

V.I. Track Athletes Record Strong Results Ahead of NCAA East Regional Championships

Michelle Smith earned SEC silver and rose to No. 2 in the NCAA, Sofia Swindell set V.I. U20 and UPenn 100m hurdles records, and Saraiah Walkes reached two sprint finals while helping Eastern Michigan win the MAC 4x100m relay title.

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Virgin Islands athletes Michelle Smith, top, and Sofia Swindell, below, delivered standout conference championship performances as they prepare for the NCAA East Regional Championships in Kentucky.

Three Virgin Islands track and field athletes delivered notable performances during conference championship competition, with Michelle Smith earning silver at the SEC Championships, Sofia

Swindell setting a new Virgin Islands Under-20 record at the Ivy League Heptagonal Championships, and Saraiah Walkes closing her senior season with multiple sprint finals and a relay title at the Mid-American Conference Championships.

Virgin Islands Sports Ambassador Michelle Smith, a sophomore at the University of Georgia, finished second in the 400-meter hurdles final at the SEC Championships on Saturday, May 16. Smith recorded a time of 54.72 seconds, earning the SEC silver medal.

Her time moved her to No. 2 in the NCAA and No. 4 in the world in the event, according to the Virgin Islands Track & Field Federation.

Smith is scheduled to compete next at the NCAA East Regional Championships in Lexington, Kentucky, from May 28 to 30, where she will seek to qualify for the NCAA Championships.

Sofia Swindell, a freshman at the University of Pennsylvania, also had a strong weekend at the Ivy League Heptagonal Track and Field Championships, held May 16 and 17 in Princeton, New Jersey.

Swindell competed in hurdles and relays, beginning with the 100-meter hurdles. She ran 13.58 seconds in the preliminaries to advance to the final, then won the championship race in 13.39 seconds with a slight headwind of -0.3 meters per second.

The time secured the Ivy League Heptagonal title and established a new Virgin Islands Under-20 record and a UPenn record.

Swindell also contributed to two relay podium finishes. In the 4x100-meter relay, she helped her team finish second in 44.87 seconds. She later anchored the 4x400-meter relay to victory in 3:32.24, setting a new meet record.

Swindell will also compete at the NCAA East Regional Championships in Lexington, Kentucky, from May 28 to 30, where she is scheduled to compete with her UPenn team in the 4x400-meter relay.

Saraiah Walkes, a senior at Eastern Michigan University, competed at the Mid-American Conference Championships and advanced to the finals in both the 100 meters and 200 meters.

Walkes ran 11.63 seconds in the 100-meter preliminaries before finishing sixth in the final in 11.61 seconds. In the 200 meters, she ran 23.76 seconds in the preliminaries and finished fourth in the final in 23.64 seconds.

Her top result came in the 4x100-meter relay, where Walkes and her Eastern Michigan teammates won the MAC title in 45.33 seconds.

The Virgin Islands Track & Field Federation congratulated Smith, Swindell and Walkes on their conference championship performances.