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MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Friends

The Christmas period has come and gone and I take this opportunity to extend New Year's Greetings to each and every one of you. Once again, 2018 was an extremely busy year for Council and one which required significant dedication and professionalism in tackling the various issues which confronted us.

There was no doubt that the highlights of the year were the staging of two Davis Cup Ties, two international ITF tournaments and many local Tennis10s, junior and senior events – which culminated in the Top 8 invitational senior tournaments for men and women, just before Christmas. The fun day which was linked to the last Tennis10s competition in December, is the start of involving a family atmosphere at the National Tennis Centre. I wish to thank everyone, their families and friends for their wonderful support and contributions and the members of the various Committees for their outstanding input.

No praise is too high for those Council and Committee members for their hard work and strong attendances at various meetings – local and sports related (Corporate, Governmental and Barbados Olympic Association). It has not escaped my attention that many members had “stepped up to the plate” during my personal trials in 2018 and this should be applauded.

INTERNATIONAL AND REGIONAL COMPETITIONS

By now, you should be aware that there will be changes to the format of the 2019 Davis Cup competition and all subsequent years' competitions. This was alluded to during my President's address at the 2018 AGM and a recent article in the Nation newspaper. The draws for all competitions below the World Group will not be known until after the completion of the qualifying rounds of the World Group during the second weekend in February 2019.

What we know for sure is that there will be only one Davis Cup Tie which Barbados will compete in, whether home or away in 2019, and that according to the Davis Cup Committee promotion or relegation will be based on “Zone Quotas” which will only be known after the ties are completed.

I can only wish our team well, whatever its composition, and hope that all players give of their best.

Our ladies will play in Group II of the Fed Cup competition in 2019. The competition has been split into two groups and the designated venues are either in Peru or Dominican Republic. The Barbados team will not know until ten weeks before the start of the competition where and on what surface it will play on – (Peru – clay; Dominican Republic – hard-tru). I wish them every success this year.

In the juniors divisions, Barbados has entered teams in the Junior Davis Cup, Junior Fed Cup, World Juniors – Boys, World Juniors – Girls and the Under 12 Development Championships – Boys and Girls – in 2019.

I suspect that there will be a major contraction in funds given to all National Associations/Federations by the National Sports Council and the Barbados Olympic Association this year. For the Association's Junior Committee continuing to recommend participation in all six junior events yearly, a greater buy-in by all members and parents of juniors in finding new and additional sponsors and also supporting local fund raising ventures must occur.

LOCAL COMPETITIONS

The provisional 2019 tournament calendar has been posted on the Association's website and I would ask each member to peruse it carefully. It gives a relatively accurate guide as to tournaments to be held during the year, although some event dates might be altered if a Davis Cup Tie has to be staged locally. The Senior Committee has been mandated to format more events – competitive or fun related – at the National Tennis Centre in 2019 and beyond. The Inter-Club competition with new sponsors for 2019 is scheduled to start on January 26.

AGM MATTERS

An updated National Development Plan was presented at the last AGM, in view of the fact that the Association will have to revise the one submitted to the International Tennis Federation within the next two years. A meeting will be held before the end of the first quarter with those who volunteered their names, in addition to a general invitation to the entire membership for a greater buy-in of ideas.

There was a general discussion related to the nomination process for candidates for Council and the amendments to the By-Laws approved at the 2016 AGM. Section 9.7 of the By-Laws now requires that the written nomination of the candidate, together with the candidate's written consent to serve if elected and a short biographical profile, must be submitted to the Secretary no later than the 31st day of July in any subsequent election year after 2016.

This was agreed to then but some members felt that this By-Law should be rescinded with nominations only received on the floor on the date of the AGM as per the previous procedure.

I personally believe that this is a backward step as the skills set of candidates cannot be accurately determined at an AGM. I am also of the view that if nominations are submitted in advance, this would allow members time to evaluate candidates more carefully and to elect persons best suited for the vacant posts. This would in turn increase transparency and strengthen the competencies represented on Council as a whole.



Nevertheless, a meeting will be held with the general membership before the end of the first quarter to discuss this matter further.

General

Congratulations are again in order to our former Vice-President, Ms. Sandra Osborne, now in her second year as President of the Barbados Olympic Association.

Ms Osborne was one of twelve persons recognized for services to the game of Tennis at the 2018 International Tennis Federation's AGM held in August in Orlando, Florida. Effective December 1, 2018, she was also appointed as the inaugural Chair of the ITF's Ethics Commission, having previously been a member of the ITF's Women in Sport Committee for the past year. Well done Ms Sandra Osborne for putting Barbados on the ITF's map.

To conclude, I wish you every success tennis-wise and otherwise in 2019, and I hope that this year will produce further triumphs for the sport of Tennis in the island.

Yours truly

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "R. Forde".

Dr. Raymond Forde
President