

The third round of the 2026 African Rally Championship (ARC) is shaping up into a tightly contested battle, with Kenyan crews continuing to dominate the standings as the series heads to Rwanda for the iconic Mountain Gorilla Rally.

The event, scheduled for 10–12 July in Bugesera District, is expected to play a pivotal role in shaping the championship race.

Defending champion Karan Patel leads the standings on 83 points, opening up a clear gap over fellow Kenyan Samman Singh Vohra on 66 points, while Uganda's Aakif Virani sits third with 60 points.

But the numbers only tell part of the story. The real test lies ahead in Rwanda's demanding terrain, where crews will face high-altitude gravel stages that are known to punish even the smallest mistake.

According to the official entry list released by Rwanda Automobile Club Clerk of Course Eric Gakwaya, a competitive 17-car field will line up in Bugesera, bringing together some of the region's top rally talent.

Patel and Virani will once again spearhead the ARC challenge in their Skoda Fabia R5 machines, but they face strong competition from a determined regional field eager to disrupt the early championship order.

Uganda's reigning African Rally Champion Yasin Nasser will also be one to watch in a Ford Fiesta, while Tanzania's Ahmed Huwel enters the fray in a Toyota Yaris GR.

Nasser, who finished third in the previous round in Uganda, will be aiming to close the gap at the top of the standings.

Much of the local attention, however, will focus on the ARC2 category, where Rwanda's Queen Kalimpinya leads the home challenge with 11 championship points. She will compete in a Subaru Impreza alongside co-driver Olivier Ngabo.

Kalimpinya, who missed the second round in Uganda, returns to action joined by compatriots Christian Kanangire and Claude Gakwaya, all hoping to make full use of familiar and demanding home terrain against regional rivals such as Uganda's Susan Muwonge and Oscar Ntambi.

In ARC2, Uganda's Godfrey Kaguta Aine currently tops the standings, with Kalimpinya close behind in second place.

With competition spread across ARC2, ARC3 and ARC4 categories, the Rwanda Mountain Gorilla Rally promises a varied and unpredictable contest. While Patel arrives as the man to beat, the demanding gravel stages of Bugesera are likely to ensure no advantage is safe over three days of intense competition.

The fourth round of the championship will be held in Mkwawa, Tanzania, in October.

Bottom of Form

Mountain Gorilla 2026 Entry list:

· ARC (Main Category / Rally 2):

- Yasin Nasser / Katumba Ali (UGA) – Ford Fiesta
- Aakif Virani / Shah Zahir (KEN) – Skoda Fabia R5
- Karan Patel / Khan Tauseef (KEN) – Skoda Fabia R5
- Ahmed Huwel / Roheet Solanki (TAN) – Toyota Yaris GR
- Manveer Birdi / Manmeet Birdi (TAN) – Skoda Fabia R5
- Jasmeet Chana / Ravi Chana (KEN) – Ford Fiesta

· ARC2 (Group NR4 / RC2):

- Queen Kalimpinya / Olivier Ngabo (RWA) – Subaru Impreza
- Susan Muwonge / Musa Nsubuga (UGA) – Subaru Impreza
- Lisa Christoffersen / Christabell Mwangi (KEN) – Subaru Impreza
- Oscar Ntambi / Pius Luggya (UGA) – Mitsubishi Lancer Evo X
- Christian Kanangire / Kevin Mujiji (RWA) – Subaru Impreza
- Mohamed Roshanali / Christophe Bigirimana (BDI) – Subaru Impreza
- Claude Gakwaya / Claude Mugabo (RWA) – Subaru Impreza

· ARC3 (Rally 3 / RC3):

- Nikhil Sachania / Deep Patel (KEN) – Ford Fiesta
- Naveen Puligilla / Musa Sherif (IND) – Ford Fiesta

· ARC4 (Rally 4 / RC4):

- Tinashe Gatimu / Caroline Gatimu (KEN) – Ford Fiesta
- Godfrey Nsereko / John Bosco Musisi (UGA) – Toyota Etios