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## Soccer Association Announces Roster for Upcoming 2022 World Cup Qualifiers; Limited Amount of Fans Allowed at Opening Match

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The Virgin Islands Men's Soccer team, the Dashing Eagles, will begin their qualifying journey for the 2022 FIFA World Cup against Antigua and Barbuda at the Bethlehem Soccer Complex on March 27 at 7:00 p.m. in front of a limited capacity of 200 fans.

On Friday, the association announced the players who will represent the territory in the first two matches of the 2022 World Cup Qualifiers.

The Virgin Islands were drawn into Group A for the first round of the qualifiers alongside El Salvador, Montserrat, Grenada, and Antigua and Barbuda. Each team will play each team once and play two home games. The first-place winner of the group will advance to the second round of

the regional qualifiers.

After the game on the March 27, the team will travel to and play Grenada on March 30 for their second match. The last window of qualifying games will see the Dashing Eagles play Monserrat on June 2 and El Salvador on June 5.

The Virgin Islands is the 207th ranked team in the world and the lowest ranked team in the group, according to the latest FIFA Rankings. El Salvador is the highest ranked team in the group heading into the qualifying game at 70. Antigua and Barbuda is ranked 103, Grenada is ranked at 160 and Montserrat is ranked 183.

Here's the roster for the first set of games:

- **GOALKEEPERS:** Leroy Brown, Erik Mozzo and Conner Querrad.
- **FORWARDS:** Dante Nicholas, Konner Kendall, Ramesses McGuinness, and Shomari Francis.
- **MIDFIELDERS:** Grant Farrell, Humberto Delgado, Jimson St. Louis, Mahari Cortijo, Nakeeme Julian, Seidon Nemeth, Julian Brown and Timothy Herring.
- **DEFENDERS:** Axel Bartsch, Dusty Good, Jacob Iller, Jett Blashcka, John Engerman, Joshua Ramos, Kassall Greene, Quinn Farrell, and Zahmyre Harris.

The addition of Brown was announced at the press conference and he replaces James Charles Mack III from the original roster.

There were some challenges relative to getting everyone the team wanted on the roster due to Covid-19 restrictions, according to V.I. Soccer Association General Secretary Lishati Bailey.

Tickets for the first match on St. Croix are available [here](#).

WTJX will be broadcasting the game against Antigua and Barbuda, and it will be streamed on WTJX's and the Soccer Association's Facebook pages.

The soccer association said it worked extensively with the Department of Health to create stringent protocols to ensure that the Virgin Islands would be able to play home games in the territory. Not all teams in the region will play their home games at their venues, as some were forced to play those games at neutral sites due to the pandemic.

The delegations for both teams and FIFA Officials will be in a bubble environment. Some examples shared by Mr. Bailey of the strict protocols during the press conference include players not being allowed to pick up their bags at the airport, the prohibition of intermingling with the public, and waiting on a bus as opposed to the lobby when awaiting hotel room assignments. An assigned individual will deal with these aspects so as to limit any potential exposure to Covid-19.

Fans will need to purchase tickets through the Eventbrite link as no tickets will be sold at the match. This will allow the information of fans planning to attend to be available in advance for contact tracing. Attendees will have their temperatures checked upon arrival to the stadium; they must also wear masks and adhere to social distancing guidelines.

The second round of qualifying games will be three two-legged qualifiers between the six group winners. There will be a home and away game and the aggregate score of the two games will

determine who will advance to the third round of qualifying games, which will be played in an 8-team double round-robin. The first three teams will advance to the World Cup while the fourth-place team will qualify for an inter-continental playoff.

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