

SPORTS



DISREPAIR

This file photo depicts the shabby condition of the one full-size Track and Field Complex in Abaco.

National sports facilities need attention

There has been great neglect of sporting facilities in the country and no doubt, the major culprits have been the recent central administrations that have had jurisdiction over the National Sports Authority (NSA).

It is deplorable, the state of facilities throughout the Family Islands, and to a bothersome degree in the capital island of New Providence. When one goes through the country and takes notice of how well kept and organized, sporting facilities operated by private concerns are, in comparison to how governments, through the NSA, have been functioning, it is a national disgrace.

Just recently, for emphasis of this point, I disclosed in this space, with photos, the shockingly abysmal state of the one full-size track and field stadium in Abaco, in the precinct

of the Patrick J. Bethel High School, formerly Abaco Central. No public statement has come forth regarding such disrepair.

Today though, there is rhetoric being hurled between the Official Opposition Progressive Liberal Party and the Governing Free National Movement, with the unfinished Andre Rodgers National Baseball Stadium as a primary focus.

A whole lot of "talk" is going on, but meanwhile, the next construction phase of the Rodgers Stadium still seems to be in limbo. The athletic complex in Central Abaco, I understand, has not been touched in the way of repairs. Work has been halted on the sports complex under construction in Moore's Island, Abaco.

All over the archipelago, in areas of Government/NSA responsibility, young aspiring athletes have to make do with shoddy or no facilities at all.

Yes, the government and its sports point person Minister of Youth, Sports and Culture Michael Pintard inherited what they met in place. It's been eight months of governance now though and the time has passed for pointing fingers. The dedicated sports leaders in this country, many of whom sacrifice personal finances to continue contributing to the development of young athletes, are not concerned with comparisons about what the PLP did wrong in sports and what the FNM now says needs to be, and will be rectified.

Get on with the job at hand!

The nation's sporting facilities are no longer among the national failings the kicked-out PLP politicians are tasked with.

Minister Pintard has this load, along with his associates, to deal with for the government in the interest of the Bahamas Sports Brand.

What is the plan?

Spend millions on completing the Andre Rodgers Stadium while the track and field facility in Central Abaco and other similar sporting areas under the purview of the Government/NSA are left in a dilapidated condition?

Certainly, there is no argument here against continued work on the Rodgers Stadium. However, let it be known that there should never be a "commitment" for baseball over any other discipline.

The neglect of sporting bodies in the past and apparently now, to some degree, leaves a wide body of work before Pintard and the government.

Get on with it!

Pay meaningful attention to the national sports landscape!

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SPORTS SCOPE

BY FRED STURRUP



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CALL TITANS UGLY OR GRITTY, THEY KEEP FINDING WAYS TO WIN

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (AP) — Go ahead and pick against the Tennessee Titans. Count them out against the New England Patriots or call them the ugliest team left in the NFL playoffs.

A franchise only two years removed from the NFL's worst record over a two-season stretch cares only about winning.

"Our guys kind of like that role," Titans coach Mike Mularkey said of being underdogs. "Again, this is not a flashy team. It's not sexy. It's just a blue collar, come to work, see what happens when you do and see ... everybody compete for 60 minutes, see what the outcome is going to come. ... Don't worry about predictors. That's their job. We have a job to do."

The Titans (10-7) went 5-27 between 2014 and 2015, costing Ken Whisenhunt his job after 23 games. Mularkey took over, and he's now 21-21 after a stunning comeback for a 22-21 win at Kansas City in the wild-card round.

Now they will visit New England (13-3) on Saturday night for Tennessee's first divisional playoff game since January 2009 and their first divisional road game since losing to the Patriots 17-14 in January 2004. They've already been installed as 13-point underdogs, though being at least an 8-point underdog at

Kansas City and trailing 21-3 at halftime didn't stop the Titans.

Pro Bowl defensive lineman Jurrell Casey said the Titans' confidence never wavered as they tied for the second-largest comeback by a road team in the playoffs.

"Everybody was hungry and had the want to," Casey said. "When you have that, and look around the sideline and see it in their eyes, there's no reason to panic. That's what we've been doing all year long, and we'll continue to do that."

Actually, the Titans have been doing that for the past couple seasons under Mularkey. The Titans now are 7-1 since the start of the 2016 season in games decided by three or fewer points — best in the NFL.

Tight end Delanie Walker said they are comfortable when trailing, confident in their ability to rally.

"We fight to the end," Walker said. "We weren't worried about it. We came in (at halftime) and we were like, 'They haven't done anything to stop us.' We made some adjustments. We went back out there, moved the ball, scored some points and there you have it."

Mularkey said being in close games is expected with how Tennessee attacks on offense with its run scheme. That's what makes coordinator Dick LeBeau's defense so crucial.



Tennessee Titans safety Kevin Byard (31) and safety Johnathan Cyprien (37) celebrate after Cyprien broke up a pass to Kansas City Chiefs wide receiver Albert Wilson during the second half of an NFL wild-card playoff football game, in Kansas City, Mo., Saturday, Jan. 6, 2018. (AP PHOTO/CHARLIE RIEDEL)

The Titans rallied against Kansas City with the defense holding the Chiefs to just 61

yards total offense and no points in the second half. On the other side, the offense held the ball for

more than 19 minutes, scored on four straight possessions and Derrick Henry had 85 of his

career-high 156 yards rushing in the fourth quarter.

Marcus Mariota also notched the ninth game-winning drive of his career and fifth since the start of the 2017 season in beating Kansas City.

Mularkey said the mental toughness required to pull out so many close games is critical, especially on the road.

"We did a lot of good things in that game to give us a chance to win," Mularkey said. "Unfortunately, we had to do it late, but we did a lot of good things as a team I think will carry over as we go forward."

General manager Jon Robinson, who got his start in the NFL with 12 seasons in New England starting as a scout, has been busy rebuilding this roster over the past two years. Cornerback Logan Ryan, who signed as a free agent last offseason after four seasons and two Super Bowl rings with the Patriots, said the Titans feature a bunch of players with nothing to lose.

"A bunch of guys who are underrated, undervalued, who came from different places, and who were trying to do something special. We believe that," Ryan said.

Now the longshot Titans face their biggest test yet Saturday night in New England.

"We want more," Walker said.