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### Chess Set To Make Move Into Schools



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While Members of Parliament took time out yesterday to acknowledge the historic achievement of junior chess champion Nathan Smith, a major announcement was made regarding mind sports.

Minister of Youth, Sports and Culture Dr Daniel Johnson announced that the often overlooked genre would be implemented in school sporting curriculums in 2014.

“This what Nathan has excelled in is a mind sport. It brings me to an idea of what we are trying to do this year of expanding sports,” he said. “I am very proud to say today that along with the Ministry of Education, that chess and other mind sports will be introduced to schools all across the Commonwealth of the Bahamas, the full 164 schools, this year.”

Smith was lauded in the House of Assembly for his performance at the CAC Youth Festival in San Jose, Costa Rica, where he won a gold medal in the under-8 division. He was a part of a two-member team for the Bahamas along with Daijah Johnson, who finished fifth overall in the under-10 girls’ category.

It was the Bahamas’ first time competing in the event.

Smith finished in a three-way tie for first place with seven points, but held the tiebreaker over his opponents. Johnson finished with seven points.

The win afforded further offers for Smith who will receive an invite to the Pan-American Youth Festival in Mexico City in July.

Another benefit of the win was that he met the requirements for the “Candidate Master” title, which must first be approved by the World Chess Federation.

No Bahamian has ever been awarded the title.

“I want to introduce the country to what I consider a ‘bad man.’ Nathan Smith is one of these young people who are setting a pace that I think will change the pace of this country. He has achieved the highest honour of his craft, in this sport, in the world,” Johnson said.

“These are the young people that we are breeding in this country. There are thousands and thousands of them and I am going to overwhelm the public

with these people so that 'those' people can get off the front page. Nathan we want you to know that the entire Bahamas, everyone in this country from Abaco to Inagua, that they are proud of you."

Speaker of the House of the Assembly Dr Kendall Major opened the first session of the year by acknowledging Smith's accomplishments prior to resuming House business.

"It just doesn't get any better than this," he said. "May you continue to use the gift that God has given you to build your mind, and as you build your mind, to build this country."

Nathan is the son of Gurth Smith, treasurer of the Bahamas Chess Federation, and Henria Ferguson-Smith.

The federation will continue play locally this weekend with the opening round of the New Providence Open, January 11-12 and January 18-19 at the CW Sawyer Primary School.

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