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# Michelle Smith Breaks Decade-Old National Record in 800m Ahead of CARIFTA Games

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## USVI Athlete Michelle Smith

As a warm up for her appearance at the 50th CARIFTA Games in April, VI Sports Ambassador Michelle Smith broke a national record this weekend.

Last Friday, Smith competed in the 800m at the Florida State Relays in Tallahassee, and placed first with a time of 2:07.95, breaking the previous decade-old record of 2:08.43, set by Ninfa Barnard. This record-breaking time puts Smith within a hair's breadth of the time set by last year's CARIFTA winner in the category - Rushana Dwyer from Jamaica, who ran 2:07.35 to clinch gold in last year's games.

Smith's record-breaking 800m run is the second of such accomplishments for the young athlete. She also holds a national record for the 400m hurdles, which she set at 2022's World Athletics Under 20 Championships.

Meanwhile Omari Bennett, who will participate in the Octathlon and the 100m hurdles at this year's CARIFTA Games, competed at a high school meet in South Carolina last week and placed first in shot put, with a throw of 39 feet, 10 inches. On Friday, at a different meet, Bennet secured second place in the 110m hurdles with a time of 14.42.

Other members of the Virgin Islands Track and Field Team finished last week with laudable results. Mikaela Smith participated in the Margaret Simmons Invitational, running the 1500m in 4:49.29, a personal best time. On Saturday, Rachel Conhoff placed second in the 5000m at her university's home meet, the Ursinus College Outdoor Invite.

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