



**MINISTERIAL STATEMENT
TO THE SENATE
BY SENATOR THE HONOURABLE OWEN K. DARRELL, JP
MINISTER OF TOURISM, CULTURE AND SPORT
CARIFTA GAMES
21st MARCH 2024**

Madam President, the CARIFTA Games and CARIFTA Aquatics Championships, are the region's most prestigious athletics and swimming competitions, which showcase the prowess of young athletes from across the Caribbean.

Madam President, the 51st edition of the CARIFTA Games will commence on Saturday, March 30th, conclude on Monday April 1st and will be held at the Kirani James Athletics Stadium Queens Park, St. Georges, Grenada.

Madam President, last year Bermuda won 7 medals in a variety of events including 5000m, 1500m and Girls 4x100m.

Madam President, the Bermuda National Athletics Association have consistently provided pathways for our junior athletes to prepare for this prestigious event. The current team are looking to emulate past Bermuda Carifta icons such as Sonya Smith (javelin), Debbie Jones Hunter (100m, 200m, & 400m), Brian Wellman (triple Jump) and our first ever medalist at the games, Branwen Smith-King.

Madam President, this team selected are young, dynamic, and determined to represent themselves and the country to the best of their ability. In total, 19 individuals have been invited to participate in these games in various events and the team are led by returning medalists Octathlete, J’Auza James and 5000 metre runner Jake Brislane. Also within the travelling athlete contingent is Junior Achievement and National Junior Athlete Sponsorship Program recipient, Jaeda Grant. It is hoped that this event will continue to serve as a foundation of inspiration for future generation of athletic athletes.

Madam President, the support staff for this team include, Director of Athletics, Devon Bean, and coaches Gerry Swan, Albert ‘Jay’ Donawa, Jerome Richards and Janine Scott.

Madam President, the 37th edition of the CARIFTA Aquatics Championships will be held at the Betty Kelly-Kenning Aquatics Center in Nassau, Bahamas. The event will commence on Thursday, March 28th and conclude on Sunday April 7th.

Madam President, last year Bermuda won 8 medals in a variety of events including 100m, 200m and 400m freestyle. In total, 15 individuals will participate in the 2024 championships in various events and the team are led by returning medalists Bella Howes, Junior Achievement recipient, Elijah Daley and Maddelyn Moore. Also within the team is National Junior Athlete Sponsorship Program recipient, Brandon Adkin.

Madam President, these prestigious events not only expose our athletes to high level competition but allows them meet Goal #2 of the National Sports Policy, 'Achieve Sporting Excellence Regionally'. This year we have some very exciting and promising local athletes participating and I look forward to cheering them on as they compete against our family in the Caribbean.

Congratulations to both National Sport Governing Bodies, Bermuda National Athletics Association and Bermuda Amateur Swimming Association, affiliated clubs such as Pacers Track Club

and Sharks Swim Club and the parents of competing athletes for their contributions to local sports.

Thank you, **Madam President.**