

SPORTS

Softball pitching legend Foster Bethel passes on

The man I consider to have been the greatest Bahamian softball pitcher has passed on.

I got a text from my good friend and former SAC school-mate Greg Lampkin, informing me that Foster Bethel died on Wednesday.

It was Bethel who bridged the pioneer era of organized softball in the country, when Posey Gardiner was the premier hurler during the 1940s, to the later generations of greats such as Clive Curry, Glen "Master" Griffin, Duggie Smith (when he was not playing another position), Charlie Mortimer, Harold Whyte, Hastings Campbell, Richard Johnson, Reggie Knowles and others of that ilk.

It was Bethel who introduced windmill pitching to The Bahamas in a significant way. As a young intern sports reporter, I started to cover him during the late 1960s and on Wednesday after getting the message from Greg, while reminiscing on this great forerunner to the present Bahamas Sports Brand, I recalled his incredible ability to bring awesome heat with every pitch.

The late "Big" Ed Knowles, a prolific softball slugger in

his day, once told me of his approach to batting against Bethel.

"Hey, I can tell you...I just went up there and swung and hoped to make contact," he said to me during a chat a long time ago.

Needless to say, more often than not, Knowles did not make contact. For sure, there were many others in his category. You just couldn't get to Bethel during his prime years.

In fact, well, into the 1970s and early 1980s, Bethel was still a difficult task for batters, even when his knees were giving him a lot of problems and his rotating arm did not have the zip of past seasons.

Early on Thursday morning, I called another national sports icon, Churchill Tener-Knowles, with the news of Bethel's death. He was somber and informed that he had just finished his morning prayers and had included Bethel.

"Man, this is a blow. I just finished praying for him. As I reflect, I have many fond memories of Foster from back during the 1950s and the 1960s. A lot of us adopted his windmill style. During the years when he



FOSTER BETHEL

pitched for teams with different sponsors, Deluxe Cleaners and J. S. George, I watched him. He had a number of no-hitters and would lead his team to the championship round every year. I remember him also, other than for sports. He was simply a really nice, soft-spoken gen-

tleman who loved farming. He and I worked together sometime back at Tropical Motors. I knew him well and there is no doubt about him being a high quality individual, always," said Tener-Knowles.

Bethel, in my view, was the leading vanguard of Bahami-

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~ Churchill Tener-Knowles

shoulders of Foster Bethel and company. Bethel, the National Sports Hall of Fame inductee is gone, but his glowing legacy will live on. May his soul forever rest in peace!

That happened with the later breed of players standing on the

shoulders of Foster Bethel and company.

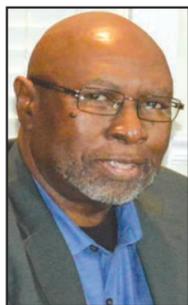
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•To respond to this column, kindly contact Fred Sturrup at sturrup1504@gmail.com or on WhatsApp at 727-6363.

SPORTS SCOPE

BY FRED STURRUP



CARIFTA APPROACHING - The 2018 FLOW CARIFTA Games are fast approaching. The Caribbean junior track and field championships take place in New Providence March 30-April 2. It's now a dead sprint as Grand Bahama athletes aim to meet CARIFTA standard times in the coming weeks and be ready for CARIFTA Trials, March 16-17. (TFN FILE PHOTO)

GB ATHLETES HAVE WORK TO DO AHEAD OF CARIFTA TRIALS

SHAYNE STUBBS
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We're two days into the third month of 2018 and that means one thing, the CARIFTA Games are now 28 days away.

The 2018 FLOW CARIFTA Games take place March 30 - April 2 with 20-plus countries slated for four days of track and field competition at the Thomas

A. Robinson National Stadium in New Providence.

With some weeks left for athletes to pre-qualify ahead of the CARIFTA Trials, set for March 16 - 17 in the nation's capital and the Grand Bahama Secondary School Athletic Association All-Island Track and Field Championships behind us, the top place athletes in their respective events have a sense of what they need to work on with such a short amount of time. While

there's no doubt the junior national team will have representation from "Track City" there is still much needed improvement to lower the times recorded at Island Sports.

The CARIFTA standard in the Under 17 Girls' 100 meters is 12.06 seconds. The top place finishers at Island Sports, Roy-janae Brown, Genique Bassett and Tajonny Stubbs turned in times of 13.02, 13.04 and 13.09 seconds respectively.

On the Under 17 boys side the CARIFTA qualifying time (QT) 10.92 seconds. The top three finishers in the 100m, Terrence Jones, Damico Austin and Latrell Taylor each posted a time of 11.20, 11.38, and 11.45 seconds respectively.

With the CARIFTA QT set at 11.80 seconds, the top time posted for the Under 20 girls at the recently held Island Sports meet was 12.47 seconds posted by Destiny Huyler. The second

lowest from that age group was turned in by Brittany Bonabi at 12.89 seconds.

As for the Under 20 boys the QT for the 100m is 10.60 seconds. Nasterio Williams and frequent CARIFTA team member Shaquille Higgs turned in times of 11.19 and 11.21 seconds respectively.

24.55 seconds is the CARIFTA QT in the Under 17 girls' 200m dash. Thus far, out of Grand Bahama Collinique Farrington

has registered a time of 25.52 seconds in her 200m gold medal this past February. As for the Under 17 boys, 21.92 seconds is the time to get under. D'Vonte Forbes turned a time of 22.82 seconds.

As for the ladies in the Under 20 Division their CARIFTA goal is 23.90 seconds. Huyler's got some ground to make up as her time at Island Sports stood at 25.19 seconds. The Under 20 (Continued on Page 11)