

Scotiabank/Pepsi Schools' Football Academy launched

By Avenash Ramzan

With the aim of integrating sports and education, as well as instilling the basics of the game to students from an early age, the Scotiabank/Pepsi Schools' Football Academy was officially launched yesterday at the Cliff Anderson Sports Hall.

The initiative, which is the brainchild of overseas-based Guyanese Colin Baker of the Guyana Sports Development Foundation (GSDF), has received tremendous support from corporate entities Scotiabank and Demerara Distillers Limited (DDL), in addition to the Guyana Football Federation (GFF), Education and Sport Ministries, Guyana Defence Force, Guyana Teachers' Union, Guyana Football Referees Council (GFRC), and alumni of the participating schools.

Ten schools from Georgetown have been identified to be part of the five-month stint, but the organisers are ultimately aiming to expand the academy to make it a truly national one in years to come.

"We hope to make it a national academy where schools from all over the country will be able to participate. This year we've started with ten schools in Georgetown and we have also named another five as alternates in the case one of the ten cannot participate for some reason or the other," Baker explained.

Those institutions identified to be part of the academy, which began on February 7 with a three-day training course for teachers from the schools involved are St. Joseph's High, Queens College, Tutorial High, North Ruimveldt Secondary, North Georgetown Secondary, St. Stanislaus High, East Ruimveldt Secondary, Christ Church Secondary, Tucville Secondary, and St. Roses High.

The five alternate schools are Richard Ishmael Secondary, Marian Academy, Lodge Secondary, St. John's College, and New Campbellville Secondary.

According to Baker, the initiative will "align sports and academics" and will cater for boys and girls between the ages eight and 15. "It has the potential to create a positive impact on local football. Among other things, scholarship opportunities will be created for the outstanding students."

Baker added that during the last two months of the five-month academy, a tournament will be held after which the top four schools will compete in a playoff.

"A website is currently being developed to disseminate information on the project-scores, activities, programmes and so on," Baker, who also called on the corporate community to support the schools, divulged.

"I hereby appeal to corporate Guyana to take (spon-

sor) a school, because as you know, they would need gear, uniforms and so on. Come on board and support the programme." Baker stressed.

Also present at the launch were Director of Sport Neil Kumar; George Rutherford of the GFF; Troy Peters of the GFRC; Nicholas Fraser of the Allied Arts Department of the Education Ministry; Jennifer Cipriani-Nelson of Scotiabank; Marlon Gravesande of DDL, and members of the Schools' Football Academy committee.

Kumar, the long-serving Sports Director, lauded Baker and the GSDF for bringing the project to realisation and praised Scotiabank and DDL for readily coming on board with the necessary sponsorship.

He assured Baker and the GSDF of the Sport Ministry's "unflinching support" for the academy, but challenged the GFF to revive the Pee Wee and Coca Cola nation-wide school competitions.

Speaking on behalf of the sponsors, both Cipriani-Nelson and Gravesande said their entities were extremely pleased to be part of the programme.

They contended that the integration of sport and education is always a move in the right direction and lauded Baker and the GSDF for seeing the need for such an academy.

Meanwhile, Peters ex-

plained that the GSDF has been working feverishly over the past few months to get the programme off the ground, and yesterday's launch started a new chapter for football in Guyana.

"And today we should all be proud that the Schools' Football Academy will kick off in grand style, thanks to the many partners who will be highlighted during the course of this programme.

While we may call it an academy, it will also serve as a nursery because of the lack of a vibrant junior development programme locally," Peters observed.

Speaking on behalf of the Education Ministry, Fraser confessed that "this is the most complete programme I have seen", and that the schools, students and teachers all stand to benefit in the long run.

Rutherford said that the GFF embraces the initiative and said for football to move forward there must be synergies between the schools and the various stakeholders.

The launch got underway after Guyana's Lisa Punch delivered a stirring rendition of the National Anthem, much to the appreciation of those in attendance.

The GSDF is a group of Guyanese in the diaspora working to support sporting activities here. The Board of Directors and Associates are John La Rose, Victor Wright, Brian Edun, J.C. Yates, Bill Adams, and Garth Nelson.

Inter-Ward Futsal Tournament...

Organiser seeking new venue for conclusion of tournament



The Inter-Ward Futsal Tournament's organiser, Bryan Clarke.

The Inter-Ward Futsal Tournament's organiser, Bryan Clarke yesterday revealed to this publication that he is currently seeking a venue for the conclusion of the tournament, which commenced January 22 at the Gymnasium, Mandela Avenue.

Clarke, who originally commenced his tournament as an Inter-School Futsal Tournament was forced to change the name of the tournament to Inter-ward Futsal Tournament because of the interest it created among the football fraternity.

The tournament was scheduled to conclude February 19 after its concluding date was extended, but due to the indisciplinary behaviour of spectators recently, the tournament was postponed until further notice.

Clarke stated that he is currently seeking another venue because of the unavailability of the Gymnasium to conclude the tournament.

The tournament was set to commence its knock out rounds last weekend, but there was no play.

Stag/El Dorado softball action tomorrow

Organisers of the Stag Beer/El Dorado nationwide softball cricket competition have decided to use tomorrow's holiday (Youman Nabi) to sneak in a few matches before the start of the GT&T 10/10 competition this weekend.

The competition, organised by the Guyana Floodlight Softball Cricket Association (GFSCA), was put on hold to accommodate the start of the 10/10 last weekend, but GT&T was forced to delay the start of their event owing to unfavourable weather conditions. The fixtures are as follows:

At the Education Ministry ground, Carifesta Avenue: On Pitch One, 09:30h- Herstelling Raiders versus Renegade; 11:30h- Upsetters versus Timehri; 13:30h- Trophy Stall versus Airport; 15:00h- Digital Technology versus Invaders. On Pitch Two, 09:30h- Regal Stationery versus Brushie X1; 11:30h- Herstelling Raiders versus Fire Fest; 13:30h- Omesh X1 versus Invaders; 15:30h- Omesh X1 versus Fire Fest.

At the Police Sports Club Ground: On Pitch One, 09:30h- Phone Paradise versus Monar X1; 11:30h- Phone Paradise versus Cena X1; 13:30h- Better Hope Warriors versus Renegade; 15:00h- Better Hope Warriors versus Trophy Stall. On Pitch Two, 09:30h- Max Masters versus Shattaville; 13:30h- Trophy Stall Angels versus Annandale Marshon Females; 14:30h- Trophy Stall Angels versus Cummings Lodge Angels; 15:30h- Cummings Lodge Angels versus Annandale Marshon Females.

At the GCC Ground, Bourda: On Pitch One, 09:30h- Floodlights versus Yusuf X1; 13:30h- Ariel Divas versus Media X1; 14:00h- Glamorous versus Lusignan Street Warriors; 15:00h- Wellwoman versus Patentia A; 16:00h- Wellwoman versus Lusignan Street Warriors. On Pitch Two, 09:30h- Glamorous versus 4R Lioness; 10:30h- Patentia B versus Ariel Divas; 11:30h- 4R Lioness versus Patentia A; 12:30h- Better Hope Power Bomb Females versus Media X1; 13:30h- Industry Super Kings versus Defenders.

At the Everest Ground: On Pitch One: 09:30h- Young Guns versus Rocket; 11:30h- Harpy Eagles versus Bent Street; 13:30h- Better Hope Masters versus Success Masters. On Pitch Two, 09:30h- Harpy Eagles versus Bel Air; 11:30h- Bel Air versus Super Street; 13:30h- Regal Seniors versus Savage.

At the Fairfield Ground, Mahaica: On Pitch One: 09:30h- Trappers versus El Commandante; 11:30h- Black Caps versus Jaguars; 13:30h- Mahaica Masters versus Enterprise Seniors; On Pitch Two, 09:30h- Rockaway versus Enterprise All Stars; 11:30h- Ramblers versus Enmore; 13:30h- Rockaway versus Trophy Stall B.

At the Rose Hall ground: 11:00h- Manchester Females versus Rose Hall Females. At the Crabwood Creek ground: 11:00h- Crabwood Creek United Females versus Number 69 Females.

Further information on the tournament can be obtained from GFSCA organizer Wayne Jones on 650-1790 or 225-0994.

UDFA hosts gender workshop

- 'Man Up' football tournament to be launched next week



Participants of the recent gender seminar in Linden. Second from right (middle row) is UDFA Vice President Sharma Solomon

The Upper Demerara Football Association (UDFA), in its continued efforts to create well rounded sportsmen

recently hosted a three-day seminar for coaches, assistant coaches, referees, and other officials on "Gender, Youth and Violence" in

Linden. According to the UDFA, the objectives of the seminar were to increase understanding of the princi-

ples of gender equality and the creation of gender-safe environments, to enhance understanding of gender roles and gender stereotyping. Participants were also trained in relevant anger and conflict management and resolution techniques.

The seminar was conducted by the Human Services Ministry through the Region #10 Domestic Violence Committee in partnership with UNIFEM and the UDFA. The participants were being prepared for the upcoming "Man Up! Be a Champion for Change" U-23 Football Tournament, which will be launched next week in the region.

The trainers of the seminar were Abbas Mancey from the Human Services Ministry and Kevin Messiah from Help and Shelter.

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