

VIOC IN ACTION

Virgin Islands Olympic Committee Newsletter

VIOC Secretary General: Lyn Reid

Sochi, Russia the Winter Olympics 2014, what an amazing experience! This was my first time attending the Winter Games as the Secretary General of the VIOC. It was also the first time I was not in the Village with our athletes. I was based at a hotel in Adler with the other Presidents and Secretary Generals of the 68 countries participating in the Games. Not only was I able to network with them, but talk about some of their best practices in conducting their NOC's Activities. Chef de Mission Ansen Sligar and I were able to meet with members of the Olympic Solidarity Team who are responsible for allocating funds for programs for our athletes, coaches, and Olympic values. In discussion we gained more insights into the types of programs that can best benefit the Virgin Islands.



Call for Volunteers



The Virgin Islands Olympic Committee and Virgin Islands Olympic Academy have several volunteer opportunities for community members and visitors of the U.S. Virgin Islands.

On April 19th from 8am to 10am, we are hosting a beach clean up of Brewer's Bay on St. Thomas. We are inviting members of the community to come out and help beautify our islands.

Please email us at vioa@virginislandsolympics.org if you would like to be involved.

In June we will be holding our Olympic Day run events on St. Thomas and St. Croix. If you would like to volunteer or donate, please let us know via email: vioa@virginislandsolympics.org.

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St. Croix Dolphins Swim Team Competition

The St. Croix Dolphins Swim Team traveled to Atlanta, GA to compete in the 2014 SCAT Georgia Open Swim Meet from February 15-16. Thirteen swimmers traveled and competed at this event, which took place at the aquatics facility at the Georgia Tech Campus Recreation Center. This facility was the site of the 1996 Summer Olympic Games.

Nati Kuipers qualified for the 2014 Carifta Games in the 200 yard butterfly with a time of 3:01.04. She is now an addition to this year's USVI National Team. Kuipers qualified for finals and finished top ten in her age group in all of her events. Her top place was 2nd in the 200 yard freestyle with a time of 2:21.31. Matthew Mays won two events in his age group. He came from behind to win the 200 yard butterfly with a time of 1:59.92 and in the 200 yard IM with a time of 2:01.57 and placed in the top 4 in 5 of his 6 events. JJ Washshah qualified for finals in all of her events. Her top place was 2nd in the 50 yard freestyle with a time of 25.93. She also finished 3rd in the 500 yard freestyle with a time of 5:57.53 and 3rd in the 100 yard freestyle with a time of 56.49. Webster Bozzo stole the show with a 1st place finish in the 200 yard backstroke in his age group with a time of 2:08.46. He also placed 2nd in the 100 yard backstroke with a time of 59.91. Jean Devera qualified for the finals in the 200 yard breaststroke and finished 7th with a time of 2:52.78. Lidia Boguslawska's top finish was 3rd in the 200 yard freestyle with a time of 2:17.57. Lex Devlin's top finish was 7th in the 200 IM with a time of 2:20.78 and he dropped lots of time in the 100 freestyle to join Tony Hendricks in the finals in that event.

Daniel Garriga-Cerni's top finish was 14th in the 500 yard freestyle with a time of 6:06.43. Chloe Phillips-Hayden's top finish was 2nd in the 200 yard breaststroke with a time of 2:47.57. Chloe also made finals in all 6 of her events. Tony Hendricks' top finish was 5th in the 100 and 200 yard backstrokes with times of 57.44 and 2:09.40. Alex Lewit's top finish was 4th in the 200 yard butterfly with a time of 2:04.89. Alex dropped time in the 100 butterfly and made finals. Jonathan Thomas' top finish was 4th in the 200 yard breaststroke with a time of 2:21.89. Jonathan made finals in most of his events. Jelena Violet's top finish was 13th in the 50 yard freestyle with a time of 27.78.

While in Atlanta, the Dolphins took the opportunity to tour Emory University and meet with the Head Coach of Swimming, Jon Howell. They also met with Georgia Tech Assistant Swimming Coach Eric. Swimming in a 25 yard pool with prelims and finals (double sessions) was a great practice to learn how their body works and how quickly it recovers after swimming fast in the morning to doing it again in just a few hours the same day. For fun, the team was able to visit the Georgia Aquarium, the largest aquarium in the country and they also visited Stone Mt for snow tubing, after the competition of course. This trip was not just a competitive experience, but an educational one as well for these student athletes who expect to receive a college swimming scholarship in the near future.

If you would like more information, please contact the Dolphins Swim Team on St. Croix at (340) 719-7946, email at stcroixdolphins@gmail.com, or visit our website: www.stcroixdolphins.org.

We also offer a Learn to Swim Program for infants through adults, as well as Life Guard and CPR certifications.



Soccer Federation: The Grassroots Program

USVI Soccer Association Saturday morning youth development program also known as the Grassroots Program will be traveling to Renaissance Park on St. Croix on Saturday March 22, 2014 to play a series of friendly matches with their counterparts at the American Youth Soccer Organisation (AYSO). The USVISA Grassroots will play matches in the U-8, U10 and U-12 divisions from 9:00am. The players and coaches are eager to play these matches as they have practiced all season long.

The Grassroots Program takes place every Saturday morning at Estate Bethlehem on St. Croix and UVI Soccer Field on St. Thomas from 9:30am. For more information please call 340-719-9707.



Youth Games In Najing



You do not have to wait until Rio 2016 for more Olympic competition. The Youth Olympics in Nanjing, China start on the 12th of August. Stay tuned via Newsletter and social media for news on our athletes!

Contact us:
vtoa@virginislandsolympics.org

Jasmine Campbell Competes in Sochi 2014

Born on St. John, Virgin Islander Jasmine Campbell competed on behalf of the United States Virgin Islands for the 2014 Winter Olympic Games in Sochi, Russia. The 23 year old received a lot of press due to her expertise on the slopes while representing a country that has never received snow. The VIOC posted many of these articles on Facebook (www.facebook.com/VirginIslandsOlympics) and Twitter @TeamISV during February's games.

Jasmine placed 62nd in her first Giant Slalom Run and 57th on her second. She placed 50th in her first Slalom Run and 43rd in her second.

At the end of the Winter Games, Jasmine told reporters: "This has been arguably the most amazing experience of my life. I came here in pursuit of one of my passions, and I believe that following where your passions lead is the richest and most fulfilling way to live. It didn't really matter to me that I wasn't a medal contender because that is not the only thing the Olympics is about. It's about generating international camaraderie, awareness, and understanding of cultural differences. I've learned a lot from my time here and the journey that led to this moment. I'm a better, stronger, more capable person because of it. I'm so blessed to be here and so grateful for those who've supported me throughout this process, I'm positively overcome with gratitude for this amazing opportunity I've been given. It truly is the highest honor that has ever been bestowed upon me."

Thank you for representing the VI so well!



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How many countries also had just 1 athlete at the Winter Games?

Answer: 18

VI History Month: Peter Holmberg's Journey

I was born and raised on St. Thomas, attended Sts. Peter & Paul School, CAHS, and then got my degree in Business Management in California. My parents introduced me to sailing when I was 4 years old. They helped me pursue this interest, first by getting small boats to play with then by helping me travel to races as I became competitive. It started with races at our club, and then events on other islands, and then national and international regattas. I realized, while racing in college against sailors from around the world, that I had real talent, and so, when I finished school, I set my sights on the 1984 Olympics.

I made a plan, set a budget, and raised enough money to buy a Finn dinghy and begin training at home. At the conclusion of this short campaign, I finished 11th in the field of 36 at the Olympics. As I reflected on this campaign in the days and weeks that followed, I came to truly believe that if I planned and executed the right campaign, that I was capable of winning a Medal. So I decided to mount my campaign for the 1988 Olympics in Korea. And here is the key- I did it my way. I trusted myself, realizing how I got this far and used my business education to make a plan, one that would lift me above the pack and into medal contention.

The VI has the best sailing conditions in the world, so I found ways to bring the competition to me here for training. I never went to the World Championships. I never had a coach. I went to Korea, to study the conditions and get one of the prototype boats. Then I trained hard, often by myself, and sometimes at night so I could learn to do it all by feel. I set a course in rough waters with lots of current, these were the conditions I learned it would be like in Korea. In the final weeks I did everything on the exact timeline that I would be racing by in Korea; when I had my meals, practicing at the same time that the races would start, doing the full race course, etc. At the Olympics, going into the final of 7 races there were 6 of us in contention for medals. Half way through that final race, in the roughest sailing conditions ever in an Olympic regatta, I was in 6th. Quick math told me I would not medal. At this moment I switched from sailing safe and surviving, to cutting loose and FIGHTING for what I wanted. I passed everyone in front of me except one, and came inches from winning the Gold. I won the Silver Medal, the first Olympic medal ever won by our small country, the Virgin Islands.

The Olympics changed my life forever. It was and continues to be, the greatest experience in my life. And

then the opportunities that came to me from this medal; the chance to race professionally, earn a living doing my sport, travel the world competing, meeting wonderful people along the way. It has given me an incredibly wonderful life.

Sport is incredibly important in our lives. The opportunity should be given to our kids at a young age. It can be a foundation in our lives, to give us direction and purpose, and steer us away from drugs and trouble. It opens a path in life to such wonderful opportunities, fosters a healthy way of living, and takes you on amazing journeys. For all these reasons, I encourage all of you to foster it in our youth and make it a part of all your lives.



My message to the athletes - if you really want it, if it's in your heart, then it is possible. It starts with a smart campaign plan, total commitment, lots and lots of hard practice and training, but you can do it.

I must thank the VI Olympic Committee and all the folks that work so hard behind the scenes to allow us athletes to pursue our dreams.

One final plea to our government: we are an island surrounded by sea, some of the best waters in the world, and the basis of our tourist economy. And yet our native population does not swim, fish or sail. This is shameful. We should introduce swimming in our schools and make it a prerequisite to graduating. This would open up our greatest natural resource to our local population, allow everyone to enjoy it, pursue marine careers and watersports, and play a greater role in our tourist economy.