

SPORTS

HOYTES Rutherford Tournament in GB places "female" basketball in spotlight

Ministry of Tourism should step forward to assist always

Organizers are at the serious planning stage for the tournament in the country that best showcases female basketball talent.

The nation's basketball maestro, veteran Coach Gladstone "Moon" McPhee was defiant as is normal, over the weekend, in speaking about the national lack of focus on female basketball. He has long lamented the failure of the national parent body, the Bahamas Basketball Federation (BBF) to sufficiently project the fairer sex element of the game in The Commonwealth of The Bahamas.

"I don't know what it is," he has said repeatedly in recent years while criticizing what he calls the "unfair outlook" on women's basketball.

Well, with his annual HOYTES Geneva Rutherford Girls Invitational Basketball Tournament Director Sharon Storr, Coach McPhee sat in his home on Sunday, going over details for what figures to be the largest basketball competition for local females ever in the country. Indeed it is expected that this upcoming 18th annual event will attract the participation of more teams than ever before.

Coach McPhee and his committee are working towards that. "We have to continue to highlight the play of our girls. They are good. We have a lot of female talent in basketball. We have to give them more credit and encourage them more," said McPhee, pointing towards the February 2018 classic.

Coach McPhee is hoping that the incredible success Jonquel Jones is having as a professional in the Women's National Basketball Association (WNBA) and in Asia; plus the performances of Waltiea Rolle in Europe, will have a greater impact on gender equality in sports, here in The Bahamas.

"What's the difference between the pro female players and the males? It's only their gender. The girls play just as hard, have the same tough training programs and know that they have to reach for the stars if they are



JONQUEL JONES



WALTIEA ROLLE

going to be accepted. Unfortunately, there is not a balance in our country. The federation should lead more in this regard," said McPhee.

The federation is sadly lacking in its parent role for basketball in the country, particularly as it relates to the female dimension of the sport. In the meantime, such as Coach McPhee take the initiative to concentrate on female development of basketball.

The HOYTES Rutherford Tournament is an excellent forum. The BBF should welcome such affairs. The national basketball power executive group should definitely relish the presence of helpful organizations like Coach McPhee's HOYTES Foundation that stays proactive in pushing female basketball.

Corporate Bahamas, particularly noted companies in Grand Bahama, should rally behind this effort to propel our women.

Then, there is the Ministry of Tourism.

The HOYTES Rutherford Tournament and many others organized by local sports mentors and administrators should always be on the ministry's agenda. I refer especially to the sports/tourism products. It is baffling that such events could go on, enhancing the Bahamas Sports Brand, with an emphasis on tourism, both domestic and foreign, and receive no meaningful financial assistance, or money-in-kind help from a ministry that is allocated millions of the taxpayers' dollars every year.

The Ministry of Tourism and the Ministry of Sports should play important roles in driving sports/tourism events, all of them, not just those coordinated by a government arm. Yes, there ought to always be certain conditions met to justify the spending of funds out of the Treasury, but once that's been done, events such as the HOYTES Geneva Rutherford Female Basketball Tournament should be assisted significantly.

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SPORTS SCOPE

By Fred Sturrup



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~ Coach Gladstone 'Moon' McPhee



COACH GLADSTONE 'MOON' MCPHEE with NBA player, Buddy Hield.

GB Regatta and Homecoming Committee begins early fund-raising for 2018 event

The 2017 Grand Bahama Homecoming and Regatta event held this past summer was one that showed the GBHR committee took steps in the right direction in drawing a significant local crowd to the Taino Beach area.

Behind some competitive races by a fleet of C-Class boats, and a laundry list of on-shore activities and performers which included some of BTC's Brand Ambassadors, the 2017 GBHR could be deemed a success by the committee.

Since that time, the local regatta board has not rested on their laurels and have already begun the necessary fund-raising to ensure they can deliver bigger and better in 2018. GBHR committee member Jackie Rolle met with members of the media this past Friday and announced that they will continue their fund-raising efforts this coming weekend.

"We will be having our second fund-raising activity, which is going to be held in Nassau at Best of the Best, Fort Montagu (December 6-10)," Rolle announced. "That's where we're going to be selling our signature drinks, as well as our Grand Bahama Regatta apparel clothing line. We're asking all Grand Bahamians who reside in Nassau, you want to come out and support this event, support this committee. And



EARLY START — The Grand Bahama Homecoming and Regatta Committee have begun their fund-raising efforts ahead of the 2018 GB Homecoming and Regatta event set for July 2018. The Committee will be in full force at this weekend's Best of the Best Regatta (New Providence) where they will be selling their signature drinks and GBHR apparel. Picture are committee members Elizabeth Grant, left and Jackie Rolle, right. (PHOTO: SHAYNE STUBBS)

the funds will be going toward our Regatta for next year. And we're really looking forward to it."

Of course, early planning and fund-raising is key to pulling off a major event and for the Regatta buffs in Grand Bahama, it was important for the committee to illustrate how serious they are about 2018.

"It's important because we want to build that excitement, we want to let people know that they can anticipate July 20-22, 2018...We are going to be doing something real grand and we want persons to see now

that we're making plans, we're making preparations and we are excited about what is going to take place next year." While plans are obviously premature at this point, Rolle

did reveal that the addition of B-Class vessels are in the works in hopes of expanding the field of competition.

While the energy and the effort of the committee was evident the GBHR, still, did not draw the attendance the committee had hoped for; something the committee felt was due to the lack of education of what a Regatta really is.

"One of the things that we found out is that a lot of Grand Bahamians don't have an idea of what a regatta is. And even those who do, they feel that they can go into Exuma or Andros or some place else and experience that. And what we're saying to them is we have it right here on the island. So what we want to do is continue to build that momentum and continue to get the word out. We want to encourage Grand Bahamians; that's why we're starting out in 2017, to build that momentum and to let them know this is their Regatta and you want to come out and support it."

"It's a reflection of the island and the community. So if we fail then the whole island fails."

Rolle also included going into the schools and hosting sessions where students would be taught about the history of regattas in the country and why the sport is an important part of Bahamian culture.

Don't just spectate participate in the sport of your choice!