

SPORTS



READY TO GO – All systems are a go for the 31st GBPA Conchman Triathlon set for Saturday, November 4 on Taino Beach. Present for the final press briefing, left to right, were Triathlon committee member Fatima Zahara Kabobe; GBPA Senior Manager of Sales and Commercial Development, Charles Pratt; Triathlon Committee Chairman, Christopher Baker and committee president John Bradley. (PHOTO: SHAYNE STUBBS)

# Conchman Triathlon and Guy Fawkes Festival ready to go for this weekend

SHAYNE STUBBS  
 FN Sports Reporter  
 shayne@nasguard.com

The 31st Annual Grand Port Authority Conchman Triathlon and Guy Fawkes Festival will have Taino Beach busy this coming Saturday, November 4 at 7:00 a.m.

As you know the yearly held race is one of the longest running calendar events for the island of Grand Bahama and is expected to continue its rich tradition of intense competition. The race that puts individuals and teams through the rigors

of swimming, cycling and running has grown steadily over the years since first introduced in 1986.

A press conference was held this past Wednesday at the GBPA's headquarters. The GBPA became a title sponsor for the event for its 30th annual celebration just last year, according to Senior Manager of Sales and Commercial Development, Charles Pratt.

"We are a part of something that is positive for the community of Grand Bahama and we certainly encourage those that have not yet registered to do so at the earliest opportunity

so that you can be a part of this wonderful, wholesome event," he expressed, "The Conchman Triathlon has been known to attract visitors to Grand Bahama and last year over 15 international registered athletes competed. So that's a great accomplishment, we think so."

He noted that the race has been known to test the will and strength of athletes of all ages over the years. Triathlon Committee Chairman Christopher Baker further added to that point when he listed events suited for every age group, including the Iron Kids Triathlon geared to primary school athletes, young

adults, middle aged adults and elderly adults.

The race also features individual sprints, individual Olympic distance, relay teams and family teams. But last year the High School challenge and Corporate Cup were introduced and have now become a fixture of the event; something Baker remains excited about.

"One of the specialities that we introduced last year was the secondary schools' competition, which was a great success. They had a lot of cheering from the sidelines and this year it's going to be even bigger and better. We even have two teams com-

ing from the Beacon School... St. George's are coming back to defend their title and we expect Jack Hayward, Bishop Michael Eldon and even Eight Mile Rock are coming into town to participate."

Just over two weeks ago the Committee had a generous sponsor give enough money to buy 11 bikes, after some of the schools lamented it was difficult to compete last year due to the lack of bikes.

"I'm pleased to say that at this stage they've all been taken up, including two of them with the Beacon School. So we're looking forward to a very exciting

day." The Ministry of Tourism will be hosting their Guy Fawkes Festival at 4:00 p.m. following the Triathlon's awards presentation.

"We'll be having Junkanoo, there's going to be a competition where schools are taking part making their own Guys. Corporate sponsors are taking part and they there will be independent judges to judge the best Guy. There's a \$100 entrance fee for that, which goes to charity with Bethel's Books for school children to be presented with. It's going to be a very exciting day."

**WORTHY DONATION** – A sixth grader from Sunland Baptist Academy made a generous donation to students at The Beacon School. Ten-year old D'Nado Burrows (pictured center holding the bike) donated his very own bicycle to athletes set to represent The Beacon School in the 31st GBPA Conchman Triathlon this weekend. He also held a raffle to give away a skateboard. Jermaine Pierre was the lucky winner of the raffle. (PHOTOS: SHAYNE STUBBS)



## Coach Vogel Williams determined to push "cross country" initiative

A track and field coach, dedicated to sports development in the Family Islands, is determined to foster a dimension of the discipline that is practically untapped outside of New Providence.

Today, long-time track and field mentor Coach Vogel Williams is slated to launch an invitational cross country event in Marsh Harbour, Abaco. There would certainly be a kind of newness to such a category of track and field (athletics) in Abaco and it is hoped that eventually the event will become an annual attraction for student/athletes and older individuals from the entire Northern Bahamas, and ultimately the entire country.

"I just thought to get this going. I am convinced that the event is a good fit and we will have the first one and build on it. This is something different for the schools in the area to look forward to and it is my desire to have all of the Abaco schools represented," said Williams recently. Actually, cross country running

is not new to The Bahamas. It is said that during the 1930s, the late, inspirational athlete Cyril Richardson, who was the pioneer distance runner associated with the Islands of The Bahamas, was a noted athlete in the United Kingdom and did some cross country running.

Cross country running gained prominence in The Bahamas during the early 1970s when a number of events were staged at the Clifford Park base in New Providence. In the capital island, various clubs and individual

coaches have included the event in their schedules, almost on an annual basis, ever since.

In Abaco though, the wider Northern Bahamas region, and beyond into the lesser affluent islands, the task has not been tackled.

In steps Coach Williams said he is confident that he has an event that will gain popularity.

What is the history of cross country running?

Long before Cyril Richardson or Sir Durward Knowles and Sloane Farrington demonstrated

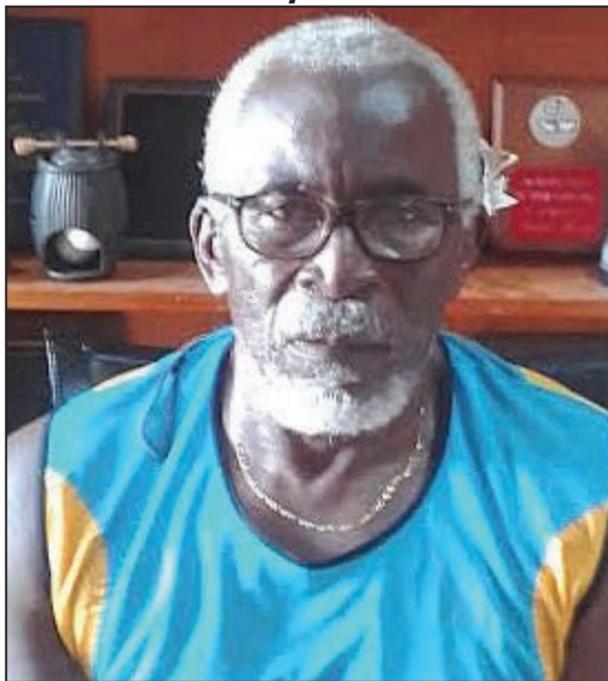
to their peers in the United Kingdom that there was quality sports talent in The Bahamas, the British had taken the lead.

Research points to the first organized cross country race taking place in 1876. A little over 100 years later, the International Association of Athletic Federations (IAAF) launched its World Cross Country Championships. Thus, cross country running got fully into the mainstream of top world events.

Williams hopes that his event will take on "new life for track and field in Abaco" and he sent out invitations to the schools in the area.

Late entries are requested to meet Coach Williams at the Cape Abaco sign at 7 a.m. today. The cross country run will start at 8 a.m. and conclude inside Cape Abaco.

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



COACH VOGEL WILLIAMS

**SPORTS SCOPE**  
 BY FRED STURUP

