



FORT PORTAL CITY MARATHON



Miles of Beauty

Venue - Boma Ground, Fort Portal

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Last year, that community brought me to the inaugural Fort Portal City Marathon. Although I had covered much longer distances during training, the 10-kilometre race was the longest I had entered in an organised event.

30 **My journey to a podium finish**

For someone who had never walked even 5km at once, 30 was a lot. And I can tell you, I dearly paid for it in the days that followed. But that's a story for another day.



EDITOR'S NOTE



What the road reveals

THE GIST: *The marathon is the spark. Fort Portal is the experience.*

A marathon reveals a place differently. Not from behind a windscreen. Not from a tour itinerary. But at a runner's pace.

Slow enough to notice. Fast enough to feel. Every hill, every bend, every cheer from a stranger becomes part of the story.

That is what makes the Fort Portal City Marathon special. After a memorable inaugural edition, 2026 promises an even richer experience when runners take their place at the starting line at Boma Grounds on July 18.

The route threads its way through a city where history, faith, education and community intersect – passing the Royal Palace, iconic cathedrals and mosques, River Mpanga, the Tooro Golf Course and landmarks woven into the identity of Fort Portal.

Tooro's warmth

But beyond the landscapes lies something equally memorable – the warmth of the people, the richness of Tooro's culture and the quiet confidence of a city that continues to grow while remaining

true to itself.

This magazine is an invitation to experience all of it. A Run in Paradise.

Within these pages, you will discover much more than a race. You will find stories of community and enterprise, places to explore, flavours to savour, adventures to pursue and the many people who make Fort Portal what it is.

Whether you have travelled from across the world, across Uganda or across town, we hope this publication encourages you to look a little closer, stay a little longer and experience a little more.

The marathon may bring us together.

But it is what the road reveals that makes us want to return.

Andrew Mwanguhya
Editor-in-Chief



WORD FROM THE CEO

Building the next chapter together

As we prepare to welcome you to the second edition of the Fort Portal City Marathon, I extend my sincere appreciation to everyone who has helped bring us this far.

To the people of Fort Portal and Tooro, thank you for embracing this marathon and making it your own.

To Tooro Kingdom, Fort Portal Tourism City, our sponsors, partners, government agencies, exhibitors, volunteers, media partners and the Organising Committee, your commitment and support continue to drive this journey forward.

The inaugural edition proved that the Fort Portal City Marathon can be much more than a race.

This year, we are building on that foundation with over 2,500 runners expected, a bigger two-day Marathon Business Expo, stronger partnerships,



This year, we are building on that foundation with over 2,500 runners expected, a bigger two-day Marathon Business Expo, stronger partnerships, greater national visibility and expanded community impact.

greater national visibility and expanded community impact.

Our vision is clear. We want to build a marathon that promotes healthy living, creates opportunities for local businesses, brings communities together and showcases Fort Portal and Tooro as one of Africa's most compelling tourism destinations.

The journey is only beginning. Our ambition is to grow the Fort Portal City Marathon into one of Africa's leading destination marathons – an annual experience that runners and visitors across Uganda and beyond look forward to.

To everyone joining us this year, welcome to Fort Portal. Come early, experience the Expo, run through Uganda's Tourism City, explore Tooro and take home memories that last long after the finish line.

Thank you for believing in this journey.

See you in Paradise.

Stephen Mugabe

CEO, Fort Portal City Marathon

PM'S MESSAGE

FORT PORTAL CITY: The perfect home of champions

On behalf of His Majesty the Omukama, the leadership of Tooro Kingdom, and the people of Tooro, I extend a warm and heartfelt welcome to all athletes, visitors, sponsors, partners, and guests participating in the second edition of the Fort Portal City Marathon aptly named "A run in Paradise"

We are honoured and delighted that the organisers of this prestigious event chose Fort Portal City and the wider Tooro region as the destination for this remarkable celebration of sport, health, community, and tourism.

Their decision could not have been more fitting. Fort Portal is not only one of Uganda's most beautiful cities but also one of Africa's most naturally gifted destinations.

Nestled at the foothills of the legendary Rwenzori Mountains, Fort Portal offers visitors a unique blend of breathtaking scenery, rich cultural heritage, favourable weather, and unmatched hospitality.

For runners, few places in the world provide such a spectacular backdrop. Every stride taken through our city is accompanied by views of rolling green hills, crater lakes, tea plantations, tropical forests, and the



The people of Tooro are known throughout Uganda for their warmth, kindness, humility, and welcoming spirit.

majestic Mountains of the Moon. It is a landscape that inspires both endurance and reflection.

Location is one of Tooro's greatest advantages. Situated in the heart of Western Uganda, Tooro serves as a gateway to some of the country's most treasured tourism attractions.

Visitors can easily explore the Rwenzori Mountains, Kibale National Park, Semuliki National Park, Queen Elizabeth National Park, and numerous crater lakes that dot our picturesque countryside.

The weather is equally inviting. Fort Portal enjoys a cool and pleasant climate throughout much of the year, making it ideal not only for athletic competition but also for leisure, recreation, and tourism. Visitors are often pleasantly surprised by the freshness of our air, the lush greenery of our environment, and the tranquillity that defines life in Tooro.

Beyond the scenery, however, the true beauty of Tooro lies in its people.

The people of Tooro are known throughout Uganda for their warmth, kindness, humility, and welcoming spirit.

Here, visitors quickly become friends,



and friends soon become family. Our culture is rooted in respect, hospitality, and community values that have been preserved across generations.

One of the most unique aspects of our culture is Empako (praise name), a cherished naming tradition recognised internationally as an important element of our cultural heritage.

Empako is more than a name. It is a symbol of respect, affection, identity, and belonging. Through Empako, we celebrate human dignity and strengthen the bonds that unite us as a people.

As you participate in the Fort Portal City Marathon, I encourage you to immerse yourselves not only in the race but also in the rich cultural and tourism experience that Tooro offers.

Visit our attractions. Taste our food. Meet our people. Learn about our history. Discover why countless visitors return again and again to this remarkable kingdom.

To the management and organisers of the Fort Portal City Marathon, I commend your vision and foresight.

By bringing this event to Fort Portal, you are not only promoting healthy living and athletic excellence but also showcasing one of Uganda's premier tourism

destinations to the world. Your contribution to sports tourism, community development, and destination marketing is deeply appreciated.

To all runners and guests, I wish you a memorable stay, a successful race, and an unforgettable experience in Tooro.

As you leave, carry with you the memories of our hills, our lakes, our mountains, and our people.

But most importantly, do not leave Tooro without receiving your Empako.

Welcome to Fort Portal City.

Welcome to Tooro Kingdom.

May your stay be rewarding, your race successful, and your experience unforgettable.

Omukama Ahangirize

*Rt. Hon. Calvin
Armstrong Roomiire Akiiki*

Prime Minister, Tooro Kingdom

MESSAGE

A RUN IN PARADISE: Showcasing Uganda's tourism city the world

Fort Portal City continues to distinguish itself as Uganda's Tourism City – a destination where breathtaking landscapes, rich cultural heritage, environmental conservation and warm hospitality come together to create unforgettable experiences.

As we prepare for the second edition of the Fort Portal City Marathon, proudly dubbed A Run in Paradise, we celebrate more than a sporting event. We celebrate a shared vision of positioning Fort Portal among East Africa's leading tourism, sports and cultural destinations.

This year's marathon is the result of a strong partnership between Fort Portal City, the Fort Portal City Marathon Organising Committee and Tooro Kingdom. Together, we are promoting healthy lifestyles, preserving our cultural identity, stimulating economic growth and showcasing the unmatched beauty of our region.

The theme perfectly captures the essence of Fort Portal. Nestled beneath the Rwenzori Mountains and surrounded by crater lakes, tea plantations, lush forests and world-



"Together, we are building an event that promotes healthy living, celebrates our cultural heritage, grows our economy, and showcases Fort Portal to Uganda and the world,"

renowned attractions, our city offers runners and visitors an experience unlike any other.

Beyond the race, the marathon drives tourism and local enterprise. Every participant and visitor becomes an ambassador for Fort Portal, creating opportunities for hotels, restaurants, transport operators, artisans, farmers and other local businesses.

Our partnership with Tooro Kingdom adds a rich cultural dimension through traditions, cuisine, storytelling and heritage, while our environmental initiatives reinforce our commitment to sustainable tourism.

We envision the Fort Portal City Marathon growing into one of Uganda's signature annual sporting events through strong partnerships, effective organisation and continued community support.

I warmly invite Ugandans and friends from around the world to join us and discover why Fort Portal proudly bears the title of Uganda's Tourism City.

Ocen Ambrose

Clerk, Fort Portal City

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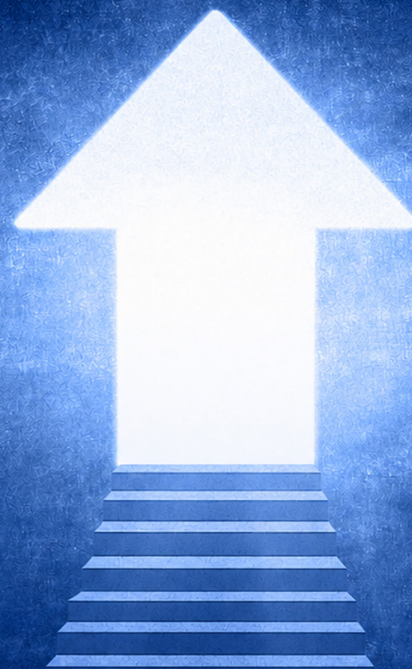
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His Majesty The Omukama Guest of Honour

His Majesty Omukama Oyo Nyimba Kabamba Iguru Rukidi IV graced the inaugural Fort Portal City Marathon as Guest of Honour, joining thousands of runners, visitors and partners while reaffirming Tooro Kingdom's commitment to sport, tourism and community development.



COMMITTEE

The Team Behind A Run in Paradise

Behind every successful marathon is a dedicated team working throughout the year to deliver a safe, memorable and world-class event. The Fort Portal City Marathon Organising Committee brings together expertise across sport, tourism, logistics, communications, hospitality, health and community engagement, united by one vision: showcasing Fort Portal and Tooro to the world.



Stephen Mugabe
Chief Executive Officer



Ronald Amega
Finance



Peter Ahabwe
Legal



Andrew Mwanguhya
Editorial & Comms



Faridah Nalunkuuma
Marketing & Comms



Dickens Sabiiti
Marketing & Comms



Desire Mutebi
Marketing & Comms



Mihayo Catherine
Marketing & Comms



Nicholas Muhirwe
Race Director



Esther Komuntale
Administration



Janet Nakkazi
Expo Coordinator



Milda Namude
Expo Team



Martin Sabiiti
Runner Experience



Douglas Walugembe
Runner Experience



Thomas Mwesigye
Runner Experience



Prosper Aketch
Runner Experience



Jomo Mugasha
Runner Experience



Don Sabiiti
Technical Team



Don Akatukunda
Technical Team

MARATHON REVIEW

A thousand runners registered for the inaugural Fort Portal City Marathon. Together with volunteers, exhibitors, partners and the wider community, they transformed race weekend into a celebration of tourism, culture and destination discovery

Year one at a glance



"It was my first time in Fort Portal and I will never forget it. I'm here again next year."
Shaban Omara, Marathon Finisher

MOMENTS THAT DEFINED YEAR ONE

A historic beginning

The inaugural Fort Portal City Marathon brought together runners, businesses, partners and the wider community for a landmark event in Uganda's Tourism City.

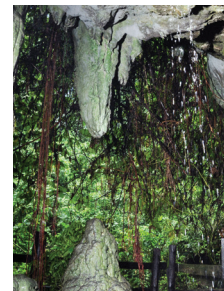
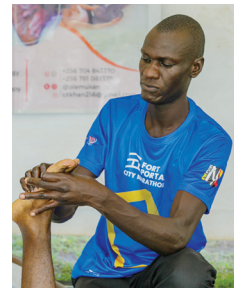


The Bishop who walked

After flagging off the 5km and 10km races, Bishop Robert Muhiirwa of Fort Portal Diocese joined participants on the course and proudly earned a finisher's medal himself.

The champion who went back to work

Cosmas Olemukan won the inaugural marathon before returning to help massage fellow runners as part of the Body Garage team



Tourism in motion

Participants extended their stay to experience Fort Portal and Tooro through visits to Karuzika Palace, Amabere Ga Nyina Mwiru and other attractions.

The town turned blue

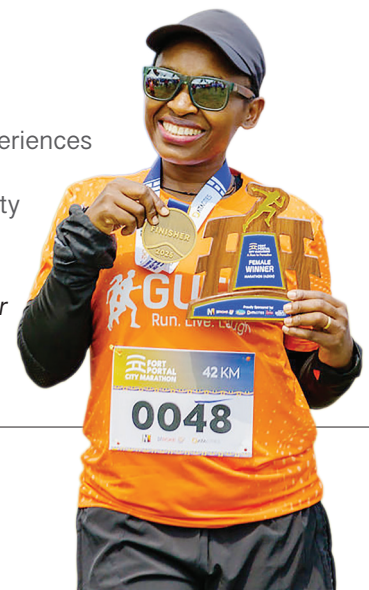
Long after the finish line was packed away, children and residents could still be seen proudly wearing their finisher medals around town.

LOOKING AHEAD

2026 promises:

- More runners
- Bigger expo
- More tourism experiences
- More partners
- Greater community impact

42km Women winner
Hilda K. Nkoola





Beyond the Finish Line: Measuring What Matters

Every marathon leaves behind a story that goes beyond the finish line. As the insights and analytics partner for the Fort Portal Marathon, DataCities is helping to tell its story – using real, on-the-ground data to show how the race shapes the city long after the last runner crosses the line.

Transforming Cities for Growth and Resilience

DataCities Initiative is a consortium of **UN Global Pulse**, **Sunbird AI**, and **ToroDev**, supported by the **Hewlett Foundation**, working with Uganda's emerging cities to use data, evidence, and practical tools for inclusive urban development.



With a current focus on **Fort Portal City** and **Jinja City**, DataCities is co-designing data-driven solutions across three key areas: **tourism development, revenue collection, and waste management** – helping cities better understand challenges, identify opportunities, and make informed decisions for the future.

Our Role in the Fort Portal Marathon

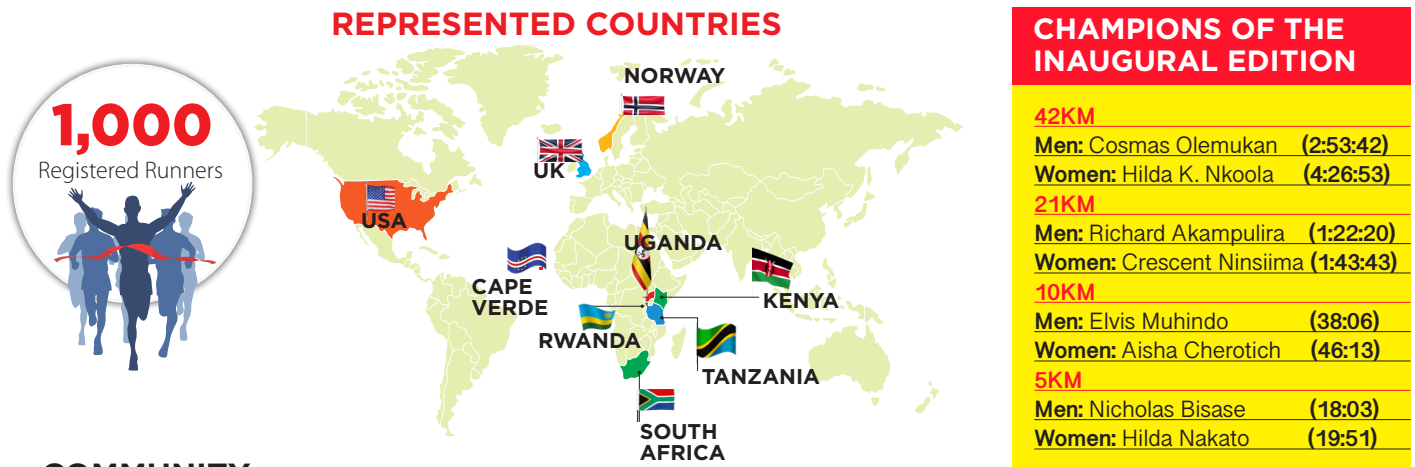
We are proud to be the **Insights and Analytics Partner for the Fort Portal City Marathon**.

Through this partnership, DataCities, in collaboration with Fort Portal City and the Mountains of the Moon University (MMU), is supporting the measurement of the marathon's contribution to tourism, local businesses, and the local community.

The findings will help answer key questions:

- Who participates, why, and where do they come from?
- What value does the marathon create for Fort Portal and surrounding areas?
- How can future events generate greater impact?

Year one by the numbers



COMMUNITY



COMMUNITY IMPACT

RUNNING GREEN

In partnership with Roofings Limited, we distributed 1,000 tree seedlings to marathon participants, the Uganda Police, Uganda Prisons Service and the Mountain Infantry Division at Muhoti Barracks, reinforcing our commitment to environmental sustainability.

SUPPORTING EDUCATION

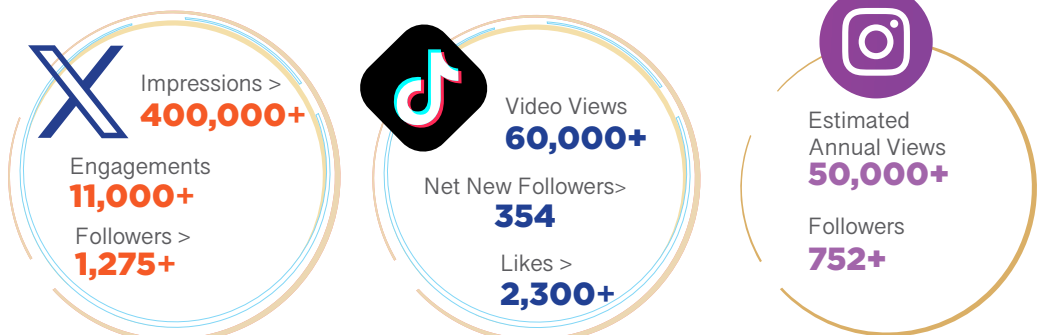
A percentage of marathon proceeds was committed to the Tooro Education Fund, supporting education within our community.

DESTINATION IMPACT

- Visitors explored Fort Portal & Tooro
- Tourism experiences extended beyond race day
- New destination partnerships created

MEDIA, DIGITAL & OUTDOOR IMPACT

SOCIAL & DIGITAL REACH





DIGITAL OUT-OF-HOME CAMPAIGN

Powered by Roke Telkom

The Fort Portal City Marathon campaign was displayed for approximately one month across the city's premium digital billboard network in Kampala and Entebbe, extending the event's visibility beyond traditional and social media audiences.

Campaign Highlights

- 10 premium digital billboard locations
- Kampala & Entebbe coverage
- Daily screen rotations per site

OVERALL COMMUNICATIONS FOOTPRINT

500,000+ Combined Social Media Views & Impressions

2,600+ Followers Across Platforms

13,000+ Combined Engagements

10 Premium Digital Billboards Across Kampala & Entebbe

- **Millions of viewers**, readers and listeners across legacy media

ECONOMIC IMPACT

Estimated Visitor Spend

Ugx 800m

Based on expenditure on travel, accommodation, tourism, transport, meals, shopping and other race-week activities.

Hotel Occupancy



75%

More than 70% of participants travelled from outside Fort Portal.



“This has definitely been added to my calendar.”

**Cosmas Olemukan,
Inaugural Marathon
Champion**

	UBC TV
	NTV Uganda
	NBS TV
	New Vision
	DAILY MONITOR
	Capital FM
Local radio stations 	Digital media 

The road ahead



The inaugural edition proved the concept. The next chapter is about growth – more runners, more visitors, more partners and a bigger tourism footprint for Fort Portal and Tooro Kingdom.

2,500+



Expected Participants
More than double the
inaugural edition.

**“The marathon
is no longer
merely passing
through the city.
It is beginning to
speak the city’s
language.”**

BIGGER EXPO

- More exhibitors.
- More activations.
- More experiences.

MORE VISITORS

More travellers
discovering Fort Portal
and Tooro through the
marathon experience.

GREATER COMMUNITY IMPACT

Expanded community initiatives,
including support for Toro Babies Home.
Participants and visitors are encouraged
to donate essential items to children in
its care.

STRONGER PARTNERSHIPS

FOUNDING PARTNERS

10 organisations

2026 EDITION

16 Partners & Sponsors

GREATER VISIBILITY

Positioning Fort Portal as one
of Africa’s leading destination
marathon cities.

Including

■ Tourism Ministry ■ Castle Lite ■ Kahive
■ Jeans Club ■ Insurance Training College
■ Kalya Courts ■ Home Bliss Hotels

*Building on the founding partnership of Roke
Telkom, Capital Radio, UBC, Vision Group,
Data Cities, Crown Beverages, Paxtel, Roofings
Limited, Fort Portal Tourism City and Tooro
Kingdom.*

2026 SNAPSHOT

Date: 18 July 2026
Theme: A Run In Paradise
Expected Runners: 2,500+
Expo: 16–17 July
Venue: Boma Ground, Fort Portal



When a marathon becomes a destination

What begins as a race weekend creates opportunities far beyond the finish line. From tourism and hospitality to local enterprise and destination marketing, the Fort Portal City Marathon is becoming an engine for growth.

F “The marathon is no longer merely passing through the city. It is beginning to speak the city’s language.”



Miles of beauty

A Run In Paradise is more than a slogan. It is an invitation to discover a city where history, culture, nature and community come together in one unforgettable destination.

LANDMARKS ON THE ROUTE

Karuzika Palace

Seat of Tooro Kingdom.

St John's Cathedral

One of Fort Portal's most recognisable landmarks.

Virika Cathedral

An enduring symbol of faith and heritage.

River Mpanga

The river flowing through the heart of the city.

Tooro Golf Club

One of Uganda's oldest and most scenic golf courses.

Historic Schools

Institutions that have shaped generations of leaders.

Fort Portal's two major mosques

Standing close to each other in the heart of the city, the two mosques reflect Fort Portal's religious diversity and strong sense of community.

BEYOND THE ROUTE

Crater Lakes



Tea Estates



Amabere ga Nyina Mwiru



Hiking Trails



Waterfalls

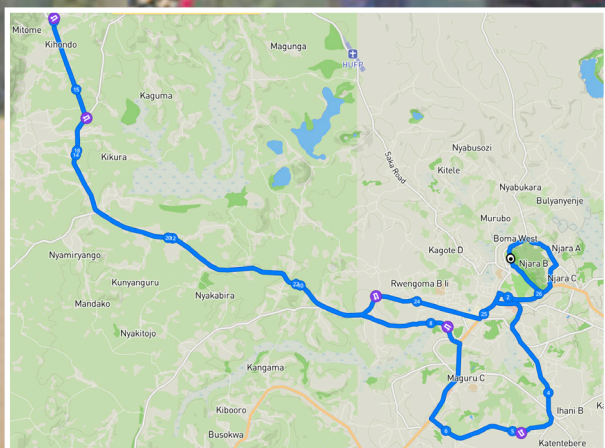


Community Experiences

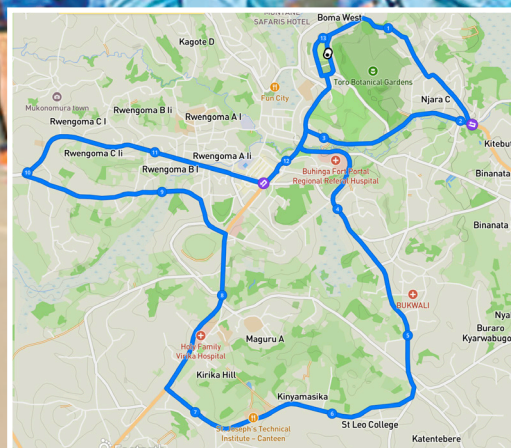


The marathon reveals Fort Portal. The adventure continues beyond the finish line.

Marathon (42km)



Half Marathon (21km)



EXPERIENCE ZONES



ELEVATION HIGHLIGHTS



Scenic. Undulating. Unforgettable.

Starting and finishing at Boma Ground, the Fort Portal City Marathon winds through the leafy Njara Hills, crosses the Mpanga River and climbs the demanding Bukwali Hill before passing landmarks including St. Leo's College Kyegobe, Nyakasura School, St John's Cathedral, Virika Cathedral, Fort Portal's iconic mosques and, finally, the Karuzika Palace – the cultural heart of Tooro Kingdom.

COURSE FACTS

City Elevation

1,500m

above sea level

Highest Point

Njara Hill

Lowest Point

Mpanga River Bridge

Maximum Elevation Gain

550m

Course Type

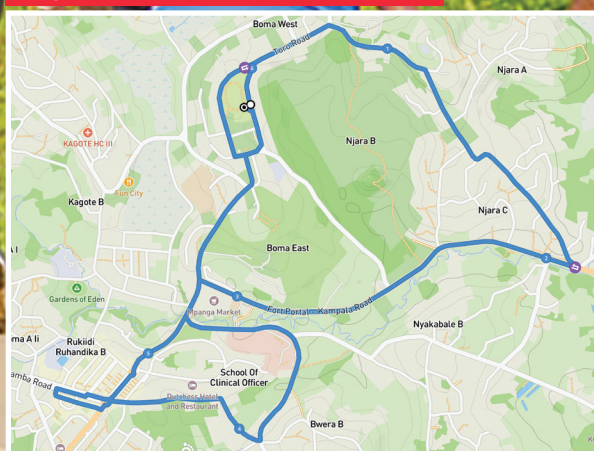
Tarmac Road

Terrain

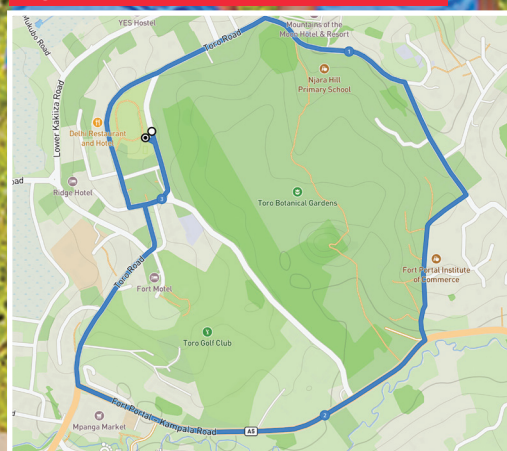
Scenic & Undulating

One Route. Endless Discoveries.
A Run In Paradise.

10km



5km



A woman with long brown hair, wearing a blue t-shirt, black shorts, and a pink headband, is running towards the right. She is smiling and looking off-camera. She has a race bib with the number 0505 pinned to her shirt. The background features a lush green forest with a waterfall cascading over rocks into a pool of water. The text 'Discover Fort Portal' is overlaid on the image in a white script font for 'Discover' and a large yellow serif font for 'Fort Portal'.

Discover
Fort Portal



The marathon may bring you here. The landscapes, culture, adventure and hospitality will make you want to stay.

WHY FORT PORTAL

- Uganda's Tourism City
- Cool climate
- Rich cultural heritage
- Warm hospitality
- Gateway to adventure

NATURE'S MASTERPIECES

- Crater Lakes
- Tea Estates
- Waterfalls
- Kibale Forest
- Rwenzori Mountains

EXPERIENCE MORE OF TOORO

- Heritage
- Community experiences
- Cultural encounters
- Hidden corners of Tooro



CHOOSE YOUR STAY

ONE-DAY EXPERIENCE

Race. Explore. Return.

- Arrive early for race-day registration
- Run the Fort Portal City Marathon
- Visit Karuzika Palace and Fort Portal city centre
- Enjoy local cuisine before departing

Perfect for day visitors.

TWO-DAY EXPERIENCE

Race Weekend

Day One

- Arrive in Fort Portal
- Visit the Marathon Expo
- Kit collection
- Explore the city
- Experience Fort Portal's nightlife

Day Two

Race Day

- Recovery and celebrations
- Visit Karuzika Palace or Amabere ga Nyina Mwiru
- Depart

The complete marathon experience.



THREE-DAY EXPERIENCE

A Run In Paradise

Day One

- Arrive in Fort Portal
- Marathon Expo
- Kit collection
- Discover cafes, restaurants and nightlife

Day Two

- Marathon Day
- Finish-line celebrations
- Relax and unwind

Day Three

- Explore Tooro
- Crater Lakes
- Kibale National Park or Amabere ga Nyina Mwiru
- Tea estate experience
- Coffee tasting
- Depart

Come for the marathon. Stay for Paradise.

DON'T LEAVE WITHOUT...

- Visiting Karuzika Palace
- Experiencing the Marathon Expo
- Tasting Tooro tea and coffee
- Exploring Amabere ga Nyina Mwiru
- Watching the sunset over a crater lake
- Taking home your Empako story



The hidden lakes of Tooro

Beyond Fort Portal's famous attractions lies another world of ancient crater lakes, volcanic landscapes and stories passed down through generations. As visitors arrive for the Fort Portal City Marathon, this is an invitation to discover one of Tooro's best-kept secrets.



By Magelah Peter Gwayaka

Fort Portal is the tourism hub of Tooro and one of Uganda's premier destination cities.

Within a 30-minute to one-hour drive lie some of the country's most celebrated attractions, including Kibale, Semuliki, Rwenzori Mountains and Queen Elizabeth national parks. Each offers something unique.

Kibale National Park is renowned as the world's primate capital, home to the highest concentration of primate species, including chimpanzees, while also being one of the few places where both forest elephants (*Loxodonta cyclotis*) and savannah elephants (*Loxodonta*

africana) can be found.

The Rwenzori Mountains are famous for their snow-capped peaks, rare wildlife and remarkable biodiversity.

Less well known, however, is that the Rwenzori region is home to more than 20 lakes, forming part of one of East Africa's most fascinating volcanic landscapes.

Discovering Tooro's hidden lakes

Beyond its famous attractions, Tooro is dotted with dozens of little-known crater lakes, waterfalls and hot springs.

During the COVID-19 lockdown, a team of researchers came together to document these



hidden treasures and share them with the world.

The project had two objectives: to promote domestic tourism and to equip a new generation of local photographers with skills in tourism photography, broadening their work beyond traditional event photography.

Together, the team travelled from lake to lake, waterfall to waterfall and hot spring to hot spring, documenting GPS locations, elevations, sizes and the stories behind each destination.

In total, they visited 67 lakes, five waterfalls, four hot springs and more than 100 calderas and dry crater basins. Every lake had its own story.

From this remarkable journey emerged 40 Lakes in Tooro You Must Visit Before You Die, a book showcasing some of the region's most spectacular yet least-known destinations.

More than beautiful landscapes

The book is an invitation to discover Tooro beyond its famous landmarks. It introduces readers to hidden lakes, their history, geography and cultural significance, while highlighting the region's enormous tourism potential.

The 40 featured lakes are only a starting point. Beyond them lie many more waiting to be explored.

As you prepare for the Fort Portal City Marathon, consider venturing beyond the finish line. Some of Tooro's greatest discoveries begin where the road ends.

FUN FACTS ABOUT TOORO'S LAKES

- Young by geological standards: Most of Tooro's crater lakes are between 8,000 and 10,000 years old – formed while Egypt's earliest pyramids were still being built.
- **Tiny but remarkable: Lake Kasindikwa** (Kanyangeye) is about one acre in size and is believed to be among the world's smallest natural lakes. Nearby Lake Kanyabuterere measures just 1.5 acres.
- **Named after remarkable women:** Only two lakes in Tooro are named after people – Lake Nyinabuliitwa and Lake Nyinambuga, both honouring women remembered in local history and tradition.
- **The famous twin lakes:** Lake Nyinambuga – featured on Uganda's UGX 20,000 note – is separated from neighbouring Lake Kifurukwa by a strip of land just 50 metres wide. Their sister lake, Lyantonde, lies hidden beyond the ridge.
- **A lake with two names:** Lake Kyaninga is traditionally known as Hamugoma, meaning “the edge” in Rutooro, a reference to the steep cliffs surrounding it.
- **Aquarium fish in the wild:** The colourful guppy fish, popular in home aquariums, can naturally be found in Lake Nkuruba.
- **New species still being discovered:** Kibale Forest continues to reveal new life. In 2018 and 2025, researchers identified previously unknown insect species in the forest.
- **Coffee's roots:** Uganda's indigenous Robusta coffee traces its origins to Kibale Forest, while Arabica originated in Ethiopia.

Fort Portal: Uganda's tourism city a frontier waiting to be explored

Beyond its crater lakes, mountains and forests, Fort Portal offers something equally compelling – the opportunity to invest in one of East Africa's most promising tourism destinations.

As we welcome visitors to the second edition of the Fort Portal City Marathon, I invite you to look beyond the finish line.

Fort Portal is celebrated for its natural beauty, cultural heritage and warm hospitality.

City of opportunity

Yet it is also a city of opportunity – a destination whose tourism potential remains far from fully realised.

Recognised officially as Uganda's Tourism City, Fort Portal sits at the heart of one of Africa's most remarkable tourism regions.

The crater lakes, Kibale National Park, Semuliki National Park and the Rwenzori Mountains already attract visitors from around the world. What remains is the opportunity to build around these extraordinary assets.

From eco-lodges overlooking crater lakes and wellness retreats in the highlands to adventure tourism, conferences, events and community-based tourism experiences, opportunities exist across the entire tourism value chain.

The annual Fort Portal City Marathon itself demonstrates the growing potential



The Tooro Kingdom Ministry of Tourism welcomes partnerships and investment that contribute to sustainable tourism growth and community development.

of sports tourism and destination-led events in our region.

What makes Fort Portal especially attractive is that growth is being built on strong foundations: a recognised tourism identity, improving infrastructure, supportive institutions and the enduring cultural heritage of Tooro Kingdom.

Built on people

Most importantly, it is built on people. The warmth, authenticity and sense of community found in Tooro continue to create experiences that visitors remember long after they leave.

The Tooro Kingdom Ministry of Tourism welcomes partnerships and investment that contribute to sustainable tourism growth and community development.

As you enjoy A Run In Paradise, we invite you to discover not only a destination worth visiting, but a future worth investing in.

Visit the City. Invest in it. Grow with it.

Keith Duncan
Deputy Minister for Tourism
Tooro Kingdom

My first full marathon will be home

RUNNER PROFILE

Home city: Fort Portal

Running Club: Team Firinda

2025 FPCM: 10km Finisher

2026 Goal: 21km Half Marathon

Big Dream: Complete his first full marathon at the Fort Portal City Marathon.

I have been running for about six years now. It started as something simple – a way to keep fit, clear my mind and stay mentally healthy. At the time, I never imagined that running would become such an important part of my life.

Two years ago, I joined Team Firinda. What attracted me most was finding people who shared the same passion, discipline and purpose. Running stopped being something I did alone. It became a community.

Exceeded expectations

Last year, that community brought me to the inaugural Fort Portal City Marathon.

Although I had covered much longer distances during training, the 10-kilometre



“I realised there were so many people who wanted to run. They just needed an opportunity,”
Noel Japheth Bwambale,

race was the longest I had entered in an organised event.

I honestly did not know what to expect. The experience exceeded every expectation.

The atmosphere, the crowds, the entertainment along the route and the refreshment points made every kilometre enjoyable.

It was also my first time running on that particular terrain, but after about five kilometres I found my rhythm and simply enjoyed the experience.

Tooro's warmth

What surprised me most, however, was not the race itself. It was the people.

Looking around, I realised just how many people wanted to run but had never been given the opportunity to participate in an event like this.

The Fort Portal City Marathon changed that. It brought together runners, families, volunteers and visitors in a way I had never experienced before.

For me, that is what made the marathon truly special. This year, I am ready to take the next step.

I will be running the 21-kilometre race for



the first time. It is another challenge, but one I am excited to embrace.

Every race teaches you something new about yourself, and I believe this one will prepare me for an even bigger dream.

One day, I want to complete my very first full marathon.

The ultimate big dive

And if I had the chance to choose where that happens, I already know my answer.

I want my first 42 kilometres to be here, at the Fort Portal City Marathon, in my home city.

As Team Firinda, we are proud to be part of this journey. We have embraced the marathon from the very beginning because we believe it belongs to all of us.

Every year, more people are discovering the joy of running, and more young people are seeing that an active lifestyle is possible.

That is why I believe the Fort Portal City Marathon is about much more than crossing a finish line.

It is about creating opportunities, inspiring healthier lives and giving Fort Portal something its people can proudly call their own.

Noel Japheth Bwambale,
Runner from Fort Portal.

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My journey to a podium finish

It all started on a random day in November 2024 when a friend invited me to participate in the JoeWalker Remembrance Relay Walk.

On that day – through some sort of sorcery, I believe – I ended up walking a total of 30 kilometers.

For someone who had never walked even 5km at once, 30 was a lot. And I can tell you, I dearly paid for it in the days that followed. But that's a story for another day.

Anyone who knows me well knows that I can strike up a conversation with just about anyone, and I did plenty of that during the walk and at the various rest stops.

That's how I found myself talking to seasoned runners who introduced me to everything running: shoes, watches, Kampala's running clubs, anything running-related you can think of, we talked about.

I remember being completely mesmerized by the sport, its people, and the sense of community.

What I didn't realize at the time was that I had already been hooked. Yes, that's all it took to get me into the cult, running.

First cut is the deepest

A couple of months later, I found myself standing on the start line of my very



“Fort Portal is truly something to behold – not just because of its landscapes, but because of its people. Many stood by the roadside cheering us on, and some even offered us water. That city has my heart,”
Sharifah Nalubwama.

first marathon: the 2025 Fort Portal City Marathon.

Nerves and excitement gripped me that morning as we were flagged off. I had no time goal in mind; I simply wanted to finish and prove to myself that I could do it.

So off we went, through villages, deep in conversation with my pacer, shouting “On! On!” to runners we passed, as is the culture within the Kampala running community.

It humbles you

When we reached the highway, almost everyone turned right. Only two people ahead of us took the left. That's when reality set in.

The 21km runners were turning right; the 42km runners were going left. What had I signed up for? This was about to be a very long day!

We continued on, sometimes talking, sometimes running in silence. Not because there was nothing to say, but because that's what long-distance running does to you.

At some point, it forces you to face yourself and your thoughts. No matter how many people surround you, you eventually go quiet.

The cheers from the well-manned hydration stations provided a welcome boost.

Levels, and the beauty

Along the route were distance markers, and I vividly remember reaching the 18km mark when I saw Cosmas Olemkan (men's 42km winner) heading toward us.

He was already on his 36th kilometre. And in that moment, I realised: Friends, there are levels to these things.



The beautiful landscape of Fort Portal continued to unfold before us. More runners passed us in the opposite direction, assuring us that we were “almost there,” referring to the turnaround point where we would begin heading back into town. Eventually, we reached it.

The mountain slopes looked like something straight out of a Windows screensaver. The beauty was unreal.

Fort Portal is truly something to behold – not just because of its landscapes, but because of its people.

The community was kind, welcoming, and incredibly supportive. Many stood by the roadside cheering us on, and some even offered us water.

That city has my heart.

Keep moving

The journey back wasn't easy. Despite hydrating diligently, 42km is a long way.

Your body is bound to take a beating. The fatigue set in, my body ached in ways I had never experienced before.

At one point, the pain turned into frustration, but the encouragement and reassurance from my run partner kept me moving. One foot in front of the other.

As time passed, the traffic along the highway steadily increased, the first sign that we were approaching town and a promise that the finish line was getting closer.

In the distance, I spotted two of my friends, Allan and Aaron, with whom I had trained for months leading up to the marathon.

Having already completed their 21km race, they had come back out to support the marathon runners.

The decision to chase them down was made without a single word being spoken, soon, we were side by side.

Now picture this: a high-ranking dignitary surrounded by a security detail clearing a path through a crowd. That's exactly how it felt.

There I was in the middle, with my friends on either side of me, clearing bodas and pedestrians so I could make my way to the finish line. I will never forget that moment!

In the running community, your friends will carry you farther than your legs ever could. My friends carried me to that finish line, and for that, I will always be grateful.

To my pacer, Akandinda Ernest, who sacrificed his own race to run at my pace; to Allan Barigye and Aaron Muluzi, who helped me through those final kilometres; and to my Makerere Run Club family, who cheered me through training and celebrated with me at the finish line – you are the real MVPs.

You will forever be part of my Fort Portal City Marathon story: The one where I win. The one where I earned a podium finish in 5:17:39.

And most memorably, the one where I get to shake the King's hand!

Thank you, FPCM, for giving me such an incredible and unforgettable experience. I'm excited to be back in July.

Run. Recover. Refuel

Running places considerable demands on the body. Recovery helps muscles adapt, reduces soreness and prepares the body for the next training session or race.

WHY RECOVERY MATTERS

Relax tired muscles

Helps reduce muscle tension and post-run soreness.

Improve flexibility

Supports mobility and a healthy range of motion.

Reduce injury risk

Can help identify and address areas of muscle tension before they become bigger problems.

Support recovery

Helps the body recover after demanding training sessions and races.

Prepare for performance

Pre-event massage can help prepare muscles for physical activity.

Maintain your body

Regular recovery should be part of your training plan — not something you think about only after injury.

Compiled Olemukan
Cosmas Okoboi, Sports
Massage Therapist





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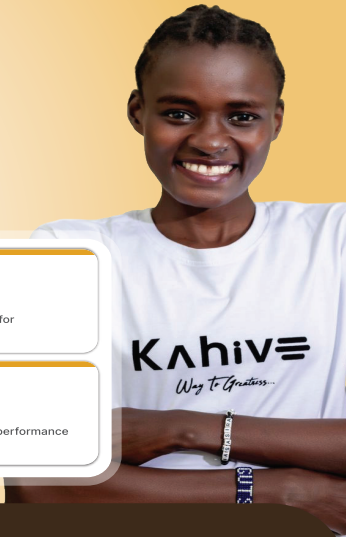
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FUEL EVERY STEP

Endurance is not built on training alone. What you eat and drink before, during and after a race can influence your energy, performance and recovery.

Eat well

Have a balanced meal up to three hours before the race.

Choose familiar foods

Consider carbohydrates such as rice, sweet potatoes, cassava, matoke or kalo, paired with protein and vegetables.

Start hydrated

Give your body the fluids it needs before taking to the road.



DURING THE RUN

Fuel regularly

Do not wait until your energy levels drop before refuelling.

Hydrate steadily

Take fluids in small, regular sips.

Replace what you lose

For longer distances, replenish carbohydrates and electrolytes lost through prolonged exercise and sweating.

Listen to your body

Do not wait until you are exhausted or extremely thirsty before refuelling.

AFTER THE FINISH

Replenish your energy

Refuel soon after the race.

Combine carbohydrates and protein

Give your body the nutrients it needs to support recovery.

Rehydrate

Continue replacing fluids after

crossing the finish line.

Keep recovering

Finishing the race does not mean recovery is finished.

Compiled by Regina Nantege | Sports Nutritionist

Partners behind the experience

FOUNDING PARTNERS

The inaugural Fort Portal City Marathon was made possible through the support of Roke Telkom, Capital Radio, Vision Group, UBC, Data Cities, Crown Beverages, Summz, Paxtel, Roofings Limited, Fort Portal Tourism City and Tooro Kingdom.

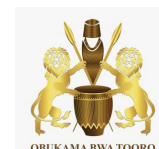
MORE THAN PARTNERS

- Destination Promotion
- Community Impact
- Runner Experience
- Innovation

GROWING THE PARTNERSHIP

While some founding partners have since completed their journey with the marathon, the platform continues to grow through new strategic partnerships.

Building on that foundation, the 2026 edition welcomes the continued support of Roke Telkom, Capital Radio, UBC, Data Cities, Crown Beverages, Fort Portal Tourism City and Tooro Kingdom, while adding the Ministry of Tourism, Castle Lite, Kahive, Jeans Club, Newman's, Insurance Training College, Kalya Courts and Home Bliss Hotels, among





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Asiiimwe Moses, a student at St. Joseph Technical School – Fort Portal, ran the inaugural FPCM barefoot. Marathon organisers have since intervened and he will embark on his second home race with proper running shoes.

The Marathon Expo

WHY VISIT THE EXPO?

- Collect your race kit
- Meet exhibitors and partners
- Discover Fort Portal and Tooro
- Enjoy interactive experiences



EXPLORE THE EXPO

- Tourism & Travel
- Health & Wellness
- Banking & Financial Services
- Government Services
- Hospitality & Coffee
- Education & Innovation
- Running & Outdoor Lifestyle
- Local Products & Crafts



FEATURED EXPERIENCES

- Product demonstrations
- Health checks
- Tourism showcases
- Coffee tastings
- Interactive activations
- Giveaways and competitions



EXPO HIGHLIGHTS

- 40+ exhibitors
- Three-day experience
- Family-friendly
- Free to explore

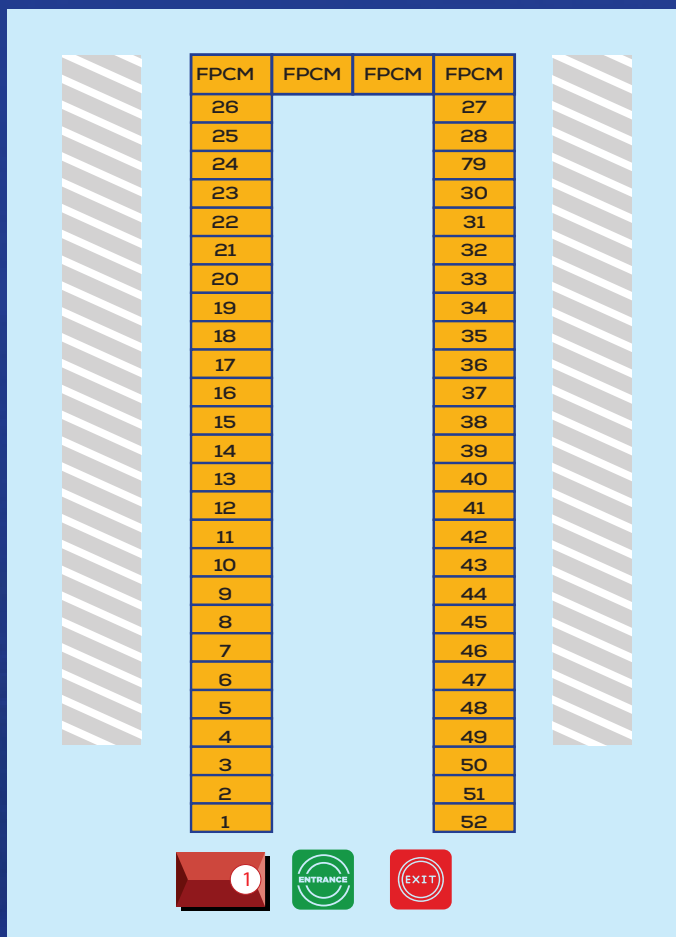
The marathon experience begins at the Expo. From race kit collection and tourism discovery to health services, local businesses and family activities, the Expo is where Fort Portal comes alive before race day.



FORT PORTAL CITY MARATHON

KEY

-  Exhibitor Number
-  Tent Divisions
-  Exhibitor Tent (50 seater)
-  Parking Area
-  Uganda Red Cross



Exhibitor Tents

- | | |
|----|------------------------------------|
| 1 | KAHIVE |
| 2 | META PLANT AND EQUIPMENT |
| 3 | TOORO CULTURAL RESEARCH DEVELOPMEN |
| 4 | SULAIMAN SHOE WORLD |
| 5 | JEANS CLUB |
| 6 | MENTAL HEALTH RUN |
| 7 | KABAROLE BEEKEEPERS |
| 8 | TOORO BABIES HOME |
| 9 | NEWMAN FOODS |
| 10 | EQUATOR CHOCOLATE |
| 11 | ABSA BANK |
| 12 | ROKE TELECOM |
| 13 | UDLS |
| 14 | NDA |
| 15 | KYAMBOGO UNIVERSITY |
| 16 | EQUITY BANK |
| 17 | FORT PORTAL CYCLING EXPERIENCE |
| 18 | UNIFI |
| 19 | MERCY (ICE CREAM/JUICE STALL) |
| 20 | RWENZORI MARATHON |
| 21 | ICEA |
| 22 | MEMA AGRO |
| 23 | VISIT TOORO |
| 24 | ARK GOLDEN FARM & JUICE LOUNGE |
| 25 | RWENZORI TOURISM ACADEMY |
| 26 | KENZI FOOTWEAR |

- | | |
|----|---------------------------------------|
| 27 | GULU CITY MARATHON |
| 28 | URA |
| 29 | FIBRED ELITE SPORTS MASSAGE |
| 30 | MUKAGO |
| 31 | DATACITIES |
| 32 | RWENZORI SUSTAINABLE TRADE CENTRE LTD |
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| 34 | AHMED HIKING GEAR |
| 35 | ACTIVATE UGANDA |
| 36 | UGANDA MARTYRS UNIVERSITY |
| 37 | UEDCL |
| 38 | KENDENZA STOVES |
| 39 | KOGERE FOUNDATION |
| 40 | TOORO SAMUEL |
| 41 | TRIBE AND THREAD |
| 42 | EMI'S TOUCH |
| 43 | ELITE SPORTS PLUG |
| 44 | CASTLE LITE |
| 45 | JONISA BAKERS |
| 46 | GISAM |
| 47 | MAKERERE UNIVESRITY RUN |
| 48 | BUMMBA CERAMICS |
| 49 | RE-NEWABLE HUB LTD |
| 50 | BODY GARAGE SPORTS THERAPEUTICS |
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To every Runner.
Every Walker.
Every Volunteer.
Every Sponsor.
Every Partner & Collaborator.
Every Exhibitor.
Every member of the Fort Portal Community.

Thank you.

Together, you've helped build something bigger
than a marathon.



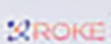
A RUN IN PARADISE



2025

FINISH

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