

Shooting Touch Rwanda (STR), in collaboration with Let It Fly Classic, Our Past Initiative, and Zaria Court, successfully hosted the first edition of the Shooting Touch x Let It Fly Basketball Tournament earlier this month. The event brought together over 300 people at Kigali's new Zaria Court, showcasing how sport can drive education, gender equality, and youth empowerment.

The tournament featured under-16 and under-18 competitions for both girls and boys, with 64 young athletes traveling from Rwanda's Eastern Province to compete. The players, all part of Shooting Touch's sport-for-development programs, were given the opportunity to showcase their skills in front of talent scouts, with the possibility of securing scholarships or team placements.



Four outstanding players were recognized as the Most Valuable Players (MVPs) and each received RWF 500,000 for educational support, courtesy of Kyle Umemba, Co-Founder of Let It Fly Classic in Boston, USA. The MVPs were Mutesi Aline (U16 Girls - Mukarange), Niyonkuru Eric (U16 Boys - Nyamirama), Tumukunde Sandrine (U18 Girls - Rilima), and Tuyizere Aaron (U18 Boys - Rukara).

The event drew notable guests, including APR basketball coach James Maye and former APR coach Fenan Atobrhan, who now works with the Houston Rockets in the NBA Summer League. One of the most inspiring moments came from Brigitte Nibishaka, a Shooting Touch alumna and current MVP of Rwanda's Professional Basketball League, who shared her journey from rural Rukara to national success, motivating the young players to pursue their dreams with determination.

Speaking at the event, Denise Uwase, STR's Community Engagement Coordinator for Kayonza District, highlighted the organization's long-term impact. "For over 14 years, Shooting Touch has worked in Rwanda's rural communities — from Nyamirama and Rwinkwavu to Mukarange, Rukara, Mayange, and Rilima. Through sport, we have provided youth and women with access to health education, mentorship, leadership training, and pathways to a brighter future. Our work directly contributes to the goals of Rwanda's National Strategy for Transformation (NST2) — especially in the areas of human capital development, gender equity, and youth empowerment. We know that when we invest in the potential of our young people, we invest in the future of this country. And that investment is paying off," she said.