

A Brief History of The College of The Bahamas' Athletics Department.

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ABSTRACT

The College of The Bahamas Athletics Department encompasses intercollegiate athletics, health and wellness, and recreational intramural sports. COB's Wellness Centre provides fitness equipment, health and wellness counseling, and group exercise classes for students, faculty and staff. The College's soccer, basketball, and track and field teams compete internationally with schools in Florida and the Caribbean. The Athletics Department works consistently to increase international opportunities for COB student athletes to excel abroad.

INTERCOLLEGIATE ATHLETICS MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of The College of The Bahamas, Athletics Department is to provide a positive environment dedicated to achieving excellence in academics, athletics, recreation and wellness. It is also intended that the Athletics Department contribute to an enhanced institutional visibility, promote institutional pride, enhance campus life and serve as a connection for alumni and within the wider national context. In fulfilling this mandate, the Athletics Department contributes to the health and wellness of The College's employees through the promotion of healthy behaviors, activities and events, ultimately supporting the National Healthy Lifestyles Initiative.

The Athletics Programme is designed to provide students with opportunities to enhance their development through academics, athletics and social involvement.

The College has seven varsity teams

comprised of 85 athletes that compete nationally and against college teams in Florida who play in the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics Sun Conference in the United States, though COB is not currently a member of this conference. The teams include: men's & women's basketball; men's soccer, men's & women's track & field; women's volleyball and women's softball.

Since the introduction of this platform in 2005, The College has been able to establish a formidable presence within the local leagues. However, COB recognizes that international exposure in intercollegiate competition is critical to the development of the athletics programme. To this end, The College is in the process of exploring the feasibility of membership in the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics. Engagements of this kind require considerable funding, but translate into high returns in terms of national exposure for the country generally and the institution and its sponsors specifically, as well

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as invaluable experiences for players and coaching staff.

As the national institution of higher learning in The Bahamas, The College of The Bahamas serves as a centerpiece for higher-level athletics in the country. Such exclusivity permits a degree of prominence in the local, regional, and international community. Additionally, The College of The Bahamas has received public endorsement of its athletics programme from the Ministry of Youth, Sports & Culture through its commitment of financial aid to assist in the recruitment and retention of athletic talent at The College. The programme has been thrust into the spotlight to a number of stakeholders, including current students, alumni and friends of The College, past and current employees, high school student-athletes and their parents, sporting entities and the wider Bahamian population.

Although The Bahamas is a small country, it has produced a number of world-class athletes. With the financial commitment from the Ministry of Youth, Sports & Culture, it is our goal to have the top Bahamian athletes emerge out of The College of The Bahamas' athletics programme into the international sports arena. Student-athletes in our programme will therefore be associated with The College's brand at an early part in their athletic careers.

During the past seven years, our teams have traveled throughout the United States of America and the Caribbean and competed against other college and university teams. Some of those college and universities include:

- Johnson & Wales University
- Ave Maria University
- Edward Waters University
- Embry Riddle University
- St. Thomas University
- Florida Memorial University
- Florida Tech University

- Florida College
- Northwood University
- New York City College of Technology
- New York University Polytechnic Institute
- Xavier University
- Dillard University
- Savannah College of Art & Design
- Southern University of New Orleans
- University of the Virgin Islands
- University of Pennsylvania
- University of Puerto Rico, Rio Piedras
- Broward College
- Florida National University
- University of Central Florida
- Trinity Baptist College
- Palm Beach Atlantic College
- University of Miami
- Warner University
- Webber University

In Spring 2010, for the first time, COB hosted college teams for a basketball tournament, January 1-4 and a soccer tournament, March 4-7. A track & field classic was hosted at the Thomas A. Robinson stadium in March 2012. Hosting such tournaments permits COB to showcase its athletes.

The College has been able to produce student-athletes who have participated on national teams in men's and women's soccer, track and field, and women's basketball and volleyball. To date, 73 student-athletes have graduated from The College in a wide array of disciplines.

HEALTH AND WELLNESS

The College has a fully-equipped Wellness Centre with state-of-the-art fitness and physical training equipment, an exercise and dance studio offering aerobics classes, shower and locker facilities, health planning, and wellness counseling available to assist faculty, staff and students.

The College of The Bahamas Wellness Centre opened its doors on February 15th, 2008 to foster health and wellness throughout the

college community. The goal of the Wellness Centre is to help students, faculty, and staff achieve their greatest potential of overall health and fitness. The Wellness Centre is much more than a place to work out. It is designed to educate and promote healthy lifestyles through proper nutrition and physical activity. The Wellness Centre helps members select and maintain healthy lifestyle choices, and educates individuals about the risk factors for heart disease and other preventable diseases.

The Wellness Centre is a first class facility offering state of the art cardiovascular equipment such as computerized elliptical motion machines, treadmills, and bicycles. The Centre is also equipped with a wide variety of free weights, strength, and resistance machines to develop muscular strength and endurance. Additionally, The Wellness Centre provides wellness classes, personal training, health risk assessments, wellness in the workplace programs, strength and conditioning programs for sports teams, as well as health counseling.

INTRAMURAL SPORTS MISSION STATEMENT

The College of The Bahamas Intramural Programme offers a wide range of sports-related activities to its faculty, staff and students through friendly competition in a relaxed atmosphere. This is achieved through participation in individual and team activities in a controlled environment, regulated by the policies established in the Intramural Sports Handbook (2006-2007).

Objectives

1. To provide enjoyable, friendly yet competitive programmes that emphasize participation for all, rather than catering to elite athletes.
2. To establish programmes that are organized and administered by staff and students.
3. To provide reliable, quality programmes that are visible and well publicized within the college community.

Recreational intramural sports provide wholesome activities for students outside of the classroom that build school spirit and camaraderie. Students compete in a diverse range of recreational sports including flag football, five-on-five men's basketball, recreational swimming, male and female bench press competitions, iron-man and iron-woman competitions and ultimate board game challenges, including dominoes, Connect Four, backgammon and checkers. COB Intramural champions also get the opportunity to compete against local colleges' intramural champions.

While winning is an important goal, it is not the primary objective of the games in the Intramural Programme, participation and enjoyment are the most important things. The emphasis is on sportsmanship, respect for opponents, cooperation, and teamwork, which are all positive attributes that foster lifelong recreational and leisure time activities. The objectives lead to the development of the whole person: physically, emotionally, spiritually, socially, and intellectually.

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