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## UVI Earns Silver Status in NAIA Champions of Character Program for Second Straight Year

UVI Athletics advances from bronze to silver in the NAIA's Champions of Character® program, earning its second consecutive Five-Star Institution Award and helping the HBCUAC secure conference honors, with gold status now in sight for next year.

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The University of the Virgin Islands has earned its second consecutive Champions of Character® Five-Star Institution Award from the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA), advancing from bronze to silver status for the 2024–2025 academic year.

The recognition marks a steady climb for UVI Athletics, which was not ranked two years ago. “I am extremely excited about earning silver status for this year’s Champions of Character® Five-

Star Institution Award because it was our goal entering the year,” said Director of Athletics Dr. Karen Carty. “In just two academic years, UVI went from not being recognized at all to steadily climbing to silver status. It shows how our student-athletes, coaches, and staff have worked to embody the five core values of the NAIA. The aim for the 2025–2026 year is to earn gold status, and with the recent progress we have made, I have no doubt we can do it!”

The NAIA evaluates institutions on their commitment to five key areas: character training, conduct in competition, academic focus, character recognition, and character promotion. Points are awarded for achievements such as high student-athlete grade point averages and having few or no ejections during competition. Schools scoring at least 60 out of 100 points receive the Five-Star Institution Award.

UVI was among 210 schools nationwide to earn the honor this year and one of 13 members of the Historically Black Colleges and Universities Athletic Conference (HBCUAC) to be recognized. UVI’s performance also contributed to the HBCUAC receiving the 2024–2025 Five-Star Conference Award.

If the current trajectory continues, UVI Athletics is on track to achieve gold status—the program’s highest ranking—by next year.

The University of the Virgin Islands is a member of both the NAIA and the HBCUAC, formerly the Gulf Coast Athletic Conference. The Buccaneers enter their 18th season of competition in 2024–2025, sponsoring six sports: men’s and women’s cross country, basketball, and outdoor track and field. As the only Historically Black College or University in the Caribbean, UVI Athletics continues to expand its presence and success on the national stage.