

SPORTS

Ministry of Tourism lends a hand to help GB Regatta bolster its weekend of events

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This month marks the countdown to the annual cultural spectacle that is the Grand Bahama Homecoming and Regatta.

The July 28 - 30 hosted event is expected to be even bigger and better than in most recent years and as always, the Ministry of Tourism has come on board to promote and help with the event to be held on Taino Beach.

Assistant Sports Tourism Manager for Grand Bahama, Jay Philippe commended committee chairman Chervita Campbell and her team for the job they have done so far.

He noted that the event continues to shed light on the island of Grand Bahama, which is the Ministry's prime objective.

"Regatta is considered a sport and a cultural event. So we think that's an excellent way to promote the island. We have a number of persons that will be visiting from either overseas or the other islands such as Acklins, Exuma, and Long Island; so these kinds of events give persons an opportunity to add to the industry," Philippe noted.

He added that the MOT would also help in the promotion of the event via their social media pages Tourism Today and Bahamas.com and will feature the list of onshore and offshore activities.

Campbell has expressed for some time now that a lot would be placed into bolstering the onshore activities at this year's Regatta.

She further emphasized some of the



FLASHBACK – The crew of the sloop – Heath Cliff – competing during a previous Grand Bahama Regatta. (PHOTO: TFN FILES)

activities and entertainment that residents could look forward to during the final weekend in July.

"This year we have injected some funds toward the onshore activities for residents and tourists alike. We want persons to really come out and participate in several onshore events that will

be taking place; particularly the hula-hoop, hopscotch, onion peeling activities and the list goes on.

"We're looking also at a steel pan (band) so when you come on the beach earlier in the day time you can be mesmerized by the sounds of a steel pan. And when we look at the sailing com-

ponent we're looking at targeting C-Class boats – approximately 15. And those sailors range from across The Bahamas."

From an entertainment standpoint Campbell listed a few of the big name acts expected to liven up the potential crowd. Artists and DJs such as Julian

Believe, Wendi and Dyson Knight, and Tiko T are expected to be in attendance. "This year we decided to go very hard at it. We understand what some of the issues which were relative were marketing and getting the word out for our event. It is a free event for the general public."

While the races kick-off that Friday, Campbell noted Friday's onshore activity that evening would feature a beer-fest featuring beer specials, Saturday would be a fun-day for the families, and Sunday will be the closing beach party.

Onshore activities' Coordinator Jacqueline Rolle noted the committee found it important to bring "energy" and give residents a reason to come out and make the local Regatta as big as possible. She later explained one of the primary activities for the Regatta.

"We're encouraging persons to come out and not only to take part in the races but we're going to have a watermelon eating contest and Hop-Scotch but the highlight of the onshore activities is going to be a "Back in Time" treasure hunt.

"With this treasure hunt we're going to start putting it out there and getting persons to participate. We want you to go dig in your closet and see what you can find. We're looking for artifacts like an Aquapure soda can, or an old stamp. So over the course of the next couple days we're going to present a list to the general public. And the person that finds most or all the items listed they're going to win a grand prize."

For more information on the GB Homecoming and Regatta, you can visit their self-titled Facebook page.

GB gets its first taste of lacrosse

On Saturday, July 1 the game of lacrosse was introduced to Grand Bahama Island via the inaugural Bahamas Bash Lacrosse Tournament held at the Grand Bahama Sports Complex.

With almost 200 players and families visiting the island from the United States to participate in the tournament, Michael Zeff, organizer, Bahamas Bash Lacrosse Tournament, said that "It's a very exciting opportunity for us to not only grow the game of lacrosse and introduce it to The Bahamas, but also to get all these teams from America and from Florida to come over here and play."

As lacrosse is the oldest, fastest growing sport in America, Zeff's goal was to create an interest among young Bahamians in regard to the sport of lacrosse.

Duncan Clancy, mid-field player, Florida Launch, Major League Lacrosse, said that "There's so much potential here...I said there has to be lacrosse in The Bahamas and there was nothing, so it's cool to be on the forefront of it now and bring (lacrosse) here (for the first time)."

Consequently, having the advantage of professional players present throughout duration of the tournament proved to be extremely important in the overall experience.

As the pro players were dubbed Ambassadors for the game of lacrosse, any Bahamian that was interested in learning could benefit from the experience of the professionals who would assist with explaining the basics of the game as well offer advice on the benefits of playing lacrosse.

For many, the sport of lacrosse led to college scholarships as lacrosse is one of the most popular sporting events at Ivy League schools. Zeff said that "anything that gets kids active and engaged in playing sports and has college potential too, it's a wonderful thing."

Jay Philippe, Assistant Manager, Sports Tourism, MOT & Aviation GBI said that "To actually see the game being played out here is absolutely amazing. I'm just so thankful that with the Ministry of Tourism, we're in the business of bringing people to the island of Grand Bahama."

Philippe continued to say that "This is a unique sporting event; we have a lot of visitors that came with the purpose of this particular event and we just want to encourage persons to continue to support Sports Tourism. We want the visitors to have an excellent time as we're all about hospitably and making sure they have an amazing time so that they can come back again."

The inaugural Bahamas Bash Lacrosse Tournament took place over the course of two days as a total of four high school age teams took to the field to compete in a series of elimination games, which led to the championship game on Sunday, July 2.

The St. Augustine Marauders took home the winning title at the inaugural Bahamas Bash Lacrosse Tournament and is excited to compete again next year should the tournament continue.



ON THE FIELD – The first Bahamas Bash Lacrosse Tournament was held in Grand Bahama on July 1, at the GB Sports Complex. (PHOTO COURTESY MOT)



MICHAEL PINTARD



DR. DANIEL JOHNSON

Countdown to Youth Games drawing comparison to previous mega events

The Progressive Liberal Party's group of candidates was unceremoniously dismissed, almost in totality on May 10. In the weeks following, an avalanche of mismanagement allegations has been leveled at the former Perry Christie Government.

While no proof has been presented (as yet) that verifies anything criminal having been done by Christie and his Cabinet colleagues, the huge figures released and not substantiated by the comparable bodies of work, have incensed many Bahamians. Yes, Bahamians are enraged that so much that was highly questionable happened on Christie's most recent watch as prime minister.

The point I wish to push home today though is that despite the heavy cloud the Christie Government is under, when it comes to sports, there have been no legitimate criticisms of the former central administration. That is for good reasons.

By and large, with the former Minister of Youth, Sports and Culture

Dr. Daniel Johnson leading the "sports" charge for the Christie Government, there was a level

SPORTS SCOPE

By Fred Sturup



of success that cannot be disputed. Yes, there were areas that could have been better addressed.

There is no perfection in this world.

However, based on the incredible worldwide reputation built because of the high grades given The Bahamas for hosting three International Association of Athletics Federations (IAAF) World Relays, a FIFA World Cup Beach Soccer event, building relationships with the Miami Marlins, the Miami Dolphins, the Black Colleges football program, and the Popeye Bahamas Bowl, Dr. Johnson demitted office in a blaze of glory.

Its credible attention to sports was perhaps the one shining

achievement for the Christie Government.

It is against this backdrop, following the most successful sports minister, (for sure, in terms of international sports products) in Bahamian history, that new Minister of Youth, Sports and Culture Michael Pintard now operates.

Thus, how he steers the Sixth Commonwealth Youth Games to conclusion will be an early barometer for Pintard. He inherited a situation whereby the groundwork was already done for the youth games. The Commonwealth Games Federation had endorsed the bid for The Bahamas, and subsequently sent into the country, advance teams to investigate and then report. The reports assured the CGF ex-

ecutives that the process towards the July 18-23 competition time line was at the very least adequate and acceptable.

Well, over 1000 visitors directly related to the youth games, will converge on New Providence in large numbers beginning, as early as July 20 and some of them will still be in the country on July 25, if late departures have been arranged.

So indeed, this is a huge opportunity for Pintard, the new national sports czar. It is his call to ensure the proper protocol and coordination going forward so as not to upset the apple cart and create a confused situation as the days wind down to the largest ever sports extravaganza in the history of The Bahamas.

Accordingly, as Bahamians, particularly members of the nation's sports family connect with the countdown to the youth games, inevitably Pintard, the bottom line factor for the millions of taxpayers' funds allocated, will be compared to Dr. Johnson.

(To respond to this column, kindly contact Fred Sturup at sturup1504@gmail.com or on WhatsApp at 727-67363).