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USVI Contingent to Showcase Skill at Pan American Games with 2024 Olympic Dreams in Balance

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The V.I. Olympic Committee announced on Tuesday the contingent of athletes that will be representing the territory at the 19th Pan American Games, being hosted for the first time this year in Santiago, Chile.

Natalia Kuipers, Maximillian Wilson, and Adriel Sanes will compete in various swimming events, while Michelle and Malique Smith will represent the USVI in athletics. Steven Hardee, Taylor Fairbanks Hasson, and Mathieu Dale will compete in skiff and dinghy sailing respectively, while Kruz Schembri will seek glory in the fencing events. Julianne Abernathy and Nicholas D'Amour have been selected to compete in archery events, while Kruz Schembri will represent the territory in fencing. Alexandra Swayne will compete in golf events.

The 11 athletes from the U.S. Virgin Islands will join almost 8,000 others for the opening ceremony on October 20th. Events will run from October 21 to November 4, with the closing ceremony on November 5.

The games is an important competition for athletes, as they serve as qualifying events for the 2024 Olympics slated for Paris, France for some sports. Kuipers, Sanes, and D'Amour all previously represented the territory in the 2020 Tokyo Olympics, and are looking to qualify for Paris over the course of the Pan American Games.

The VIOC is encouraging residents to support the team as they undergo their respective tests of skill and endurance during the games. According to the press statement announcing the team selection, "the journey of team ISV is not merely about medals, but the embodiment of the Virgin Islands' resilience, zest, and unity."

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