

SPORTS

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Sports Minister promises additional funding

TBCA may get additional funding from Sports Ministry if they add ladies teams to their tournament

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Tabernacle Baptist Christian Academy (TBCA) Thanksgiving Tournament and the school's basketball program so impressed the Minister of Youth, Sports and Culture, Desmond Bannister that he promised to pump additional funds into the program if organizers add ladies teams to the tournament agenda.

While in Grand Bahama to open the 10th Anniversary segment of TBCA basketball event, Bannister requested a "small favour" of head coach and principal, Norris Bain.

"I wish to request a small favour of Mr. Bain and the other sporting officials that are here, including the GBSSAA president Wayne Smith, and that favour is this, next year you give consideration to expanding the tourna-

ment field to include a segment for female players ... many of whom who do not have the opportunities that some of our male players have to participate properly in organized tournaments, such as this one," said Bannister.

"My ministry will be satisfied if this is given measured and thoughtful consideration, and yes you can be assured that we will be pleased to increase our support for such an effort as that, once you determine that you are going to include young women in this tournament."

Bannister said that Tabernacle is developing a rich basketball legacy, "and I know that the young men in Grand Bahama truly appreciate the preparedness that is now being afforded to them in developing their skills and, the discipline which is required for them to succeed in life."

He noted that the past achievements of TBCA are



DESMOND BANNISTER



NORRIS BAIN

Ferguson: 'Diving Legends recognize those who contributed to the sport'

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Having been in the diving profession for 22 years, Ollie Ferguson says that Jeff Rice's Diving Legends event coming to Grand Bahama can only bring further light to the sport.

Ferguson, who thoroughly enjoys diving and "interacting with nature" noted that what Rice has done with the program is "super."

"Because, there are so many unsung heroes - in so many aspects of business, sports and recreation that people don't ever get the chance to hear about - but have contributed in many ways to the success of that particular activity," he added.

Ferguson said that Rice is giving those people the opportunity for recognition, "so he must definitely be complimented for that."

"However, having said that, many of the people, myself included, that are mentioned weren't doing it for the recognition. It is a lifestyle, it was something we did, because we did it."

"But, now for many of us who are out of the industry, to finally be recognized is always nice."

Ferguson noted that he is looking forward to the event, "I think it is a great event and the preceding events at the



OLLIE FERGUSON

Portage Quarry have been very successful."

It is Ferguson's belief that Rice's program has done a lot to put diving out in the public eye and this event will be a great continuation to complement the hard work and efforts already made internationally.

"Sure that this will be an ongoing part of diving that people look forward to on a regular basis, continues to promote and put diving in the public eye in the best way," said Ferguson.

Having worked with the team of UNEXSO to develop a number of its experiences,

Ferguson said that his time with the diving company is hard to communicate to people.

"It was so incredible, it was a lifestyle, it was something that many people would have done without being compensated for financially," he added.

Personally, noted Ferguson, "I had incredible opportunities and great experiences ... to be out on the water six, seven days a week and interacting with nature was absolutely incredible."

It was because of those underwater experiences Ferguson said, he was able to

do it for 22 years.

"I've had people ask me when I was going to get a real job, when was I going to really do something ... and that was such a hard question to answer, and I often thought an unfair question because I couldn't even begin to share with them the rewards or the satisfaction that I experienced on a daily basis."

Sharing his love of diving with the rest of the world and coming across incredible encounters, whether it be with a 'Minky Whale or a Manta Ray' or being a part of bringing the dolphins to the Dolphin Experience, or being a part of the team that set up the 'Shark Dive' with UNEXSO, "those were all things that some people only dream of or pay great amounts of money to be a part of."

But, said Ferguson, he was fortunate enough to be able to do it.

"So my time at UNEXSO was truly an odyssey in the best way, that I found very hard to put into words."

As a result of his experiences, Ferguson said that Diving Legends coming to Grand Bahama in April will be a great experience for local divers.

'Legends of Diving' is held annually in Bowling Green since 2006. Jeff Rice is the managing director of the Portage Quarry and organizer of the fast growing event.

already the "stuff" of which legends are made of.

"Continue to do the wonderful work that you are doing," said Bannister.

"It is my pleasure as the Minister of Youth, Sports and Culture to lend the ministry's full support to this program, because I am convinced that it does so much for the young people of Grand Bahama," he added.

Bannister also encouraged coaches to continue to strive for excellence as they prepare their athletes for the college level.

"Let me confess, to all of you at the outset, that I have known Mr. Norris Bain for quite some time. He is a principled, dedicated and disciplined leader," said Bannister.

He noted that Bain is just the type of person needed to guide young people through the uncertainties of their teenage years.

"I congratulate him for his consistent leadership," said Bannister, "we in the

Ministry of Youth, Sports and Culture look forward to continue working with him and his wonderful team of youthful leaders at Tabernacle Baptist Christian Academy."

*Sports
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(CFL from Page 18)

Furthermore, we intend on assisting the schools with the initial set up for high school and pee-pee football. However, it will be mandatory that high school student athletes maintain a respectable grade point average. The long-term objective of high school football is to create an avenue to obtain U.S. college scholarships. American colleges are always looking for talent in The Bahamas. We had conversations with the University of Miami, Florida Atlantic University and also the University of Florida. Right now, the Pros team has several young men playing college football," said Moore.

In related news, there has been a change to this weekend's CAFL scheduled playoffs. The first playoff game which was set for a 1:30 p.m.

start on Saturday, January 10 between the Pros and Stingrays has been postponed to Saturday, January 17. The Pros finished second this season with a win/loss record of 6-2 while the Stingrays ended the season in third place with a record of 4-4. The CAFL decided to postpone the match because Phil Smith's funeral is set for this Saturday.

However, the playoff match set for Sunday, January 11 at 1:30 p.m. between last year's runners-up and the 2008 pennant winning Jets and the Kingdom Warriors is still on. The Jets have a flawless 8-0 win/loss record while the Warriors finished in fourth place with a 1-7 record. All of the sudden death playoff games will be played at the D.W. Davis field. The two winners will advance to the championship game slated for Saturday, January 24 at 1:30 p.m.