

SPORTS

Bannister the architect of sports unit in Education Ministry

National Basketball Championships to give Grand Bahama economic lift

It is estimated that over \$250,000 will be poured into the economy of Grand Bahama when the National High Schools Basketball Championships are staged in Freeport, at the St. George's Gymnasium, March 22-26.

Twenty-six teams from throughout the rest of the country will converge on Freeport, beginning in some cases, on March 21. Inclusive of players, basketball mentors, school education leaders, parents/guardians and support fans, about 500 domestic tourists, through sports, will be in Grand Bahama for the prestigious event.

Three hotels, Royal Islander, Castaways and Freeport Resorts, are earmarked to house the visitors. While as far as the players are concerned, in a number of instances, several will be together in a room, it still figures that, factoring hotel costs, food, in-land transportation and incidentals, about \$600.00 on average will be spent accommodating each of the 500 domestic tourists, for a total projection of \$300,000.

The Sports Unit in the Department of Education, a major arm of the Ministry of Education, is responsible for the national sports championships, which are chiefly coordinated by Evon Wisdom.

Who is the architect of this significant avenue of sports focus and development under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Education?

Well, none other, than Desmond Bannister. Unlike many others who climbed on the back of sports to positions of influence in this country, Bannister has always had a profound appreciation for all of the roads that led him to the point of being a national decision maker.

He never forgot his sports roots. Bannister was an excellent sports minister in a previous Free National Movement administration and later took



SPORTS CLASSICS -- Evon Wisdom, who heads the Sports Unit of the Department of Education, is pictured next to Sports Minister Michael Pintard seated at right. Wisdom and the Department of Education coordinates annual national championships in different sporting disciplines



FLASHBACK -- In this file photo from the 2018 National Championships, during which the St. George's Jaguars won the title, Ahmad Harvey defends Tabernacle Baptist Academy's Franco Miller. Looking on is Howard Hinsey of St. George's.



DESMOND BANNISTER
Minister of Works

SPORTS SCOPE

BY FRED STURRUP



up the challenge of being the Minister of Education. It was his idea to develop a proactive sports unit that would heighten "after school sports," a program that ultimately mushroomed and brought forth national school sports championships.

Bannister is now the Minister of Works in yet another FNM central administration, but it is a safe bet that he stays connected to national sports.

"The Sports Unit in the Department of Education, a major arm of the Ministry of Education, is responsible for the national sports championships, which are chiefly coordinated by Evon Wisdom."

It is fitting to mention also, the present Minister of Education, Jeffery Lloyd, and his predecessor

Jerome Fitzgerald, from the recent past Progressive Liberal Party Government.

Fitzgerald and now Lloyd have allowed a continuance of the sports unit.

The nation benefits as a result and at a time when the island's economy is struggling, the financial shot in the arm will be huge for Grand Bahama.

The National High School Basketball Championships will showcase the finest senior boys' and girls' teams in the country. I understand that the St. George's Gym will undergo some repairs, to the court, in preparation for the tournament.

West Grand Bahama District Education Superintendent Ivan Butler informed me on Thursday that bids for the body of work have gone out to contractors and the expectation is that responses will be quick in order to ensure that the court at the St. George's Gym is playable.

Meanwhile, all other signs are "go" for yet another high school sports classic.

To respond to this column, kindly contact Fred Sturru at sturru1504@gmail.com or on WhatsApp at 727-6363.



ON THE PODIUM -- Matthew Henfield of Tabernacle Baptist Christian Academy, left, and Akaya Lightbourne of Sunland Baptist Academy, right, were two of Grand Bahama's athletes that made it to the medal podium yesterday on day one of the Bahama National High School Track and Field Championships, yesterday morning over in New Providence. Henfield won the bronze in the boys' Under 15, 1500 meters finals, while Lightbourne struck gold and won the national championship in the girls' Under 15, 1500m. (TFN FILE PHOTOS)

Grand Bahama schools off to strong start at Nationals

SHAYNE STUBBS
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The 2018 Bahamas National High School Track and Field is well underway.

The 2018 championships kicked off yesterday over in New Providence yesterday morning at the Thomas A. Robinson Sta-

dium with three of Grand Bahama's athletes making it on onto the podium up to press time.

Akaya Lightbourne of Sunland Baptist Academy (SBA) took the national crown easily in the Under 15 Girls' 1,500 meters contest. The reigning 1,500m champion in Grand Bahama took the tape and national gold in the time five minutes 21.04 seconds (5:21.04).

Winning the silver medal was Frideline Augustine of Huntley Christie School in the time of 5:38.16 and winning the bronze was Kenya Forbes of Sister Mary Patricia Russell (SMPR) in the time of 5:41.10.

Matthew Henfield, representing Tabernacle Baptist Christian Academy (TBCA), was a favorite to medal and possibly bring home the national title in the

Under 15 Boys' 1,500m contest. However, a bronze medal finish for the promising distance runner was the final result.

Henfield finished third in the field with a time of 5:02.17. Paulindo Boyer of St. John's College was the eventual gold medal winner and posted a time of 4:49.75. The silver medal was hauled away by Damani David of Kingsway Academy in the

time of 4:56.07.

Up to press time the results of all 100m and 400m preliminaries had not been posted. The finals of the 100m and 400m took place yesterday evening. Advancing to the Under 13 Girls' 100m finals were Solange Sargent of Jack Hayward Junior and Kaily Pratt of Sunland Baptist Academy.

Sargent turned in the fastest

time of 13.36 seconds to advance. Pratt cracked the top eight with a time of 14.12 seconds.

As for the U13 Boys' 100m final, that race was packed with athletes out of Grand Bahama. Island Sports' champion Malik Wood of Sunland; Denard Ad-derley of Tabernacle Baptist; Joshua Johnson of Sister Mary (Continued on Page 11)