

SPORTS

Olympic Committee has important role

Networking through schools, churches necessary

For decades, the Olympic Movement in The Bahamas was little more than a processing agency for members of delegations who were selected to participate in the Olympic Games, the Commonwealth Games, the Pan American Games and the Central American and Caribbean Games.

Two decades ago the International Olympic Committee (IOC), through its area representative organizations, began funneling finances for special projects, in our case, the Bahamas Olympic

Association (now Committee) focused on the scholarship program in conjunction with the Pan American Sports Organization (PASO).

There however has not been much of a development program within The Bahamas Olympic Movement. This remains the case despite the IOC's priority mandate of outreach development programs in member nations.

Via a changing of the guard a decade ago, new Olympic Movement executives ventured beyond the modest operation of their predecessors and began, in addition to the scholarship program, a concentration on training for coaches and sports administrators. Still though national sports development



Sports Scope

by Fred Sturup

within the Bahamas Olympic Movement left much to be desired.

It is this particular area that the present Bahamas Olympic Committee, under the presidency of Romell Knowles, needs to concentrate on, I submit. The IOC desires its member bodies to spread the Olympic message throughout the respective nations. Indeed, the IOC wants their NOCs to be the keepers of the Olympic Flame, intrinsically.

The Olympic Movement is to be perpetual, ongoing, constant. In essence the BOC is charged

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to deliver the Olympic message throughout these many islands of The Bahamas in some significant manner.

Outside of the major competitions it has responsibility for, inclusive now of the Youth Olympics, the BOC is obligated to connect with all Bahamian societies. Unfortunately, in many corners of The Bahamas, entire communities have very little or no knowledge at all about the Olympic Movement in their very own country.

The Olympic executives have just not as a rule, seen to it that a distinct link was made through

the schools and the churches, the main avenues of spreading national messages.

Knowles should lead the general initiative that has representatives of the BOC visiting churches across the archipelago and making appearances at morning assemblies in schools in every island.

If the BOC undertakes such a national travel project to emphasize the Olympic Movement, the interest developed as a result, would inspire an expansion of the Bahamas Sports Brand. At an early age, young boys and girls in our islands



ROMELL KNOWLES
BOC President

would begin dreaming of being an Olympic athlete.

I predict, a new sports wave would build and push its way throughout the country. There is no intent here to minimize what is going with the hierarchy of the Bahamas Olympic Movement. Knowles and company are working for sure, but there is definitely much more that could be done.

It's a safe bet that Bahamians in every island are more familiar with the BAAA (Bahamas Association of Athletic Associations) than the BOC. The BAAA is actually a member

of the BOC, not the other way around. Yet, the BAAA has a much higher profile, even without a comprehensive national development program.

The BAAA connects through the CARIFTA Movement.

Similarly, the BOC can heighten its image by networking with the churches and schools in the nation.

At the start of yet another year, I just want to provide some food for thought.

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CAMP CLOSED

The Chavez Young Baseball Camp came to a close this past Thursday, January 3 at the EM-ERA Baseball Park. Young, standing third right, is pictured with the final group of campers and coaches at the conclusion of the two-day camp.

(PHOTO: SHAYNE STUBBS)



Campers left inspired after Chavez Young Camp

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The second and final day of the Chavez Young Baseball Camp was one that left the campers encouraged.

Day two was geared toward workouts for players 15 and up, as they took part in various hitting and agility drills over the course of the morning, leading

into the afternoon.

Young, a resident of Grand Bahama, who plays right field in the Minor League for the Toronto Blue Jays' organization, is hopeful that the athletes will take what they learned over the course of the two-day camp and continue to build on their skills.

“From this camp some of these kids can take what they learned and just carry on with it. It was just something where we could

give them tips and a head start over some others. It was a blessing to work with these kids, they were a blast to work with,” he expressed. “They bought into it and I'm happy they loved that camp.”

The camp was also structured to ensure the campers enjoyed themselves during the process. During a scrimmage that took place among the younger campers, Young recapped a moment

where a camper drove in a game winning run.

The occasion called for Young to simulate for campers how a walk-off hit would be celebrated in the pros - a customary celebration where players douse the batter with water.

“It made him feel how a walk-off would be exciting and be celebrated. Everybody feels like this game is hard and you have to make it fun and show them

that it's fun after the game and during the game.”

Fellow Minor Leaguers, Joshua and Richard Palacios, surely had a blast with the campers over the past two days as well. They also shared that they're more than willing to come back once the opportunity presents itself.

“It's been an amazing experience,” Joshua said. “One thing that stood out is the passion that

these kids have for the game of baseball. Working with the young guys yesterday (January 3) gave me energy to want to play this game and it makes me enjoy what I'm doing here. They're just so excited to be around professional guys and it's a blessing that I could be a blessing to somebody else. If the opportunity is there we'll definitely be down here again.”

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