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Territory's Amateur Boxing Squad Returns from the States with Five Championship Belts and Fist-Full of Respect

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Robert Moore **November 26, 2019**

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The VI Department of Sports, Parks and Recreation “I Believe I Can Fly” amateur boxing team on Monday returned home from the renowned Sugar Bert National Boxing Tournament with five championship belts among them. By. VI Dept. of Sports, Parks and Recreation

The V.I. Department of Sports, Parks and Recreation sent 11 young Virgin Islands boxers to the “Sugar Bert” National Championship Tournament in Kissimmee, Fla., over the weekend.

Nearly half the young men returned home to St. Croix and St. Thomas Monday with championship belts.

Eleven boxers participated in the renowned amateur boxing tournament that featured more 700 boxers from 32 countries. Two belts were won by fighters from St. Croix and three winners hail from the St. Thomas-St. John district.

“We went there as one USVI team, and the U.S Virgin Islands came back with five championship belts,” said DSPR Commissioner Calvert White.

“We give our unwavering support to our athletes and pledge to find more opportunities for their talents to be showcased,” Mr. White said.

The DSPR team - dubbed “I Believe I Can Fly” - is comprised of cruiser weight, welter weight, light-heavy and heavy weight boxers, ages 15 to 28 years old, Coach Melvin Donovan said.

This year's team of 11 was the largest to travel to the Sugar Bert tournament. Team members include Jordy JohnBaptiste, Reginald Byers, Malik Donovan, Geovanny Gonzalez, Yoster Gonzalez, Deion Rashwaan, Abdul Smith Jr. and Eric Thompson.

Thompson, Rashwan and Coach Otto Ortiz are from St. Croix. The other boxers hail from the St. Thomas-St. John District.

The Sugar Bert tournament provides a world-class venue for amateur boxers from around the U.S. and abroad.

The V.I. team is coached by "the Champ" Julian A. Jackson Sr., Julian A. Jackson Jr., Otoniel Ortiz and Melvin Donovan.

Said Mr. White to the coaches: "Thank you for believing in our athletes."

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