

## **STRENGTH OF A WOMAN**

### **Caribbean women take top honours on last day of Orlando Grand Prix**

On the last day of competition at the Orlando Grand Prix the major honours were shared among the regional women. Bahamians Joanna Evans and Arianna Vanderpool-Wallace and Jamaican Alia Atkinson all had top 10 finishes.



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Joanna Evans

Sixteen year old distance sensation Joanna Evans continued her awesome showing at the ARENA Grand Prix meet. The Swift swimming athlete made it three

national marks from three swims. Racing in the early heats of the women's 800 metre freestyle she lowered her standard of 8:58.64 set on August 26, 2013 in Dubai at World Junior Championships to 8:57.04. She swam that time based on the speed of splits of 2:12.72 at 200 metres and 4:29.59 at 400 metres. The event was won by US Olympian Chloe Sutton in 8:35.20 with the runner up being Adreina Pinto of Venezuela representing Gator Swim club 8:36.35. Pinto is the reigning CAC champion and record holder with her 8:40.51 swim from the 2010 Games held in Puerto Rico.



[www.floridaswimnetwork.com](http://www.floridaswimnetwork.com)

Alia Atkinson improved significantly on her preliminary time of 2:21.22 in the finals of the women's 200 metre individual medley championship final when she

punched the clock in 2:17.42 for 5<sup>th</sup> place. The 25 year old Atkinson is the reigning CAC champion and record holder with her standard of 2:17.31 set on July 23, 2010 in Mayagüez, Puerto Rico .Atkinson also holds the Jamaica national record of 2:14.75 with her silver medal winning performance at the 2011 PANAM Games in Mexico The event went to Hungarian ace Katinka Hosszu who won in a meet record of 2:11.27.



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Arianna Vanderpool-Wallace

Arianna Vanderpool-Wallace who won the 50 metre freestyle earlier at the Grand Prix had the strategy of using her sizzling pace in the Championship finals of the 100 metre freestyle to take the race away from the field. For the first 50 metres the strategy was right on point as Arianna attacked the first and only wall in 26.39

seconds. She had an advantage of 0.20 seconds over Megan Romano US 2013 World Championships 400 medley and freestyle anchor leg superwoman and 0.34 seconds over Canadian Olympian Victoria Poon. The effects of still being in hard training took over as the 5'6 star from Nassau was overtaken by the 6'0 Poon and then the 6'2 Romano. The final results had Poon winning in 55.20 seconds a new meet record, Romano second in 55.25 and Vanderpool-Wallace third in 55.41.

Earlier Alia Atkinson had qualified for the finals but decided not to swim the race in the evening. Atkinson swam a brisk 57.25 seconds for 7<sup>th</sup> overall. This narrowly missed the Jamaican record of Natasha Moodie of 57.16 set on July 19 2010 at the CAC Games. Atkinson and Moodie who were teammates at the Comets swim club in Florida which has now evolved into South Florida Aquatics would team up to set the national mark in the 400 medley relay the day after Moodie set her freestyle record. The team of Kendese Nangle backstroke, Alia breaststroke, Alexia Royal-Eatmon butterfly and Moodie freestyle would swim a combined time of 4:20.93.

Ariel Weech another Bahamian seeking to make her mark internationally swam 57.60 to take second in the C final of the women's 100 metre freestyle and finish 18<sup>th</sup> overall.

In the C Final of the men's 100 metre freestyle Azura Florida Aquatics teammates Trinidad and Tobago's Joshua Romany and Suriname's Renzo Tjon-A-Joe could

not better their heats swim of 51.85 and 52.16 respectively. Romany finished third in the finals in 52.17 while Renzo was 8<sup>th</sup> in 52.79.

Those Caribbean swimmers missing a second swim in the men's 100 metre freestyle included Bermudan Olympian Roy-Allan Burch 35<sup>th</sup> in 52.71 ,Trinidad and Tobago's Jabari Baptiste 47<sup>th</sup> 53.42 , Bahamian Olympian Elvis Burrows 48<sup>th</sup> 53.45, Jordy Groters 75<sup>th</sup> 54.42, Suriname's Zuhayr Pigot 84<sup>th</sup> 54.61, Trinidad and Tobago's Emiro Goosen 114<sup>th</sup> 55.86 and Jamaica's Sidrell Williams 122<sup>nd</sup> 56.21.

Surinamese Diguan Pigot representing Metro Aquatics finished 32<sup>nd</sup> in the D finals of the men's 200 individual medley in 2:18.40 slower than his morning swim of 2:13.82. Aruba's Jordy Groters was 51<sup>st</sup> overall in 2:17.07

The meet was concluded with 400 medley relay swims by Jamaican's Alia Atkinson and Sidrell Williams. Atkinson helped South Florida Aquatics to the bronze in 4:26.51. Atkinson had the fastest breaststroke leg with her split of 1:08.93. The event was won by York YMCA in 4:21.39 with Mexico second in 4:22.67

Sidrell Williams had a butterfly split of 1:00.68 to help St Andrew Swimming to 11<sup>th</sup> place in 4:13.16. The event was won by Azura Florida Aquatics in 3:52.08. Williams shares the Jamaican 15-17 medley record of 4:04.23 with a team that

comprised Cameron Chow backstroke, Kevaughn Campbell breaststroke, Sidrell butterfly and Timothy Wynter which took the bronze at CARIFTA 2013

Contributed by

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