Trinidad and Tobago ready for CFU Women Cup

It will be a Soca affair with pulsating Calypso music in the air when the eight Caribbean teams meet in the Twin Island Republic of Trinidad and Tobago from August 19-26 in the finals of the inaugural Caribbean Football Union (CFU) Women's Caribbean Cup.

The mixture of languages, food and culture will be the essence of the games as each island will display their talents on and off the field.

The eight finalists: Trinidad and Tobago, Jamaica, Bermuda, Haiti, Antigua & Barbuda, Martinique, Puerto Rico and St Kitts and Nevis, are ready and rearing to go.

They reflect the five first round group winners, the best overall second place teams from the four team groups and the best overall second place team from the three team groups along with the host team.

These teams have been placed in two groups namely A and B. The Group A games will be staged at the Larry Gomes Stadium in Arima, Trinidad from August 19 to 23 while the Group B games will be played at the Ato Boldon Stadium in Couva Trinidad August 20-24.

The grand finale and the third and fourth playoff of this Championship is scheduled for August 26 at the Hasely Crawford Stadium in Port of Spain, Trinidad.

Group A comprises of: - Jamaica, Haiti, Bermuda and Puerto Rico, while Group B is formed with: - Antigua & Barbuda, Martinique, St Kitts & Nevis and Trinidad & Tobago.

The preliminary stages of the tournament began on May 23, 2014 and concluded on June 22, in five countries those being Antigua & Barbuda, Puerto Rico, Turks & Caicos, Haiti and Dominican Republic.

Shaun Fuentes Communications manager of the Trinidad and Tobago Football Association (TTFA) spoke to the CFU BEACON about the hosting of this special event and said it was an honour for the country.
“We feel privileged and extremely excited to be hosting the upcoming CFU Women’s Caribbean Cup finals. We think it’s a fantastic opportunity to continue promoting the women’s game. We’ve hosted several competitions in the past including the FIFA Under-17 Women’s World Cup in 2010 and so this upcoming event is one that we are definitely looking forward to.”

Fuentes continued to share some details relating to the ‘Trinidadian Princesses’ preparation strategy, “Currently we are preparing to undergo a three-week training camp in Houston. We hosted Venezuela’s Senior Team recently during which time two friendly matches were played. The T&T team was victorious 5-0 in the opening game but gave up the second outing 2-0.”

“The introduction of American Coach Randy Waldrum as the new Trinidad and Tobago head Coach/Technical Director is a definite boost to our preparations for this finals and several experienced players such captain Maylee Attin-Johnson and Tasha St Louis who have close to ten years in the game.”
Eight teams have qualified for the Final Round of the Caribbean Football Union (CFU) 2014 Men’s Under 20 Qualifiers set to be staged in Trinidad and Tobago, in September of this year.

The teams are Cuba, Dominican Republic, Haiti, Aruba and Curacao from Groups 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 respectively along with hosts Trinidad and Tobago, Suriname and St Kitts and Nevis (the two best overall second placed teams) will compete for a chance to be crowned as the top Under 20 team in the region.

Haiti thanks to a 2-1 hard fought win over Suriname collected maximum points to top Group 3 and enter the final round.

CFU Men’s U-20 Finals takes shape

For the first time in CFU’s history an all females officiating team has been selected for a women’s tournament finals, this is worth celebrating. Thirty females were appointed and twenty-nine are from the Caribbean region.

The names of these females and their country of origin are as follows are Gwendolyn Salmon, Iola Simmons (Antigua and Barbuda) Sharon O’Brien, Linda Bramble Thompson, Cindy Mohammed, Cecile Hinds (Trinidad and Tobago), Gillian Martindale (Barbados) Cardella Samuels, Stacy Ann Greyson, Margaret Sutherland, Antoinette Williams, Latoya Dacosta and Cavelle Johnston (Jamaica) Sabrina Charles-Kirton (St Lucia) Nereyda Diaz Martinez, Maria Saez Armenteros, Irazema Aguillera Fuentes (Cuba) Linda Pierre (Haiti), Diane Ferreira-James (Guyana), Karen Samuels (Grenada), Shequita Parsons (Bermuda), Milagros Leonardo Carmona, Yajaira Astacio Pena (Dominican Republic), Navine Flemming, Janice Hodges (Anguilla), Sharline Monique Ras (Aruba) Maurees Skeetes (Guyana) and Deborah Zebeda (Suriname)

The competition is expected to be a keenly contested one with all teams ready to give of their best, with the top four teams advancing to the CONCACAF finals and hopefully then the FIFA Under-20 championships.

Suriname netted as early as in the 3rd minute with a goal from the prolific Giovanni Osoman.

Seven minutes later the stadium erupted from the cheers and chants of the home crowd when Haiti levelled the score. This half ended 1-1.

At the start of the second half both teams came out with new life as the players from both sides performed at their best to...
advance to the next level but it was the Haitians who got the clincher in the 58th minute off the boots of Alessandro Campoy to decide the fate of the hosts who ended the game 2-1.

When the dust settled in this group Haiti earned maximum nine points, Suriname six, St Lucia three and Turks and Caicos nil. Aruba who were the Group 4 hosts emerged group winners with six points to qualify after defeating Grenada 1-0 and maintaining a similar score line against Dominica at the Guillermo Trinidad Stadium, in Aruba.

Duncan Homoet is the hero having scored both goals in both games.

Grenada was second with three points while Dominica finished the contest without a point. In Group 2, the Dominican Republic racked up six points to emerge winner of that Group with Antigua and Barbuda placing second, Bermuda third and Guadeloupe fourth.

Cuba took the number one spot in Group 1 with five points ahead of Martinique with four, Barbados with three and St Vincent and the Grenadines with two points.

Group 5 hosts Curacao made a dramatic comeback by defeating Anguilla 9-0 and St Kitts and Nevis 3-0 to top the table and qualify for their group with six points.

Scoring for Curacao against St Kitts and Nevis Ronald Albertus in the 58th, and Isai Marselia in the 65th and 71st minute.

St Kitts and Nevis were placed second with six points, Cayman Islands were placed third with six as well but with a lesser goal average while fourth place went to Anguilla.
Barbados, Martinique and Cuba have secured their places in the final rounds of the 2014 Caribbean Football Union (CFU) Men’s Under 17 Qualifiers after winning their individual groups in the preliminary stages of the tournament.

The final round is scheduled to be played in Haiti, in September of this year.

Barbados was the first to qualify after gaining seven points in Group 3 ahead of Guyana with four, Dominican Republic four (lesser goal average) and Antigua & Barbuda with one point.

Martinique was next on the list when they earned seven points in Group 4 to qualify over Puerto Rico with four points, Bermuda four (lesser goal average) and Bahamas nil.

Cuba earned their spot by turning back Suriname 2-0 in Group 5 after both teams went into the game with three points each. Cuba took all three points leaving Suriname to take second place while Dominica failed to gain a single point.

Barbados, Martinique and Cuba will await the results of the other two groups namely 1 and 2 scheduled to be played from August 20-24 in Guadeloupe and St Lucia respectively, after which the final eight teams will be named and placed in two groups to decide the winner IN A Final Round scheduled to culminate in Haiti in early October.
The Caribbean football Union (CFU) became the second FIFA affiliated football body to recently welcome a female President on Monday July 21, 2014 when the Union’s Member Association the Turks & Caicos Islands Football Association (TCIFA) elected its first and newest female President, Sonia Bien-Aime.

Bien-Aime, served the TCIFA as the Football Association’s General Secretary for the past eight years before her election as President during its Annual General Meeting (AGM) held at The Regent Grand Resort in Turks and Caicos.

She is the only female Executive Member of the CFU, the Chairperson of Women’s Football for the Union, the only female President in the entire CONCACAF region and one of two women to hold such a position worldwide in the FIFA 209 Member Associations.

The other members of the TCIFA Executive committee are First Vice President Paul Slattery, Second Vice President Oliver Smith, Director of Finance Ryan Blain, Executive Director 1 Norman Hamilton, Executive Director 2 Paula Garland, Executive Director 3 Candace Hanchell, Executive member Tamara Hall, Executive member Alvin Parker, Honorary President Thomas Smith and Honorary Member James Slattery.

Attending the Congress were international dignitaries such as Jeffery Webb, CONCACAF President; Gordon Derrick, Caribbean Football Union (CFU) President; Captain Horace Burrell, CONCACAF Vice President and President of the Jamaica Football Association; Damian Hughes, CFU General Secretary; Bruce Blake, Cayman Islands Football Association’s First Vice President; Howard McIntosh, FIFA Development Officer; Marco Leal, CONCACAF Director of Legal Affairs; Jason Harper, Media Officer CONCACAF and Angela Vasco, CONCACAF staffer and TCI’s Deputy Governor Anya Williams.

Bien-Aime can easily be classified as a female giant in the Caribbean Football Union. A woman, who by virtue of hard work, dedication, humility and charisma has broken down barriers in a male dominated sport enabling her to stand tall.

In her acceptance speech, Bien-Aime said: “I am totally humbled by this elevation to be the President of this fast growing organization and I want to use this occasion to thank those persons who have assisted in my growth in this challenging world of football administration. Those who have held my hands and those who provided the need, balance, support and patience.”

She also praised former President Chris Bryan for his tenure and guidance of the country’s football programme.

“I would like to acknowledge the foresight and enlightened approach of Chris Bryan and others within the Football Association and football community here in the Turks & Caicos Islands. It is their open mindedness and willingness to embrace female equality that was the genesis of this historical moment that we are celebrating here today.

I want to thank everyone, and lets all continue this eventful journey together to elevate football here – in these lovely Turks & Caicos Islands.”

An elated President of the Caribbean Football Union, Gordon Derrick, noted that it was two years ago when he spoke with Bien-Aime regarding the possibility of serving as a CFU Executive Member.

Of this he said: “I wasn’t asking her or suggesting to her or encouraging her for serving because she is a woman. I was encouraging her because I saw the ability and the way that she conducted herself, how she spoke, her depth of thought, her rationale and I said ‘in the era where yes we want to support and encourage female participation – which I am a full supporter of; but I am not one who believes in putting persons in a position just because’. She is not there just because she...
is a woman; she is there because she is a qualified woman. A very highly qualified woman. A woman who knows how to do things and get them done, and therefore I am just extremely excited for the TCIFA.”

President of CONCACAF Jeffrey Webb pointed out that his first international relations responsibility was to the Turks & Caicos Islands in 1995, being charged with the task of assisting the TCI to become a member of the Caribbean Football Union, CONCACAF and FIFA. On arrival, he noted he met with past president Tom Smith, James Slattery and a group of individuals who were passionate about the game, though they did not have much in terms of equipment and facility.

“To come to the Turks & Caicos almost 20 years later, and to witness what I’ve seen in terms of the growth, to see your Centre of Excellence, your Academy, sixty-five (65) young female football players playing football in a football festival, to, of course witness the healthy state of football in Turks & Caicos, exceptional financial reporting, exceptional annual reporting – all I can say is please allow me to give you all a round of applause for an exceptional job,” said Webb.

Bien-Aime was welcomed into the highest ranks of football’s governing body on Friday, May 31 2013 at the historic 63rd FIFA Congress in Mauritius, when she was one of three women voted into the FIFA Executive Committee in a co-opted position, followed by her appointment as the first female to be appointed to the CONCACAF Executive Committee on November 9, 2013.

This female Caribbean icon serves as Deputy Chair Person of the FIFA U17 Women’s World Cup Organizing Committee, CONCACAF Women’s Championship Committee, CONCACAF Women’s Technical Committee and a Member of FIFA World Cup Organizing Committee, FIFA Women’s Committee and FIFA Women’s World Cup Organizing Committee.

The Suriname National Men’s team has been in existence since 1933 and played its first international game against Deportivo from Venezuela and in 1934 against the Curacao National team.

The team won its first Caribbean Football Union (CFU) championship in 1978 and has played a series of international games since 2000 a total of ninety-two to be exact.

The team is strengthened by overseas based players and is led by Ronald Kolf the current Technical Director and his assistant Head Coach Roberto Godeken.

The names of the overseas based players are Stefano Rijssel and Dimitrie Apai who are strikers on the W Connection team in Trinidad and Tobago. These two players along with Midfielder Gregory Pokie presently the player with the most international games under his belt, he is the rigged choice of the team.

According to the records of the football association Suriname played against Barbados fourteen times, the results were five wins five draws and four losses. Suriname played against Bonaire three times and won all three games. They played against Martinique sixteen times won five drew four and lost seven.

Technical Director Ronald Kolf speaking to the BEACON said, “Although we aren’t aware of the latest performance of these teams, we are prepared to achieve good results. We expect to finish at first or second place. In November 2013 Suriname participated in the ABCS tournament at Curacao and became the winner. The team went on to play two friendly games in April, 2014 and got reasonable results. Although we are in the off season we intend to start preparation with the national team during the 2nd week of July 2014.”

“This team consists of some good experienced players who really know each other and have high tolerance. We have players who we expected to perform significantly such as Goalkeeper Obrendo Huiswoud, Midfielder Gregory Pokie and Forward Stefano Rijssel.”

Suriname, officially known as the Republic of Suriname, is a country on the north-eastern Atlantic coast of South America. It is bordered by French Guiana to the east, Guyana to the west and Brazil to the south.
Barbados General Secretary foresees new era in football development

General Secretary of the Barbados Football Association (BFA) Joyce Stewart foresees a new era in football development in Barbados and has voiced this openly.

According to Stewart “The development of our very own football stadium at Wildey is just the beginning of the positive changes you will see in the days and months ahead. We owe it to the athletes, referees, coaches and other volunteers to make sure we make all our decisions going forward on what’s best for the game.”

“We have a responsibility to uphold the legacy of football so that young and old can be confident we are managing the programs and the money in a responsible and sustainable way.”

Stewart continued stating, “Barbados used to be a strong contender in the Caribbean but sadly our FIFA rankings have slipped, and we can start the climb back up the ladder to success. Each international game gives our National Teams an opportunity to learn, develop and excel. World Cup qualifiers are within reach – we just have to believe it”

She went on to itemize the plans which should be put in place and executed at the State of the Art Building the Football complex in Wildey which is the home of the national teams training Centre of Excellence.

This she said will be the Home and National Teams Training Centre of Excellence for Developing a girl’s league, Extending our grassroots program into the wider community, Developing a Futsal league, Developing a Beach Soccer league, Having structured ID camps for our players, referees, and coaches, Increasing the number of international friendlies for National teams, Improving our BFA Governance and Financial Management Systems, improving our Communication and being the best we can be.

Stewart ended by saying that some persons may not believe that this will be possible and may be probably shaking your heads and saying “it can’t be done”. However, she happens to believe that with hard work, commitment and a strategic direction it can be done.

Presently, the Barbados Football Association runs four divisions: the Premier League, Division One, Division Two and Division Three. In addition, there is only one Women’s league and a Youth league which consists of U 9, 11, 15 and 17 (mix Boys and Girls).

Barbados Football Association is now entering a contemporary era in football development and is seeking to create opportunities for its players especially the youth, through elite national programs and scholarships for Under 13, 15 and 17 age groups. Moreover, the secretariat is in a transitional phase from a volunteer organization to a professional one. Therefore, the football community around the world can expect to see and hear great things from the Barbados Football Association in the future.