

SPORTS

# Challenging Thanksgiving weekend games ahead for Coach Yo, Rebels



## GB native closing in on 100 wins

Thus far, the marriage between head Coach of the Women's Basketball Program, Yolette McPhee-McCuin and the University of Mississippi has been working quite well.

The Grand Bahama native Coach Yo has the lady Rebels off to a most encouraging start to the season. The team is 3-1 and has demonstrated a level of resilience that, if continued could result in a spot in the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Tournament.

The matter at hand though is getting rid of the kinks that have allowed opposing teams to go on runs. This weekend during the U.S Virgin Islands Paradise Jam Division I Tournament in that Caribbean location, according to Ole Miss Media Chief Ty Wooten, Coach Yo and the Lady Rebels "will face the toughest test of the season to date, with back-to-back-to-back tilts versus No.1 ranked University of Connecticut (this evening); Purdue (November 23) and St. John's University (November 24)."

It is a tough lineup indeed and if Ole Miss allows any of the weekend opponents to dominate a full quarter that could lead to defeats. Losing in her first tournament at Ole Miss would be a difficult pill for Coach Yo, but, being battle tough through-



### Sports Scope

by Fred Sturup

out all of the games would be satisfying for one has who been successful by imparting her bulldog mentality into players.

"I want my players to dive for every ball and hustle on every play."

That's the mantra of the daughter of the legendary Bahamian-based basketball mentor Gladstone "Moon" McPhee.

Wooten has noted that the tournament in the U. S. Virgin Islands is ideal for the Ole Miss Rebels at the start of the season.

"The U.S. Virgin Islands Paradise Jam is an annual early-season basketball tournament for

Division I Men's and women's basketball teams. Hosted at the University of the Virgin Islands Sports & Fitness Center on St. Thomas, the tournament offers excellent early season competition in an exotic island setting. Founded in 2000, many of the nation's finest college student-athletes have converged on St. Thomas to test their skills and enjoy the tropical weather," further communicated Wooten.

It is noteworthy to point out that a key milestone is in sight for Coach Yo. The diminutive coach with the positively forceful nature has racked up 97 victories against 64 defeats in her NCAA head coaching career. Three more in the win column will enable her to hit the century mark in just six seasons.

It is truly remarkable that she is at this pivotal stage and riding a wave of confidence that figures to propel her to many more victories. In the meantime, though, her pathway will be filled with obstacles, some of them very difficult to hurdle, such as UConn, Purdue and St. John's.

Best wishes Coach Yo!

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*"I want my players to dive for every ball and hustle on every play."*

~ COACH YOLETTE MCPHEE-MCCUIN

# Cultural show highlights Falcons' Thanksgiving Basketball Classic

(From Page 23)

"Like Mr. Johnson said, I didn't know how it was going to turn out but Dale said go ahead, I'll get you the teams and we'll pull the event off. So we started this tournament in 1999 and brought in at that time, Science Hill. We brought also Brainerd and Robert High. "Perhaps one of the greatest basketball games I ever watched took place at the YMCA between Science Hill and Tabernacle Baptist. It went to double overtime and the final score was 102-101, won by Science Hill. We often still talk about that basketball game. The media from Science Hill was here and they radio broadcasted the games back to Johnson City.

"This tournament has certainly grown to this level largely because of the input and help of Dale Burns who has ensured that we get the quality teams," said Bain.

While the friendship forged with Bain and spirit of competition has kept Burns connected to the tournament, the latter acknowledged that the hospitality shown to him during his visits make every trip memorable for him.

"I think the most important thing, I tell the people that come down here with me - I tell them this every year - it's the people. The people in The Bahamas are the greatest people in the world. I also tell them when you come down here, what I want to make sure you do is treat them with the same respect that they treat you with. I always tell the teams that. "They put a lot into this (tournament) and you can see the pride in what they do. It's really a special thing."



**CULTURAL EXPLOSION** - The Tabernacle Baptist Academy Choir took the visitors on a 'trip around the archipelago' during their selection at the 20th annual Tabernacle Falcons Thanksgiving Basketball Classic opening ceremony held this past Wednesday morning on the school's campus. (PHOTOS: SHAYNE STUBBS)

Mackey became popular as an athlete for the Falcons for his unique leaping ability. The former Falcon, who now owns his own fitness center in New Providence - MacFit360 - moved on to playing collegiate basketball and ultimately pro basketball in Europe in 2004.

Mackey eventually put his basketball career on hold to focus on receiving an advanced degree in sports management and massage therapy. His dream of offering something unique in the field of fitness in the country gave birth to what has become one of the most

popular fitness and performance centers in New Providence.

The 2017 National Icon Award winner, who grew up on the streets of Kemp Road in the nation's capital before moving to Grand Bahama, shared with the athletes how his rough upbringing propelled him to the life he now knows. Married with two children, a business owner with numerous certifications, Mackey urged the athletes to never take the moments of their youth for granted.

"Really take heed of these moments. Enjoy these mo-

ments because after this, the real world happens.

"Some days you're going to be up, some days you're going to be down. But, you just have to turn to each other as a team and say 'let's go guys.' This is tournament weekend, enjoy it.

"I just want to say from the bottom of my heart, thank you so much for what you (administration and teachers) have done for me and I'll never forget the opportunity you've given me. Some day I want to officially put MacFit360 as an official sponsor for this tournament," he concluded.



**SOAR HIGH** - Former Tabernacle Falcons and owner of MacFit360 Jimmy Mackey served as the guest speaker at the Tabernacle Falcons Thanksgiving Basketball Classic opening ceremony. He encouraged the athletes to continue to strive for greatness and to enjoy the moments the tournament will bring.



**CONTINUING ON** - Dale Burns, left, and Norris Bain, right, are pictured as the duo gave brief remarks on the Tabernacle Falcons Thanksgiving Basketball Classic's history at yesterday's opening ceremony.