

CARIBBEAN SWIMMERS IN FOUR CHAMPIONSHIP FINALS

The growing strength of regional swimming was seen in the morning heats of Day 2 of the morning heats of the Orlando Grand Prix. This as the Caribbean will be represented in four championship finals. The women's 50 metre freestyle, the men's 50 metre freestyle, the women's 400 metre freestyle and the women's 200 metre breaststroke.

Arianna Vanderpool-Wallace 2012 Olympic Finalist for Bahamian in the 50 metre freestyle will be the second seed in the 50 metre freestyle. She clocked 25.84 to be ranked behind Amanda Kendall 25.63 heading into tonight's race. Vanderpool –Wallace will be aiming at the meet record of 25.33 set by Christine Magnuson. Arianna's national standard is 24.64 from the London 2012 Games.

Her countrywoman Ariel Weech placed 16th overall with her time of 26.80. This time gave her the opportunity of a second swim in the B Final. Weech 2s who represents Club Huskers is a member of two national record setting teams for the Bahamas in the 200 and 400 freestyle relays with Vanderpool-Wallace.

Renzo Tjon –A-Joe of Suriname bested his more heralded Caribbean counterparts in the men 50 metre freestyle to be the lone regional swimmer in tonight's final. He clocked 22.98 to make the championship final in 8th place. Being the lone Caribbean representative is not unknown to Renzo who clocked his personal best of 22.75 at the semi-final round to the only swimmer from the region at the World Junior Championships in Dubai UAE August 2013. He also ended his CARIFTA career in Kingston Jamaica with the sprint title in 23.44

2012 Bermudan Olympian Roy-Allan Burch made it to the B final with his 23.39 clocking. Burch holds the Bermudan national record with his 22.47 blast in at the London 2012 Games. 2008 Bahamian Elvis

Burrows leads a West Indian trio in the C final of the 50 metre freestyle. Elvis was 18th overall in 23.65. He holds the Bahamian national record of 22.39 from the World championships in Rome in 2009. He will be joined by top juniors Suriname's Zuhayr Pigot who was a finalist in the 100 metre butterfly last night who stopped the clock at 23.74 for 21st. With him will be Azura's Trinidad and Tobago's Joshua Romany who pinched the wall in 23.79 for 23rd.

Missing the cut for second swims were Trinidad and Tobago's Jabari Baptiste 52nd 24.55 Aruba's Jordy Groters 54th 24.57, Suriname Wayne Denswil 82nd 25.11, Jamaica's Sidrell Williams 84th 25.13 and Trinidad and Tobago's Emiro Goosen 115th 25.98

In the women's 400 metre freestyle the future of Caribbean distance swimming was seen in the person of Bahamas 16 year old sensation Joanna Evans. With such great swimmers as Jamaica's Janelle Atkinson and French Antilles Coralie Balmy the baton has now been handed to the swimmer from Swift Swimming. Racing in heat 2 Evans lead from start to finish to win in 4:20.79 This is new national senior record for the young Evans. At Carifta 2013 she won handily to take the 15-17 crown in the event by over 5 seconds in 4:25.46. In Dubai UAE at the World junior Championships in August she finished 20th in a new national record on 4:24.72. Interestingly enough she had lowered the record yet again on January 17 to 4:24.17. A young swimmer who can be expected to perform well at CARIFTA, Commonwealth Games and CAC Games this year and upset the more established older swimmers.

Aruba's Daniella Vandenberg placed 31st in 4:29.04 to make the D Finals. The 17 year old Aruban is significantly faster than the 4:37.36 she raced to take the bronze medal at CARIFTA 2013. With the swims this year it may take under 4:25 to medal in the girls 15-17 400 metre freestyle.

Jamaica's Alia Atkinson was the last championship qualifier when she cruised home to the third seed in the 200 metre breaststroke. Alia split the 100 metres at 1:14.26 and touched the wall in a total time of 2:34.70 for her ranking. Atkinson who is the reigning CAC champion and record holder at 2:30.99 and national record holder at 2:28.77 from the London 2012 Games may have to better her personal record to be atop of the rostrum. This as the swimmers seeded faster than her have personal bests faster than 2:25. Those persons are Americans Micah Lawrence and Laura Sogar who posted times of 2:30.80 and 2:31.04 respectively.

Alia's countryman Mathew Lyn competed in the 400 metre freestyle finishing 81st in a time of 4:27.33 with a 200 metre split of 2:09.42 and 71st in the 100 metre backstroke in 1:04.73 with splits of 31.56 and 33.17

Trinidad and Tobago's Jabari Baptiste made it to the D Final of the 100 metre backstroke placing 32nd in 1:00.53. Again Aruba's Jordy Groeters ended West Indian Interest in the morning heats when he placed 45th in the 200 metre breaststroke in 2:33.84. Groeters is the defending 15-17 CARIFTA champion in this event. He won that race in Kingston in 2:22.79

Contributed by

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