

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Virgin Islands Special Olympians Win 42 Medals, 17 Gold In L.A.

VIC News / **Published On August 11, 2015 06:42 PM /**

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U.S. Virgin Islands special Olympians who left the territory earlier this month to participate in the Special Olympics held in Los Angeles, California, this year, brought home 17 gold medals, according to delegates traveling with the winning group.

Participating in the event this year were 145 countries, 7,000 special Olympians and 3,000 coaches, according to Troy Williams, head coach of local athletic group Aquatics at the games and part of the VI delegation who traveled to L.A. Nineteen of the territory's special Olympians converged on the west coast to play in the games, which was broadcast on ESPN.

"The Virgin Islands athletes represented well," Williams said. "When it came down to competition and performing in front of the world, they stepped up to the challenge." Williams said a member of his swimming team was able to beat his best record by 40 seconds, "because he was in the atmosphere of competition."

The head coach said that the pressure aligned with international competition could have intimidated the Virgin Islands team, but to the contrary, their spirits were lifted by the attention, affording them to dominate the games, all while making the territory proud.

Governor Kenneth Mapp, elated by the group's performance, honored the special Olympians with a special reception on Saturday.

"I am extremely proud of our athletes. It is so impressive that our Special Olympians traveled to these games in Los Angeles and brought back Forty-Two medals. Tomorrow's event is just one way to show them and their families how much I appreciate their efforts, as they represent the US Virgin Islands," the territory's leader said in a press release issued last Friday.

This year's theme, "Inclusion For All People", included a segment where healthy athletes were paired with special athletes, an exercise deemed "a huge success" by Williams and other attendees.

The local special athletes participated in bowling, tennis, athletics, powerlifting and aquatics. See all results [here](#).

They included: Yazan Abdaljawad, Aquatics; Abigail Alicea, Islands Tennis; Marquisa Ubain, Athletics; Nhunda Burke, Tennis; Era Daniel, Athletics; Alohnah Daniel, Tennis; Steven Dominguez, Powerlifting; Leroy Johnson, Bowling; Rachanna Johnson, Bowling; Jahkiel Maryland, Athletics; Danil Omiranda, Powerlifting; Dante Nicholas, Tennis; Brian Samuel, Bowling; Alex Sosa, Athletics; Devonte Stevens, Islands Athletics; Jusenía Tuitt, Athletics; Ariel Turnbull, Athletics; Jakisha Vanterpool, Athletics; Shabari Williams; Bowling.