

## **The State of Sports at Saints (Sept. 2019)**

The Physical Education (PE) and Sports department teaches PE to all students in forms 1 to 3 and those fourth and fifth formers who elect to write the subject for CSEC. The PE department also facilitates inter-class and inter-house competitions, as well as selecting and training the teams which represent the school at external competitions. In addition, the department coordinates four after school programmes for Basketball, Volleyball, Hockey and Football. Saints Scouts and the Chess Club are also part of the after school programme of activities offered to students. The main objective of these programmes is to provide our students with the rounded education we all benefited from at Saints.

### **Basketball**

Approximately 40 children participate in the after school programme. Saints was the only school to qualify a team in all four categories of the 2019 National Schools Basketball Festival (NSBF); however, the under 16 boys category was eventually cancelled. Our Under 18 girls and boys were competitive but lost in the early rounds of the competition, while our boys' under 14 team placed second in their category.



*Under 14 Boys Team that placed second at the National Schools Basketball Festival*

### **Hockey**

Approximately 50 children participate in the after school programme. Our teams dominated the 2019 Guyana Hockey Board's under 14 Club & School league. Our two boys' teams placed first and third, with Saints boy Javid Hussein winning MVP, while our two girls' teams placed first and second. Saints girl Shanique Clarke won MVP while Clayza Bobb received a prize for being the top goal scorer of the competition. Four of our students, Abosaide Codogan, Charlia Webb, Shakeem Fausette and Nickel Ashby, were selected to represent Guyana on 2019 tours of Canada and Trinidad respectively.



*Guyana Hockey Board under 14 League Champions - Saints Scorpions and Saints Snipers*

### **Football**

Approximately 20 children participate in the after school programme, which only started this term on Friday afternoons at the College's ground on Carifesta Avenue, under the guidance of the Vurlon Mills Academy. This year our under 18 boys placed third in the St. Roses 5 a side Futsol Competition. They also qualified for the knockout stage, but lost in the round of 16 of the Milo U18 Competition. Our boys and girls under 14 teams both placed third in their respective groups in the Exxon Mobil U14 Competition but did not qualify for the knockout stage of the competition.

### **Volleyball**

Approximately 20 children participate in the after school programme, however there hasn't been any schools competition for volleyball in the past two years.

### **Chess**

Approximately 20 children participate in the after school programme. The school team won the 2018 Marian Academy Scholastics Competition. Five of our Students, Savir Gookul, Jarrell Troyer, Chelsea Juma, Jaden Taylor and Ghansham Allijohn, were also selected to represent Guyana at the 8th CARIFTA Junior Chess Championships 2019, which took place in Curacao.



*Saints' 5 National Chess Players - L to R - Savir Gookul, Jarrell Troyer, Chelsea Juma, Jaden Taylor and Ghansham Allijohn*

### **Track & Field**

Saints continues to dominate zone 3 at the annual schools track & field championships. However, apart from these championships once a year there isn't any other track & field events for schools.

### **Cricket and Table Tennis**

Although cricket and table tennis are also played at the college, we don't offer any structured after school programmes for these sports at the moment. We hope to address this sometime in the future.

### **Positives**

The completion of a second basketball court at the school has led to a big increase in participation numbers. An increase in the number of Ministry of Education equipment grants has helped us to rely less on alumni donations for the replacement of heavy use items such as balls. We have been able to enter into partnerships with clubs who use our facilities to help coach our student athletes. Eagles Basketball Club, Classic Ball Blasters Volleyball Club, Saints Hockey Club and, most recently, the Vurlon Mills Football Academy all assist in the coaching of our students in the after school programmes. There has also been a steady improvement in the overall participation numbers, gender balance and performance of all our school teams over the past four years.

### **Challenges**

With the high level of competition that currently exists for spots at the top schools, more and more first formers are coming into Saints having spent most of their early years focused exclusively on academics. As a result, the talent pool of athletes entering the school seems to be diminishing with each passing year. There has also been several instances where parents withdraw their children from the school team in the middle of a competition, because of a dip in

their academic performance. This forces us to either field under strength teams or in extreme cases, to forfeit matches due to lack of players. In some sports such as volleyball there is a lack of competitions for the school to compete in which causes students to loose interest in the sport.

### **Future Plans**

It is our intention to host annual invitational tournaments for each sport at the college, starting next year with Basketball and Volleyball. These tournaments will have to be coordinated with the Ministry of Education and the various associations. We would also like to facilitate the development of more facilities at Saints ground to improve its revenue generating capacity and usage by students and alumni.

### **Needs**

The department has several equipment needs, however I think priority should be given to those which are difficult to address locally. One of our main needs at the moment are uniforms for all sports, but I would suggest acquiring a large quantity of numbered and branded reversible pinnies instead of individual uniforms for each sport. Two portable electronic scoreboards would also enable us to host simultaneous matches on our two basketball and volleyball courts for planned competitions.

I'd like to thank the Toronto Alumni for all their support over the years. I hope future generations of alumni live up to the commitment and dedication you have shown to the school, and continue the great work that allows us to provide future generations with the well-rounded education that has become the hallmark of the Saints experience.

**Regards,**

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