



2021 CHIMPANZEE FOOTBALL TOURNAMENT

Football for Conservation



Nyaituuma FC (left) and Kiziranfumbi FC (right) before their quarter-final match

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BACKGROUND TO THE PROJECT:

In western Uganda, endangered wild chimpanzees survive in shrinking habitat around villages, especially in Hoima and neighbouring Kikuube districts.

Since the 1990s, most of the forest in this region has been cut down for timber and converted to farmland, as farmers seek to increase their livelihoods and provide for their families. However, deforestation caused escalating conflicts between villagers and the resident chimpanzees, as they now compete with each other for space and resources. With most of their natural food gone, the chimpanzees have been forced to find alternate food sources from people's agricultural fields and around village homes. Chimpanzees are large mammals and can be dangerous, and local children have occasionally been seriously injured by chimpanzees. These conflicts threaten people's livelihoods and have led to chimpanzees being killed or caught in traps set to protect crops.



Many local people are unaware that chimpanzees are endangered and legally protected, and may instead view these great apes as large, dangerous wild animals that encroach on their land, eat their crops, and sometimes attack people.

The Bulindi Chimpanzee and Community Project (BCCP) was started in 2015 to conserve the chimpanzees in Hoima and Kikubbe districts, and support local households, to aid more peaceful coexistence. We provide local people with livelihood alternatives to

deforestation, invest in children's education, promote tree planting, and help improve quality of life through constructing water boreholes in villages and providing households with energy cook stoves. In parallel, we monitor and study the region's chimpanzees to understand and mitigate threats to their survival.

Since 2018, BCCP has implemented a '*Football for Conservation*' programme. Football is enormously popular in Uganda and many villages have local teams. Using the universal language and popularity of football, our football league allows us to engage with young men (aged between 15–25 years), who are often involved in forest degradation activities such as charcoal burning and timber cutting. By sponsoring local football teams with kits and balls, and arranging matches and tournaments, we can show local communities that we are invested in them and their youth. The tournaments provide a platform to convey

messages about environmental issues, the chimpanzees and conservation, helping to reduce misconceptions and mitigating tension between local residents and chimpanzees.



A family of wild chimpanzees in the forest in Bulindi

THE 2021 TOURNAMENT:

Last year's 2020 tournament was our most ambitious to date, involving 16 local teams from Hoima district (up from 8 teams in 2019). This year we went one step further and included another two teams, this time from neighbouring Kikuube district. The two new teams were very happy to receive their new kits, donated by KitAid!!

Therefore, a total of **18 village teams** were competing for the coveted title!



Kiziranfumbi FC in their new kits donated by KitAid. They are holding tree seedlings to plant before their 1st round match against Kitabona FC. BCCP staff (Jonus and Francis) are in green!



Kitabona FC sporting their brand new Man U kits donated by KitAid!

At the request of teams and local councillors, we also upped the stakes by increasing the value of the first prize, from a goat in previous years to a bull! This time, the runners-up prize was to be a goat.

Preparations for the tournament had been delayed by the global Covid-19 pandemic and related restrictions on social gatherings in Uganda. However, restrictions were lifted by October and we were able to proceed with the tournament, which was held between the 13th and 27th November. It included 4 days of playoffs, 1 day for quarter finals, and 1 day for the semi-finals and final.

Prior to the first matches, a meeting was held at the BCCP office with the captains of all teams to remind them of the reasons for the tournament and to discuss fixtures and tournament rules and conditions (for example, concerning discipline and the importance of good behaviour by players and their supporters).



A team Captain's meeting was held on 5 November. Here, BCCP staff member Jonus takes the captains through the tournament rules.

In the run up to the tournament, all 18 teams received a new ball. Teams were provided with refreshments during all matches as well as a basic medical kit. A qualified referee and two linesmen were hired for the duration of the tournament.



*Pre-match preparations:
balls (check), water
(check), tree seedlings
(check!)*



Defending champions Kyamuchumba FC – can they win the tournament for a third time?!

THE FIRST PLAYOFFS: 13th & 14th NOVEMBER

Match	Score	Winner
Kasunga vs Kiraira	Kasunga: 3 Kiraira: 0	Kasunga
Parajwoki vs Kihomboza	Parajwoki: 0 Kihomboza: 1	Kihomboza
Wagaisa vs Bulemwa	Wagaisa: 2 Bulemwa: 2	Draw
Kyamuchumba vs. Kyabasengya	Kyamuchumba: 1 Kyabasengya: 1	Draw
Kiseke vs Buhamba	Kiseke: 2 Buhamba: 4	Buhamba
Mparangasi vs Nyaituuma	Mparangasi: 0 Nyaituuma: 1	Nyaituuma
Kiseeta vs Kyakamese	Kiseeta: 1 Kyakamese: 3	Kyakamese
Nyakakonge vs Kyabigambire Central	Nyakakonge: 0 Kyabigambire: 1	Kyabigambire Central
Kitabona vs Kiziranfumbi	Kitabona: 0 Kiziranfumbi: 3	Kiziranfumbi



Buhamba FC (and entourage): Buhamba made it to the quarter finals for the first time this year.



First round action from the match between Bulindi teams Mparangasi FC (red) and Nyaituuma FC (blue). In a reversal of last year's matches, Nyaituuma came out on top this time.



Before matches, players were invited to participate in a tree planting exercise to instil the spirit of conservation. On the left and right are players from Kyabasengya FC; at centre is a player from Kasunga FC.



Kitabona FC and Kiziranfumbi FC prepare for their match wearing their new Man U kits donated by KitAid

THE SECOND PLAYOFFS: 19th-21st NOVEMBER

The two teams that played one another in the first playoffs played again, except this time the visiting teams in the first matches were the hosts.

Match	Score	Winner
Kasunga vs Kiraira	Kasunga: 2 Kiraira: 0	Kasunga
Parajwoki vs Kihomboza	Parajwoki: 1 Kihomboza: 2	Kihomboza
Wagaisa vs Bulemwa	Wagaisa: 4 Bulemwa: 2	Wagaisa
Kyamuchumba vs. Kyabasengya	Kyamuchumba: 1 Kyabasengya: 0	Kyamuchumba
Kiseke vs Buhamba	Kiseke: 0 Buhamba: 1	Buhamba
Mparangasi vs Nyaituuma	Mparangasi: 0 Nyaituuma: 2	Nyaituuma
Kiseeta vs Kyakamese	Kiseeta: 2 Kyakamese: 2	Draw
Nyakakonge vs Kyabigambire Central	Nyakakonge: 0 Kyabigambire: 2	Kyabigambire Central
Kitabona vs Kiziranfumbi	Kitabona: 1 Kiziranfumbi: 5	Kiziranfumbi

Scores were tallied from the two playoffs. Teams were awarded 3 points for a win, 1 point for a draw, and 0 points for a loss. In terms of number of goals scored, newcomers Kiziranfumbi FC looked especially strong, winning their playoffs against Kitabona FC by 8 goals to 1 on aggregate!

Nine teams qualified for the next round, with the two teams with lowest scores (defending champions Kyamuchumba FC and Kihomboza FC) to play one another to decide who would take the last place in the quarter finals.



Four males of the Bulindi chimpanzee community engrossed in the second playoff between their two home teams, Mparangasi FC and Nyaituuma FC.

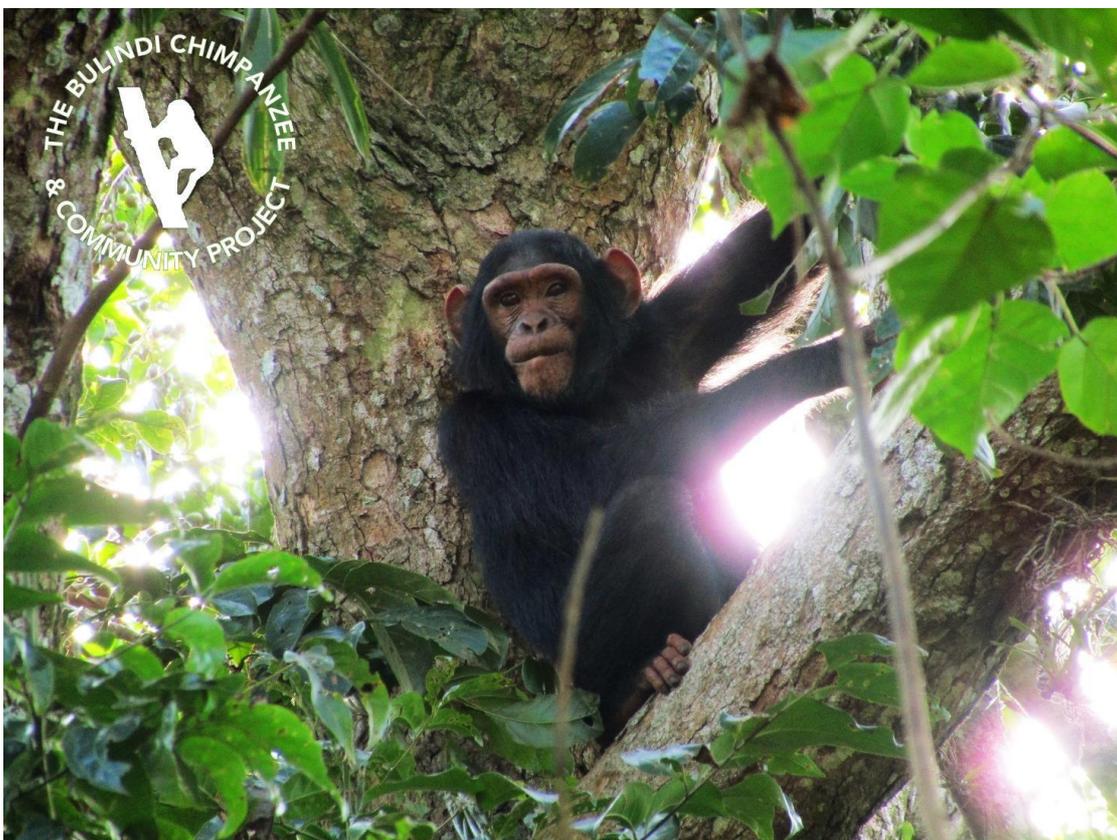


A linesman in action during the Kyakamese vs Kiseeta game.

QUARTER FINALS: 23 NOVEMBER

In the first match of quarter final day, Kyamuchumba and Kihomboza played for a place in the quarter final. In a shock defeat, defending champions Kyamuchumba FC were beaten by Kihomboza on penalties, after a 1-1 draw. (Commiserations to Kyamuchumba – they'll be back next year!).

Thus, the 8 teams to play in this year's quarter finals were: **Kihomboza, Wagaisa, Buhamba, Kyabigambire Central, Kasunga, Nyaituuma, Kyakamese** and newcomers **Kiziranfumbi!**



A juvenile male of the Kyamuchumba chimpanzee community climbed high in a tree to get a good view of the critical match between Kyamuchumba FC and Kihomboza FC. Alas, his home team and defending champions, Kyamuchumba, were beaten by Kihomboza on penalties and made an unexpected early exit the tournament!

The quarter finals, semi-finals and the final were all played at a new pitch in Dwoli, not far from Wagaisa village. This meant that Wagaisa FC were the home team. The pitch at Dwoli proved to be an excellent location, being situated along the main road and near a trading centre, helping to ensure a large crowd of spectators and supporters throughout the

quarters, semis and final matches. Moreover, discipline was kept in check by the presence of an officer from the nearby police post!

Match	Score	Winner
Kyabigambire Central vs Buhamba	Kyabigambire: 1 Buhamba: 0	Kyabigambire Central
Kiziranfumbi vs Nyaituuma	Kiziranfumbi: 2 Nyaituuma: 2	Kiziranfumbi (on penalties)
Kasunga vs Kyakamese	Kasunga: 3 Kyakamese: 3	Kasunga (on penalties)
Wagaisa vs. Kihomboza	Wagaisa: 2 Kihomboza: 0	Wagaisa

There was once again drama and tension as two quarter finals were decided on penalties!

By the end of the day, four teams were through to the semi-finals: **Kyabigambire Central** (for the second year running), **Kiziranfumbi** (playing in the tournament for the first time), **Kasunga** (who had not previously made it past the playoffs) and **Wagaisa** (runners-up in our first tournament in 2018).

SEMI-FINALS & FINAL: 27 NOVEMBER

Although the first semi-final was scheduled to start at 10 am, there was heavy rain in the morning and teams and referees turned up late. Nevertheless, the sky eventually cleared and the teams arrived; we were ready to go by 1 pm!

The first semi-final was a nervy affair with no goals scored by full time. Wagaisa eventually came through the test, beating Kasunga 4-2 on penalties! As home favourites, Wagaisa's tense win led to jubilant celebrations by their hundreds of supporters.

In the day's second semi-final, newcomers Kiziranfumbi failed to produce the same high quality play of their earlier matches that propelled them to the business end of the tournament. In a close match, they were eventually dispatched 1-0 by Kyabigambire Central. Even so, it was a highly respectable first campaign for Kiziranfumbi FC!

Match	Score	Winner
Wagaisa vs Kasunga	Wagaisa: 0 Kasunga: 0	Wagaisa (4-2 on penalties)
Kyabigambire Central vs Kiziranfumbi	Kyabigambire: 1 Kiziranfumbi: 0	Kyabigambire Central

Prior to the final, a tree planting exercise was carried out involving local leaders, BCCP staff, and players from Wagaisa and Kyabigambire Central, as a reminder of the conservation issues at the heart of the tournament. Tree seedlings (supplied by BCCP from our tree nurseries) were planted in the grounds of a church and primary school adjacent to the football pitch.



A player from Wagaisa FC plants a tree seedling ahead of the final with Kyabigambire Central FC

THE FINAL!

Match	Score	Winner
Wagaisa vs Kyabigambire Central	Wagaisa: 2 Kyabigambire: 1	Wagaisa!

The final proved to be an exciting and high quality match with close to 1000 spectators eagerly following the action. By half-time, home favourites Wagaisa were 2-0 up and the crowd of supporters were already sensing victory. But with just 15 minutes left of the match, a striker for Kyabigambire Central fired in a fantastic goal. With nothing to lose, Kyabigambire continued to pile on the pressure while Wagaisa showed signs of losing confidence. It appeared that Kyabigambire would equalise at any time and the match might go to extra time and even on to penalties. In the end though, it wasn't to be, and Wagaisa FC emerged victorious, winning the Chimpanzee Football Tournament for the first time in four attempts. It was a popular and very well-deserved win!



Spot the ball: Action from the final between Wagaisa FC (in blue kit) and Kyabigambire Central FC (in black kit)

Kyabigambire Central players were dignified in defeat – perhaps safe in the knowledge that, as well as playing well throughout the tournament, they were also going home with a goat!



After the match teams and supporters settled for the speeches. Here, Vincent from BCCP is giving closing remarks and reminding everyone of the conservation message behind the tournament.



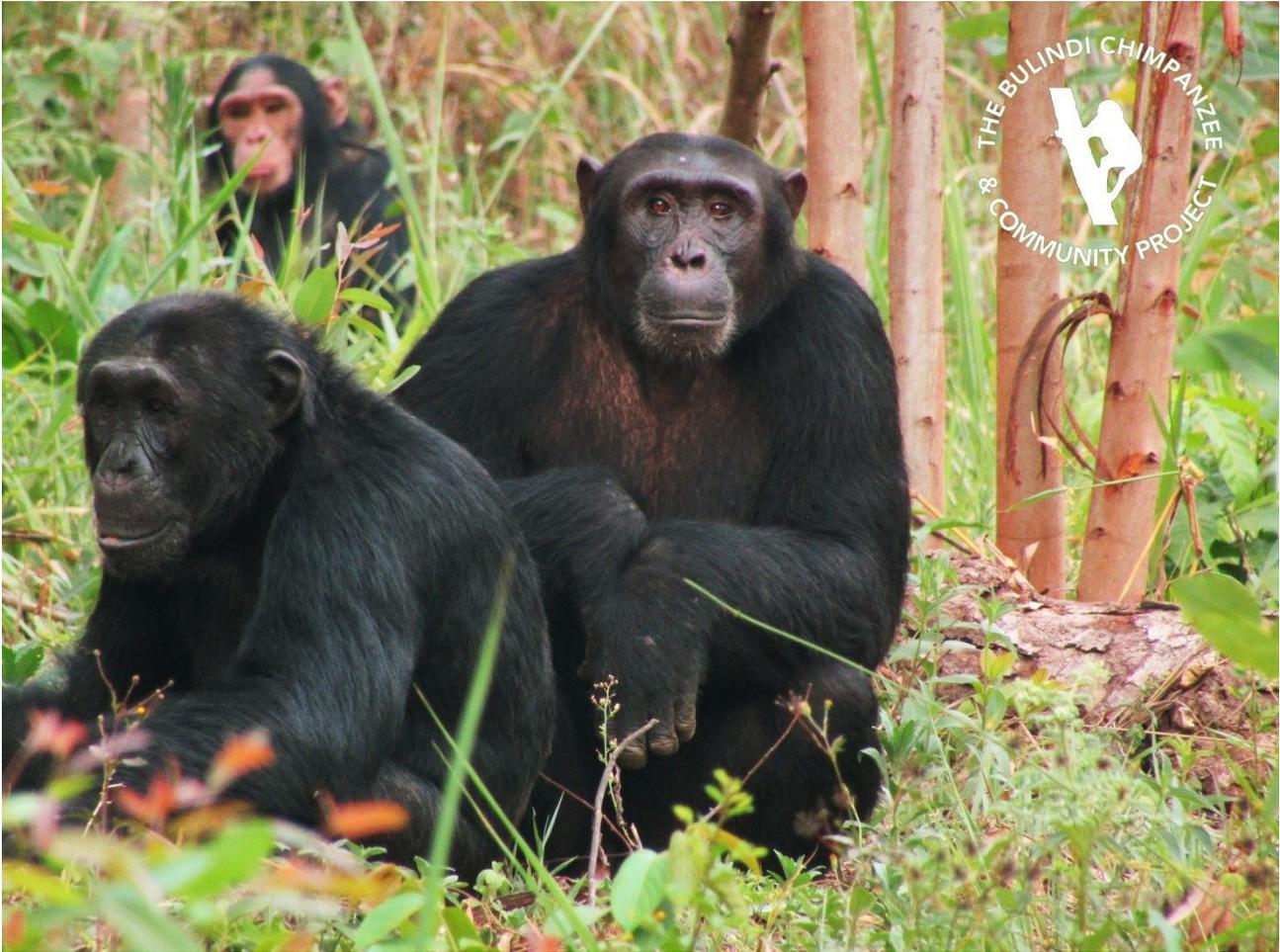
Left: The Wagaisa FC captain and coach receive the winner's trophy from Moses (BCCP Manager) and Matt (BCCP Director); Right: Ajuna Moses is presented with his 'Player of the Tournament' certificate.



Wagaisa FC players (and young fans!) celebrate with the trophy after their popular 2-1 win over Kyabigambire Central FC in a dramatic evening final.

The 2021 Chimpanzee Football Tournament was undoubtedly the most successful tournament we've held to date: after the final, local leaders thanked us and commented that it was one of the best football tournaments ever held in the region. News of the tournament was aired by several local news and TV stations.

We are very grateful to KitAid for once again sponsoring our Chimpanzee Football Tournament. Already, several additional local teams are asking for kits and balls and the chance to participate in next year's tournament!



Can it be true? Members of the Wagaisa chimpanzee community pause in wonder as news filters through that their local team Wagaisa FC has won the 2021 Chimpanzee Football Tournament! (Centre: Edward; Left: alpha male Newton; back: Jonus)



THE BULINDI CHIMPANZEE & COMMUNITY PROJECT

HUGE thanks and chimpanzee ‘pant-hoots’ to everyone at KitAid for supporting our 2021 Chimpanzee Football Tournament!

Thanks to all the participating teams, the referees and linesmen, and congratulations to Wagaisa FC.

Also, big thanks to the staff of BCCP for their hard work organizing and supervising this year’s tournament.



Members of BCCP enjoying the Final!

Report compiled by Dr Matt McLennan

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