

SPORTS

HOYTES' annual showcase event for female basketball players set

The venerable Coach Gladstone "Moon" McPhee continues to be a great advocate for female basketball.

Almost two decades ago, through his HOYTES (Helping Our Youth Through Education and Sports) Geneva Rutherford Female Basketball Invitational, Coach McPhee began a crusade to provide the fairer sex aspirants of the game, a higher profile.

"I noticed then, and it is still very much the case today, that the growth of female basketball has been stunted, simply because, the general attitude is to show preference for the male basketball players. More focus is placed on them (males) in school, league and recreation play. It has been not a balance that I favor and this is why I have sought to level the playing field or to come close to that stage for the ladies.

"I began this tournament to ensure that at the very least, there would be one tournament each year that highlights the young girls and older ladies," said the stalwart sports mentor, earlier this week.

He is preparing for this year's event, scheduled February 20-23 at St. George's Gymnasium in Freeport, Grand Bahama. Invita-

tions have already gone out to schools in New Providence, Grand Bahama, and some of the other Family Islands, such as Abaco, Eleuthera, Bimini and Andros.

Coach's McPhee's HOYTES Program has been the major plank for private development of female basketball. Through HOYTES, he has fostered many scholarship opportunities for young Bahamian females. Two of his prized pupils, have gone all the way to the top. I refer to his daughter Yolett McPhee-McCuin and Jonquel Jones.

The former is the first female to head the University of Mississippi's Women's Basketball Program. Coach Yo recently won her 100th game in National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Division 1, with Jacksonville University for six years, and upon joining Mississippi in 2018.

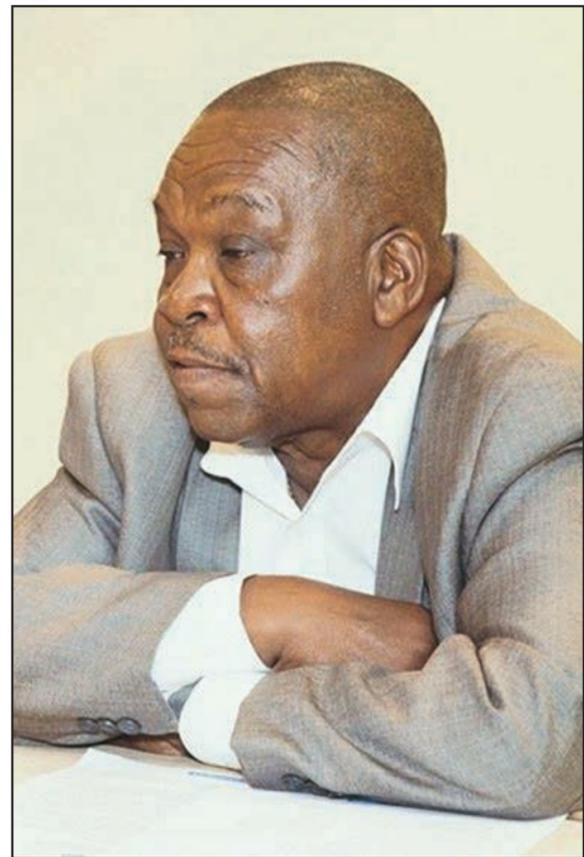
Jones, of course, is the global basketball star. She has been an All-Star in the Women's National Basketball Association (WNBA); Jones sits as the single season-rebound record holder(403); she captivated Asian basketball for two seasons (South Korea and China); and the Grand Bahama native is considered one of the bright young talents expected to lead the WNBA for years to come.

Coach Yo and Jones are the collective message that the 'Moon Man' has consistently sent out while projecting female basketball.

"I keep telling people that there is just as much female talent in basketball as with the males. Basketball, the male version, yes, gets more attention. But, why can't people see that the females provide excitement as well? I wish to keep this tournament alive to give the females a platform to show their talents, without their skills being compared to the males.

"I challenge the Bahamas Basketball Federation, and the schools to show more interest in the ladies who play basketball. I invite them to focus more on events designed for the ladies, such as our February tournament," said Coach McPhee.

Once again, the Tournament Director is Sharon "The General" Storr. He can be reached at storr_17@hotmail.com or Sharon.storr17@gmail.com.



COACH GLADSTOANE
'MOON' MCPHEE

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~ COACH MCPHEE

**SPORTS
SCOPE**

BY FRED STURRUP



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ON DISPLAY — Heats Athletics was on full display at the recently held BAAA: Odd Distance Meet held on January 5 at the original Thomas A. Robinson Stadium. (PHOTO: KERMIT TAYLOR/BAHAMAS ATHLETICS)

BAAAS OPEN SEASON WITH ODD DISTANCE MEET

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The new Bahamas Association of Athletics Associations (BAAA) jump started the track and field season with its annual Odd Distance Meet not too long ago.

This past January 5 at the old Thomas A. Robinson Stadium in the nation's capital, dozens of track athletes flocked to get the ball rolling on their respective seasons.

The meet was highly anticipated according to current BAAA president Drumeco Archer. With a host of track clubs in attendance, the BAAAs was certainly happy to get an early look at the junior competitors ahead

for their upcoming high school meets.

Archer, indeed, had high hopes for the event's success and he was left nothing short of gratified at the turnout from the clubs and spectators, as they aim to breathe life back into the local track and field scene.

"I always thought that this was going to be the hit in setting the tone for this year's season and this did not disappoint me," Archer expressed, "I am fully satisfied with the turnout. The vibe that I got, I think people really enjoyed the experience here at the track meet and I couldn't ask for more."

One of the Team Be the G.O.A.T's main mantras for their campaign was to ensure that when persons hear of an upcoming track meet, they are filled with a desire to be pres-

ent and participate. The recently held meet tested new elements, including the incorporation of big names in the radio business, that turned out to be a hit as reported by the BAAA's president.

"When we came into this administration we spoke about one specific thing: how is it that we're going to bring people back into the stadium? We understand that we are competing with a number of different sporting events and we said there has to be an infusion of entertainment.

"I think that we hit the mark. It was a big hit. The crowd loved it. This was the first time I've seen the VIP stands filled to capacity that wasn't a major competition. So that tells you what the anticipation would have been like."

Archer certainly felt the meet set the tone for upcoming events. He was also overjoyed at seeing persons he is not accustomed to seeing at track events show up for the January 5 held event.

Philiper Amette-Willie expressed that she hopes the BAAA's continues to make track meets all around the country as exciting as the first meet of the year.

"This exceeded my expectations. I must say the BAAAs outdone itself with the flavor that we tried to bring at the Odd Distance Meet. Inviting the radio houses here to hype up the meet and get involved in meet presentation and the delivery; it was awesome.

"I'm sure the fans enjoyed it, the athletes enjoyed, I enjoyed it as an announcer. I definitely

hope it continues and I hope the BAAAs continue to make such a presentation because it definitely brought a different twist and flavor to things."

The media houses certainly took a liking to the first track meet of the New Year. Rika C., host of the "Midday Misbehavior" on Hot 91.7FM shared the meet was a delight and was amazed by how hard the athletes competed from start to finish.

"I had an amazing time watching these athletes compete on the track, giving their all; even the ones that didn't place first or second place. So, I have to send a shout out to the family members that came out and gave support for this great event. I feel more of our young people should get involved in this."

Calling some of the races may have been new territory for the radio personality but she expressed that it was a lot of fun diving into the experience.

"It was a lot of fun. It was hilarious because I didn't know the names of the track athletes. It was just a lot of fun. Everybody here felt like family and we could all joke about it. Even though I did not know some of the names the fact of the matter is we all came out, had a good time and that's what counts."

DJ Cres of 100 JAMZ spoke about his experience DJ'ing in a different environment and said, "It was very wonderful entertaining the athletes' parents, brothers and sisters who weren't in the track meet. Playing music from the 80's straight to 2018 was great."