



Media Coverage

Youth push

BFA boss outlines plans for future of football

by EZRA STUART

YOUTH FOOTBALL will be placed on the front burner, says Barbados Football Association (BFA) president Randy Harris.

"Youth football is in a real happy state. We are fortunate because we have a partner in the Brewster's Trust, which has the resources and the knowledge of development because it has the personnel who have worked in Europe and who know exactly what to do to develop young players," Harris told **NATIONSPO** in a wide-ranging interview.

"We are going to work very closely with them in order to develop our young players to professional standards. That is one aspect of it. We are also lucky that Harlequin Hotels is now organizing for a Liverpool Under-20 team to be here next year," added Harris.

The first-time BFA boss said the Kenville Layne-coached national Under-17 team were also in next April's **CONCACAF** final round of the **Youth World Cup**.

Quality opposition

"As it stands now, we are fighting hard to see if we can get quality opposition for them We might have to send them to South America or Central America for some much needed higher competition to give them an idea of the kind of standard to expect in the finals," Harris said.

"I think the last Under-17 team with Jabarry Chandler and Diquan [Adamson] and all the rest were an excellent team, but we never took them to the next level; and it showed in the finals that were held in Jamaica. We don't want the same result for this team," the BFA head said.

"I think that the Ministry of Tourism



RANDY HARRIS (FP)

would be delighted if we were able to take a full team, and its officials to Brazil or Venezuela," he added.

But the news is not rosy for the Colin "Potato" Forde-coached national senior team, who failed to qualify for the second stage of the **Caribbean Football Union's Cup** after finishing second in their first-round group with six points.

"We have already been notified that we didn't qualify as one of the best second-placed teams. We had the same points, but it was our goal difference [+1] which was the problem," Harris lamented.

However, he said it was not the end of the road for the senior footballers, who managed to get Barbados' FIFA global ranking move up 23 places from 175 to 152 at the end of September.

"What we propose to do in the future is to have a selection of elite players from our **Premier League**, and we will have them in constant training.

Monthly stipend

"Our technical director [Julian Broomes] will be in charge of that programme, and we expect that we will give these players a monthly stipend.

"The amount will be determined later, but obviously we think the time has come when we have to have players constantly in training, ready at any time to play, because we would expect that we would get some teams coming here," Harris said.

"We have some connections overseas that are willing to help us to have top-class competition playing in Barbados. However, that would be decided on the availability of adequate facilities here like **Kensington Oval** and the **National Stadium** next year.

"That is the way we are going to go because we believe that higher competition will help to bring an improvement to our standard of play and the attitude towards the game," Harris contended.

Barbados' exit from the **CFU Cup** follows last year's winless six-match **World Cup** campaign, but Harris said the BFA was not ready to give anyone the boot.

"We have not got to that stage as yet. But I think the time has come now for the BFA to take a more serious interest in our national selections, because that is really the showpiece of all the work we will be doing over a period of time."

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