

BADMINTON PANAM MALE AND FEMALE CONTINENTAL TEAM CHAMPIONSHIPS 2018 KICK OFF AT THE NATIONAL RACQUET CENTRE

The opening ceremony for the PanAm Male and Female Continental Team Championships was held on Thursday 15th February, 2018 at the National Racquet Centre, Tacarigua. Trinidad and Tobago welcomed to its shores athletes from Canada, The United States of America, Jamaica, Barbados, Dominican Republic, Guatemala, and Peru.



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Trinidad and Tobago also has a contingent of athletes participating in the championships bringing to eight (8) the total number of competing countries with more than 100 participants overall. Complimenting this tournament, will be the hosting of a high performance training camp which will allow athletes and coaches to prepare for the next event on their journey to the Tokyo Olympics 2020. The tournament's programme will also include training for referees on new fixed height technology, which will be introduced for the first time ever in the PanAm Region.

The Trinidad and Tobago Badminton Association (TTBA), the Badminton World Federation (BWF) and Badminton Pan America collaborated with the Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs to spearhead the event which is the highest level of International Badminton to ever be hosted in Trinidad and Tobago and for the very first time. It was another memorable day for Trinidad and Tobago in Badminton as last year in August, T&T hosted for the first time the CAREBACO Championships which saw fourteen (14) participating countries.

The Honourable Darryl Smith, Minister of Sport and Youth Affairs noted that his Ministry was pleased to be part of such momentous events as it supports the Ministry's mandate to promote and propel Sport Tourism in T&T. He recalled that at the CAREBACO Championships last year, he expressed his interest in hosting the said PanAm Team Championships and was grateful that T&T was indeed able

to do so and also expressed his hope that T&T could host the World Junior Championships in the near future.

The year 2017 has been one of the most successful years for sport in Trinidad and Tobago with racquet sports including the CAREBACO Championships, having brought significant revenue into the coffers of Trinidad and Tobago. This Badminton competition is in keeping with the Ministry's Sport Tourism drive and it is envisaged that Trinidad and Tobago will reap significant benefits in repeat clientele from the successful hosting of the tournament for off season training and even conferencing activities in sport.

In closing, Minister Smith expressed thanks to the Trinidad and Tobago Badminton Federation (TTBA) for their continuous hard work and dedication toward the sport of Badminton, for bringing such historic moments and opportunities to Trinidad and Tobago's shores and for raising the national profile of badminton in the country.

The winning team of the PanAm Male and Female Continental Team Championships 2018 will represent the region at the Thomas & Uber Cup in Thailand, May 2018.