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Virgin Islands Athletes Stand Out at Pan American Games Despite No Medal Wins

Pan American Sports Prepares for Barranquilla 2027 with Closing Ceremony Tradition

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Santiago 2023 closing ceremony highlights sports, culture and transition By. MARCELO HERNANDEZ/SANTIAGO 2023 VIA PHOTOSPORT

The Santiago 2023 Pan American Games came to a vibrant conclusion with Team Virgin Islands' Archer Nicholas D'Amour and Hurdler Michelle Smith leading as flag-bearers in a dazzling display of sportsmanship and cultural festivity.

The closing ceremony, held at the Estadio Bicentenario de La Florida, was a kaleidoscope of music, dance, and fireworks, capping off 15 days where 41 countries competed across 39 sports.

While Team ISV did not claim any medals, their athletes made significant strides. Seventeen-year-old Michelle Smith narrowly missed the bronze in the Women's 400m Hurdles, finishing less than half a second from victory.

Swimmers Max Wilson and Natalia Kuipers reached the finals, marking a milestone for Virgin Islands swimming, as noted by Coach John Vasbinder.

Team USA dominated the medal count, securing the top spot with a total of 286 medals, including 124 Gold, 75 Silver, and 87 Bronze. One Virgin Islander did emerge PanAm Games with a gold medal, albeit earned under the Star-Spangled Banner. St. Thomas-born Ian Barrows won the men's skiff 49er event for the United States of America alongside teammate Hans Henken during the event's medal race on Friday, landing them in 1st place overall with a total race tally of 26 net points, compared to 34 net points from second place team Uruguay.

The ceremony also honored the traditions of the games, with Pan American Sports and International Olympic Committee leaders handing over the flags to the organizers of the next Pan American Games, set to take place in Barranquilla, Colombia, in 2027.

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