

SPORTS

Excitement evident for 2019 Legacy Baseball season



FIRST PITCH - Deputy Director and City Maintenance Manager of GBPA's Building and Development Services Department, Troy McIntosh is pictured as he throws the ceremonial opening pitch.

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Along with the delight of the story telling abilities of former Olympian Troy McIntosh, Legacy Baseball officially opened its season.

League executives, coaches, players and parents have enough to be excited about with the season now in full swing on the weekends at the YMCA.

Growth in player participation has been a sore spot for Legacy in recent years. Yet, registration this season was an uptick. It was announced by Legacy president Shavargo Cox that the league welcomed back one of its most cherished divisions.

This past February 2, Legacy celebrated the return of their 14 and Under (14U) Division.

Just before the players competed on the diamond a brief opening ceremony was held to officially open the 2019 season.

President Cox shared that he hopes to see even more parents come out on weekends as a confidence boost to the young players.

"We look forward to continued support and your cheering. We want you to come out and cheer your kids on. We want you to encourage them because sometimes when they make a play, or they hit the ball or something they couldn't do at the start of the season they often look to



STORY TIME - Deputy Director and City Maintenance Manager of GBPA's Building and Development Services Department, Troy McIntosh, right, shares his testimony of hard work as a former athlete with the Legacy Baseball players during Legacy's opening ceremony held February 2 at the YMCA. (PHOTOS: SHAYNE STUBBS)

see if a family member is here to have seen what they've done.

"We encourage you to come out to support your kids and to cheer them on."

"Never being satisfied" was the message young Skylar Gardiner shared with the parents and guests in his welcome address; where he reminded his

fellow players and teammates to continue working hard toward their goals.

"Winning is fun ... wanting to win is the point, never giving up is the point, never letting up is the point. Never being satisfied with what you have done is the point.

"I am excited to welcome you

to this opening ceremony for the Legacy Baseball League 2019. Legacy is more than just about baseball. It is a family of leaders who are committed to providing a safe environment for the development of young boys and girls in this community.

"Legacy is based on a foundation of hard work and per-

sistence," he shared.

The YMCA is home to a plethora of different activities and programmes and has been home to Legacy Baseball over the years. Speaking on behalf of the 'Y' was Donella Seymour, a former parent of the Legacy programme, who continued to encourage parents in uplifting

and cheering their kids on as they grow in the sport.

"As I look around and look at the players and the parents I used to be in the same seat. It's in great enthusiasm that I stand here today as a staff member of the YMCA just seeing the work that has been going on with Legacy and keeping the teams going; I'm so proud.

"Legacy Baseball, indeed, is a household name by now because it has been around for such a long time. And it's a sport (baseball) that has taken many young persons who I have seen play as little boys go off to school with scholarships. So, make sure keep your kids in this particular sport and encourage them in every which way because this sport is one that's taking leaps and bounds."

Sherwin Williams, who represented one of the many sponsors for Legacy Baseball in the Freeport Container Port, reminded parents and players that baseball and sport in general is a great foundation builder in terms of discipline.

"You may notice in the home and classroom, wherever you may go, because persons were a part of sports such as baseball they are more disciplined. It also teaches us teamwork that we are able to support each other. So, it's a good thing that you came out here today and joined such an organization as Legacy."

Philosophy ideal, dedication to sports scrutiny advocate

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The philosophy that is to guide the Ministry of Sports, collectively, is transparency and an



Sports Scope

by Fred Sturup

adherence to the conditions by which financial assistance is given, sports infrastructure is put in place and maintained, the Subvention Program is operated, and quasi-government sports entities and independent federations/associations are supported.

Somewhere along the way, the general doctrine by which the Ministry of Sports functioned, got blurred. There is no wish here to point a finger at those who had responsibility for the Ministry of Sports in the past. It is a fact that rather than subscribing to the template monitored by directors Winston Cooper, Martin Lundy, Interim director Kevin Colebrook and now Tim Munnings, the system often operated in a random fashion.

Sports leaders clamored for financial assistance and failed to provide annual plans. Upon receiving financial grants, they

never saw the need, most of them anyhow, to provide financial reports verifying that the spending was done for exactly what was intended.

Yet the ministry continued, despite the abnormal culture, to provide funds.

Sports infrastructure deteriorated, throughout the country, with little or no accountability, whatsoever, in some cases.

The Subvention Program has not always been coordinated via the rules put in place to control the movement of money from the Treasury to personal accounts and to ensure at all times, such payments were deserved. The reality is that subvention payments have been made through the years to athletes who were not justifying the gesture by their performances.

Federations/associations take a steady path to the Ministry of Sports, requesting funds and even additional financial assis-

tance, but hold strong to their independence and have been accused and indeed been guilty of ostracizing the hand that fed them.

Put mildly, the Ministry of Sports has not had the kind of relationship with partners within the sports fraternity, that fostered maximum achievements of the Bahamas Sports Brand. I have always said that the buck stopped with the Ministry of Sports.

While, the ministry has absolutely no jurisdiction over the day-to-day business of federations, the leverage of being the financial supplier, should be used to enforce certain conditions. For instance, if a federation/association refuses to, or is unable to present a financial report that reconciles the previous grant, it should not be provided with another until there is full compliance.

Perhaps a new day has dawned.

Last week, Minister of Youth, Sports and Culture Lanisha Rolle and associates conducted a series of meetings with administrative partners within the fraternity and the view here, is that she laid it on the line, respectfully so, but firmly nevertheless.

Does she have the mettle to change the culture and bring everybody in line with what is appropriate and best for the enhancement of the national sports brand?

She claims to be serious and set on her course.

I came away with a good feeling.

For sure, there will be those, not accustomed to having to toe the line on methods that create a transparent culture. If they meet a formidable Minister Rolle at every turn, the system will change and revert to what it always ought to have been.

When the late Father of the Nation, Sir Lynden Pindling

decided that sports would have its own ministry in 1977, he seemingly had a vision of how the brand would expand in the subsequent years.

The sports ministry is imperative and it has the appropriate structure. Nothing needs to be re-invented. The template is excellent.

What would be ideal is for there to be a sports minister who is prepared to bite the bullet and insist that the principles that guide the process are upheld.

Hopefully Minister Rolle will hold steady to the course of compliance and progress for the Ministry of Sports.

The old philosophy for the Ministry of Sports is still good. There just needs to be greater scrutiny.

• To respond to this column, kindly contact Fred Sturup at sturup1504@gmail.com or on WhatsApp at 717-6363.