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St. Croix Team Beats Over a Dozen Competitors to Win First Caribbean Pool Tournament in Puerto Rico

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Winners of the 2022 8-Ball BCA Pool Tournament in Puerto Rico.

Five men and three women from St. Croix are returning to the U.S. Virgin Islands today as the winners of the 8-Ball BCA Pool Tournament, beating more than a dozen other groups to claim the Caribbean title.

The group of players traveled to San Juan, Puerto Rico last week to participate in the Cue Sport International (CSI) Billiard Championship Expo which is usually hosted in Las Vegas.

They joined the list of firsts by becoming the first group from the Caribbean to win the tournament in both male and female categories.

“It’s the first time that the men and ladies for St. Croix, U.S. Virgin Islands actually get to play in this event and for the first time actually playing we actually were victorious and came out in first place in the division in the ladies and also the guys,” said Team Captain, Jerome "JT" Anthony.

Mr. Anthony, along with his wife Leona Anthony, formed the group A&L Professional Billiards shortly before the Covid-19 pandemic because of their love for the game.

“We’ve never had the opportunity to go as a team to their Vegas games because cost-wise it’s a lot. So, with the new event in Puerto Rico, that was something doable that we as individuals could have done,” she said.

The ladies’ team, ‘Caribbean Gems’ was represented by Leona "Lee" Edwards, Karen Brin and Donna Prock, while Jerome "JT" Anthony, Richard Joseph, Anthon Cannonier, Wayne Scotland and Washington Hilaire represented the men’s team.

They recalled that they traveled with just enough players to be able to participate and never imagined that they would win.

“We’re feeling great, it was a nice experience and we really weren’t expecting to place but winning just made it all better,” said Ms. Anthony.

“We were really excited to be part of this to show what V.I really has to show,” her husband continued. “We actually came here for just the experience and to have fun ... We came to shoot pool and we came to represent.”

So much so that the team traveled without alternates. Mr. Anthony explained that other men’s teams consisted of seven players which included two alternate players.

“But my team, I went in with a five-man line up and I only walk with exactly five. I had no alternate or anything, so what we walked with, we came to do what we had to do,” he said.

The men’s team earned a plaque and \$10,000 while the women’s team was awarded a plaque and \$5,000 as their winnings.

Mr. Anthony also competed against 60 other players and came out third in the men’s 8-ball singles games.

Since securing a win at the CSI Leagues Caribbean Championships, the spouses are making plans to get other Caribbean countries involved in the game of competitive pool.

Mr. Anthony believes that Caribbean players have the ability to dominate the sport.

“St. Croix is a very strong competitive team ... I’m talking the Caribbean Islands, you have St. Thomas where you have a lot of great shooters; you have St Kitts; you have Tortola; you have a lot of great players that actually come at A&L and actually play pool,” he recalled.

Ms. Anthony said, “They expect us back and they expect us to bring more players from the Caribbean, so in December we’re expected to do a Zoom call with players from different islands so that they can also meet the requirements to join this type of competition.”

This year’s tournament was held from November 15-22. They will travel again in 2023 to defend their title for the U.S Virgin Islands and Mr. Anthony is hoping for assistance from the corporate community to assist with travel.

“If there’s any assistance out there, then they could contact us at A&L, they could contact us through Facebook. I mean some sort of help because just the ticket alone is expensive just to go to Vegas,” he said.

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