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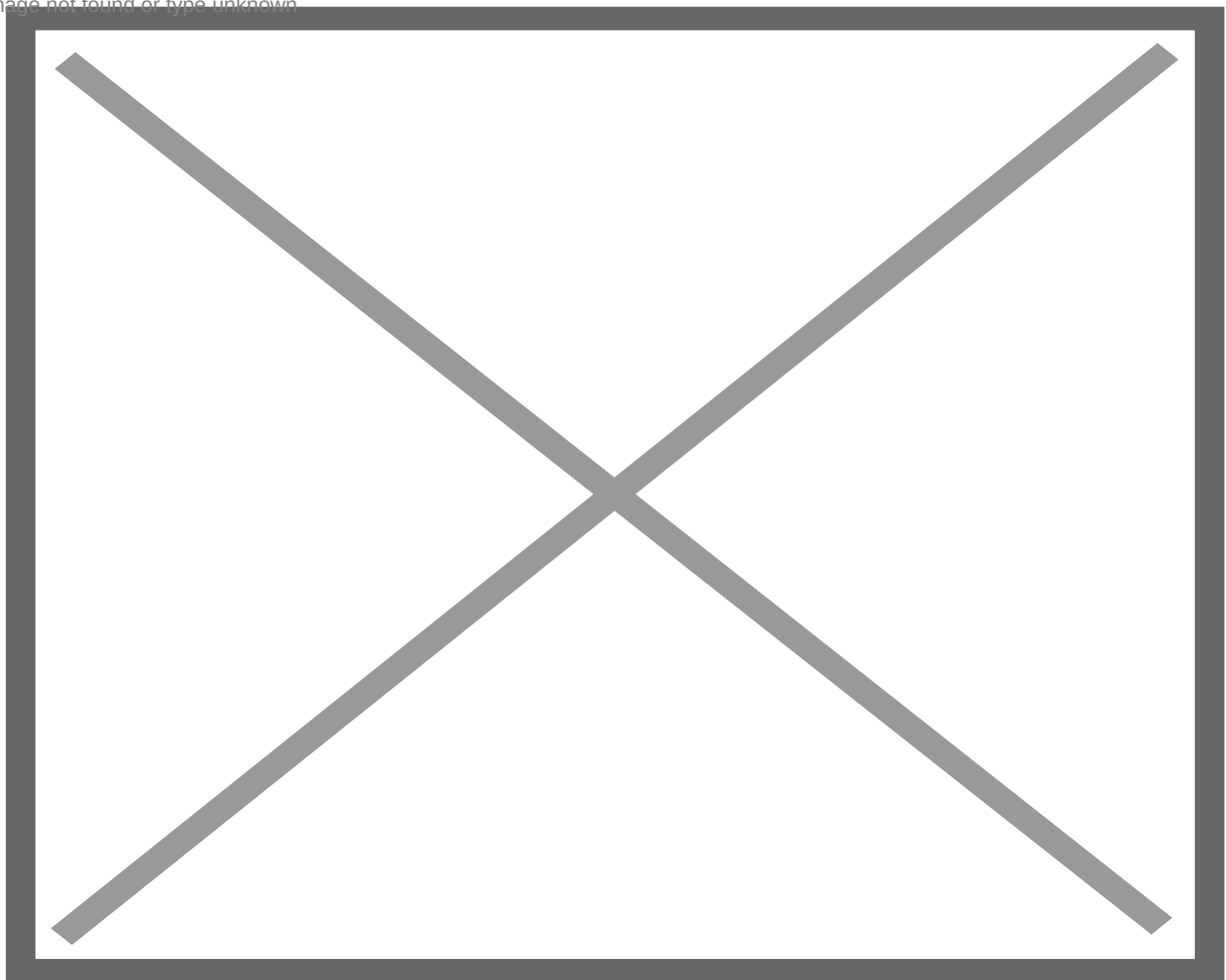
With Unprecedented Speed, Smith Sets New Benchmarks in 400m and Anchors Record-Breaking Relay Team

Virgin Islands' prodigy eyes the Paris Olympics following her historic wins at indoor championships

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Michelle Smith

Virgin Islands sports ambassador Michelle Smith, a senior at Montverde Academy, has made headlines yet again, this time at the New Balance Indoor National Championships held from March 8 to March 10. According to the Virgin Islands Track & Field Federation, Smith had a series of standout performances that have rewritten the record books.

Smith kicked off the championships on March 8 by leading her Montverde Academy 4x200m relay team to the finals, winning their heat in 1:36.21, the fastest qualifying time. The following day, she continued her dominance, finishing first in the 60m Hurdles preliminary round with a time of 7.78 and qualifying for the semi-finals. Although Smith narrowly missed her VI National U20 record in the semi-finals with a time of 6.67, her resilience led to a record-breaking performance in the 400m. She not only won the semi-final but also set a new VI National U20 record of 54.22. Smith then surpassed her own record in the final, clocking an impressive 53.55, which secured her qualification for the World Athletics U20 Championships in Lima, Peru, later this year.

Her achievements did not stop there. Smith also played a crucial role in Montverde Academy's 4x400m relay team, which set a new meet record of 3:38.18, with Smith contributing an individual split of 52.9.

This event marked the end of Smith's remarkable indoor high school career, but her journey continues as she prepares for the 18th Spring Break Classic, a qualifying event for the Olympic Games in Paris, France, later this year.

Joining Smith in showcasing the Virgin Islands' talent was Sofia Swindell, a junior at The Lawrenceville School, who also competed in Boston. Swindell and her team finished third in their Sprint Medley relay heat, setting a new school record of 4:09.25, a significant improvement over the previous record. Swindell's exceptional 400m leg, completed in 56.23, was a highlight of the achievement.

Despite narrowly missing qualification for the semi-finals in the 60m Hurdles by just five thousandths of a second, Swindell excelled in the 200m. She won her heat with a personal best time of 24.39 and improved further in the final, clocking 23.97, just shy of the VI National U20 record. This performance has also qualified Swindell for the World Athletics U20 Championships.