

# Nimrod Mkono

## Youth Open Championships goes annual



Kevin Anderson



Abuu Hamis



Salum Abilali



Peiyo Song



Fatema Hasmmali



Zakia Salum

**A** FIXED annual date would soon be set for the Nimrod Mkono Open Youth Championships to run consistently every year with intent to create awareness for the game of tennis across the country.

While representing main sponsor, Nimrod Mkono, the Social Responsibility Manager at the Mkono Advocates & Company Susanne Seifert revealed in Dar es Salaam that event was mainly in support of the talent identification program among youth.

She said Nimrod was determined to work closely with the TTA and contribute in building a more social responsible youth across the country through the game of tennis.

Susanne said: "Nimrod Mkono Open Junior Championships would be extensively expanded to provide foot-works for junior players in both education and sports. Nimrod is determined to build social and competitive skills that are crucial in defining a prosperous future."

Sixty five juniors from two regions of Arusha and Dar es Salaam (up from 50 the year before), competed for trophies and medals during the second edition Mkono Open Junior Championships held at Dar es Salaam Gymkhana Club late February.

The two day tournament also offered an opportunity for juniors in the four categories of 18 & Under, 14 & Under, 12 & Under and 10 & Under to compete for national ranking.

Susanne noted that the TTA tennis development trademark 'Be Smart, Play Tennis' would be upheld every year through interaction saying the kids would have a lot to learn from each other.

Susanne reiterated on the growing partnership between her law firm and the national tennis body (TTA), saying all efforts were geared to improve individual social capabilities among the youth.

She said: "We are hopping to make this a annual competitive platform where kids interact and increase skills while we create awareness for the game of tennis across the country."



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# The pride is ours, says Susanne Seifert



**MKONO Advocates & Company Social Corporate Investment Manager Susanne Seifert says Nimrod Mkono, the main sponsor of Mkono Open Youth Championships, takes pride in the growth of youth tennis.**

After a remarkable success in two previous editions, Susanne is looking forward to the start of another year that would bring the third edition Mkono Youth Open Championships .....

**a. Tell us about the annual Mkono Open**

For the second consecutive year, the Mkono Open Youth Tennis Tournament was held in Dar es Salaam's Gymkhana Club on February 21 and 22, 2009. Drawing high expectations after last year's successful event, 65 young players between 8 and 18 participated and competed in 13 different categories. The general perception among players and attending parents was very positive. The players were provided with T-Shirts for the matches and served with drinks and food throughout the two-day competition. The winners and runners-up in all categories went home with prizes related to their school career or sports equipment.

**b. Are we achieving our goal in the junior event?**

Most definitely. Our Junior Tournament had two main objectives: First of all, the young players were supposed to have fun and meet new friends from other clubs. Secondly, they were expected to display their skills under more serious conditions than during a regular practice match.

We had the feeling that both goals were more than achieved. The atmosphere during the competition was very relaxed and playful, but the matches didn't lack any of the seriousness that an aspiring young player should possess to compete successfully throughout his or her career. Some of the finals were very tight, showing that there are many talents among the players that are on one level and able to challenge each other. This is important to move the sport further and motivate the youngsters to improve their game in order to stay successful.

**c. With recent reports pointing to the positive, Mkono & Co must be happy with being involved in a growing individual sport. Tell us what to expect next year and if there are any prospects to expand coverage.**

Hon. Nimrod Mkono and his team are very proud to be part of the new wave of tennis enthusiasm in Tanzania. For us, it is a great opportunity to actively support young players from all parts of the country and give them the chance to practice and refine their skills under tournament conditions. We hope this will enable them to compete on a bigger stage, ie in international events in the future. For next year, another junior tournament is planned, and it is our intention to establish our event as a fixed annual date in every year from now on.

**d. What are your personal feelings about Tanzania Tennis at present?**

I think Tennis is on a very good way to become one of the country's leading recreational sports and has some interesting young talents to participate on an international level. The work of the Tennis Association has increased in seriousness and the involvement of Hon. Bernard K. Membe, Minister for Foreign Affairs & International Cooperation as TAA Patron, can only be seen as a boost for the sport. Further, Prince Madema, the ITF (International Tennis Federation) representative for East Africa, is doing excellent work in setting up better training facilities for young players.

In the future, we will aim for attracting more sponsors for bigger events and improving the tennis facilities at our Gymkhana Club Dar es Salaam and other Clubs in the country. The ultimate goal should be to integrate Tanzania into the Davis Cup circle to get international recognition and secure bigger support by the ITF to further improve the game in the region.



Bill Makoi



Christian & Kassam



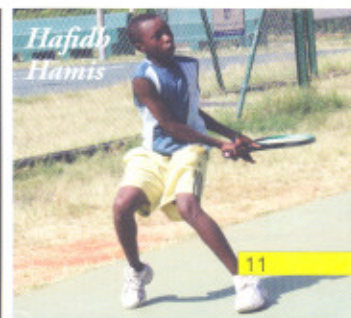
Tito Nyato



Leah Mkono & tennis fans



Leah presents to Lailati



Hafid Hamis