

The Virgin Islands Consortium

USVI Names Tajama Abraham-Ngongba New Women's Basketball Coach Ahead of Centrobasket Women's Championship

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The USVI Women's Basketball Team will have a new coach at the helm for the Centrobasket Women's Championship that will take place in El Salvador for March 24-28 as 6 nations will vie for four spots in the Women's FIBA AmeriCup that will take place this summer.

Tajama Abraham-Ngongba was named the head women's basketball coach by the Virgin Islands on Monday evening and expressed her excitement in a phone interview with the Consortium. When she heard she was under consideration she "was very excited, it's always a great honor to come down and coach." and "was really anxious, I hope this works out, I would really like to do this." she said

Hailing from St. Croix and being a former national team player, It means alot to her to be able to coach the Women's National Team "It's a lot of pride, I get emotional, so hyped, so appreciative, so honored, it is a huge privilege." and "it's a huge honor for me and my pride is through the roof right now."

She hopes she can instill a playing style with the national team that never gives up and gives their full effort. "I think the one thing that the teams I've played on had is this relentless commitment to never quit in the game no matter what's going on, regardless of the adversity of what's going on on the floor, just being tough, locked in focused players that want to compete every possession." Ms. Abraham-Ngongba "I want us to be the team that outworks the other team."

She expanded this thoughts by saying "Going into the tournament I just want to be a team that makes the other team work for every basket, so we are not giving up open threes, we are not giving up easy things in transition, we get back, we play solid, and we play together. Offensively we have a lot of weapons on our team in terms of guards that can get downhill or shoot it, good post presence on the inside so I think it's important that we get the hot hand the ball but also make sure everyone feels involved in our scoring process. "

The team will play Puerto Rico. at 5 p.m. on March 24, Costa Rica at 5 P.M. on March 25, The Dominican Republic at 9 p.m on March 26, Cuba at 9 on March 27 and host El Salvador at 6 P.M on March 28. All Times are A.S.T

Ms. Abraham-Ngongba understands the physical demands that five games in five days will have on her players and stressed that one of her most important roles would be managing minutes to prevent burning out and encouraging players to recover properly through stretching and eating right. The Virgin Islands will be able to bring 11 players to the CentroBasket tournament.

In the latest World FIBA Rankings for the Women The Virgin Islands are ranked 49 while Puerto Rico is ranked 23, Costa Rica is ranked 96, Dominican Republic is ranked 44, Cuba is ranked 29 and El Salvador is ranked 85.

The top four teams in the standings at the end of round-robin play will qualify for this summer's AmeriCup.

The Virgin Islands senior women's national team will be in training camp on St. Croix from March 14 to the 21st in preparation for the tournament.

Ms. Abraham-Ngongba is currently an assistant coach at George Mason. She coached previously at George Washington, Radford and Virginia Commonwealth University. She was on the coaching staff of the U.S. Virgin Islands Women's Junior National Team that won a gold medal in the 2001 Caricom Junior Basketball Championships.

She played Collegiate Basketball at George Washington University and is the only player in George Washington school history to score over 2,000 career points as she finished with 2,134 in her four year playing career there. In the 1997 NCAA Tournament she helped defeat No. 4 North Carolina en route to an Elite 8 appearance and was the 1997 Atlantic 10 Conference Player of the Year.

She was Drafted in the WNBA where she played for two seasons. In her second professional season she also played in France before returning to George Washington as an Administrative Assistant.

Some highlights of her national team was being able to play at home in the Virgin Islands and beating the Dominican Republic at a time when the Dominican Republic were playing well at the time.