

**OPEN LETTER FROM THE GFF PRESIDENT WAYNE FORDE ON
THE NON-PARTICIPATION OF ALPHA UNITED FC & SLINGERZ FC
IN THE 2017 CARIBBEAN CLUB CHAMPIONSHIP**

Dear Madam/Sir,

I am saddened that two of our top teams – Alpha United and Slingerz FC – will not be able to participate in this year's Caribbean Club Championship, the premier tournament for the CFU region.

This would have been a great chance for some of our best players to showcase their skills on an international platform.

I am disappointed that the actions of these clubs have resulted in this lost opportunity for our boys. Rest assured, the GFF stands ready to support the players so their personal development is not held back. We will intervene to protect the interests of the players, if necessary.

The responsibility for this regrettable situation lies solely with the leadership of those clubs that failed to adhere to the agreed structure of football, and put political ambition above the collective good.

There are rules for football on the pitch, and there are rules off the pitch. All members of our fraternity must respect these rules in a spirit of fair play.

All of our members have signed the 2015 GFF Constitution, which gives the GFF the authority and mandate to regulate football in all its forms in Guyana, including how competitions are organised and structured.

The clubs in question have betrayed the spirit of our constitution by refusing to participate in the expanded, domestic Elite League, despite numerous attempts by the GFF to find a solution, including the approval of accommodative measures requested by the clubs.

As these teams have failed to honour their constitutional obligations, the regional governing body CONCACAF has had little choice but to take the decision to exclude them from regional competition. We have to respect this decision and work together to ensure that it never happens again.

The GFF Executive Committee took the decision to expand the Elite League to accelerate the development of football, by spreading its reach, increasing participation, and improving the commercial opportunities necessary for the sustainable growth of the game.

The vast majority agree that an expanded league is in the best interests of Guyanese football, and we certainly have the full support of CONCACAF and FIFA in this matter.

The only opposition to this necessary expansion came from clubs led by individuals that unsuccessfully contested the 2015 GFF elections.

Their recent actions are an example of the kind of politics that we must move away from if we are to restore credibility to football.

My job is to concentrate on the future of football and not to engage in the negative politics of the past. I am determined to make up for all the damage that years of infighting, misdirected personal ambition and vested interest have inflicted on Guyanese football.

FIFA expects me to ensure that its financial resources are invested directly and responsibly into football development. We know that this has not always been the case in Guyana, but it is now.

The global football community is working to rebuild the integrity of the game, and to get the focus back on football. Most of our members here are doing the same, and we support them in those efforts.

We were elected on that mandate. It is our goal to lay the foundation for sustained development by investing carefully in all areas of the game, from youth to senior levels.

My track record shows that I am in football for the right reasons, and not for personal gain. I want to make a genuine difference so that our young boys and girls can fulfill their potential, and so we can all be proud of Guyana's football.

I look forward to working with all the members of the GFF to develop football and to leave the problems of the past behind us.

We will announce, in due course, the way forward for clubs that have boycotted this year's Elite League, so that their players can have a chance to get back into top-level football as soon as possible.

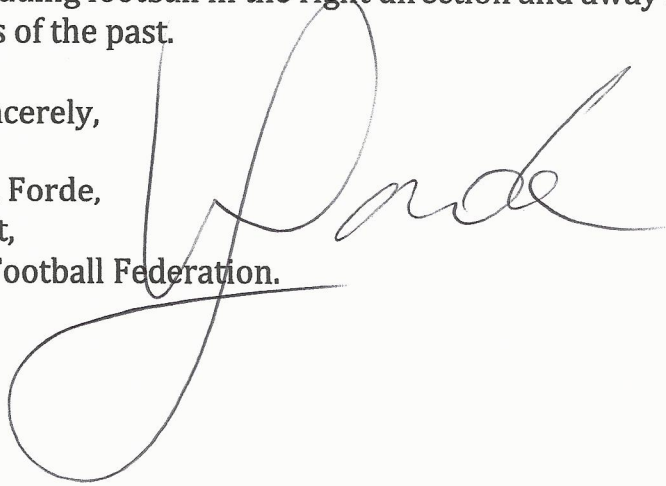
The GFF is greatly disappointed by the clubs' actions, but we are ready to work with them again in good faith, and to put this matter behind us in the interests of the game.

The GFF has already made extremely encouraging progress in football over the last year. This is only just the beginning.

We look forward to making further announcements that will show we are leading football in the right direction and away from the problems of the past.

Yours sincerely,

Wayne S. Forde,
President,
Guyana Football Federation.

A large, stylized handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read 'W. Forde', is written over the typed name and title. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the end.