

Year In Review 2004-05

*Welcome member representatives to the 39th Annual Congress
Of the Cayman Islands Football Association*

2004 – 2005 was an extraordinary period in the history of the Cayman Islands Football Association (“CIFA”). A year sprinkled with great achievements and heart felt devastation. It is never to be forgotten.

The year commenced with the realization of a dream- the President’s dream and that of every President that came before. Their vision of one day owning property on which to construct a national training centre had finally materialized. On Saturday June 26th 2004, the Minister of Sports, Hon. Dr. Frank McField, on behalf of the Cayman Islands Government, and Jeffrey Webb, on behalf of CIFA, signed a 99 year peppercorn lease agreement that transferred, to CIFA, 17.5 acres of Crown Land located at block 25B parcels 495 and 496 next to the Prospect Primary School in Spotts Newlands. The land will accommodate the National Training Centre Facility (“the Centre”) which will encompass dormitories to house up to four team, CIFA offices, an all purpose hall, 3 standard football fields and one half field. The Centre will be utilized as a high performance centre for the

development of national team players and teams at all age levels.

The lease was signed during the first annual CIFA Youth Football Rally, which saw teams from Under 12’s to Under 17’s compete in

tournaments through out the day. George Town Primary school took home the primary level championship, while Bodden Town took the mixed boys and girls U14 tournament, Future the U16 Girls and Scholars the U16 Boys.

In July another milestone was reached as CIFA unveiled its player exchange program with top flight club Vasco da Gama of Brazil. The player exchange was established to (1) allow promising young local players to travel overseas to a professional football environment to gain valuable insight into and experience of the life of a professional football player and (2) to raise the standard of football locally by the infusion of foreign players into the domestic league. The first local young players to benefit from this exchange were Jario Sanchez of Scholars International, Joseph Tatum of Academy S.C. and Gabriel Godet of Scholars International. The trip was sponsored by Admiral Administrations Ltd.

On July 4th and 5th the Cayman Islands National Women’s team played two



international friendlies against visiting St. Jago High of Jamaica. The results of which were 0:1 on both occasions.

Also, on July 10, 2005, CIFA hosted its annual awards ceremony at the Cayman Islands Community College Multipurpose Hall and although the venue was changed at the last minute, due to the weather, a multitude of family and friends attended to support the awardees. CIFA was very pleased with the turnout, especially of the parents of the players.

The months of July - August saw Scholars, Future, East End, Bodden Town, FC International and Cayman Brac hold their annual youth football camps. All camps were well attended and each was assisted by CIFA national coaches Marcos Tinoco, Thiago Cunha, Ernie Seymour, Roy Ebanks and Elbert McLean as well as some national players.

On August 7th and 8th CIFA hosted a local Champion of Champions tournament which saw Tivoli Gardens, winners of Jamaica’s National Premier League, arrive on Island to play Latinos S.C., winners of the CIFA Fosters National Football League and the Cayman Islands National

Football Team. The results of both games were 1:1.

Later that month members of the National Senior Team assisted the staff at the Botanical Park and several other local and overseas volunteers with renovating and landscaping the breeding pens for Cayman's endangered blue iguanas. Fredrick Wilks, Milton Sinclair, John Kelly and Nickoli Hill shovel earth, moved rocks and put down grass for phase II of the national Blue Iguana breeding program. The young men were recorded as saying that the experience was an ideal way of making good on their commitment to take on civic duties, as part of their role as national ambassadors.

On August 29th CIFA held its Annual General Meeting ("AGM") at the Marriott Grand Cayman. The AGM was well attended and various issues of importance was discussed and agreed upon.

Following our earlier hosting of the Deans of Admissions from ten prestigious US colleges and prep schools in November of 2003 eleven young players were successful in acquiring either academic or athletic scholarships for schools in the United States.

They departed in mid 2004 and include Ariel Tatum, Trevor Gibbs, Joseph Tatum, Carl Morgan, Carlos Morgan, Andre Gooden, Machel Turner, Mikhail Turner

and Wade Mitchell-Evans all of Academy Sports Club, Ijon Neil of Future FC, Andreas Webb of Scholars International and Mitchie Williams from George Town Sports Club. This will make a total of seventeen local players that have departed in the last four years for both academic and athletic scholarships overseas.

September 2004 witnessed the passing of Hurricane Ivan which devastated the football infrastructure throughout the Island. All stadiums, lights, changing rooms and restrooms were severely damaged or completely destroyed, including the CIFA office. In light of the extensive damage the season was postponed indefinitely. However, despite the destruction, the Cayman Islands National Team travelled to St. Vincent to participate in Group E of the Digicel Caribbean Cup.

Prior to arriving in St. Vincent, the team stopped over in Jamaica to play a warm up game against the Jamaica Under 23 National Team, which Cayman won 0:1. In St. Vincent the Cayman Islands played Bermuda (1:2), British Virgin Islands (1:0) and Saint Vincent & the Grenadines (0:4). The Cayman Islands was unfortunate not to advance.

The CIFA office was reopened in the new-year with the assistance of a grant from FIFA. Also in January, CIFA in conjunction with the Ministry of Sports hosted a dinner at Pedro St. James to honour Lee Ramoon of George Town S.C. upon his receipt of the FIFA Centennial Order of Merit.

The medal, which elevates Lee to the highest level of

world recognition in football, was pinned onto the lapel of this Caymanian role model by international superstar and UNICEF Goodwill Ambassador George Weah. Weah who has been voted FIFA World Player of the Year, European Player of the Year and African Player of the Century has also received the Arthur Ash Award for courage and the FIFA Fair Play Award.

In February the CIFA Foster's National League commenced. It was held despite the destruction and hardship faced by the citizens of the Island. Everyone, especially the youth, was looking for some recreational activities for relaxation and as a temporary avenue of escape from the conditions post Ivan. It was decided that certain rules and regulations would be relaxed. Teams were allowed to register extra players and new teams were invited to participate.

The league saw the addition of a team from East End and Her Majesty's Prison. Also, the duration of matches was reduced and games were played in the early afternoon. Special thanks is extended to the referees who made themselves available for service under such adverse conditions. Special mention has to be given to Livingston Bailey, Alfredo Whittaker, Winston Blackwood, Sheldon Anderson, Mitchell St. Clair, Archibald Magaw and Francisco Coelho who went beyond the call of duty to ensure that all sanctioned CIFA leagues were officiated.

Also, special recognition must be given to Foster's Food Fair and Progressive Distributors for their continued sponsorship of the men's senior league after Hurricane Ivan, even after the

severe destruction of their businesses. It is a gesture which must be recognized and appreciated by all citizens of the Cayman Islands and especially the football fraternity.

March saw the commencement of the Under 14 and 17 Youth Leagues, sponsored by Admiral Administration, and the implementation of the second phase of the Cayman Vasco Da Gama player exchange program. Diego Brandão, Vasco da Gama defender, arrived on Island and was assigned to play for and assist with the development of East End United's senior and youth programs.

Brandão played with Grêmio Football Club in 2000 and São Paulo Football Club in 2001 but moved to Clube de Regatas Vasco da Gama in Rio de Janeiro and has been there since 2002. During that time Diego played against Panama's National Under 20 football team, as well as Verdy Kawasaki from Japan and college teams out of the USA. This is Brandão's second training exchange away from home. In 1999 he trained for three months with Saudia Arabian football club Al Wahda in Mecca.

The CIFA Foster's National League and the FA Cup concluded in May with Western Union facing and emerging victorious against Scholars International on both occasions. The scores were 3:0 after penalties and 2:0 respectively. The Under 14 League final was held on the same day as the senior men's FA Cup final with George Town S.C. emerging victorious over St. Ignatius by a score of 2:1. Scholars later won the U17 League title beating Western Union 5:0.

In June the Under 17 and Under 14 FA Cups concluded with Scholars International winning the Under 17 against Future by a score of 2:1 and Bodden Town S.C. winning the Under 14 against George Town by a score of 4:2.

The women's league got underway in late April with three teams Future FC, George Town SC and Scholars International as participants. The remaining two teams Western Union and Sunset FC were unable to enter women's teams for the shortened season. Many of their players therefore, joined the three participating teams, assisting Future FC in their bid for the title. The final match ended Future FC 2 Scholars International nil.

In conclusion, special thanks must be extended to the Ministry of Sports and the

Department of Youth and Sports who assisted CIFA tremendously in order to ensure that completion of the respective leagues.

For the upcoming year, CIFA will concentrate on assisting the Ministry of Sports and the Department of Youth and Sports with the upgrading on the football facilities throughout the Island. It is also envisioned that the first phase of the National Sports Center, which will encompass the construction of the Dormitories, will commence. Also new sponsorship will be sought to assist with the development of the various youth leagues and the formation of the Under 23 and Under 12 leagues.

Of top priority for CIFA in the coming year is the development of the Referee Association to ensure that capable and competent individuals are recruited, trained at the highest standards and retained over the long term as CIFA referees.

The past year was a difficult one to say the least but together we achieved the unexpected and together we can achieve even more

God Bless
Bruce Blake,
General Secretary