

The Virgin Islands Consortium

USVI to Play in Puerto Rico for the Final FIBA AmeriCup Qualifying Window Late February

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The Virgin Islands Men's Basketball Team before their last game against the Dominican Republic. By. FIBA BASKETBALL

The Virgin Islands basketball team learned that it will travel to San Juan, Puerto Rico with hopes of utilizing the third and final qualifying window of the International Basketball Federation's (FIBA) 2021 AmeriCup to qualify for this summer's edition of the tournament.

San Juan was announced as the host city for the third qualifying window for teams in Group C and Group D, with games being played from February 17-21. Group C is the

group the Virgin Islands team is in with Canada, the Dominican Republic and Canada, while Group D is composed of Puerto Rico, Mexico, Bahamas, and the United States. Three of the four teams in each group will advance to the AmeriCup.

The Virgin Islands started the tournament strong and secured a 80-64 win against Cuba in Havana last February but lost 91-64 in St. Thomas during the first window. Cuba's advantage in point differential between the two teams gave them the tiebreaker if just Cuba and the Virgin Islands are tied in the final standings.

The second window was held in a similar bubble format and the Virgin Islands traveled to the Dominican Republic and lost to the host city 89-75. They were supposed to play Canada as well in the second window but Canada did not travel to the games. Canada was sanctioned and deducted a point in the group standings for missing games in that window. Those games have been rescheduled and Canada will play four games in the final window.

The times for the games have not been announced but the Virgin Islands must get ready to play Canada twice and the Dominican Republic once in a brutal stretch over four days. The Dominican Republic and Canada are ranked 19 and 21 respectively in the latest FIBA World Rankings, while the Virgin Islands is ranked 51 in the same rankings.

The Virgin Islands and Canada will tip things off as the lone game on February 17. On the 18 Canada will play Cuba. The 19th will see the Virgin Islands play the Dominican Republic, USA play the Bahamas, and Mexico play the host Puerto Rico. On the 20th all eight teams will be in action with the USVI vs. Canada, Cuba vs. the Dominican Republic, Mexico vs the United States and Puerto Rico vs the Bahamas. There will be one game on the final day of the window with Cuba playing Canada.

All 8 teams still have a shot at qualifying for the FIBA AmeriCup but the United States is the only team in the two groups traveling to play in Puerto Rico with their spot confirmed in the tournament.

Group C standings are led right now by the Dominican Republic with seven points after four games played with Cuba, and the Virgin Islands behind them with four points over their three games played. The V.I. is trailed by Canada which has played just two games, with three points. The United States has eight points in Group D's first spot while Mexico has six points in second. The Bahamas and Puerto Rico are tied at five points a piece. All teams in Group D have played four games. FIBA awards two points for a win and one point for a loss in the standings.

The Virgin Islands will begin training on St. Croix from Feb 8 to 14 before the team flies to San Juan to compete for its spot in the 2021 FIBA AmeriCup. The national team had its best ever run in the tournament in 2017 when the team finished in fourth.

A FIBA press release stated that FIBA will continue to monitor the Covid-19 situation in the Americas on a daily basis and communicate further updates regarding competitions when necessary.

