Happy Holidays

The Caribbean Football Union wishes for its Member Associations, Partners, Associates and its entire Football Family a Merry Christmas and a Prosperous New Year.

La Caribbean Football Union souhaite pour ses Associations membres, partenaires, associés et sa famille du Football tout un joyeux Noël et une nouvelle année prospère.

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The Caribbean Football Union (CFU) under its new administration and its new motto “Purpose Passion Performance” has been making concerted efforts to change the face of the union with special emphasis on transparency, development, finances, officiating and all other elements of the game that is necessary to propel the sport to its highest level in the Caribbean.

As the saying goes “After a Storm there is Calm” the storm is over and the dust has settled therefore its business as usual at the new headquarters in Kingston, Jamaica home of the CFU where the compiling of the union’s first year in review BEACON Newsletter was done.

One of the first major happenings in the CFU was the Jamaican national senior men’s team being the only Caribbean Football Union (CFU) team to advance to the Road to Brazil World Cup Qualifying Final Rounds. The Jamaicans shocked North American football giants Mexico, on their home ground the Estadio Azteca, in Mexico on February 6, by holding them to a 0-0 draw in the first of their two-legged encounter.

The Jamaica team, popularly known as “The Reggae Boyz”, braced themselves against the North Americans to generate an historic result after past humiliating scores such as 8-0, 2-1, 6-0, 4-0, and 3-0 in five previous World Cup encounters in Mexico City.

Unfortunately for the tiny Caribbean island of just 2.7 million, Mexico, who boast a population of 115 million, defeated them at home 2-1 in the return leg. After a string of poor performances in the remaining games, Jamaica bowed out of the tournament, leaving them to consider preparing for the next qualifying rounds leading up to the 2018 World Cup games.
Cuba made the CFU proud by creating history on Tuesday, February 26, 2013 when its national Under 20 team qualified for the FIFA U-20 World Cup finals for the first time. Their place was secured after defeating Costa Rica, 2-1, in a quarter-final dual in the CONCACAF Under-20 Championship in Puebla, Mexico. The prolific Aricheell Hernandez was voted the most outstanding player in the game after he scored both of Cuba’s goals.

In May, Sonia Bien-Aime of the Turks and Caicos Islands stood tall as the first woman from the Caribbean to become a co-opted member of the FIFA Executive Committee for one year. This was announced at the FIFA Congress, held in Swami Vivekananda International Convention Centre on May 31, 2013 in Port Louis, Mauritius.

In November Bien-Aime was in the news again lifting the flag of the CFU by making another statement as a phenomenon in the male-dominated sporting entity, with her new appointment as an Executive Committee Member of the Confederation of North Central America and Caribbean Association Football (CONCACAF) at an executive meeting held in Montego Bay, Jamaica.

Bien-Aime is also the only female member of the CFU Executive Committee and the current General Secretary of the Turks and Caicos Islands Football Association (TCIFA). She was born on the small island of Grand Turk.

In May, three Caribbean nationals were appointed to serve on the nine-member CONCACAF Technical Committee. They are Carl Brown (Jamaica), Alvin Corneal (Trinidad) and Lenny Lake (St Kitts and Nevis).

This Technical Committee will serve for one year and is headed by Chairman Sunil Gulati (United States) and Vice-Chairman Alfredo Hawit (Honduras). The other members are: Hector Gonzalez (Mexico) Tony Fonseca (Canada) Rodrigo Kenton (Costa Rica) and Jeff Agoos (United States).

These appointments were made possible through CONCACAF’s continued commitment to identifying the best strategies in the expansion and development of football in the region, guided by the precepts of integrity and transparency.

The CFU calendar of events kicked off with the CFU Extraordinary Congress which was held at the Westin Playa Bonita Hotel in Panama City, Panama last April at which time President of CONCACAF Jeffrey Webb handed over the title for the new CFU headquarters in Kingston, Jamaica to Vice President of CFU Cheney Joseph in the presence of FIFA President Joseph Sepp Blatter.
The 2013 CFU Club championship was deemed a huge success. The General Secretary of the CFU Damien Hughes, before heading off to Panama in April as well, made a courtesy call on Minister with Responsibility for Sports, Office of the Prime Minister, Natalie Neita-Headley.

At the Congress the CFU also welcomed the Federation Football of Bonaire (FFB) as its newest member from the region. This addition took the total membership of the CFU to thirty-one.

Jamaican-born seventy-four year old Lincoln “Happy” Sutherland was inducted into the Confederation of North and Central America and Caribbean Association Football (CONCACAF) Hall of Fame at its XXXVIII Congress held in Panama City, Panama in April as well.

Sutherland a product of the CFU is a former President of the Jamaica Football Federation (JFF) and President of the St Catherine Football Association (SCFA) for forty-two years.

He was awarded for his uninterrupted and altruistic services to the development of football in Jamaica and in extension the Caribbean Football Union (CFU), CONCACAF and FIFA. Sutherland served in football as an Administrator, Referee, Match Commissioner in the region and is currently the Chairman of the Protocol Committee for the Jamaica Football Federation (JFF).

Later in April there was the staging of the CFU Champions Cup in Jamaica and Trinidad when Valencia FC from Haiti along with W Connection FC and Caledonia AIA, both from Trinidad and Tobago, secured places in the 2013-2014 CONCACAF Champions League competition. Unfortunately, none of these teams made any significant impact during the tournament but the exposure and experience garnered will propel them to do better the next time around.

W Connection FC from Trinidad and Tobago qualified by topping Group I with four points by defeating Caledonia AIA, 4-0, and playing to a 1-1 draw with Antigua Barracuda of Antigua. Caledonia AIA beat Antigua Barracuda, 3-1 to take second place. Antigua Barracuda finished third after securing one point from the tournament after a 0-0 draw with W Connection.

In Group 2, Valencia FC of Haiti qualified by earning seven points after defeating Bayamon of Puerto Rico 3-2, Portmore United 4-3 and playing to a stalemate with Boys Town. Portmore United placed second after edging out their fellow Jamaican team Boys’ Town 1-0 and blanking Bayamon 5-0, while Boys Town beat Bayamon 2-0 and drew 0-0 with Valencia.
Caledonia AIA edged out Portmore United in a battle for the third and final Caribbean spot in the CONCACAF Champions League. The results were Caledonia AIA 1 Portmore United 0 and Caledonia AIA 2 Portmore United 2 in the return leg. Both games were played at the Hasely Crawford Stadium and Ato Boldon Stadium in Trinidad and Tobago.

This was the 15th edition of the CFU Club Championship contested by the top clubs from the Caribbean region who are official members of the CFU.

The CFU Under-20 women’s Tournament was next on the Calendar of events for the CFU. This tournament was divided into four groups namely Groups 1, 2, 3 and 4 played in Dominican Republic, British Virgin Islands, Suriname and Jamaica respectively in the month of July.

Trinidad & Tobago topped the table with six points in Group 1; Dominican Republic got three points while Aruba failed to gain a point. Thirteen (13) goals were scored in this group with Yaqueisi Nunez of the Dominican Republic topping the scoring charts with four goals.

In Group 2, it was British Virgin Islands and Anguilla that emerged from the group with nine and six points respectively, while Antigua & Barbuda and St Kitts and Nevis failed to qualify after gaining three and zero points in that same order. Twenty-five (25) goals were scored by the players in this Group, with Britney Lawrence of St. Kitts/Nevis earning top scoring honours with five goals.

Suriname dominated Group 3 with nine points and were joined by Grenada which ended up with six points, while Dominica obtained three and St. Vincent and the Grenadines, none. This group produced twenty-two (22) goals, with three players sharing the maximum goal-scoring honours with three (3) each: Dominica’s Kasika Samuel, Grenada’s Cherese Hood and Suriname’s Andaya Lantveld.

Jamaica topped Group 4 with Cuba, Bermuda and Curacao following in that same order. Jamaica earned nine points, Cuba six, Bermuda three and Curacao none. Thirty-one (31) goals were scored in this Group.

The CFU Women’s Under 17 followed in the calendar of events in August with three groups vying for eight places in the finals which was played in Port-Au-Prince Haiti in September.

Group One staged at the Juan Ramon Loubriel Stadium in Puerto Rico had three teams competing namely hosts Puerto Rico, Bermuda and Bahamas, qualifying from that group were Puerto Rico and Bermuda. Both teams gained six and three points respectively while the Bahamians lost all their games.
Bermuda lead the goal scoring chart with five goals coming from the prolific Aaliyah Nolan, and one from her teammate Eva Frazzoni. Keisha McCartney of Bahamas and Mariana Crespo of Puerto Rico scored two goals each. A total of thirteen goals were scored in that group.

In Group Two which consisted of Trinidad & Tobago, St Kitts& Nevis, US Virgin Island (USVI) and Antigua & Barbuda it was Trinidad& Tobago, US Virgin Island and Antigua & Barbuda who qualified for the finals with nine, four and two points in that order.

Trinidad & Tobago’s Jahra Thomas scored six goals and her teammate Chevonne John netted four out of the total thirty goals scored in Group Two.

In Group Three Haiti dominated the group scoring a record of thirty-six goals out of sixty-four goals in that group. The other teams in the group were Dominican Republic and Grenada.

Haiti’s Louis Batcheva and Dominican Republic’s Winibian Peralta both netted eleven goals apiece with Haitians Rudena Pailere scoring seven, Rudy Sherly and Lebrun Isnada netting five each.

Haiti, Dominican Republic and Grenada emerged as finalists with nine, six and three points in that same order.

All eight teams played in the finals held in Haiti and Trinidad & Tobago where the two top teams advanced to the CONCACAF Championship held in Jamaica. Hosts Jamaica was automatically qualified for the event which was won by Mexico. Canada was second and Jamaica the only CFU team to reach the semis was placed fourth. Haiti and Trinidad & Tobago were knocked out in the preliminary stages.
Next on the calendar of events was the CFU Women’s Under 20 Tournament finals staged in Kingston, Jamaica, October 18-27 at The Anthony Spaulding’s Sports Complex and the Waterhouse Mini Stadium alternatively.

The Final was divided into two groups. Groups “A” which consists of Trinidad & Tobago, Anguilla, Cuba and Grenada, was based at the Waterhouse Mini Stadium in Drewsland, while Group “B”, which comprised Jamaica, the Dominican Republic, St. Kitts/Nevis and Suriname, played all of their games at the Anthony Spaulding Sports Complex in Arnett Gardens.

Emerging from the over one week of interesting football games it was the culture of the Caribbean Reggae and Soca dominating on the pitch after Jamaica and Trinidad & Tobago earned their places in the final. Over two thousand spectators came to watch the semis and witnessed Trinidad & Tobago outplay Dominica Republic 2-1 while Jamaica easily brushed aside rivals Cuba 5-1.

Jamaica and Trinidad & Tobago took their musical history and their football pedigree to the finals on Sunday, October 27, at the Anthony Spaulding Sports Complex and it was Jamaica who achieved bragging rights for the next two years after taking the inaugural title of the CFU’s Women’s Under 20 tournament.

The reward for both teams was that by dismissing their semi-final opponents, they both advanced to the CONCACAF Women’s U-20 Championship scheduled to be staged in the Cayman Islands January 9-19, 2014 at the Truman Bodden Sports Complex.
On Thursday, November 14, the CFU stepped up another notch when the CFU President Gordon Derik announced the hosting of the union’s inaugural Major League Soccer (MLS) Caribbean player combine scheduled for January 2-5, 2014, in St. John’s, Antigua. The event, in partnership with the Caribbean Football Union (CFU), will feature elite-level players invited from around the Caribbean, ages 18-21, who will compete in front of League scouts for an opportunity to earn an invitation to the annual adidas MLS Player Combine in Fort Lauderdale, Florida later in the year.

After the announcement, an elated Derik said, “As CFU Member Associations turn their attention to Russia 2018, this is an exciting developmental opportunity for the opulent young talent in the Caribbean to assess their developmental level and the growth required to play at the highest level. This partnership with MLS is another way in which we at the CFU are seeking to bridge the gap that exists between talent availability and scouting opportunities that the Caribbean region has received from professional leagues.”

The Caribbean Player Combine will be focusing on 18-21 year olds as part of the developmental objective that both MLS and the CFU share. In this respect, the most important factor is the quality of the experience for these young, talented players as they seek to enter into the professional realm. The January 2014 event will create the enabling environment for them to do so.

Media interested in attending the Caribbean Player Combine should contact the CFU at media@cfufootball.org.

About CFU

CFU “Caribbean Football Union” is one of three Unions in CONCACAF (The Confederation of North, Central America and Caribbean Association Football) and serves as the governing body of football in the Caribbean. It is composed of 31 national associations, from Bahamas in the north to Guyana, Suriname and French Guiana in the south. It spans 4 languages and composed of republics, independent countries and overseas territories of the UK, USA and Holland. For more information about CFU, log on to its official website at www.cfufootball.org.
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