

GOLF: BJGA set for major shake-up

New dawn breaks for junior golfers

By Colin Thompson

Bermuda Junior Golf Association (BJGA) have launched a major scheme at the grassroots level designed to introduce the sport to a broader cross-section of the community.

Having already produced the likes of Dwayne Pearman, Blake Marshall and Michael Sims over the years, the BJGA are now expanding their Novice Programme into the Island's school system with further plans to implement a summer camp programme this year.

"With support from the Bank of Butterfield, corporate sponsors and the Ministry of Sports and Education, we have selected a handful of schools to introduce students to the sport of golf either through existing curriculum or after school activity," BJGA president Rawn Rabain said.

"We are starting out small as a pilot programme to see what works and what doesn't. The BJGA will enlist the assistance of local golf professionals and golf courses to support the children of Bermuda in what we consider a worth while endeavour.

"And not only will the students be exposed to one of the most popular and fastest growing sports, but parents can rest assured that students will also master self discipline, confidence, integrity, honesty, respect

Thousands of dollars to be put towards vigorous schools programme

and sportsmanship."

Another of the BJGA's objectives, Rabain said, will be to try and reduce costs to participate in the sport and increase the Association's membership rate.

"The BJGA will completely shatter what up till now has been a high-cost sport. Our aim is to make golf more affordable for all households on the Island," he added.

"We will also be actively looking to increase the membership rate of the BJGA pulling across all the schools, and also actively encourage the development of more junior golfers here in Bermuda."

Earlier this week the BJGA was on the receiving end of a \$70,000 cash injection donated in part by premier sponsor Bank of Butterfield (\$25,000), BDC 2000 Limited (\$10,000), Island Construction (\$10,000), The Argus Group (\$7,500), Bermuda Security Group Limited (\$7,500), BELCO (\$5,000) and the Phoenix Stores Limited (\$5,000).

Each year the BJGA stages

over 40 competitive events for their members, as well as four major tournaments. And via ongoing fundraising events and activities the BJGA are able to send groups of eligible juniors to compete in major tournaments throughout North America and the UK.

And it is organisations such as the BJGA that add "value" to the community, Bank of Butterfield president and Chief Executive Officer Alan Thompson said.

"It is our pleasure to contribute to a better future for Bermuda golf. We believe sport is a positive activity for young people as it teaches patience, competitiveness and many other transferable skills children will use as they move forward in life," Thompson said.

Bank of Butterfield have also agreed to pump an additional \$50,000 into the BJGA's coffers over the next two years, while BDC 2000 Limited (\$10,000), Island Construction (\$10,000) and Bermuda Security Group (\$7,500) each pledged to offer additional funding over the



Photo by Tamell Simons

In the money: The Bermuda Junior Golf Association received \$70,000 in sponsorship from a assortment of local firms this week, which it plans to put towards some exciting new schemes. Pictured above at a press conference this week to announce the investment are, from left to right, Bob Wilson, Herman Tucker, Zane Desilva, Wendell Brown, Sports Minister Randy Horton, the BJGA president Rawn Robain, Allan Thompson, Gerald Simons, Gary Madeiros and Bushard

same period.

"I think the need is there to fund organisations such as the BJGA because the more we can get our youth involved in sport, it will give them character and teach them responsibility and commitment," said Island Con-

struction president and avid weekend warrior Zane DeSilva.

Over the year's DeSilva's company have played an integral role in the development of young athletes by funding various sports organisations including cricket, football, tennis and

track and field. "We've supported a lot of youth programmes in the past so this is just a continuation of that really," DeSilva added.

"The more youth we can get involved in sports in this country, the greater our future."