

The Virgin Islands Consortium

2015 MLK Varsity Basketball Invitational Tourney Tips Off

Entertainment / **Published On January 16, 2015 10:32 AM /**

Cynthia Graham **January 16, 2015**



The 2015 IAA/McDonald's Martin Luther King, Jr. Varsity Basketball Invitational Tournament will tip off Friday, Jan. 16 at 5 p.m. and run through Sunday, Jan. 18 at the Ivanna Eudora Kean High School Gymnasium on St. Thomas.

For the first time, McDonald's in the Virgin Islands has partnered with the St. Thomas - St. John Interscholastic Athletic Association and the V. I. Dept. of Education as the title sponsor of the tournament.

"At McDonald's, we are honored to partner with the USVI Department of Education and the Interscholastic Athletic Association as title sponsor for the IAA/McDonald's Martin

Luther King, Jr. Varsity Basketball Invitational Tournament, an initiative that we feel is an important legacy for student athletes in the Caribbean and the Virgin Islands," said Marisol Vega-Couto, regional communications director for Arcos Dorados, the operator of



Student basketball athletes Romeo Joseph,

Kerrol F. Laurent, Je'Noya Francis and Eshae Aska

"We thank McDonald's for partnering with us and for supporting the student athletes of the Virgin Islands through this tournament," said Mark J. Daniel, IAA president and health and physical education coordinator for the Dept. of Education. "It is our hope that McDonald's support will be annual and together we will grow this event into a major tournament, attracting the best teams from the Virgin Islands, Puerto Rico and the U.S. mainland."

In a telephone interview, Daniel told *VI Consortium* that this year the championship game, traditionally played on the Monday of the Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday, would be played the day before, Sun., Jan. 18, because off-island teams could no longer afford to stay an additional day on St. Thomas due to costly hotel rates.

He said for the 2016 tournament, however, IAA would seek to partner with the Hotel Association in order to offer better rates for teams traveling to play in the games.

With McDonald's help, the tournament, which has been in existence since 1982, will recognize two participating student athletes with the highest academic scores at the closing ceremony on Sunday.

"This initiative is in line with McDonald's commitment to support the well-being and active lifestyles of children in the V.I.," Vega-Couto said.

Six male and five female teams will participate in the tournament, including boys and girls teams from Antilles School, Charlotte Amalie High School and Ivanna Eudora Kean High School on St. Thomas. St. Croix Central High School boys and girls teams will also participate, as well as boys and girls teams from Tortola's Elmore Stoutt High School.

To view the complete tournament schedule, go [here](#).

Feature Image: Marisol Vega-Couto, regional communications director for Arcos Dorados; Mark Daniel, IAA president; Ms. Dionne Wells, superintendent for STT-STJ School District; student athletes: Romeo Joseph, Kerrol F. Laurent, Je'Noya Francis and Eshae Aska

