

The argument still exists... what is our national sport?



IT IS not how you start, nor how you get there. Most importantly, it's how you finish.

• **The Finish Line**, a weekly column, seeks to comment on the state of affairs in local sports, highlighting the highs and the lows, the thrills and the spills and the successes and failures.

At the same time, there is also the debate over why successive governments continue to place regatta under the jurisdiction of either the Ministry of Local Government or Agriculture and Marine Resources.

Why, if it's a sport, is it not placed under the Ministry of Youth, Sports and Culture where all sporting disciplines are included?

Is it because the other ministries are earmarked more financial resources to cover the grants that are disbursed to the various Family Islands when they host their annual Family Island Regatta or Homecomings?

Or is it that successive governments have not seen the necessity to provide the sporting and cultural event the significance that it so rightfully deserves?

Does anybody care which sport is dubbed the national sport of the Bahamas? Is it a priority? Does it make a difference to the countless boat owners and sailors who compete for the cash prizes and trophies offered?

This seems like a non-issue. But just for the record, it should be noted that there are some persons who care and would like to see the sport given the proper significance that it deserves.

Fed Cup

The Bahamas Lawn Tennis Association is preparing to send a youthful team of



FED CUP team members (l-r) Elana Mackey, Sydney Clarke, Iesha Shepherd and Sierra Donaldson.

junior players to represent the country at the Americas Zone II Fed Cup next month in Panama City, Panama.

Association president Elwood Donaldson said they selected the quartet of Iesha Shepherd, Sydney Clarke, Sierra Donaldson and Elana Mackey based on their performances in the 2016 Giorgio Baldacci Open Tennis Tournament, held in December at the National Tennis Centre.

While I'm not knocking the quartet, who will be coached by Chelsea Russell, because they earned the rights to travel, if that's only to be the only trials for the team selection, then the BLTA should find a way to ensure that more of the elite tennis players come home to compete.

The Fed Cup, like Davis Cup for men, is the pinnacle team competition for countries outside of the Olympic Games. And sure, the BLTA should ensure that the top players are given a chance to compete, even if there are some other criteria in selecting the team.

Both the Fed and Davis Cup competitions are extremely competitive and it attracts the top players in the various countries and as such, the BLTA may have to look at putting on another tournament after the year-end tournament.

We've seen in the past, especially with the Davis Cup team, that some of the players who emerged out of the December Tournament have not been able to travel because of an injury or school commitments.

Although it's customary to move up the players who follow the foursome originally selected to fill in for those who can't make it, it would be good to host a tournament closer to the travel period to ensure that all of the players are still fit and ready to compete.

The Week Ahead

The Bahamas Association of Athletic Associations will hold two important events over the next two weekends as they select two national teams to represent the country.

Starting tonight and finishing on Saturday, the BAAAs Junior Nationals Championships will be held at the original Thomas A Robinson Track and Field Stadium.

Then next weekend at

the Grand Bahama Sports Complex, the BAAA will stage its National Open Track and Field Championships.

The former will be held to select the team for the IAAF World Under-20 Junior Championships set for Nairobi, Kenya, July 19-24.

The latter will select the team for the IAAF World Championships August 5-13 in London, England.

It's important that we see our top athletes, especially those who are currently in high school, college and universities and those on the professional circuit to come home and compete.

If it all pans out, there should be a number of exciting match-ups to watch both here and in Grand Bahama.

Cricket Association to host Youth Summer Camp at Windsor Park June 26-July 21

By **RENALDO DORSETT**
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THE Bahamas Cricket Association will look to attract new aspiring players to the sport with a summer initiative.

The organisation will host the BCA Cricket Youth Summer Camp June 26 to July 21 at Windsor Park.

Hosted Monday to Friday from 9am to 1pm, the programme is open to players ages 8-15.

The camp will feature a variety of different aspects including physical drills, cricket rules, skills and simulations, etiquette and

grooming. Off the field of play, there will be appearances by guest lecturers on the art of cricket

The International Cricket Council has appointed Theo Cuffy to develop the Bahamas' junior national team programme and he has been working with the programme since April.

In previous interviews with The Tribune, cricket enthusiast Paul Thompson said the BCA continues to move toward youth development.

The programme continues to benefit from the youth initiative it took years ago by hiring an international cricket coach from England to take the game into the country's schools.

The coach was able to make contact with 26 primary schools in Nassau, seven in Grand Bahama and one in Bimini, where Kwik Cricket was introduced to the young boys and girls.

Hundreds of school children were involved in that scheme. Out of that programme, the BCA was able to start an under-15 and under-13 league with four teams in each competition, with the under-15s playing with a hard ball. The under-19 team was also developed with plans in place to sustain the game for years to come.

Many of those team members also advanced to the senior level.

CITY BOWLING LEAGUE COMPLETES SEMI-FINAL PLAYOFF ROUND

THE semi-final playoff round of the City Bowling League was completed last night with the Ten Back Strikers edging the Bahamasir Flyers 3-2 in a best-of-5 game series.

Ten Back was led by strong performances from 4 of its six starting players.

Leading the way was Kelsey Rolle with a 194 average for 5 games followed by

Ryan Davis with 192 and Lee Davis with 191. Janice Hoyte chipped in with an impressive 186 average for the three games she played.

Bahamas was led by Edmund Deal, who topped the pins for a respectable 175 average during the competition.

In the other semi-final game, the CDM Knights swept the Island Game

Stokers 3-0 with a balance attack which ended their series on Monday night. Kevin B Williams and Rshad McCarty both downed the pins for a 175 average over the 3 games to lead the Knights.

Chigozie Ijeoma was top player for Island Game Stokers after striking for a 176 average over the 3-game series.

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