

The Virgin Islands Consortium

USVI Women's Basketball Getting Ready Ahead of Centrobasket Women's Championship With New Coach in Charge

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Kyle Murphy **March 19, 2021**



The USVI Women's Basketball Team will have a new coach, Tajama Abraham Ngongba, 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.

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 11 p.m on March 26, Cuba at 11 on March 27 and host El Salvador at 8 p.m. on March 28. All Times are A.S.T and the games will be broadcast on [FIBA's Youtube Channel](#).

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.

In a press release from the Virgin Islands Basketball Federation said "We are asking the Entire

Virgin Islands to support the women from the territory."

The roster for the upcoming tournament is Taylor Jones, Imani Tate, Anisha George, Lanese Bough, Naja Ngongba, Akia Frett, Kadesha Barry, Brittney Matthew and Akeema Richards.

Ms. Jones played collegiate at Oakland and finished 6th on the schools all-time scoring list with 1615 during her career.

Ms. Tate played at the University of Albany and averaged 19.1 points, 5.0 rebounds, and 3.9 assists her senior year. In the 2017 FIBA AmeriCup she averaged 19.8 points and 7.3 rebounds.

Ms. George played her college basketball at North Texas and averaged 14.3 points and 8.9 rebounds in the 2019-20 season.

Ms. Bough played at the university of Nebraska-Ohama and averaged 5.1 points, 5.2 rebounds, 3.5 assists and 1.9 steals per game in her senior season.

Naja Ngongba is the daughter of the head coach and plays high school basketball at Woodbridge High School. Despite being the youngest player on the team she is the tallest at 5'11.

Ms. Matthew played at Stephen F. Austin and averaged 7.7 points her senior year.

Ms. Richards played her collegiate basketball at University of Delaware and was a team captain and averaged 5.9 points, 2.5 rebounds and 1.6 assists per game.

Two schools did not have statistics on their website; Ms. Frett played at Langston University and Ms. Barry played college basketball at Southern University.

The Virgin Islands team started training camp on St. Croix on March 14 and it will wrap up on Sunday before traveling to the event.

Ms. Abraham-Ngongba was named the head women's basketball coach by the Virgin Islands Basketball Federation earlier this month 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. ”

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.

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.

Clint Williams will be the assistant coach and is also an assistant coach at Morehead State.

More information and updates during the tournament can be found [here](#).