

SPORTS

Sugar leaves void in Bimini's youth/sports development

Grathen "Sugar" Robins passed away quietly around 6:00 a.m. on Sunday morning. Arnold Bain, a former Bahamas Basketball Federation President called me with the sad news.

No doubt, many in the Bahamian sports fraternity were not quite familiar with Sugar in life. A lot more of those who function on the national sporting landscape know of the other Robins, Charlie, the one, called "Softly," who is one of the nation's legendary high school basketball players and presently heads The Bahamas Basketball Federation.

The elite of the basketball family knew Sugar well though. On Sunday, Gladstone "Moon" McPhee, the coaching czar, and I shared a nostalgic moment, reminiscing our interactions over the years with Sugar.

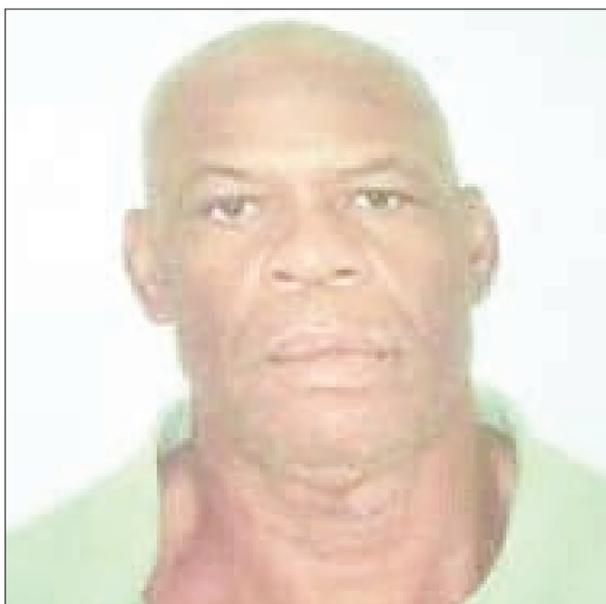
Charlie and I did as well.

Carol Smith-Gomez, who lost her father, Cyril Smith the sports icon recently, also lamented Sugar's passing. In Bimini she was a contemporary of Sugar's and expressed words that bore out the sorrow of yet another national contributor of substance, moving on into eternity.

Sugar was special with his nation-building work through youth and sports development, particularly in his native island of Bimini. In recent decades, giants of the sports movement in Bimini either died or retreated quietly into less active lives.

Meanwhile, Sugar emerged as an acknowledged chief mentor of the youth of Bimini.

He was awesome with his basketball outreach program. For the last 10 years, he struggled mightily with bad knees and



GRATHEN "SUGAR" ROBINS

Sports Scope



By Fred Sturupp

then a serious back ailment made movement much more uncomfortable for Sugar. But he hobbled along, of late, needing to resort to crutches.

Nevertheless, he would courageously fold his long aching body into planes in order to travel with teams to guide his players in competition. I have a vivid memory of Sugar gingerly crossing Adventurers Way in

downtown Freeport. My last networking opportunity with Sugar was at a tournament last year, in the St. Georges' Gymnasium. I entered the gym and heard that loud baritone voice calling out to me.

We talked about his continuing role in youth development in Bimini.

He admitted that his body gave him many challenges, but

nothing about Sugar indicated that he was ready to pack it in. We talked about his desire to assist in reviving the Yama Bahama Youth Club that was started some eight years ago by the Pan American Caribbean Boxing Organization (PACBO) in Bimini, with Vincent Ellis.

Sugar was there along with Ellis, as I conducted registration assisted by Meacher Major on behalf of PACBO. Thirty-four young Bimini natives were given sports equipment and sports attire on that day. The Local Government group, at the time, was very interested and supportive as well. Local Government in Bimini actually allocated an area as a prospective base of operation for the Yama Bahama Youth Club. Unfortunately, for a variety of reasons, the club never became firmly established.

A revival of the club was always a desire of Sugar's. Such was his overall approach to youth development in Bimini.

Now, he is gone and there is no one that I know of in Bimini, prepared at this moment to take his place in mentoring the young boys of that island and steering them towards a wholesome lifestyle.

Such was the value of Sugar. He will be missed, greatly.

I extend condolences to Charlie, Carol and the rest of family/close friends network in Bimini.

The nation has lost a high quality contributor through sports.

Rest in peace Sugar!

• To respond to this column, kindly contact Fred Sturupp at sturupp1504@gmail.com. or WhatsApp me at 727-6363



TWO AND THREE – Silver medalist Kyle Alcine (left) and bronze medalist Jyles Etienne (right) pose with the nation's flag after they went two and three in the Under 20 Boys' High Jump. (PHOTO: SHAYNE STUBBS)

After 30 years, Brazil's top court rules on soccer title

RIO DE JANEIRO (AP) — After 30 years, Brazil's Supreme Court finally decided on Tuesday the winner of the 1987 league title.

It's Sport Recife, a team that more often fights against relegation than for titles. The northeastern club beat Rio de Janeiro giants Flamengo 3-1 in the ruling by a five-member panel.

One member of the panel abstained because his son had worked as a Flamengo attorney in the case.

The long-running dispute began when Flamengo won the title in a league created by the clubs involved. However, Brazil's football confederation decided to organize a separate competition, which was won by Sport. The confederation then tried to get Flamengo to play Sport in a final, an offer that the Rio giants rejected.

Had the panel failed to decide, the case would have gone to the full 11-member Supreme Court.

"Football is passion, but the ideal is that sporting decisions do not come to court," Justice Rosa Maria Weber said.

Brazil's Supreme Court is currently clogged with dozens of investigations into public officials in a sprawling corruption scandal involving state-run oil com-

pany Petrobras and major conglomerate Odebrecht, among others.

Justice Marco Aurelio Mello, a Flamengo fan that ruled against his club, said there will be no more appeals in the affair. "This will be the final score," Mello said during the session.

Also a Flamengo fan, Justice Luis Roberto Barroso said "there is no place worse than the judicial system to discuss sports." He voted to split the title between the two clubs.

After the decision, Barroso said "40 million fans have their hearts shattered."

"And that includes me," Justice Mello said.

Flamengo, the most popular team in Brazil, has always claimed the title and is unlikely to be swayed by the high-court ruling. But seconds after the decision, Sport Recife proudly announced the title on its website.

"(The title of) 87 is, undoubtedly, ours," Sport Recife said. "In court, once more, Sport beat those who ran away."

Flamengo used Twitter to answer Sport's comment. "On the pitch, on the ball, always Flamengo. Brazilian champion of 1987."

Brazil's football confederation did not comment on the ruling.

Pirates CF Starling Marte suspended 80 games for PEDs

NEW YORK (AP) — Pittsburgh Pirates All-Star outfielder Starling Marte has been suspended 80 games by Major League Baseball after testing positive for a performance-enhancing drug.

The league said Tuesday that Marte tested positive for the steroid Nandrolone. He will be eligible to return in mid-July.

Marte was an All-Star for the first time in his career in 2016 and moved from left field to center field in the offseason after winning his second Gold Glove. The 28-year-old from the Dominican Republic is hitting .241 with two home runs and seven RBIs this season. The Pirates began play on Tuesday 6-7 through the first two weeks of the season.

Marte said in a statement that "neglect and lack of knowledge led to this mistake."

"With much embarrassment and helplessness, I ask for forgiveness for unintentionally disrespecting so many people who have trusted in my work and have supported me so much," he said. "I promise to learn the lesson that this ordeal has left me."

Pirates president Frank Coonelly he was "disappointed that Starling put himself, his

teammates and the organization in this position."

"We will continue to fight for the division title with the men who are here," Coonelly said, "and will look forward to getting Starling back after the All-Star break."

Barring postponements, Marte would be eligible to return for the July 18 home game against Milwaukee and would lose 91 days' pay from his \$5 million salary, which comes to \$2,486,339. Under a change to baseball's drug agreement in collective bargaining during the offseason, he doesn't get paid on off days during the ban. Under the old agreement, he would have lost 80 days' pay, which would have amounted to \$2,185,782.

Another change in the drug agreement means Marte will not be credited for major league service during the suspension. That would have delayed his eligibility for free agency by a year until after the 2019 season, but he agreed in 2014 to a \$31 million, six-year contract that includes club options for 2020 and '21.

Under the drug agreement, Marte is ineligible for the 2017 postseason if the Pirates were to



Pittsburgh Pirates center fielder Starling Marte slides to catch a line drive by St. Louis Cardinals' Dexter Fowler to end the eighth inning of a baseball game Monday, April 17, 2017, in St. Louis. (AP PHOTO/JEFF ROBERSON)

advance.

It's a task made considerably harder with Marte out of the mix for the next three months. Pittsburgh already is missing third baseman Jung Ho Kang, who remains in his native South Korea awaiting a work visa after being convicted of driving under the influence in February.

The Pirates recalled Jose

Osuna from Triple-A Indianapolis ahead of their game Tuesday night in St. Louis.

Marte is the second player to be suspended this season for running afoul of the league's drug policy. Philadelphia pitcher Elniery Garcia, who was on the Phillies' 40-man roster but assigned to Double-A Reading, was suspended last week.

Phillies' Buchholz could miss rest of season after surgery

NEW YORK (AP) — Phillies right-hander Clay Buchholz had surgery to repair a torn flexor tendon in his right forearm Tuesday, and could miss the rest of the season.

The 32-year-old was placed on the 10-day disabled list retroactive to April 15 prior to the club's series opener against the New York Mets. The surgery was performed by Dr. James Andrews, and Buchholz now faces an estimated recovery time of four to six months.

The two-time All-Star last pitched a week ago in Philadelphia, allowing six runs and

eight hits in 2 1/3 innings against the Mets before the injury forced him to exit the game. An MRI the following day revealed a partial tear of the right flexor pronator mass. Buchholz then visited Dr. Andrews on Monday for a second opinion before opting for surgery.

Buchholz spent his first 10 seasons with the Boston Red Sox before he was traded to Philadelphia in December.

The Phillies recalled right-hander Zach Eflin from Triple-A Lehigh Valley to replace Buchholz in the rotation.

Williams-Goss to skip senior season, declares for NBA draft

SPOKANE, Wash. (AP) — Nigel Williams-Goss, who led Gonzaga to its first appearance in the Final Four, has decided to skip his senior season and declare for the NBA draft. He will hire an agent, precluding his return to Gonzaga.

The second team All-American announced his decision Tuesday.

Williams-Goss led Gonzaga in scoring last year (16.8 points per game) as the top-seeded Zags advanced to the NCAA title game,

where they lost to North Carolina.

Williams-Goss says he has achieved his goals of earning a college degree, improving his game and helping Gonzaga reach the Final Four.

The guard played his first two seasons at Washington, then sat out a year per NCAA rules before leading Gonzaga to a 37-2 record.

He was named West Coast Conference player of the year.

Adidas sorry for email saying 'you survived' Boston Marathon

BOSTON (AP) — Adidas has apologized for sending out a marketing email praising customers it said "survived" this year's Boston Marathon.

The subject line of the email sent Tuesday by Adidas Running read: "Congrats, you survived the Boston Marathon!"

On social media, customers quickly reminded the company about the real survivors of the 2013 Boston Marathon bombing. Three people were killed and more than 260 others were wounded when two bombs exploded near the finish line in that attack.

The sports apparel company quickly apolo-

gized, saying it was "incredibly sorry" for the "insensitive" subject line about Monday's race.

At least two survivors of the 2013 bombing participated in this year's race.

Adidas says the marathon is "one of the most inspirational sporting events in the world."

The 46th Carifta GAMES

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