



MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

TO THE SENATE

BY SENATOR THE HONOURABLE OWEN K. DARRELL, JP

MINISTER OF TOURISM, CULTURE AND SPORT

“NATIONAL SPORT POLICY UPDATE”

27th NOVEMBER 2024

Madam President, sport indeed plays a crucial role in fostering community development, unity, and national pride. The National Sport Policy – Sport Matters 2022-2027 has served as a guiding framework for the Ministry of Tourism, Culture, and Sport for the past two years, with a mission that is both aspirational and transformative. By focusing on increasing participation, achieving sporting excellence, improving access to sports facilities, increasing the value of sport, and developing a clear framework for talent development, this policy ensures that our national sporting landscape will be both vibrant and sustainable for generations to come.

Madam President, the five core goals of the policy are designed to address the critical components necessary for an inclusive and high-performing sports culture. These goals are not isolated; they are deeply interrelated, creating a holistic approach to sports development. These goals are interrelated to ensure we address the key relationships between participation, sporting excellence, high performance and talent development and facility access more broadly.

Today, **Madam President**, I would like to provide an update on the National Sport Policy and highlight the achievements made under each goal. These milestones reflect our ongoing commitment to creating a thriving, inclusive, and vibrant sports culture in Bermuda.

The first goal **Madam President** of the National Sport Policy is to increase participation across all levels of sport and physical activity in Bermuda. This goal aims to create more opportunities for individuals of all ages and demographics to engage in regular physical activity, develop a love for sports, and ultimately contribute to a healthier and more active society.

Progress on Goal 1: Increase Participation

- *Publish an Online Calendar:* The calendar has been published and is available on the sportsandrec.bm website. This tool offers the public easy access to information on sports events and programs.
- *Develop a Grassroots Sport and Activity Program for Children Aged 3-6:* Preparations are well underway for the Active Kids Sports Academy, which is scheduled to launch in January 2025. This program aims to introduce young children to foundational physical activities and encourage lifelong participation in sports.
- *Hold a Sport Expo Annually:* The annual Sport Expo is scheduled for September 2025. This event is an excellent platform for showcasing local talent, engaging families, and connecting the community with sports organizations.
- *Implement Measures to Further Support Women in Sport:* Collaboration with the Bermuda Olympic Association has begun under the Women in Sport initiative. This initiative

focuses on increasing opportunities and visibility for women in sports, including athletes, coaches, and administrators.

Madame President, continuing with the update on the National Sport Policy, I would like to highlight the achievements and progress made under Goal 2, this goal focuses on enhancing support for our high-performing athletes and teams to excel on the regional stage.

Progress on Goal 2: Achieve Sporting Excellence Regionally

- *Increase Government Funding for High-Performing Athletes and Teams.* The Elite Athlete Sponsorship initiative has provided valuable funding to athletes such as Caitlyn Bobb, Adriana Penruddocke, Tyler Smith, Conor White, Jack Harvey, Jessica Lewis, Erica Hawley, Sebastian Kempe, and Yushae Desilva-Andrade. This support has significantly enhanced their opportunities to excel and perform at the international level.
- *Provide Free Access to the National Sports Centre for National Athletes and Teams:* Organizations such as the Bermuda Football Association (BFA), Bermuda Cricket Board (BCB), Bermuda National Athletics Association (BNAA), Bermuda Sanshou Association, Bermuda Rugby Football Union, Bermuda Hockey Federation, and Bermuda Triathlon Association have benefited from free access to the National Sports Centre (NSC) for two months prior to international competition. This access has allowed athletes to train effectively without the barrier of facility costs.
- *Invest Further in Local Coach Education and Development:* Increased funding has been allocated annually to National

Sports Governing Bodies (NSGBs) for coaching programs under the Sports Investments initiative. This investment is aimed at enhancing the quality of coaching, which is essential for athlete development and performance.

- *Establish a High-Performance Framework:* Work is currently in progress to develop a comprehensive High Performance Framework, scheduled for completion in 2025. This framework will outline the strategies and support systems necessary to nurture elite talent and achieve sustained excellence in sports.

Madame President, Goal 3 focuses on ensuring equitable and increased access to quality sports facilities for the broader community.

Progress on Goal 3: Improve Access to Sports Facilities

- *Increase Free Access to the National Sports Centre (NSC) and Other Sports Facilities for the General Community:* We are committed to expanding free access to the NSC and other facilities by 2025, ensuring that more members of the community can benefit from these resources. **Madame President,** currently local sports clubs, including Devonshire Colts, Hamilton Parish, and Willow Cuts, have been utilizing community fields to host practices, games, and community programs. This initiative not only promotes grassroots participation but also strengthens ties between sports organizations and their local communities.

Madame President the progress achieved under Goal 4 emphasizes the importance of enhancing the visibility and

recognition of athletes, teams, and sports activities in Bermuda to foster a deeper appreciation for the role of sports in our society.

Progress on Goal 4: Increase the Value of Sport

- *Endorse and Promote Athletes and Teams to Increase Visibility:* This initiative is being carried out consistently through our social media platforms and website, which serve as dynamic channels for sharing the accomplishments and stories of our athletes and teams. A key achievement under this initiative is the digitization of the Bermuda Sports Hall of Fame, making its valuable information easily accessible to the public. This effort has significantly enhanced awareness of our distinguished athletes and their contributions to the growth and development of sports in Bermuda.
- *Promote All Levels of Sport and Physical Activity Participation with Local Sports Partners:* We have partnered with local sports organizations to promote participation in sports and physical activity. This is also achieved through the strategic use of our social media channels and website, where we regularly highlight upcoming events, programs, and success stories. Additionally, our monthly newsletters play a vital role in amplifying awareness and engagement by featuring key updates, achievements, and opportunities across the sporting community.

These initiatives under Goal 4 are critical to fostering a culture that values and celebrates sports, not only as a means of physical activity but also as a source of inspiration, pride, and community cohesion.

Madame President, to conclude the National Sport Policy update, I am pleased to share the progress achieved under Goal 5. This goal is pivotal in ensuring the systematic development of athletic talent in Bermuda through structured and well-supported pathways.

Progress on Goal 5: Establish a Framework for Talent Development

- *Ensure All National Sports Governing Bodies (NSGBs) Are Educated on the Long-Term Athletic Development Plan:* All NSGBs have participated in educational workshops covering all aspects of the Long-Term Athletic Development Plan (LTADP). These workshops provided foundational knowledge to help sports organizations align their programs with best practices in athlete development.
- *Assist All NSGBs with the Development of Their Respective LTADPs:* Sixteen (16) NSGBs have successfully completed their Long-Term Athlete Development (LTAD) plans, which are now publicly accessible on our website. These plans outline clear, structured pathways for developing athletes at all stages of their careers, from grassroots to elite levels. We remain committed to providing ongoing support and resources to assist the remaining NSGBs that are still in the process of finalizing their LTAD plans, ensuring that every sport in Bermuda benefits from this framework.

Madame President, by establishing this framework, we are laying the groundwork for sustained athletic success, empowering athletes and sports organizations with the tools and strategies they need to achieve their full potential.

Madame President, together, these goals create a comprehensive strategy for addressing the interconnected aspects of participation, excellence, and infrastructure in sport. As the policy moves forward, it is essential that we continue to monitor progress and make adjustments where necessary to ensure that these objectives are met effectively and equitably. It is with these principles in mind that we look to further strengthen our national sports framework, empowering athletes, fostering community engagement, and setting a pathway for sustained international success.

Thank you, **Madam President**.