

Giancarlo Davite and pace note reader Matteo Davite won the Huye Rally to secure the 2026 Rwanda National Rally Championship, capping a dominant weekend on the demanding gravel roads of Huye and Gisagara.



Davite is the 2026 Rwanda National Rally Champion. Photo credit RAC

The Gianca Team crew completed the rally in 1 hour, 9 minutes and 14.31 seconds, finishing 12 minutes and 48.95 seconds ahead of Ugandan driver Ponsiano Lwakataka co-driver Lawrence Mwambazi. Rwanda's Eric Gakwaya and Aurore Kayibanda in the Subaru STI N10 took third in 1:28:52.18, according to the provisional overall classification.

Davite arrived in Huye leading the championship with 134 points from the first four rounds. He needed 10 more points to clinch the title, with a 64-point advantage over his closest challenger, Queen Kalimpinya.

The victory secured another national crown for Gianca Team, whose previous championship wins came in 2008, 2009, 2011, 2012 and 2013. He also won the Mountain Gorilla Rally in 2025, a round of the FIA African Rally Championship.

The Huye Rally, held from October 16 to 18, was the fifth round of Rwanda's national championship and attracted a registered entry of 16 crews: 12 from Rwanda and four from Uganda. Six became casualties of the rally.

Subaru Imprezas accounted for 14 entries, alongside a Mitsubishi Evo X and a Peugeot 106. Davite competed in his usual Mitsubishi Evo X, while Lwakataka brought his Subaru Impreza to challenge the home crews.

The event began with a spectator night stage in Huye town on Friday evening before the competition moved to stages around Kibirizi, Gisagara and Rango on Saturday. Sunday's final stages took crews towards Save, where the overall results and championship outcome were decided.

Davite and Matteo were already leading after the first five special stages. Their advantage over Lwakataka and Mwambazi stood at 12 minutes and 48.95 seconds in the provisional final classification.

Loose gravel, red dust and tight bends left little room for mistakes, while the changing road conditions tested both drivers and their service crews.

A night super special stage added to the spectacle, allowing fans to watch two cars compete side by side on a short course. Motorcycles also featured in the weekend's programme, bringing a separate contest to Huye.

The enduro event also took center stage, with Olivier clinching on a KTM 450 in 32 minutes and 45.50 seconds. Shaida and Sebastien finished second on a Ducati, 5 minutes and 50.81 seconds behind, while Mathieu took third on a KTM 890, just 8.79 seconds behind the runners-up.



The enduro bike event also took center stage in Huye Rally, Photo Credit to Rwanda Automobile Club (RAC)

Bizimana Augustine was the leading Rwandan rider in fourth place. Twelve riders were classified.

Huye Rally is the Memorial Gakwaya Challenge Cup which honours Claude Gakwaya, a Rwandan rally driver who died in a road accident in 1986. The 2026 edition marked 40 years since his death.

It also provided a farewell for veteran driver Rutabingwa Gracien, who began his rally career on the Huye roads nearly four decades ago.

Drivers, co-drivers, officials and teams formed a guard of honour to recognise his contribution to the sport. His departure marked the end of a long career in a discipline that has grown through the efforts of competitors, mechanics, organisers and fans.



Drivers and crews also engaged in Umuganda. all photos by RAC

Away from the stages, drivers and team members joined residents for Umuganda on Saturday morning, helping with construction work on a home in Huye.

For Davite, the weekend ended with both the Huye Rally victory and the national championship.

The previous edition, in 2025, was won by Christian Kanangire and co-driver Fernand Rutabingwa in a Subaru Impreza.



Davite cursing his Mitsubishi Evo X



Ugandan rally ace Ponsiano Lwakataka co-driver Lawrence Mwambazi finished second behind Davite



Eric Gakwaya and Aurore Kayibanda in the Subaru STI N10 took third on the podium



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