

SPORTS

Elite subvention template should relate to world's sports picture

How does the National Subvention Program relate to today's world's sports picture?

Circumstances that are likely to severely encroach upon The Bahamas Sports Brand beg that question. Recently, The Bahamas lost the national team services of Grand Bahama native and basketball sensation, Jonquel Jones.

She is now on the Bosnia National Basketball team.

The 6'-6" center forward ventured into South Korea and was the best; shifted the next season to China and captivated that nation's basketball scene; and all along she continued the rise to stardom in the Women's National Basketball Association (WNBA), by being named an All-Star, and winning the Most Improved and Best Sixth Women awards.

She is on Team Bosnia now, because that country was able to offer her much more for her awesome talent on the basketball court and a general persona that is infectious.

So, should we not recognize the need to immediately take a look at our subvention template?

I think so, most definitely.

Not that long ago, I served through an appointment by the Cabinet of The Bahamas, as a consultant to the Ministry of Sports with the subvention program as one of the prime items of responsibility. Minister of Sports at the time, Neville Wisdom, and Director of Sports Martin Lundy worked very closely with the late Tommy Robinson, Grafton Ifill Jr. and I in monitoring the subvention program and addressing certain needs.

The subvention categories of annual payments, then, were: \$34,000 (top rated elite athlete); \$26,000 (second rate elite athlete); \$19,000 (lower level elite athlete); and \$12,000 (development athletes, funds to be paid and distributed through respective federations, because of National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) conditions).

It was a workable plan. The structure was appropriate. It enabled our finest athletes to maintain, through conditioning, a standard that allowed them to compete favorably with their world peers; and also, for the younger ones to properly develop.

However, the demands today, to stay on par with the quality athletes from around the world, are much greater.

So, for example, the wonderfully-talented swimmer Joanna Evans, who incidentally also hails from Grand Bahama, should be at the highest subvention level. If she is to ever achieve the heights of the greatest ever Bahamian swimmer,



Bosnia offered Jones much more!

Jonquel Jones



JOANNA EVANS

the Olympic finalist and highly decorated Arianna Vanderpool-Wallace, the \$12,000 category that I understand Evans to be placed in at the moment, is not appropriate.

Evans has climbed to the top of the Central American and Caribbean region. She has the abil-

ity to go further, much more so.

It is essential, I submit, that the Ministry of Sports take the subvention program under serious review and make a presentation to the Cabinet of the Bahamas for a financially-upgraded package in line with what can help to give our elite athletes a fair

chance against the best of the rest of the world.

We've lost Jonquel Jones, at least for the present time. She has national team status with Bosnia now.

The Government of The Bahamas should take heed and nip this situation in the bud.

I call for a major upgrade of the sports allocation from the national budget, and accordingly a revised subvention program.

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Sports Scope

by Fred Sturup

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GB POWER CHARGES CONQUER BFFL TOURNAMENT



CHAMPIONSHIP SWEEP - The GB Power Chargers went three for three on the year after they took care of business in New Providence over the weekend. The Chargers won their third straight championship for the year when they took down the Coca-Cola Hitmen in the Bahamas Flag Football League Invitational championship game this past Sunday. The final score was 25-14. Charles Williams came up big with three touchdowns and was named the Most Valuable Player. The Chargers finished the year as champions of the Grand Bahama Flag Football League and also champions of the GBFFL Invitational Tournament held this past August.