

Families of missing Barbuda fishermen comforted

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Principal of Granville's Secondary School Roddy Christopher (left) and Principal of Pares Secondary School Letitia Lawrence (right) with Executive Director of the GARD Centre June Jackson at the signing of hydroponic project on Tuesday

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Barbuda families of missing fishermen comforted

The Barbuda families of the three fishermen who went missing in early December and who have not since been located, were comforted this week when a team from the Antigua and Barbuda Defence Force Coast Guard visited the island to meet with them as well as with members of the Barbuda Council.

The ABDF Coast Guard team met with family members of Shalico Charles, Vere Isaac, and Cleon Joseph, the crew onboard F/V GIVE THANKS, which was reported overdue on 1 December 2024.

This comes as the Coast Guard has reported that it has located the wreckage of the vessel at about 50 feet depth of water some 4 nautical miles west of an area called Cedar Tree Point or 9 miles out from River Dock, in an area frequented by Barbuda fishermen. Brigadier Telbert Benjamin explained that last Friday the Coast Guard was notified by some fishermen who reported seeing what they felt was the wreckage of the vessel, GIVE THANKS during one of their dives. “We sent down our divers with an underwater camera and which picked up video-footage of the vessel that had already been covered in barnacles. When the barnacles were removed we were able to recognize the vessel, its engine and a debris field that indicated that the vessel had been severely damaged before it sunk,” Brigadier Benjamin reported.

According to the ABDF chief there were no signs of human remains and because of this, he indicated that both the police and the Coast Guard are carrying out active investigations so at this time he has declined to comment of what might have happened that caused the vessel to sink and the men to go missing.

The vessel – GIVE THANKS – was discovered with two large holes...one at the front and the other at the bottom towards the rear of the vessel. Given this discovery and the amount of time that has elapsed since the vessel was reported overdue, the Coast Guard has transitioned the operation to a search and recovery mission.

During the meeting in Barbuda held at the Barbuda Council New Millennium Administration Building, Lieutenant



Colonel Alando Micheal and Lieutenant Naval Trish Lake shared the latest details of the investigation into the missing vessel.

The Coast Guard is working closely with relevant authorities to salvage the wreck and ensure the proper handling of the items recovered in an effort to further the investigation into the cause of the incident.

The Chief of Defence Staff and the

members of the ABDF have extended deepest sympathies to the families and loved ones of Shalico Charles, Vere Isaac, and Cleon Joseph during this incredibly difficult time.

The ABDF has also confirmed its commitment to conducting the investigation and providing closure to the families of the crew.



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Senate President Grant-Williams leads Antigua and Barbuda delegation at UN conference



Senate President Grant-Williams, Ambassador Walton Webson and members of the Mission

President of the Senate, Alincia Williams-Grant is leading a three-member delegation to the 69th session of the Commission on the Status of Women taking place from March 10 – 21 at the United Nations in New York.

After meeting with Antigua and Barbuda's Permanent Representative to the United Nations Ambassador Walton Webson and members of the Mission, Senator Williams-Grant delivered statements Tuesday on behalf of Antigua and Barbuda as well as the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) at the General Assembly. Her statement on behalf of the regional body is on account of Antigua and Barbuda's chairmanship of the Caricom Caucus of

Permanent Representatives to the United Nations for the next two months.

In her national statement, Senator Williams Grant elaborated on several of achievements that are distinguishing the country's efforts in advancing the principles of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the landmark document that sets out the framework for achieving gender equality and women empowerment globally. The meeting will undertake a review of progress of the main goals of the document so far and assess current challenges.

Senator Williams Grant proudly reflected on her country's key achievements to include the establishment of the Support

and Referral Centre, the creation of the Entrepreneurial Development Fund and the opening of the 4th landed Campus of the University of the West Indies. She said they serve as tangible examples of Antigua and Barbuda's committed efforts to go beyond the goals of gender equality and empowerment but also to create opportunities for the social and economic advancement of women in Antigua and Barbuda.

"Antigua and Barbuda has been proactive in tackling gender-based violence against women and girls through the Support and Referral Centre established in 2017 which allows women to access medical, legal and psycho-social services at one convenient location," she told colleagues.

On the EDF, Senator Williams Grant revealed that women are playing a phenomenal role in the success story that the initiative has become by taking advantage of the financial assistance, training and opportunities to start new micro-enterprises it affords.

"Currently, 47% of the Fund's active clients are women, most of whom have successfully applied for and received loans to support their businesses," she stated.

However, she acknowledged that there is still work to be done, particularly in addressing the existing gender disparities in Antigua and Barbuda.

"Despite the progress, women in Antigua and Barbuda continue to face challenges, including limited representation in parliament, with only 5.6% of seats held by women as of February 2025. Additionally, the country still lacks comprehensive data on key gender-related indicators, such as violence against women and unpaid care work," Senator Williams Grant lamented.

Tuesday's session begins a packed agenda of meetings for Senator Williams Grant, who is leading the country's delegation on behalf of the Minister of Social and Urban Transformation, the Hon, Rawdon Turner. Her delegation includes Executive Director of the Directorate of Gender Affairs, Jamie Saunders and Programme Officer, T'Chell Loo-by-Antonio.

Ambassador Webson along with the other members of the Mission, Counsellor Glentis Thomas and First Secretaries Claxton Duberry and Asha Challenger, will also be involved in the various events and meetings of CSW 2025.

A GARD Centre launches project to assist with the country's food security

The Gilbert Agricultural Rural Development Centre located at Gilberts has launched a project that is aimed at having a lasting impact on the nation's drive to ensure food security.

Executive Director of the GARD Centre, June Jackson explained that the project is a Global Environment Facility (GEF) Small Grants Programme (SGP) initiative implemented by the United Nations Development Programme under the caption: *'Scaling up local Food Security through a network of Climate Smart Agricultural Systems'*.

"The overall goal of the project is to expand on the recent GEF SGP Project "Increasing food security by reducing the impact of drought and improving security" by increasing the GARD Center's crop output through the use of climate smart technologies in particular hydroponics that reduces the impact of drought, while increasing vulnerable women, prisoners and agricultural science teachers, students and farm attendants' capacity about climate smart agricultural approaches," she further explained.

Jackson disclosed that the overall grant funding of the project is USD\$30,000 through the support of GEF SGP UNDP donor partners. The immediate beneficiaries are two neighbouring



secondary schools – Pares Secondary and Glanvilles

Secondary – inmates of His Majesty's Prison and vul-

nerable women who will receive training to operate hydroponics systems as small business ventures.

"The training includes 25 students and 2 Teachers from each school while 12 inmates and 20 vulnerable women will be trained in hydroponics. Each of the women would receive a mini hydroponics box to include a start-up kit with the necessary supplies," Jackson added.

The project has the support of the Ministry of Agriculture whose Head of Communications, Carol-Faye Bynoe-George described the project as timely and an asset to what the government is striving to achieve which are the accessibility to nutritional food and resilience through sustainable agricultural practices.

Speaking on behalf of the sponsors – GEF SGP and the UNDP, its national Coordinator, Natalya Lawrence noted that as a small-island developing state, Antigua and Barbuda faces challenges such as climate change, import dependence, and limitations on access to arable land. However, it also has the power to transform its food system through innovation, sustainability, and inclusivity.

"One of the most promising solutions is hydroponics — in this instance, a water-based system of farm-

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transformation,” she declared.

The principals of the two secondary schools – Letitia Lawrence of Pares Secondary and Roddy Christopher of Glanvilles Secondary – both expressed their appreciation for being included in the project. “We are deeply grateful for your remarkable generosity and support in making

the hydroponics initiative a reality. The construction and installation of a hydroponics unit at our schools, along with the invaluable assistance of teachers, supervisors, volunteers, and participants, are a testament to the power of collaboration and shared vision,” Principal Lawrence stated.

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ing that uses nutrient-rich water to grow crops efficiently. In a water-scarce country, hydroponics is ideal for Antigua and Barbuda because it requires less space, conserves water and allows year-round production. Further, there is a quicker production cycle with higher yields, good for people who are less patient! To make food security a reality, we must involve our youth and vulnerable groups in these modern agricultural practices,” she remarked.

The representative for HMP’s Rehabilitation Programme, Michaela Harris noted that the project provides the inmates with a ‘very powerful tool’; opportunity. “You have provided not just training, but the promise of a second chance to the individuals who are trying the break the cycle and become better men and women in our communities. The skills that the inmates are acquiring – whether in hydroponics, agriculture or business development – are not just trades; they are tools of

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Agriculture Minister Smith reveals government's plans to attract more people to the sector



Agriculture Minister, Anthony Smith Jr. says the government has launched several initiatives that will make the sector more attractive to private sector investments as well as for young people.

Speaking with J-Truth The Engineer on his podcast on Tuesday night, Minister Smith again pointed to an area of concern for both he and the government; the generational gap that currently exists in agriculture.

“The average age of farmers in Antigua and Barbuda is over fifty years and as a country and a government we have to develop programmes to address this issue urgently,” he stated.

Among the initiatives, he outlined is putting in place much of the infrastructure that the sector needs such

as available water, roads and the provision of equipment to assist with preparing the land for production.

“Through the Ministry of Agriculture, we have been working on developing our water catchments as this is very important and is one of the issues that the sector faces. With the assistance of some specialists, the ministry has identified some water ways which have since been earmarked for dam development,” he revealed.

Already, one such development is a dam being developed at the Cassada Gardens Race track to serve farmers in the surrounding areas. “We are also working on developing some mega-dams in the Liberta area to take care of farms in those areas,” he stated.

Another area of concern is feeder roads for farmers so that they can easily access their farms. “Farmers must be able to access their farms and currently we have a number of bad roads leading to where there are farms. The Cabinet has assigned a quarry to the Ministry of Agriculture to provide the materials necessary for the development of feeder roads leading to farm areas,” he disclosed.

Minister Smith explained that the overall aim is to attract private sector investments into agriculture by these moves.

Additionally, he announced major developments for the Central Marketing Corporation (CMC) which will be more active in marketing the produce from the nation's farming community. Included in the plans is a new headquarters building for CMC that is in the cards.

Coupled with these is the renovation of the current abattoir at North Sound and the construction of additional ones to process the meats produced by animal farmers, the minister further disclosed.



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A Step Towards Change: The Government of Antigua and Barbuda Leads the Way in Addressing Violence



Antigua and Barbuda witnessed a powerful moment in its ongoing fight against violence with the Capacity Building Workshop on the Caribbean Model for Behavioral and Cultural Change held at the UWI Five Islands Campus on Monday.

The event, organised by the Government of Antigua and Barbuda, the UWI Five Islands Campus and UNFPA (United Nations Population Fund), aimed to address youth violence, domestic violence, and gender-based violence and marked a critical step in bringing together the nation's stakeholders and from around the region, to work toward a safer, more inclusive society for all.

On behalf of the Minister of Social and Urban Transformation, Rawdon Turner, the Minister of State in the Ministry of Health, Senator Michael Joseph addressed the gathering by passionately highlighting the

Government's commitment to addressing violence in all its forms, reinforcing that responsibility lies with every sector of society. "We are all part of this effort. Every sector—education, health, business, and community—must come together to create lasting solutions. Together, we can build a society where violence is no longer a part of our daily lives," he said, echoing the call for unity and action.

The Government of Antigua and Barbuda fully pledged its support to take meaningful, timely action in addressing these issues. The workshop itself was seen as a pivotal moment in the ongoing national and regional dialogue on violence prevention and social change.

Special recognition was given to key stakeholders who contributed to the success of the event. DeJane Gibbons Liaison Officer, and team from the



Senator Michael Joseph

United Nations Population Fund, Dr Camille Samuel, and Ms. Adeola Matthew from the University of the West Indies Five Islands Campus, and Dr. Sue Ann Barrat, the workshop's lead facilitator, were all acknowledged for their hard work. In collaboration with the Government's Youth Violence Intervention and Management Committee, these individuals set the foundation for a transformative journey toward peace.

Permanent Secretary Colin

O'Keffe reflected on the Ministry's proactive steps, sharing, "In 2023, we recognized the urgency of this matter. The Youth Violence and Intervention Committee was formed, and from day one, we understood that this had to be an ongoing effort. This is a journey, and we must all work together to create solutions," reinforcing that collective and continuous action is essential for meaningful change.

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Permanent Secretary Colin O'Keiffe

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The Youth Violence and Intervention Committee identified seven key strategies to combat violence in Antigua and Barbuda, each designed to drive progress:

1. A National Peace Walk
2. Legislative Reform and Review
3. Capital Investment
4. Media Engagement
5. Collaboration with 6th Gear and the Oral Tradition Roots Foundation
6. Human Resource Capacity Development
7. Continuous Support for Improved Systems

These strategies represent more than just plans—they are commitments to the people of Antigua and Barbuda, aimed at fostering a society that prioritizes peace, safety, and healing.

The Government is also addressing the critical link between mental health and violence, with initiatives such as the proposed Mental Health Recovery facility in Seaview Farm, along with plans for similar facilities in Barbuda. These efforts are part of a

broader vision to ensure that healing and support are available to those who need it most.

The Capacity Building Workshop on the Caribbean Model for Behavioral and Cultural Change was a vital step in sparking a nationwide movement. It was a clear affirmation of the Government's belief that combating violence is a shared responsibility, and the Ministry of Social and Urban Transformation encouraged all sectors—educational institutions, churches, media, businesses, and residents—to actively contribute to the solutions.

As the country moves forward, there is a call for all to embrace this call to action. "Let us unite to eliminate violence, prioritize healing, and create a society where every individual has the opportunity to thrive. This is our collective mission, and with unity, dedication, and determination, we will succeed in creating a safer, more peaceful Antigua and Barbuda," a statement issued at the end of the workshop noted.

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Press Release



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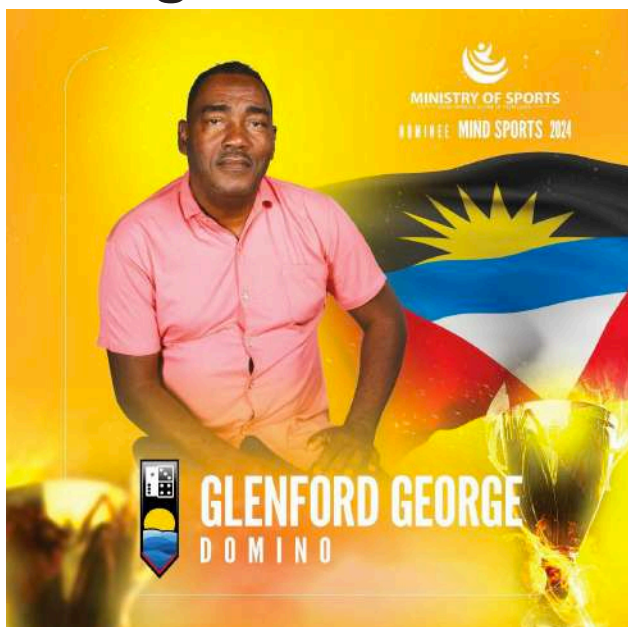
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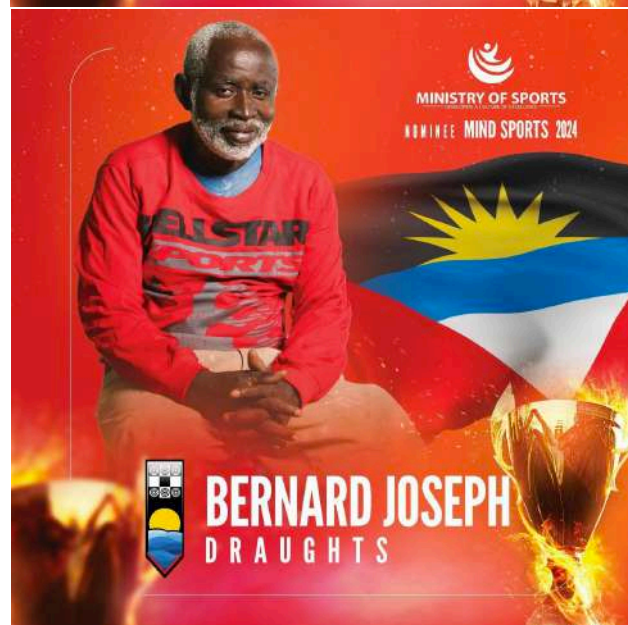
Antigua Barbuda Mind Sports Nominees 2024



Glenford George has been an influential figure in the world of dominoes for over twenty-five years. As a dedicated player and leader, he revived the Fire Brigade's membership with the ABNDA after a decade of dormancy, leading the club to notable success in the 2024 local tournaments. Driven by his passion for the sport, Mr. George sought to foster camaraderie among his colleagues in the fire service. His leadership qualities were recognized by his teammates, who selected him as both captain and manager. Known for his commitment, respect, and discipline, Mr. George's efforts continue to elevate the sport in Antigua and Barbuda.



Natalee Heron had an exceptional year in 2024, excelling in domino competitions at national and regional levels. Nationally, she dominated the Independence Classics, earning the most points for the Eagles Eye Domino Club and winning her second Female Pairs title. Regionally, she captained and managed the Eagles Eye International Domino Team at the EPS Tournament in Barbados, leading Antigua and Barbuda to a second-place finish. Beyond her achievements in competition, she contributed significantly to the sport through her roles on the ABNDA Games and Tournament Selection Committees, solidifying her reputation as a dedicated leader and ambassador for Dominoes.



Bernard Joseph Willock had a phenomenal year in 2024, showcasing his exceptional skills in the field of draughts. He emerged as the champion in the Swizzlestick Easter Classic Invitational Draughts Tournament in the Master's Division. His most notable achievement came at the 1st Pan-American Rapid Team Draughts Championship in Grenada (September 22-26, 2024), where he was unanimously named MVP after an extraordinary performance, winning all six matches against International Master-level players. In addition to his success, Mr. Willock served as head trainer for the Antigua and Barbuda Draughts team, further cementing his legacy as a top player and mentor.

Antigua Barbuda Senior Sportswoman 2024



Alexandria Hunt is a very promising young golfer with a bright future ahead of her! At just 17 years old, her success in national competitions and her victory at the Antigua and Barbuda Golf Open already show her talent and determination. Being part of the national team and helping secure such impressive wins is a great achievement, and it seems like she has a lot of potential for even greater accomplishments as she continues to develop her skills. With continued focus and support, she could significantly impact the world of golf.



Bianca Mitchell has had an exceptional 2024, breaking three National Records and 14 Age-Group Records while securing the 18 & Over Girls Championship at the OECS Swimming Championships for the second consecutive year. Her most impressive feat was shattering a five-year-old 400m freestyle National Record by three seconds. Taking a break from academics, Bianca dedicated herself entirely to swimming, achieving remarkable results. Beyond her accomplishments, she coaches young swimmers every Saturday, inspiring the next generation. With university offers in hand but focused on Olympic qualification, Bianca's dedication, talent, and impact make her a deserving candidate for Sportswoman of the Year.

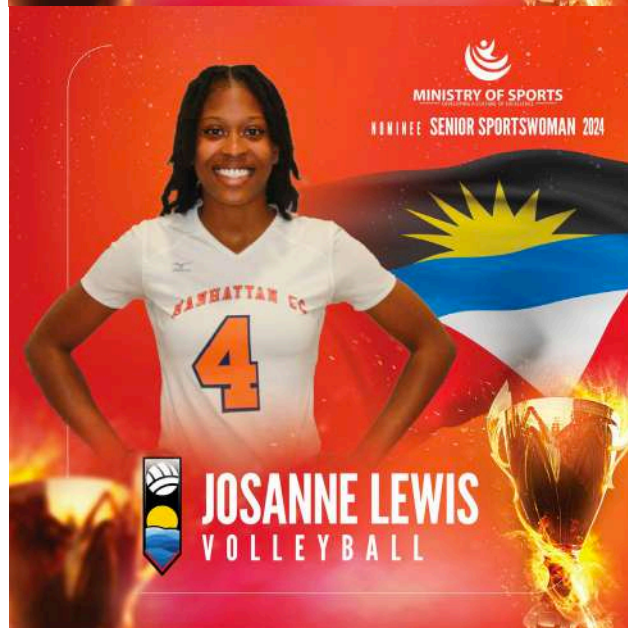


Irressia Allen's brilliance defined the 2023/2024 Antigua Female League season. Leading the league in goals and assists, she demonstrated exceptional offensive prowess and versatility as both a midfielder and attacker. Her vision, agility, and game intelligence orchestrated Lady Fort Road's triumphant season. Allen's electrifying performances consistently captivated fans, while her leadership and resilience under pressure inspired teammates to excel. Off the field, her dedication and passion for sport make her a role model for aspiring athletes. Irressia Allen embodies excellence, perseverance, and a winning spirit, leaving an enduring legacy in Antiguan football.

Antigua Barbuda Senior Sprotswoman 2024



Amanda Edwards has had an outstanding 2024, showcasing remarkable skill, leadership, and consistency in regional cricket. As captain of the Leeward Islands Women's team, she led her side to key victories over Guyana and Barbados in the regional 50-over tournament. Her batting brilliance was on display with a crucial 35 not out against Jamaica, while her bowling skills shone with best figures of 3/17 against Trinidad and Tobago. In T20 competitions, Amanda's strike rate of 100.00 kept her team competitive. A true role model, Amanda's contributions to cricket in Antigua and the region make her a deserving Sportswoman of the Year.



Josanne Lewis outstanding performance in the 2023 CUNYAC Women's Volleyball Championship solidified her as a top contender for the Sportswoman of the Year award. As the Championship MVP, Lewis led John Jay College to its first-ever victory over Hunter College in a 3-1 win, with an 18-kill, 10-dig performance. Her hard work and dedication were evident throughout the season, as she helped the Bloodhounds make history by claiming the CUNYAC title after 38 previous losses to Hunter. Beyond her athletic prowess, Lewis excels academically, maintaining a 4.0 GPA while pursuing a degree in Psychology. With unwavering determination, she is an inspiration to both athletes and aspiring psychologists.

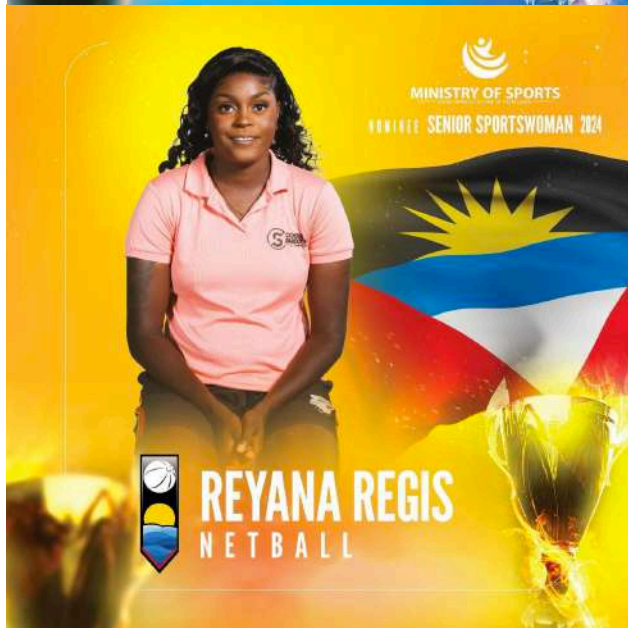


Jewel Crump exceptional performance in 2024 makes her a deserving nominee for Senior Sportswoman of the Year. After beginning her fencing journey in 2023, Jewel's dedication and hard work have paid off significantly in 2024. She captured the Senior Female National Champion title for the second time in November, demonstrating her growth and consistent excellence. Her participation in the February Fencing Training Workshop resulted in marked improvements in her sportsmanship, agility, and fitness, all of which were praised by Coach Nestor Rosario. Jewel's achievements in 2024 highlight her relentless commitment and determination in the sport.

Antigua Barbuda Senior Sportswoman 2024



Kimberly Percival is nominated for the 2024 Sportswoman of the Year for her exceptional achievements in bodybuilding, including winning the Cancun Pro in Mexico and the IFBB Elite Miss Y Mister Chile in November 2024. As the reigning World Champion, she showcased her dominance with standout performances at the IFBB Pro Grand Gala and Arnold Classic World Championships, while also securing second place at the prestigious Roger Boyce Classics. Beyond competition, Kimberly serves as a mentor and leader, representing the Antigua and Barbuda Bodybuilding Federation with professionalism. Her dedication, resilience, and ability to inspire others make her a true icon in the sport.



Reyana Regis is a standout athlete, playing as the top shooter for the Eastsiders Netball Team in her division. She is also a proud member of the national netball team and was named MVP at the ECCB/OECS International Netball Series in St. Lucia. In the tournament, Reyana finished 3rd in the overall shooting standings, making 243 shot attempts and scoring 216 goals, achieving an impressive accuracy of 88.89%. Her exceptional national and international performance highlights her skill, dedication, and multi-talented athleticism, positioning her as one of netball's rising stars.



Junella King achievements in 2024 are nothing short of extraordinary. She broke three World Records, becoming the youngest Black woman to circumnavigate the globe and Cape Horn, and was among the first three Black women to compete in the Round the World Ocean Globe Race. Junella also played a pivotal role in the first all-female team to win the Ocean Globe Race. Her accomplishments earned international recognition, including praise from Queen Camilla and features in "Hello Magazine" and BBC News. With her historic milestones, Junella has inspired countless individuals worldwide and is a deserving candidate for Antigua's Sportswoman of the Year.

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Antigua Barbuda Senior Sportswoman 2024

Makada Samuel-Hector is a deserving nominee for the 2024 Sportswoman of the Year. As captain of the Alzarri/Sharon Joseph Female Flyers, she has led her team to numerous successes. Starting at age 10 with coach Gregson “Cushe” Josiah, Makada has become a fearless bowler and batter, earning the nickname “Afridi” within the cricket community. Her leadership is driven by a strong commitment to teamwork, consistently encouraging her teammates to play hard and support each other. With her dedication, skill, and inspirational leadership, Makada has been a cornerstone of her team’s success, making her an ideal nominee.

Joella Lloyd’s remarkable 2024 season, marked by personal growth and dedication, positions her as a top contender for Sportswoman of the Year. Overcoming an injury-riddled 2023, she achieved a new national 100m record (11.06) at the NCAA East Regional Championships, securing her spot in the Paris 2024 Olympics. She also triumphed at the NACAC New Life Invitational 100m and reclaimed her national 100m title. As a key member of the NCAA #2 ranked 4x100m team, Joella’s success and leadership have inspired athletes in Antigua and the region, earning her top rankings globally and regionally.

Antigua Barbuda Mind Sports Nominees 2024

Abner Farquhar’s chess journey began at age seven, ignited by his mother’s introduction to the game. His dedication culminated in becoming one of the first Antiguan to earn the prestigious Candidate Master title at the 45th FIDE Chess Olympiad in Budapest, where he impressed with victories and draws against top-ranked players. Beyond his success, Abner is a dedicated advocate for chess in Antigua and Barbuda, promoting the game’s benefits, such as critical thinking and discipline, especially among youth. His journey embodies excellence, resilience, and a commitment to advancing chess within his country, making him a true ambassador for the sport.



Regional News



Seventeen injured in mass casualty collision in Barbados

According to the Barbados Police Service (BPS), a mass casualty road collision resulted in seventeen people being injured on Monday morning.

“It occurred about 8:40 am along the Belle Road at its junction with Barker Road, St Michael. It involved a Route Taxi and a pickup van. As a result of this collision, seventeen persons complained of injuries, sixteen from the route taxi, including the driver and a passenger in the pickup. The collision is a mass casualty, and a medical doctor and eight Emer-

gency Ambulance Service Personnel treated the injured persons on site,” said BPS.

Police stated that eight people were transported to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, seven were transported to Fast Track at the Sir Winston Scott Polyclinic and two were treated at the scene and discharged.

They noted that medical personnel have described the injuries as non-life threatening.

“Investigations revealed that the route taxi was traveling from

the city towards Norman Niles Roundabout when the pickup exited from Barker Road and the collision occurred,” said police.

In the aftermath of the collision, police notified the public that the section of road between the Norman Niles Roundabout and Barkers Road along the Bell was closed.

Barbados Police are asking anyone who may have witnessed this accident to contact District A Police Station at 430 7242/46. (*Loop Caribbean*)

Firefighter in Guyana hospitalised after battling school fire dies



Twenty-seven-year-old firefighter Vashan Manbodh, who was badly injured when a wall collapsed on him as he battled a fire at a school in Guyana last Wednesday, has died.

Manbodh passed away late Saturday at the Georgetown Hospital.

He reportedly suffered multiple head injuries as well as injuries to other

parts of his body.

His death came hours after his family raised concern about his care at the hospital, complaining that he was in an open ward, although seriously injured, and had not been administered an MRI (Magnetic Resonance Imaging) scan to ascertain internal injuries.

“Since Wednesday he was in the

hospital, and his situation has gotten worse. He was speaking coherently on Wednesday and today (Saturday) his condition deteriorated to the extent that he is not speaking coherently or recognising persons he should be able to recognise and he also has to be restrained,” a family member told News Source shortly before the man’s death.

It is reported that the fireman sustained fractures to his neck, which affected his motor skills.

The death of the firefighter has left the Guyana Fire Service in a state of shock and disbelief.

Two other firefighters who were injured are still recovering.

This is the first time in more than two decades that a fireman has lost his life as a result of injuries sustained in the line of work.

The Mae’s School was gutted by fire on Wednesday. (*Jamaica Gleaner*)

Police impose restrictions at National Stadium for Cavalier-Inter Miami match

The police have announced restrictions at the National Stadium for this Thursday's CONCACAF Champions League football match between Cavalier FC and Inter Miami.

The police are advising that no weapons, selfie sticks, fireworks, flame-creating devices, alcoholic beverages, glass bottle beverages, large igloos, umbrellas with metal tips, or frozen water/beverage will be permitted inside the stadium.

However, two-litre plastic bottles and personal bottles (squeeze or not) will be permitted.

Smoking will not be permitted inside and anyone found in violation will be asked to leave the stadium.



Patrons are also reminded that all persons entering the stadium will be subject to

search. Meanwhile, vendors are being advised that vending

outside of approved zones will not be permitted. (*Jamaica Gleaner*)



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Regional News

Albert Ramdin becomes first Caribbean representative to lead OAS

Suriname's Foreign Minister Albert Ramdin has been elected as the new Secretary General of the Organisation of American States (OAS).

Ramdin was elected unanimously by representatives of member states at today's special session of the General Assembly at the OAS Headquarters in Washington, D.C.

Ramdin was facing one challenge in the race from Paraguayan Foreign Minister Rubén Ramírez Lezcano but his candidacy was withdrawn by President Santiago Peña last week. In a post on Facebook, Surinamese President Chandrikapersad Santokhi congratulated Ramdin on his historic election.

"Congratulations today to our minister Albert Ramdin. This morning, he was elected by acclamation as the new Secretary General of the Organization of American States (OAS). The OAS is the main organisation of countries in the Western Hemisphere," Santokhi wrote.

"It is a great honour for Suriname that our candidate has been supported by the vast majority of the member states. It is the first time in the history of the OAS that a representative of the Caribbean Area has been elected Secretary General."

Ramdin will lead the hemispheric organisation for the



period 2025-2030. He replaces Uruguayan diplomat and lawyer Luis Almagro who served as the 10th Secretary General since 2015.

It's not the first time that Ramdin has held a senior role at the OAS. From 2005 to 2015, he served as the Assistant Secretary General of the

OAS.

Ramdin's colleagues across the region have also showered him with congratulations and expressed their excitement about with him in this new position. Belize's Foreign Ministry wrote: "The Government of Belize extends warm congratulations to H.E. Albert Ramdin, Foreign Min-

ister of Suriname who was elected as the incoming Secretary General of the OAS. Belize looks forward to working closely together with your leadership to advance the development and regional cooperation across the Americas. We wish you a successful tenure in fostering unity and prosperity for all." (*Loop Caribbean*)

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S'more-making blamed for Long Island, NY brush fires, SoE

Multiple brush fires that burned across a wooded area of Long Island over the weekend were accidentally caused by a family's attempt to make s'mores, Suffolk County police said Monday.

Commissioner Kevin Catalina said detectives traced the cause to a home in Manorville and a morning attempt to make the campfire dessert of toasted

marshmallow and chocolate between graham crackers.

"The individuals making the s'mores were unable to get the fire lit due to the winds, but they used cardboard to initially light that fire," Catalina said at a news conference. "That person subsequently discovers that the fire does ignite, and the backyard area all goes up in fire."

That fire was extinguished by about 10:30 am, but burning embers carried by the wind are believed to have started fires in other locations.

Gov. Kathy Hochul declared a state of emergency Saturday after four wind-driven fires spread across large swaths of Long Island's Pine Barrens region, prompting closures to the highway and evacua-

tions of a military base.

Crews managed to contain the fires by Sunday but remained on alert as the wind continued to gust.

Two firefighters were treated at a hospital for injuries and released, Suffolk County Fire Coordinator Rudy Sunderman said Sunday.

At least two commercial structures were damaged. (*Loop Caribbean*)

Gunmen hijack train in Pakistan's Balochistan, take hundreds hostage

Separatist fighters say they have attacked and seized a train in Pakistan's southwestern province of Balochistan, taking hundreds of people hostage.

Railway sources confirmed to Al Jazeera that more than 400 passengers were on board the nine coaches of the Jaffar Express when it was attacked on Tuesday while travelling from the provincial capital of Quetta to the northern city of Peshawar.

Provincial spokesperson Shahid Rind said an emergency had been declared at a major hospital in Sibi city, 160km (100 miles) southeast of Quetta, after reports of "intense firing" at the train.

The Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA) separatist group claimed responsibility for the attack, saying in a statement that six military personnel had been killed. It added that security personnel were among those taken hostage and warned of retaliation if security forces carried out an operation.

There was no immediate comment by Pakistan's military.

The 1,600km (994-mile) train journey from Quetta to Peshawar takes more



than 30 hours to complete with more than 30 stops along the way.

The train service was resumed in October after a two-month halt due to a BLA-claimed attack on the track in Balochistan.

The province, which is rich in minerals and natural resources, has been home to a decades-long conflict between the government and ethnic

Baloch separatists, who demand secession from Pakistan.

In recent years, there have also been attacks against Chinese interests and nationals working in projects in the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, a \$62bn development initiative. The attacks by the BLA and other groups have continued despite a number of military operations. (*Al Jazeera English*)

Doctors declare Pope Francis no longer in imminent danger due to pneumonia, but remains hospitalised



Doctors said Monday Pope Francis is no longer in imminent danger of death as a result of pneumonia that has kept him hospitalised for nearly a month, but have decided to keep him hospitalised for several more days to receive treatment.

In a late update, the doctors said the 88-year-old pope remains stable and has consolidated improvements in recent days, as determined by blood tests and positive responses to drug treatments.

The Vatican said the doctors had lifted their previous “guarded” prognosis, meaning they determined

he was no longer in imminent danger as a result of the original respiratory infection he arrived with on February 14. But their caution remained.

“However, in view of the complexity of the clinical picture and the important infectious picture presented on admission, it will be necessary to continue medical drug therapy in a hospital setting for additional days,” according to the Vatican statement.

In a sign of his improved health, Francis followed the Vatican’s weeklong spiritual retreat via videoconference on Monday in both the morning and afternoon sessions.

As he did on Sunday, Francis participated in the retreat remotely from the Rome hospital where he is being treated. He could see and hear the Rev. Roberto Pasolini, preacher of the papal household, but the priests, bishops and cardinals gathered for the retreat in the Vatican auditorium could not see or hear him.

Pasolini is delivering a series of meditations this week on “The hope of eternal life,” a theme that was chosen well before Francis was admitted to Rome’s Gemelli hospital on February 14 with a complex lung infection.

The retreat, an annual

gathering that kicks off the Catholic Church’s solemn Lenten season leading to Easter, continues through the week. The Vatican has said Francis would participate “in spiritual communion” with the rest of the hierarchy, from afar.

Francis also resumed his physical and respiratory therapy at the Gemelli hospital, and rested and prayed in-between. Francis has been using a nasal tube for supplemental oxygen to help him breathe during the day and a non-invasive mechanical ventilation mask at night, therapy that he was continuing Monday.

The 88-year-old pope, who has chronic lung disease and had part of one lung removed as a young man, had what was just a bad case of bronchitis when he was hospitalized last month. The infection progressed into a complex respiratory tract infection and double pneumonia that has sidelined Francis for the longest period of his 12-year papacy and raised questions about the future.

Francis was still keeping his eye on things. (*Jamaica Gleaner*)

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Sports News



Potters win ABSCA's warm-up competition

Potters have won the Antigua Barbuda Softball Cricket Association's (ABSCA) Rudy Mathew 10 Overs Warm Ups 10 overs competition.

Potters claimed title honours by recording an eight-wicket victory against the previously unbeaten Buckley's 3Js in the final at the Potters playing field on Sunday.

Buckley's 3Js were restricted to 98 for six off 10 overs. Steve Martin hit 27, and Nigel Fergus got 17. Jenny Scott grabbed three wickets for six runs.

Potters achieved victory

by scoring 104 for two off their 10 overs. Denley Thomas struck 29, and Nolia Elvin Hodge made 15. Steve Martin took one for 13.

Both teams advanced to the final after recording wins in the semi-finals. Potters snatched an eight-wicket win over Wayne's Electrical Services Survivors/Dredgers in the second semi-final.

Survivors/Dredgers were restricted to 118 for one off their 10 overs. Kimberly Anthony hit 22 not out, Rae Charles struck 19, and Sacha Michael made 17 not out.

Stacy Telemaque claimed one for 17.

Potters secured victory by scoring 120 for two with three balls to spare. Denley Thomas hit 24, and Stacy Telemaque made 12. Jeniece Russell picked up one for 23, and Kimberly Anthony took one for 24.

The Buckley's 3Js beat the Jennings Rockets by 59 runs in the first semi-final. Buckley's 3Js made 138 for three off their 10 overs.

Steve Martin slammed 30 not out, Christine Mills cracked 28 not out,

and Gaynel Ogarro scored 20. Valarie Isaac captured one for 22.

In reply, Jennings Rockets were restricted to 79 for five off their 10 overs. Roshana David scored 25, and Jamoy Jarvis got 18. Gaynel Ogarro grabbed three for 14, and Nigel Fergus snapped up two wickets for three runs.

The ABSCA executive has expressed its thanks to the participating teams, officials such as the umpires, scorers, and other supporters who contributed to the successful hosting of the Warm Up competition.

Ojays extend unbeaten run in ABBA's Division 2 league



The Cutie's Ovals Ojays maintained their unbeaten run in the Second Division of the 2025 Antigua and Barbuda Basketball Association's (ABBA) domestic season on Monday evening.

The Ovals Ojays 2 notched up their eighth win in as many games with a 101-36 drubbing of Square One Construction United in the first game

of a double-header at the JSC Sports Complex.

Tajahron Davis produced 25 points, six steals, and five rebounds; Shaheim Omarde sank 18 points and grabbed 11 rebounds; Dajon George converted 14 points; Najee Simon had 12 points and nine rebounds; and Aiden Christian scored eight points and snatched 12 rebounds for the Ovals Ojays 2.

Dwayne Samuel converted nine points, Neville Chambers produced eight and six rebounds, and Thomas Skerit had six points and eight rebounds for United, who lost for the sixth time in seven games.

The Navigators claimed their fifth win in eight matches with an 84-45 victory against Da Project 2 in the second game of Monday's double-header.

Baldwin Anthony converted 22 points and grabbed 20 rebounds; DeLornge Jules also scored 22 points; Ricky Willock sank 12 points; and Ryan Sheppard had 10 points and 10 rebounds for the Navigators.

Raheem Charles produced nine points and six rebounds; Donald Hunte had eight points, 12 rebounds, and five steals; and Elijah Charles chipped in with eight points and six steals for Da Project 2, who suffered their eighth loss in as many games.

Basketball action will continue with a Division 2 double-header at the JSC Sports Complex on Wednesday evening (today).

Square One Construction United will take on the Navigators at 6:45 pm, and Ramco Pharmacy Fearless Crew will clash with Michael Joseph Phoenix at 8:30 pm.

Guydadli FC wins again in Second Division League



The Guydadli Jets football team in 16 matches.

Guydadli FC was among the winners in the latest round of matches in the Antigua and Barbuda Football Association's (ABFA) Second Division League on Monday.

Imani Joyce and Michael Peters both scored twice as Guydadli FC consolidated their position in sixth place, recording their 11th win in 16 matches by snatching a 4-1 victory against West Ham at the PMS playing field.

Imani Joyce scored twice with conversions in the third and 30th minutes to give Guydadli a two-nil lead at halftime. Jahmarley Barzey missed a good chance to reduce the deficit in the first half when he failed to convert a penalty kick in the 24th minute.

But Vaughn Roberts succeeded in reducing the deficit by scoring the only goal for West Ham in the 47th minute. Michael Peters scored two late goals in the 78th and 82nd minutes to wrap up the victory for Guydadli.

Guydadli will advance to 33 points from 16 encounters, while West Ham will remain in 13th place with 16 points after suffering their 10th defeat

ABFA, the Earthquake team left the venue before the start of the game without giving a reason to the match officials.

Jaheer Pryce scored twice as Blackburn Palace secured their eighth win in 14 matches with a 5-0 drubbing of the CPTSA Wings at the St. Johnstone's Village Stadium.

The Wings played the entire match with 10 men after Dayon Hackett received a red card and was expelled before the first minute was completed.

Pryce had conversions in the 30th and 68th minutes. The other goals for Blackburn Palace were scored by Jahmari George in the 63rd minute, Malik Samuel in the 80th minute, and Sowandae Farrell in the 82nd minute.

The result allows Blackburn Palace to remain in seventh place by advancing to 27 points from 15 matches. The CPTSA Wings dropped to 11th place with 19 points after suffering their seventh loss in 16 matches.

Bethesda jumped from 12th to 10th place on goal difference by claiming their sixth win in 16 matches. Bethesda was awarded a 3-0 victory by default against Earthquake FC at the Bethesda playing field.

According to a report from the

Bethesda advanced to 20 points from 16 matches. Earthquake FC dropped from eighth to ninth place on goal difference with 20 points after suffering their seventh loss in 15 matches.

The Young Lion leapfrogged Earthquake FC into eighth place by recording their sixth win in 15 matches with an 8-0 drubbing of Glanvilles FC at the Glanvilles playing field.

Emery Horsford and Xavier Joseph both struck hat tricks, and Nasir Thomas scored twice for the Young Lions. Horsford had conversions in the 22nd, 53rd, and 82nd minutes, while Joseph scored in the 39th, 70th, and 79th minutes. Thomas scored his two goals in the 13th and 48th minutes.

The Young Lions advanced to 22 points from 15 matches. Glanvilles will remain second from the bottom of the 17-team standings with five points after tumbling to their 13th defeat in 16 matches.



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SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

PRE-EVENTS

**THURS
FEB 27**

CARNIVAL LAUNCH

**SUN
JULY 13**

AUNTY CLAUDETTE'S KIDDIES FETE
CARNIVAL CITY

**THURS
JULY 17**

CALYPSO MONARCH SEMI-FINALS
CARNIVAL CITY

**FRI
JULY 18**

PARTY MONARCH SEMI-FINALS
CARNIVAL CITY

**SAT
JULY 19**

WITNESS YA FITNESS
INDEPENDENCE AVENUE

MR AND MISS TEENAGE PAGEANT
CARNIVAL CITY

**SUN
JULY 20**

QUEEN OF CARNIVAL
CARNIVAL CITY

**MON
JULY 21**

INVASION BAND CLASH
CARNIVAL CITY

**TUES
JULY 22**

JUNIOR CALYPSO MONARCH
CARNIVAL CITY

**WED
JULY 23**

JUNIOR PARTY MONARCH
CARNIVAL CITY

OFFICIAL CARNIVAL EVENTS

**FRI
JULY 25**

FACE OFF
CARNIVAL CITY

**SAT
JULY 26**

T-SHIRT MAS
ST. JOHN'S

**SUN
JULY 27**

GOOD MORNING D'INCLUSIVE
COOLIDGE CRICKET GROUND
JUNIOR CARNIVAL COMPETITIONS
PARADE, PRINCE AND PRINCESS
ST. JOHN'S/CARNIVAL CITY

**MON
JULY 28**

JAYCEES QUEEN SHOW
CARNIVAL CITY

**TUES
JULY 29**

**KARI SOCA INTERNATIONAL
SOCA MONARCH**
CARNIVAL CITY

**WED
JULY 30**

**BURNING FLAMES 40TH
ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION**
CARNIVAL CITY

**THURS
JULY 31**

DRINK TILL YA WEAK
BOAT CRUISE

MELTING POT
CARNIVAL CITY

WATCH NIGHT
ARG / BOTANICAL GARDENS

**FRI
AUG 1**

CALYPSO MONARCH
CARNIVAL CITY

**SAT
AUG 2**

RISE
SIR VIVIAN RICHARDS CRICKET STADIUM
CARNIVAL DREAMZ
HODGES BAY
PANORAMA
CARNIVAL CITY

**SUN
AUG 3**

D BREAKFAST FETE
SPLASH ANTIGUA
PARTY MONARCH
CARNIVAL CITY

**MON
AUG 4**

J'OUVERT
ST. JOHN'S
MONDAY MAS PARADE
ST. JOHN'S

**TUES
AUG 5**

PARADE OF BANDS
CARNIVAL CITY
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H2A ViBe

Deitz wary of Windies women's batting struggles against spin bowling

West Indies Women head coach Shane Deitz expressed disappointment at the batting performances in the recently concluded CG United Women's Super50 Cup in St. Kitts.

Throughout the tournament, no player scored a hundred with the highest individual score being 88 not out by Leeward Islands Women captain Amanda Edwards of Antigua and Barbuda.

The numbers show that there was also a glaring weakness against spin across the board with the top five highest wicket-takers all being spinners.

While crediting the spin bowling displays he saw in the tournament, the bigger story, according to Deitz, was the general lack of ability to combat it.

"The spin bowling on a whole across the whole tournament was a big positive. The main thing standing out to me was the batting and the lack of scores, low strike rates, no big hundreds made by anyone in the whole tournament so, the batting side of it, particularly playing



West Indies Women head coach Shane Deitz

spin bowling, is a bit of a concern moving forward," he said during a CWI Media Interaction on Monday.

He was particularly critical of the younger players, noting that they need to improve in order to knock on the door of consistent international selection.

"We need them to start learning to be international cricketers and start pushing for their selection in the West Indies team," he said.

With the team's next assignment being the ICC Women's World Cup Qualifiers in Pakistan from April 4-19, conditions will mean that the batters will have to

face a lot of spin bowling.

As such, Deitz says plans are already being put in place to improve the batters' ability against slow bowling.

"Moving forward, we're putting some plans together for how to tackle that and that's a big improvement we need to do because, obviously, playing most teams in women's cricket, spin is a big factor," he said.

"We just played a series against Bangladesh where they pretty much only bowled spin to us and we're going to the qualifiers with Pakistan, Bangladesh and Thailand who will be bowling 90 to 95 percent spin bowl-

ing to us," Deitz added.

On a more positive note, Deitz praised champions Trinidad & Tobago for bouncing back from their opening round defeat to go on and win the title, praising their tactical prowess and the leadership of Karishma Ramharack.

"It was great to see Trinidad & Tobago fight back from a loss in their first game to take the title and they really had some good plans and executed those plans and strategies really well," he said.

"I saw good captaincy from Ramharack, stepping up as she did for us in the game against Bangladesh," added Deitz.

ABSF announces team for 38th CARIFTA Aquatics Championships

The Antigua and Barbuda Swimming Federation (ABSF) has announced the official team selected to represent the twin-island nation at the upcoming 38th CARIFTA Aquatics Championships.

The annual regional swimming event is scheduled to take place from April 19 to 22 in Port-of-Spain, Trinidad and Tobago.

The CARIFTA Aquatics Championships is a prestigious annual competition that has served as a platform for young swimming talent in the Caribbean since 1985.

The event will see participation from approximately twenty-five countries, including the Bahamas, Barbados, the Cayman Islands, Grenada, Jamaica, and St. Lucia.

Antigua and Barbuda's delegation will feature a talented line-up of swimmers who have successfully met the qualifying standards to compete in this high-caliber event.

The squad comprised 18 swimmers, four less than the Antigua and Barbuda team that finished in ninth place with a total of 18 medals at last year's CARIFTA swimming championships in the Bahamas.

The squad includes five of the six swimmers who won medals at last year's event. They are Ellie Shaw, Anya De Gannes, Madison MacMillan, Ethan Stubbs-Green, and Alessandro Bazzoni.

The head coach for the team is Wayne Mitchell. He will be assisted



Madison MacMillan



Ellie Shaw

by Coach Nelson Molina Fojo, Team Manager Lisa MacMillan, and Chaperones Ayedele Warner and Tallio Joseph. The technical official is Edith Clashing.

The ABSF extends its congratulations to all selected athletes and commends them for their dedication, discipline, and hard work in achieving this milestone.

As the national swimmers prepare to compete on the regional stage, the ABSF is encouraging the nation to rally behind the team and show their support.

The list of qualified athletes by age group is as follows:

Girls 11-12

Keziah Joseph

Kaylee Warner

Alyssa Watkins

Willow Zreibi

Boys 11-12

Alessandro Bazzoni

Christopher Walter

Girls 13-14

Anya De Gannes

Boys 13-14

Reuben Edwards

Girls 15-17

Ellie Shaw

Madison MacMillan

Aunjelique Liddie

Mila Festini-Cromer

Alandra Dublin

Selah Wiltshire

Boys 15-17

Tivon Benjamin

Ethan Stubbs-Green

Neil Noronha

Jai Sindhi