



(OECS Secretariat, Castries, St. Lucia, Thursday February 3rd 2011) Grenada's Champion team has hailed the OECS Amateur Swimming Competition as a tremendous boost for regional integration. Speaking at the end of the just concluded competition in Saint Lucia, Grenada's national swimming coach Micheal Davidson says among the Member Countries, a spirit of integration lies beneath the highly competitive event:

"Yes it is. We have seen great camaraderie between the swimmers in the region. With St. Kitts and Nevis coming on in the next tournament we should see more camaraderie in the tournament."

Grenada with a total medal haul of 174 including 64 gold captured their fifth OECS swimming championship title chalking up 1,668.50 points over long time rivals Saint Lucia who collected 50 gold in a total 128 medals. The hosts finished with 1,508 points. Despite Grenada's dominance in the pool which landed them their 10th OECS Swimming championship overall, winning coach Davidson saluted Antigua and Barbuda's impressive third place appearance. Antigua and Barbuda who dominated at least one of the races took home 81 medals including 16 gold. They finished with 1,079.5 points. Coach Davidson says Antigua and Barbuda's showing has added a new dimension to the clash in the pool:

"Next we go to Antigua and Barbuda and we think it will be the most competitive OECS swimming tournament. Before we just had Grenada and Lucia but Antigua and Barbuda came like a bomb this year and we know that when we go to Antigua and Barbuda for the next tournament they will even be better. So I think it will be most competitive and it therefore encourages us to work even harder to achieve more. It speaks wonders because when Antigua and Barbuda came in about three years ago they were struggling. A lot of work has been done in Antigua and Barbuda. St. Vincent and the Grenadines have reorganized and we are sure they will push themselves up. And so the event will become more and more competitive."

Coach Davidson also expects Grenada to clock more outstanding finishes at the Carifta Swimming Championships in April: ***"We have been doing really well at the OECS level. This is our fifth straight year winning this title and I must give credit mainly to the swimmers and the parents who have worked very hard to achieve this. It's a real meaningful win for us since we have had the two hurricanes. We train in a 25 yard four-lane pool and when we had the hurricanes we could not swim for one year in the pool but we are a resilient people and we bounced back to put it together again. We have outstanding swimmers. They all did well. It takes hard work and support from the parents to help the kids put in the work."***

The 20th OECS Swimming Championships was a 2010 rescheduled event following it's postponement forced by Hurricane Tomas in early November 2010: ***"This was the best championship hosted by Saint Lucia and credit must go to the organizers. We hope that the other OECS Member States match up to the level Saint Lucia has attained .Let's keep the standard higher and higher."***-Micheal Davidson

Meanwhile Head of the OECS Sports Desk Denis James says the tournament met his expectations: ***"Let me say special congratulations to the Grenada Swim Team for capturing the OECS swimming championship for the fifth consecutive year; and hearty commendations to the Antigua & Barbuda swimmers for putting up such a sterling performance at the Rodney Heights Aquatic Centre in St. Lucia over the weekend of January 14 – 16, 2011."***

The British Virgin Islands and St. Vincent and the Grenadines who fielded small contingents in the tournament were also commended for their participation. The British Virgin Islands finished with two bronze while and St. Vincent and the Grenadines earned a Bronze and Silver medal in the tournament.

Antigua and Barbuda will host the 21st OECS Swimming Championships later this year.