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Virgin Islander Michelle Smith Wins Gold Medal and Sets Record in 400m Hurdles During 49th Carifta Games

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Michelle Smith wins gold for the U.S. Virgin Islands at the 49th Annual Carifta Games.
By. THE VIRGIN ISLANDS TRACK AND FIELD FEDERATION

The Virgin Islands Track and Field Federation on Monday congratulated Michelle Smith for winning a gold medal for the U.S. Virgin Islands in the 400m Hurdles at the 49th Carifta Games.

Smith ran a time of 58.61 which is not only a new Carifta Games record and a VI National Junior record, but also the world's fastest time for 2022 for the Under 18 age group, the federation said in a release. Smith is the first Virgin Islander to set a Carifta Games record.

Smith, the 15-year-old daughter of Keith Smith participated in the U17 age group but posted a time that was faster than the U20 age group.

Smith's time qualifies her for the World Athletics U20 Championship which will be held in Cali, Columbia August 1 - 6, 2022. This is the 2nd event Smith qualified for. Smith previously qualified for the 400m, however, because of her age she can only enter in 1 event.

Smith is the 4th athlete to win a gold medal for the VI. The overall number of gold medals won by the VI is now 5.

Previous gold medalists for Carifta are:

- Jimmy Fleming won the first gold medal for the V.I. in the 200m 21.65 Barbados 1985
- Sanny Eugene won gold in the 800m 2:12.75 Tobago 2005
- Allison Peter won gold in the 200m 23.99 St. Kitts & Nevis 2008 and in the 200m 23.29 Cayman Islands 2010

Carifta stands for The Caribbean Free Trade Association. The Carifta Championship of today is the world's best junior championships, according to the release. It is where the great Caribbean athletes usually get their start. Olympic gold medalists such as Usain Bolt and Shaunae Miller-Uibo came up through the Carifta Championships.

Funding for the team was provided in the form of competition grants from the Virgin Islands Olympic Committee and the Virgin Islands Track and Field Federation.