution of higher learning of the pupil or student, as the case may be.

Section 48³² provides for National Sports Competitions. It states that the Ministry shall in consultation with the Council, organize sports competitions for schools and institutions of higher learning, for the sports disciplines authorized by the Council under Section 46. These apply to primary, secondary schools, tertiary institutions and universities.

²⁷ The National Sports Act Cap 151

²⁸ Ibid.,22

²⁹ Ibid.,4

³⁰ Ibid.,17

³¹ Ibid.,18

³² ibid

More so, **Section 50**³³ provides for Sports academies. It expounds that there shall be in Uganda sports academies to provide specialized training in particular sports disciplines for athletes and sports persons.

However, there are unrealistic registration and representation requirements imposed by the Act for the registration and recognition of sports associations and sports federations. While intended to ensure inclusivity and national character, these requirements may be unrealistic for emerging sports that often have limited resources.

2.1.3 The National Council of Sports Regulations, 2025.

These regulations are made basing on the powers conferred to the Minister by Section 10 of the National Council of Sports Act.³⁴ These regulations provide for the incorporation and registration of National sports associations, and forms for application for registration under Schedule 1 of these regulations.³⁵

Regulation 3³⁶ provides for the incorporation of every national sports association in accordance with the laws of Uganda. A national sports association means an organization promoting and supervising a particular sport throughout the country and includes federation.³⁷

Regulation 4³⁸ provides for the registration of National Sports Associations by the Council with the exceptions being that there should not be registering a national association which is incorporated as a company, not registering more than one National Sports Association.

Regulation 14³⁹ provides for the National sports associations to organize sports competitions for the sports they are recognized for. It further elaborates that the National sports associations shall issue clear rules and regulations regarding the participation of any person or club in a competition organized by the association.

It is also worth-noting that **Regulation 6**⁴⁰ explains the governance structure of national sports associations. It states that every national sports association shall have a general

³³ *ibid*

³⁴ Kitaka Aziz, Sports and the Law in Uganda, Research Article 3 (2019), page 14

³⁵ *ibid*

³⁶ The National Council of Sports Regulations, 2025

³⁷ *Supra* note 34

³⁸ *Supra* note 36

³⁹ The National Council of Sports Regulations, 2025

⁴⁰ *Ibid*, 8

assembly, an executive committee, a chairperson or president and a general secretary or secretary. It further provides that a national association recognized by an international body governing a particular sport may in accordance with the rules prescribed by that body have a different governance structure from the one specified in this regulation. It also provides that every person involved in the governance of a national association shall be elected or appointed in accordance with the instruments constituting the association or in accordance with the international rules governing the sport.

Furthermore, **Regulation 7**⁴¹ establishes the qualifications for participation in governance of a national sports association. It states that a person shall not hold an executive office of a national sports association unless that person has participated in the sport or been involved in administration of the sport and that person is a citizen of Uganda. It also explains that a person shall not hold an executive office or be involved, concurrently, in the governance of more than two national sports associations.

More so as part of good governance, **Regulation 5**⁴² provides for register of members. It states that every national association shall maintain a register of all persons who are members of the association. It further provides that a recognized national association shall at the beginning of each calendar year transmit a copy of the register of its members to the council.

In addition, **Regulation 15**⁴³ provides for funding. It stipulates that the council or the ministry responsible for sports shall not fund or support an association which is not recognized by the council.

National sports associations are however required to submit to the council annually, a statement of all sources of funding of the association, including donations and grants.⁴⁴

Regulation 17⁴⁵ provides for access to sports facilities. It states that every national association shall have access to sports facilities owned or managed by the council in accordance with a schedule drawn up by the council. It further explains that the council shall draw up a schedule for the use of sports facilities after consulting the registered national associations and that the council may charge a nominal fee for the use of a sports facility.

⁴¹ *ibid*

⁴² *Ibid*,.4

⁴³ *Ibid*,.8

⁴⁴ Regulation 16

⁴⁵ The National Council of Sports Regulations, 2025

2.2 Institutional Framework.

2.2.1 Ministry of Education and Sports.

This is a cabinet level ministry of Uganda. It is mandated to provide technical support, guide, coordinate, regulate and promote quality education, training and sports to all persons in Uganda for national integration, development and individual advancement. Sports is managed under the Department of Physical Education and sports.⁴⁶ When the ministry fails to monitor bodies such as the National Council of Sports, issues such as corruption, mismanagement of funds and leadership conflicts arise thus poor governance.

2.2.2 The National Council of Sports. (NCS)

This is a statutory organ whose establishment, status and powers are enshrined under the National Council of Sports Act of 1964, to among other things; develop, promote and control sports activities in Uganda on behalf of the government, under the Ministry of Education and Sports. The NCS also serves as a regulator and apex organization that coordinates all sports activities in the country in conjunction with the registered National Sports Associations/Federations.⁴⁷ Governance challenges in sports often arise from conflicts with federations. When the NCS fails to resolve disputes promptly and fairly, leadership conflicts persist and destabilize sports administration.

2.2.3 The Uganda Olympic Committee(UOC)

The Uganda Olympic Committee was constituted in 1950 and recognized by the International Olympic Committee (IOC) in 1956. The UOC represents Uganda in the international sports events like the winter and summer Olympics and the Common Wealth games. These are amongst the leading and most noticeable sports occasions in the world that attract the world's best athletes who compete before millions of spectators and sports fans watching them live and on television.⁴⁸ One of the major roles of the UOC is to support athletes preparing for international competitions. When there are weaknesses in planning, funding and training programs, athletes may receive inadequate support. This reflects a broader governance problem in the management and prioritization of athlete welfare.

⁴⁶ Kitaka Aziz, Sports and the Law in Uganda, Research Article 3 (2019), page 3

⁴⁷ *ibid*

⁴⁸ *ibid*

2.2.4 Conclusion

In this chapter in my submission above, it examines the institutional and legal framework that governs and regulates sports in Uganda. The study shows that legal framework addresses some challenges that affect sports such as doping, betting and match-fixing. Such challenges are provided for in the law thus creating fair completion in sports. The study further explains the institutions that govern sports in Uganda. However, despite the fact that there is a well-established legal and institutional framework governing and regulating sports in the country, Ugandan sport still faces a number of crucial challenges that need to be addressed effectively to prevent the under development of the sports sector. Some of these challenges are not addressed by the legal framework.

CHAPTER THREE

3.1 GOVERNANCE CHALLENGES IN UGANDA’S SPORTS SECTOR.

Despite the significant role sports play in national development, social cohesion, youth empowerment, and economic growth, the sports sector in Uganda continues to face governance challenges that hinder its effective growth and sustainability. Although the government and various stakeholders have made some efforts to promote sports through policy formulation, institutional support and international participation, the sector remains underdeveloped compared to its potential. Understanding this challenge is essential in order to develop effective legal, institutional, and policy responses aimed at strengthening the sports sector and ensuring that sports contribute meaningfully to national development. This section therefore examines the governance challenges facing the sports sector in Uganda and how this challenge impacts its overall growth.

3.2 Absence of term limits for Federation leaders.

This majorly stems from the gaps in the National Sports Act Cap 151. The National Counsel of Sports ought to create a standard Constitution for all sports federations in Uganda. The Act does not provide for some serious issues such as term limits for the leaders of these federations. These could be some of the issues addressed by these constitutions of different federations. The leaders of these federations are therefore left with so much power in that they personalize these federations.

The leaders of these federations are not entitled to salaries but receive money from the government for specified purposes meant to develop sport in the country. It is a worry that in the absence of term limits, some of these leaders may end up turning the federations into a money making venture instead of developing sport thus bringing up total mismanagement.

Talented individuals with fresh perspectives and ideas, often younger, more diverse or closer to the athlete experience are sidelined because there simply are not open seats at the table.⁴⁹

⁴⁹ Why term limits are key to Uganda’s sports federations. <https://www.monitor.co.ug> accessed on 13th February, 2026

3.3 Harsh conditions for registration of Sports Federations and Associations

The other gap in the act is the implementation of **Sections 9 and 10**⁵⁰ which provide for the eligibility for registration as national sports association and eligibility for registration as national sports federation respectively. The law stipulates Under Section 9 that in order for one to be given a license, they must be in at least half of the districts in Uganda. That means that the sport must be played in at least 73 districts. Section 10 on the other hand states that for federations, the sport must be in 75% of all the districts. Such conditions are deemed a hindrance in the formation of federations and associations basing on the fact that some sports are not prominent in many parts of the country.

The NCS provides for 52 games that are allowed to be played in Uganda. However only very few games are played. For instance, under athletics, running is the only sector emphasized yet there is discus, javelin, short put, high jump and so on but are not utilized in the country. Further only few common games such as football, basketball, netball, rugby are being played in the different districts. In his Article, Godfrey Drabe stated that one of the most glaring symptoms of poor governance is chronic financial instability and mismanagement.⁵¹

3.4 Inadequate funding

This is due to lack of a sports funding policy in Uganda. There is no statutory sports funding policy in Uganda to guide allocation, transparency and equitable distribution of government and private funds in sports. Sports is poorly funded by the government in Uganda. This is due to prioritization of especially football over other sports. Large sums of funds are allocated to FUFA compared to other disciplines. Most of the federations have to carry out fundraising to add to what government offers.

⁵⁰ National Sports Act Cap 151

⁵¹ How poor governance cripples sport in Uganda <https://www.monitor.co.ug> accessed on 4th January, 2026

In his article, Jjagwe Robert stated that during international competitions, many times the National Federation leaders spend their own money in many millions of shillings that often take long to be repaid, if the said repayment even comes through fully anyway. A very disturbing eventuality here is that these funds often take several months to be repaid but when the repayment is finally executed, it comes with no interest gains whatsoever. Generally speaking the National Federation leaders go through a lot to present a team for a major international competition.⁵²

3.5 Limited accountability and transparency.

Effective governance requires systems that promote accountability and transparency, yet these are often weak in Uganda's sports structures. Financial reporting may be inadequate, and stakeholders especially athletes and local clubs are rarely involved in the decision making processes. Without putting into consideration the mechanisms to hold leaders accountable, misuse of funds and lack of strategic direction will persist. This lack of transparency further undermines the confidence among sponsors, partners and the public.

3.6 Player welfare

Player welfare refers to the physical, mental, financial, and social well-being of athletes. In a well-governed sports system, athletes are protected, supported and developed in all aspects. However, in Uganda, weak government structures have led to significant gaps in safeguarding player welfare, making it a critical issue in the sports sector. Due to financial mismanagement, poor accountability and corruption, funds meant for the welfare of athletes are misused thus resulting in delayed or unpaid allowances, inadequate facilitation during competitions, poor living and travel conditions for athletes among others.

The issue of accountability and transparency is another significant governance deficit. Many clubs lack proper financial audits, making it difficult to track revenue and expenditure. This not only discourages potential corporate sponsors, who demand clear

⁵² Jjagwe Robert, Former Uganda Table Tennis Association president, National Sports Federation Leaders Deserve to Enjoy International Competitions, (July 2025)

financial reporting, but also fosters an environment ripe for corruption and misuse of funds. Players and technical staff often bear the brunt of this, with reports of unpaid salaries and allowances being common across the leagues. Such practices erode trust and professionalism, pushing talented individuals away from the local game.⁵³

In addition, players face abuse and exploitation such as sexual harassment by coaches or officials. Weak reporting mechanisms enable such acts to continue. Mental health of players is also ignored as few teams have sports psychologists and structured counseling programs.

3.7 Poor infrastructure

Poor infrastructure in Uganda's sports sector is one of the clearest symptoms of poor governance and it ends up affecting athlete performance and fan engagement. Limited public accountability brings question as to whether funds meant to construct sports facilities are fully optimized. A new report by the Confederation of African Football (CAF) reveals that as of February 2026, none of Uganda's four proposed stadiums fully meet Category 4 requirements for hosting Africa Cup of Nations (AFCON) 2027 matches.⁵⁴

The state of football infrastructure across Uganda is a major concern. Licensing demands proper facilities, which many clubs simply do not possess or can afford to maintain like substandard home stadiums and training grounds. Requirements for all-green natural grass or artificial turf pitches, proper markings, and basic amenities are often unmet. Many clubs also operate without proper administrative offices hindering professional organization and record-keeping.⁵⁵ Furthermore, many other sports such as athletics, basketball, volleyball, swimming, and boxing lack a variety and standard training and competition venues. The government ought to invest more in sports facilities and further demand accountability.

3.8 Conclusion

⁵³ How poor governance cripples Ugandan football clubs <https://www.monitor.co.ug> accessed on 9th April, 2026.

⁵⁴ None of Uganda's Stadiums meet Afcon 2027 Standards. <https://nilepost.co.ug> accessed on 9th April, 2026

⁵⁵ Why clubs consistently fall short of Fufa licensing. <https://www.monitor.co.ug> accessed on 9th April, 2026

In conclusion, most of challenges facing the sports industry in Uganda stem from poor governance which brings about inadequate funding. The government ought to invest more in the sports sector because it generates a lot of income as the case in developed countries.

CHAPTER FOUR

4.1 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

This Chapter outlines the findings of the study examining the legal framework of the sports sector in Uganda and the governance challenges facing the sports sector in Uganda. The research involved both legal analysis and the opinions of the public in published articles and journals, different websites and newspapers. The chapter also presents recommendations for improving the sports sector in Uganda and for the development of sport in the country.

4.2 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS.

4.2.1 Introduction

The research consisted of two parts. The first was the legal and institutional framework of sports in Uganda and the other was the governance challenges facing the sports sector in Uganda. The study showed that sports in Uganda is growing but however is still under developed when compared to other states and that part of this cause is the poor governance of the sports sector.

4.2.2 The Legal Framework

Under the Legal framework, the study revealed that sports are governed by the Supreme law of the land which is the Constitution of the Republic of Uganda 1995 as amended. Objective XVII provides that the state shall promote recreation and sports for the citizens of Uganda. Further Article 45 of the Constitution states that rights expressly stated shall not exclude others not expressly stated.

1. The National Sports Act

The study revealed that the National Sports Act Cap 151 is the major legal framework that governs sports in the country. The Act states under Section 2 that its major objective to put into consideration Objective XVII of the Constitution meaning it is in line with the Supreme law of the country.

2. The National Council of Sports Regulations

The study outlined that the National Council of Sports Regulations, 2014 are part of the statutory framework that regulates and governs sports in Uganda. These guide in the registration of National sports federations and associations.

4.2.3 The Institutional Framework

The study further revealed the institutional framework of sports law in Uganda which is the Ministry of Education and Sports, the Uganda Olympic Committee and the National Sports Council. These enable in regulating sports in Uganda.

4.2.4 The governance challenge

Furthermore, the study outlines the governance challenge facing the sports sector in Uganda. This includes issues to do with poor infrastructure, player welfare is lacking, limited accountability and transparency, inadequate funding, harsh conditions for the registration of National Sports Federations and Associations and the absence of term limits for federation leaders. If this challenge is addressed and worked upon, the sports industry shall flourish and develop like those in developed countries such as Europe.

4.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

4.3.1 Recommendations to the Government and Ministry of Education and Sports

My first recommendation would be that the sports sector should be given an independent ministry aside from the Ministry of Education and Sports. The current ministry focuses more on education than sport itself. The sports sector needs an independent institutional framework and budget meant to invest more and develop sport in the country right from the grassroots.

Secondly, I recommend that the sports forum that was there in the Statutory Instrument of 2014 be rejuvenated. This was removed by the Statutory Instrument of 2025. This sports forum was a forum where the sports minister would meet the National Sports Federations and they would advise the minister on how best to develop the sports in Uganda, on how best to brand sports in Uganda and on how to promote sports in Uganda. This was a very important forum.

Thirdly, I recommend that there is diversity in the sports sector. The government need not focus on only a few games such as football, basketball or netball but also other games such as tennis, badminton and so on. This would increase the country's participation on the international stage such as Olympics.

I further recommend that the government of Uganda invests more money in the sport industry. Uganda has the ability to host Formula one which is the most highly recognized motorsport in the world. Such would bring in government revenue if proper investment is made.

I recommend that the sports infrastructure be developed in Uganda. Instead of spending a lot of money for instance paying a foreign Uganda Cranes Coach 92 Million Uganda Shillings per month, such money should be channeled in developing sports facilities and further hire local cheaper coaches.

4.3.2 Recommendations to the National Sports Council.

I recommend that the National Sports Act be amended to fill certain gaps such as term limits for the leaders of National Sports Federations and Associations, the Act should also address issues to do with player welfare and that the restrictions for registration of federations and associations under Sections 9 and 10 be revised to comply with Article 29 of the Constitution which provides for freedom of association.

4.4 Conclusion

Conclusively, Sport plays an important role in Uganda. This study has examined the governance challenge facing the sports sector in Uganda. This challenge has hindered the growth and development of Ugandan sport both at national and international level. With the absence of sustained government funding and investment, Uganda's rich sporting talent may go unrecognized.

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