



SPORTS

http://thefreeportnews.com



RUNNERS UP - The St. George's Jaguars fell to the C.I Gibson Rattlers this past Saturday evening, 80-69 in the Providence Basketball Club: 2017 High School Basketball Tournament championship. The Jaguars were champions of Pool Four and finished the tournament with a 5-1 record, with wins over Queen's College, C.V Bethel, Mt. Carmel (won both games against them) and Telos Christian School. (PHOTO: COURTESY OF ST. GEORGE'S JAGUARS)

Jaguars advance to tournament finals, but fall short of title victory

SHAYNE STUBBS
FN Sports Reporter
 shayne@nasguard.com

The St. George's Jaguars finished the Providence Basketball Club 2017 High School Basketball Tournament with a 5-1 record and second place overall.

The reigning high school national champions fell short after playing their way into the championship, where they faced off against the C.I. Gibson Rattlers. Things got out of hand for the Jaguars and they just never recovered, as they fell to the Rattlers this past Saturday evening, 80-69.

Christopher Johnson led the Jaguars in scoring on the night with 16 points, to go along with six rebounds. Kingcy Thompson added 12 points into the mix, along with six rebounds and two steals. Jaden Atkinson and Paul

Greene each chipped in with seven points and three boards in the loss.

The Rattlers got two 20-plus point performances out of their duo of Terrence Storr and Tyrell Butler. Butler registered 23 points, four boards and two assists in the championship win. Storr finished with 21 points, six boards and four steals. Cameron Sheomer chipped in with nine points and five rebounds to help lift the Rattlers.

The Jaguars trailed 21-14 at the conclusion of the first quarter. From there the floodgates opened in the second quarter and the Rattlers held a 45-26 advantage at halftime.

The Rattlers continued the onslaught on the Jags and led 62-40 at the end of the third quarter. The Rattlers kept the Jaguars out of reach the entire fourth quarter on their way to eventually be-

ing crowned champions.

Nonetheless, Jaguars' head coach Darrell Sears expressed that up until the championship he and the coaching staff saw "tremendous" improvement out of the players. Despite the blow-out loss in the championship game, Sears reminded *this daily* that it was one of the reasons why a trip like this is important for his team moving forward.

"This is why we go there when we do have the opportunity, because it gives us a different bird's eye view of the style of play that is completely different from what we play in Grand Bahama," he expressed. "And we fell victim to that style and who was probably the best team of displaying that style in that tournament in C.I. Gibson. They played a very physical, attack style of run and gun basketball and we were not prepared and I

take full responsibility for that.

"We were not prepared for that and they punched us in the mouth and we did not respond collectively as a team and that was the only disappointing thing for myself and Coach Future (Calvin McIntosh). But overall we were very pleased in the growth and we're very excited about fixing some things and doing some things differently and I think we'll be one of the teams talked about in the end."

The contrast in play Sears alluded to were the FIBA (International Basketball Federation) Rules commonly played in New Providence, whereas Grand Bahamas plays a modified version of FIBA rules, but it's High School Federation rules. FIBA rules allow for a more up-tempo and more physical style of play in contrast to the less physical and somewhat slower

pace played here in the "Second City."

However, the Jaguars' coach noted that his team has already begun some necessary adjustments that need to be made. Admittedly, the players realized that their physical strength does not match up to the Rattlers or even the Tabernacle Falcons, which led to players making personal adjustments on their own.

"They're making personal commitments of doing their own push-ups if they can't afford to go to the gym. We've gotten back yesterday (December 31) and guys have already sent me stuff where guys are getting muscle milk and doing the first day of their push-ups.

"But what I heard and saw more is that they recognize that they didn't respond and how to respond. Getting back in transition was one point they made,

being able to communicate on the court better with each other and talk and let guys know where to be.

"And when they seemed to get frustrated they'd huddle up together. They'd say they don't need coach to call a timeout and get us together. Let's huddle up and try to fix what we're doing and figure out who's out of position and figure out where they should be. That was something I heard them talking about the next day."

The Jaguars opened up the tournament with a 52-25 win over Queen's College, and then a 50-19 victory over C.V Bethel. They later defeated Mount Carmel twice; firstly, 48-37, and once again, 73-59. They moved on to defeat the Teelos Cherubims in the semi-finals to advance into Saturday's championship.

MANY EMPTY SEATS FOR BAHAMAS BOWL

Minister Pintard positioned to maximize sports czar role

The current Minister of Youth, Sports and Culture has declared publicly that he would not have a problem networking with his predecessors, inclusive of the last two from the other side of the political divide, Dr. Daniel Johnson and Neville Wisdom.

Such an approach is politically refreshing. Hopefully he was not just being patronizing.

In particular, Dr. Johnson has gone on record, offering to assist with the completion of the Moore's Island Sports Complex. Based on Minister Pintard's stated desire to reach out for expertise and guidance in the interest of sports (youth and culture) development in the country, Dr. Johnson's willingness to step forward and put politics aside, is praiseworthy.

So yes, it would be excellent if the man who is well positioned to be a sports czar of note in The Bahamas, follows through. If he does, the Bahamas Sports Brand will accordingly be greatly enhanced, in my view.

Let's take for instance the Bahamas Bowl. Both Dr. Johnson and Wisdom both have meaningful insight to the furthering of this event. The fourth edition of the Bahamas Bowl took place on December 22. The Ohio University Bobcats defeated the University of Alabama, Birmingham Blazers 41-6. The match was not as scintillating as the 2014 inaugural contest when the final play in a Western Kentucky 49-48 victory over Central Michigan was nominated for an ESPY Award.

The ongoing play, from the 45-yarder thrown by Quarterback Cooper Rush to wide

receiver Jesse Kroll, to the unsuccessful two-point conversion try that would have knotted the game, stamped, I think, the Bahamas Bowl, as one of the signature collegiate post-season items.

Did we build enough on that 2014 classic?

The answer would be a negative.

Yes, the participating teams, support staff and fans remain enthusiastic about being a part of the Bahamas Bowl experience. Surely though, the country should be able to capitalize more on a highly marketable event. The Bahamas Bowl organizing committee has expressed delight over the event. Visitors, who flew into New Providence especially for the bowl game, but also to get a taste of The Bahamas, indicated as much.

According to a *Nassau Guardian* report, Ohio and Alabama fans were thrilled. Here are some of the comments:

"We went to Atlantis and we stayed a few extra days, just because of the environment, the sunshine and the beaches."

"I would love to come back to The Bahamas. I highly recommended it."

"We were so excited that our team got to come here and to be a part of the Bahamas Bowl, and we're just really happy to be here supporting them. I'm definitely coming back. It's been awesome."

That's the general feeling of the foreign fans. However, there were too few of them. While the action afield was hot, the vast majority of the 15,000 seats at the Thomas A. Robinson National Stadium were empty, as many of the photographs of the



BAHAMAS BOWL ACTION - In the background are empty seats that defined the crowd participation for such a quality post-season collegiate competition.

competition show.

In this matter, I think the ball is in the court of the National Sports Authority (NSA). Thus far, the NSA hasn't demonstrated the capacity to develop a strong local marketing arm. The Bahamas Bowl is tailor-made to fill the TA Robinson Stadium.

The NSA powers that be are paid handsomely by the Bahamian taxpayers. They need to step smartly to the challenge of effectively marketing events so that in all cases, the stadium would have a capacity crowd or close to it.

I'm sure the interaction that Minister Pintard speaks to, can be most helpful

(To respond to this column, kindly contact Fred Sturrup at sturrup1504@gmail.com).

In particular, Dr. Johnson has gone on record, offering to assist with the completion of the Moore's Island Sports Complex. Based on Minister Pintard's stated desire to reach out for expertise and guidance in the interest of sports (youth and culture) development in the country, Dr. Johnson's willingness to step forward and put politics aside, is praiseworthy.

SPORTS SCOPE

By Fred Sturrup

