

SPORTS

400 METERS POTENTIAL OUGHT TO BE MAXIMIZED

Right in this space, just about three years ago, August 8, 2014 to be exact, I heightened the nation's knowledge of an unassuming track mentor, one of his specialties, of which was training 400 meters runners.

I refer to the late Fred Bastian. In doing so, I thus lobby for his induction into the National Sports Hall of Fame. Bastian still has the strongest link to the excellence of 400 meters sprinters out of Grand Bahama.

Ironically just a little over a week ago, two young Grand Bahamians added to the island's legacy in that event. GB's Shaquiel Higgs and Correy Sherrod along with Gabrielle Gibson and Marissa White got the Mixed 400 X 400 meters relay bronze medal during the Sixth Commonwealth Youth Games.

In the process, Higgs and Sherrod added their names to the list of GB athletes who have won medals related directly to the 400 meters event, in recent years, for The Bahamas, in top world competitions. They expanded the circle that includes Michael Mathieu, Demetrius Pinder, Alonzo Russell, Jeffery Gibson, and Latoy Williams. Of that lot, Bastian trained all with the exception of Mathieu.

Why was Bastian so successful in mentoring 400 meters runners? Bastian informed me that he came up with a particular method, a strength (from distance running) and sprint power formula.

It is imperative that our 400 meters potential be maximized. Bastian is gone, Chris Brown has retired and so has Latoy Williams.

The nation, despite the presence of several holdovers for medal performances recently, is nevertheless in a relatively new relay era of 400 meters sprinters, with Abaco native Steve Gardiner and Shaunae Miller-Uibo as the lead athletes.

How do we sustain our power spot in the world?

The time certainly has come for the Bahamas Sports Brand to be more precise with its development program. The other day, Mike Sands, a strong quarter miler of yesteryear, was emphasizing the importance of a 400 meters sprinter, running distance constantly in training, to build up strength.

As aforementioned, Coach Bastian was passionate about strength building. Youthful athletes like Higgs, Sherrod, Gibson and White have the speed for the long sprint. They must build their strength however, if consistency is to follow their Youth Games performances.

The International Association of Athletics Federations (IAAF) will engage in its 16th version of the World Championships, August 4-14 in London. The world knows of the strength and heart, Miller-Uibo has combined with her incredible sprinting prowess over 400 meters. She is the reigning 400 meters champion, precisely because of super human strength exhibited at the very end of her classic duel with American Allyson Felix last year in Rio de Janeiro.

She had strength left for that all-out dive across the finish, just ahead of Felix.

The jury is still out on Gardiner, as to how well he demonstrates strength to go through the heats and still be highly competitive for the final.

So far, The Bahamas had been fortunate to craft a status in sports, admired throughout the world. We must begin now though, to adhere to highly technical methods in every discipline if the sports brand is to be enhanced. Strength training is essential and maximizing our 400 meters potential is an example of the points of focus necessary.

(To respond to this column, kindly contact Fred Sturrup at sturrup1504@gmail.com or on WhatsApp at 727-6363).



FRED BASTIAN



MIKE SANDS

Sports Scope
BY FRED STURRUP



GB FLAG FOOTBALL INVITATIONAL TO HIGHLIGHT HOLIDAY WEEKEND

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The Grand Bahama Flag Football League, now with Aliv as a major sponsor, has been a powerful force on the island's sports scene for the past eight years.

Focus now is on the upcoming Invitational Tournament. Teams out of New Providence and Grand Bahama engage in a rivalry over the Emancipation holiday weekend for non-stop action on the gridiron. This coming weekend will be no different.

The GBFFL Invitational is scheduled to kick off this Saturday, August 5-7 at the Grand Bahama Sports Complex.

The total number of teams has yet to be determined but league President Craig Smith informed *The Freeport News* that five male and three female teams would be representing Grand Bahama. An estimated six teams out of New Providence are expected.

This year's invitational now comes on the heels of a pair of National Flag Football Championship matches played this past Saturday in the nation's capital at the Roscow Davies Soccer Complex.

The Sawyer's Fresh Market Lady Enforcers were once again in the national championship mix after becoming back-to-back GBFFL female division winner.

Last year the Lady Enforcers took on the Summit Academy Ravens for the national crown but came up short in a thriller. The GBFFL women's champions they fell short in their quest for redemption in a 6-0 loss to the now two-time national champion Ravens.

The Ocean Motion Shipwreckers earned a spot in the national championship spotlight after dethroning the GBFFL and national champion Da Rock Boyz.

The Shipwreckers faced the A Sure Win Warhawks, who looked to redeem their shortcoming in last year's national title game.

The Shipwreckers started off strong, but found themselves fighting from behind. The Warhawks showed no let-up and defeated the Shipwreckers 24-18 for the national crown.

The Grand Bahama teams put on respectable performances on the national stage.



SAWYER'S FRESH MARKET LADY ENFORCERS



OCEAN MOTION SHIPWRECKERS