

SPORTS



BACK AT IT – The Freeport Rugby Football Club Boys' Soccer Program is back and parents are urged to get their young soccer "studs" signed up and registered this week and next weekend.

Freeport Rugby Football Club boys' soccer registration kicks off today

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The Freeport Rugby Football Club Boys' Soccer Program is back and parents are urged to get their young soccer "studs" signed up and registered this week and next weekend.

The FRFC not only announced the opening of its season this past, but noted that registration for the program takes place today, October 7 and next Saturday, October 14.

"The hugely successful Freeport Rugby Football Club 'Grassroots Soccer' Program kicks off Saturday (today October 7) at 11:30 a.m. at the Freeport Rugby Football Club with registration of boys running from 11:00 a.m. to mid-day (with practice starting at 11:30 a.m.). Registration will also be held on

Saturday, October 14 at the same time," a release issued by the FRFC stated.

For years the program has been geared to the likes of young boys and men in Grand Bahama.

Organizers hope to begin an Under 15 Boys' Program by the end of the month, the release added.

"The Club's Soccer Programs focus primarily on young boys and young men on the island. The Saturday 'Grassroots' Program, traditionally focuses on primary school age boys aged seven to 11, but has been extended to include 12 year olds this year. Going forward, it is hoped that next season (2018-19) the age range can be lowered to include six-year-olds, as more coaches come on board as organizers are aware of the keen interest for children in that age group.

"Organizers also anticipate an Under 15 Boys' Program to commence by the

end of October, to meet the demand and talents of the youngsters in the community."

The program has seen success in helping its players move on to the collegiate level over the years and according to the FRFC, that trend continued most recently.

"Over the years, the soccer program has promoted sportsmanship, teamwork, self-confidence and self-discipline as well as developing soccer skills. The club and program organizers are proud that the program has helped at least a dozen boys obtain soccer scholarships to U.S. colleges since our inception and has now added two new players to the University of The Bahamas team, so that over one third of the starting 11 for the University are alumni of our program. However, the club is equally happy to have positively impacted the lives of countless boys on

the island by helping to instill the key 'life skills' noted above."

Other goals for the season were said to include – to further grow and develop the Saturday program for boys aged seven to 12; re-introduce the Midweek Academy (every Wednesday) for various age groups (Under 11s, Under 15s, and Over 15s); to identify the better and keener players at the aforementioned age groups and then further develop their skills, and provide opportunities for either national /international or collegiate recognition.

And it should be noted that it is the express intention to travel at least once this season and also host teams to help meet the goals stated.

The FRFC noted that last season a traveling group of 20 had a hugely successful trip to Nassau to participate in an Under 10s tournament and

talks are ongoing with Nassau teams, with a view to matches against Nassau teams as early as this Christmas time.

Any player who is active in either this program or the YMCA Program is eligible for the academy, which is scheduled to start in late October and will encompass the best players at each age group. The Under 10s will practice once a week, every Wednesday from 5:00 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.

While it is expected that the U15s and Over 15s will practice twice weekly, dates and times are still to be finalized. Practices will obviously be increased as they prepare for travel or hosting teams.

For more information, persons may contact either Rob Speller or Jake Edey at Freeport Rugby Football Club or Facebook: Grand Bahama Boys' Soccer for details.

North Andros track initiative carries tourism expectation

Bahamas Olympic Committee (BOC) President Wellington Miller, a native Androsian, calls the North Andros Track Project, "one of the most satisfying happenings in my time thus far as a sports administrator."

A long-time president of The Bahamas Boxing Federation (formerly Amateur Boxing Association of The Bahamas) and now a multi-tenure BOC chief, Miller was instrumental in the Pan American Sports Organization (PASO) making available \$200,000 for the track in North Andros to be outfitted with a high-tech Mondo top.

For Miller, the gesture will "open a major avenue" for economic growth in the laid-back north sector of the largest island in the country.

"This is big. So many things can come out of this gift from PASO. Now, once the two phases of construction are over, North Andros will have one of the finest tracks in the region. That means, combined with our weather, the area will be attractive for lots of schools from North America, the United States proper and Canada to come to Andros to train.

"There is the labor force benefiting from new employment. The Mondo Surface folks will bring in their specialists to ensure that

the work is done properly and up to world certification, but there will be a good amount of Androsians hired.

"The community will feel an economic boost. Motels and hotels will be able to cater to the workers, especially the foreign ones and there are bound to be Bahamian workers who would need somewhere to stay, while working on the track project.

"This means also, that from a touristic point, we must start thinking in accordance with what the project means. If we are to entice student athletes to come to North Andros to train, then there must be fitting accommodations for them. The Ministry of Tourism, the group that promotes North Andros, they all now need to digest the situation and maximize this opportunity," said Miller on Friday.

While, a roof, bleachers and a concession area are to be "handed down the road" as disclosed by Miller, initially along with surfacing the track, will come the construction of the infield to accommodate soccer. It is the intent, also, for the soccer field to be constructed in line with international standards. This means that once the field is completed, North Andros would also be able to host Federation



WELLINGTON MILLER

SPORTS SCOPE

By Fred Sturup



Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) endorsed events. "We have to officially contact The Bahamas Football Association (BFA). I must have a talk with Anton Sealey (BFA President) and discuss the process. They will guide us in getting all of the necessary specifications put in place," informed Miller. Congratulations are in order for Miller and his Olympic associates. PASO is one of the world bodies that funnels money into strategic areas for sports development on behalf of the International Olympic Committee (IOC). PASO has jurisdiction over North America, the Pan American zone and the Caribbean.

It is my view that this extended outreach by the BOC is important. I have long advocated for

the BOC to make a more meaningful contribution through its PASO connection to national sports development.

Actually, all National Olympic Committees are mandated by the IOC to foster growth and development in their respective countries, in particular of youthful athletes.

The BOC, under Miller is proving equal to the task.

Miller will be seeking another term in office when the BOC's Annual General Meeting (AGM) takes place in November. He is favored to continue on in the highest sports administrative post in the land.

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