

SPORTS

New Minister of Sports provided good opportunity to prove herself

NSA NOT FUNCTIONING PROPERLY

The new Minister of Youth, Sports and Culture, Lanisha Rolle, was moved into the national sports picture, saddled with a not so-complimentary report card from her previous portfolio, the Ministry of Social Services & Urban Development.

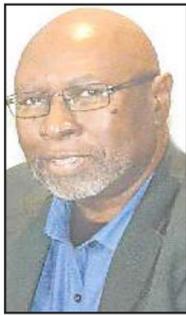
As such, and with no sports knowledge background of note, her appointment was questioned widely.

Ironically though, she inherited a situation that left much to be desired and she has been provided an opportunity to prove her worth as a capable government minister. I have previously expressed the view that the Ministry of Sports languished over the past year. Nothing particularly meaningful was accomplished and the period became known more for important areas/projects that were not advanced or continued.

As an example, Minister Rolle met a National Sports Authority that was struggling, with an acting general manager battling to take it out of a near dysfunctional state. That the NSA was

SPORTS SCOPE

BY FRED STURRUP



not, and still isn't operating properly, is an understatement. Notably, the appointed chairman reportedly does not live in this country.

If this indeed can be verified, then one has to seriously wonder about the thinking of those/or the one, responsible for the appointment. The backdrop for such a situation is a lack of understanding, or small view of national sports.

How could a chairman who is not based in The Bahamas have a proper understanding of, or a good feel for what is going on in this country, regarding sports?

Also, it seems board mem-

bers do not know the limit of their collective authority. The Act does not give the board the mandate to manage the NSA. Management personnel are hired or appointed.

The Minister of Sports is the higher boss of the NSA.

This is where Minister Rolle can emerge as someone befitting her posting.

She is actually in charge of the NSA and is thus challenged to step in and operate as the Act entitles her. It clearly indicates in the Act that in instances of conflicts and controversy the Minister of Sports has the authority to address the situations

and make decisions that no one can rescind.

Indeed, Minister Lanisha Rolle has that kind of power, as it relates to all government sports entities. I speak of the NSA, the Bahamas Anti-Doping Commission (BADC) and the Bahamas Boxing Commission. The aforementioned bodies are the three quasi-government sports organizations that exist in this country.

Presently, there is mass confusion in the NSA. I understand that there is an attempt afoot to bring in a foreign individual to operate within the NSA. Hopefully that does not happen. In this country there are Bahamians qualified for any position in sports administration. In fact, there are those who either have served or are presently functioning in international sporting organizations.

There's no doubt about it, Minister Rolle needs to take charge of the NSA.

• To respond to this column, kindly contact Fred Sturup at sturup1504@gmail.com or on WhatsApp at 727-6363.



LANISHA ROLLE
Minister of Youth, Sports and Culture

Tournament participants afforded summer workout with tennis veteran

SHAYNE STUBBS
FN Sports Reporter
shayne@nasguard.com

The year, 2018, marked the start of what is hoped to become a summer time favorite in the tennis community – the BJ Munroe Tennis Tournament, which was launched this past June at the YMCA.

While the number of participants were not what organizers forecasted for the tournament, those that participated left an impression on the native tennis veteran.

With Munroe present and viewing the talent that Grand Bahama served up, three young tennis players got the opportunity to spend a few weeks in West Palm Beach, Florida where Munroe now resides and runs an established tennis clinic at the Bear Lakes Country Club.

Kofi Bowe, Michael Reckley and Abigail Simms were each afforded the opportunity to work with Munroe and his fleet of players, which left a lasting impression on the trio.

Bowe voiced that the experience was worthwhile for his development as he continues to bud in his junior career.

"The experience was good. It was good just to see the players he has there. We got to play against them and we got to stay at his house ... it was very nice of him," Bowe disclosed. "We had two sessions a day. We usually hit with him, maybe once, and then we hit with the group. Then sometimes we played a match with some of the players over there."

Bowe is accustomed to playing against foreign talent as he's traveled abroad as Junior National Team member. While he wasn't nervous, he noted, the difference between local competition versus talent abroad. As far as his advancement in technique, Bowe shared, he was really receptive of the tips Munroe shared.

"I learned a lot. He showed me a lot stuff that I was doing wrong. I made a lot of improvements to my forearm (swing), my backhand, my whole game overall. My mental confidence got a huge lift as well."

Reckley, who is relatively new to the sport and just started playing tennis two years ago, has aspirations of using tennis as a



ADDED KNOWLEDGE - Kofi Bowe, left, Abigail Simms, center, and Michael Reckley, right, were participants in the inaugural BJ Munroe Tennis Tournament held in June. Based on their performances, the trio were afforded the opportunity to work with the Grand Bahamian Tennis veteran at his Academy in West Palm Beach Florida for a few weeks. (PHOTO: SHAYNE STUBBS)

vehicle for a higher education – the trip turned out to be an eye opener to international play, while also helping to grow his game.

"I haven't been exposed on an international level yet and I felt that was good for my game. I got to see different players outside Grand Bahama. I got to see how they operate their facilities and how it compares to the ones in Grand Bahama.

"Every day we would just do different foot-work drills, try different ways to hit the ball, he'd correct us if we did something wrong. It wasn't complicated, but it was way much more advanced than what we do over here."

Reckley furthered that working with an established veteran two-years into his tennis jour-

ney was "mesmerizing."

"He's the best for a reason. He's very hard working and talented with the racket. He played on the international level too. So, I feel working with him was mesmerizing for me, since I haven't been exposed to that kind of competition. Knowing he wanted to work with me and I wanted to work with him, that was a great experience for me and made me really confident that I could do something with this game."

While there are a number of local tennis tournaments that take place on the island, Simms admitted that the juniors still don't have enough chances to compete.

Thanks to the trip, Simms was left with a sense of fulfillment from her time working with

"BJ" and deemed it an honor to be selected for the trip.

"There were people who were really good, then there were people who were at a level or below a level. We got to play a bunch of different people and see different types of hits, different types of spins. Fitness wise, I think it pushed me because when I was there I was not my fittest. So, we did a lot of foot-work drills that helped out with my fitness.

"I think it was a privilege to be looked at as someone who could compete and play at a level over there (United States), because they get a lot of training over there. So, to be able to say I can compete with a lot of the players over there, it's an honor."

Patrick Munroe, BJ's father, admitted that they did fall flat in

regards to the number of participants for the June held tournament, he promised that in 2019 they will be sure to deliver a better product with better promotion. Nonetheless, Patrick was more pleased about what was able to come out of the tournament – giving a few athletes the chance to travel and train with BJ.

"One of the things he (BJ) wanted to do was join West Palm Beach and Grand Bahama. The reason he wants to do that is because he has connections and an Academy that is ongoing over there. And more importantly, the UTR (Universal Tennis Rating) is working closely with them and they are looking for junior players to make sure they get into programs so that it would be easy for them to get



BJ MUNROE

into University."

Patrick concluded that negotiations are ongoing for the UTR to partner with the BJ Munroe Tennis Tournament for next year.