



MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

TO THE SENATE

BY SENATOR THE HONOURABLE OWEN K. DARRELL, JP

MINISTER OF YOUTH, CULTURE AND SPORT

INCREASE ACCESS TO THE NATIONAL SPORT CENTER

WEDNESDAY, 14th DECEMBER 2022

Madam President, in the 2022 National Sports Policy the Government underscored a five-year commitment “to inspire and enrich participation in sport and enhance the international success of our athletes”. The policy highlights the need to “increase free training access to the National Sports Centre for athletes competing in international competitions.”

To this end, **Madam President**, the Ministry of Youth, Culture and Sport, through the Department of Youth, Sport and Recreation will advance this initiative which aims “to achieve sporting excellence regionally.” Preparation is integral to the development of a healthy training regime and athletic success. Athletes are encouraged to physically ready themselves during training and

before an event to reduce the likelihood of injury occurring. The body must be prepared to endure the physical demands and stress of the activity being undertaken.

Madam President, according to Global Human Performance, athletes training 10-15 hours per week were consistently making good improvements in their progress. Often this looks like five (5) days of a two (2) hour practice with 2-3 days of additional training in: strength, skills, endurance and speed training. Attaining 'physical readiness' for international competition is paramount to our Bermudian athletes achieving sporting excellence regionally. This is goal number two (2) within the 2022 National Sports Policy.

Madam President, the National Sport Centre (NSC) provides world-class training facilities that can assist our National athletes and teams in preparation for international competition with improved access to training. The NSC booking policy currently states, *"National Teams receive complimentary training time access at the NSC two (2) weeks prior to NSC approved international off-island competitions. The National Team practices must be comprised of at least 85% team members."*

Outside of the aforementioned timeframe, **Madam President**, national athletes and teams must pay to use the NSC facilities in preparation for international competition. It must be noted that preparation for international sport begins months prior. This can be costly, and we have national teams representing Bermuda that are insufficiently prepared as their budget dictates the frequency of training.

Madam President, in 2007 while preparing for the ICC World Cup, the Bermuda Cricket Board decided the best way to prepare their players immersed in a semi-pro environment. The increase in usage at the NSC facility allowed the Bermuda Cricket Board staff to create a professional environment for players months before the tournament, which included strength and conditioning training for at least six (6) days a week.

Madam President, Bermuda's own Dame Flora Duffy, Olympic, Commonwealth and World Champion in the sport of Triathlon, in an article in *Built for Athletes*, speaks of her typical training sessions being between 20 and 30 hours a week.

The Ministry recognises **Madam President**, that ‘Sports Matters’ and it has approved that the free training access will increase from two (2) weeks to two (2) months prior to international competition for National athletes and teams at the National Sport Centre to achieve sustained competitive excellence.

Madam President, as our National Sports of Football and Cricket prepare for their busy 2023 international duties with Gold Cup, World Cup and ICC qualifier, they and all National Sporting Governing Bodies now have increased access to the NSC to do so. Accordingly, the Government will continue to find ways to help “raise the value of sport in Bermuda and increase participation and regional success” for all.

Thank you **Madam President**.