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CEES RISING TALENTS 2026 : AN EVENING CELEBRATING THE TALENTS OF TOMORROW

For this second edition, held in late June at the Grand Case Beach Club, 19 young people representing seven disciplines received 25 awards. Selected for their academic achievements, sporting performances and personal qualities, these rising talents embody the values promoted by the CEES: hard work, perseverance, discipline and self-improvement. The ceremony also highlighted the essential role of families, teachers, coaches and partners in supporting these young people on their path to excellence.



RISING TALENTS 2026 Jacob Brown shares a message of leadership with student-athletes in the CST program

Former National Football League player, speaker, author and coach, Jacob Brown addressed the student-athletes of the CST program run by the Centre of Excellence and Education through Sport (CEES) during the Rising Talents 2026 ceremony.

Joining the awards ceremony remotely, he shared an inspiring message on performance, leadership and personal development. Having visited Saint-Martin last February, Jacob Brown had already met with the CST student-athletes alongside the CEES team during a session focused on high-performance pathways, personal growth and the demands of elite sport. During this latest address, he reaffirmed his commitment to the program and praised the CEES for its dedication to supporting young athletes across the territory.

His message highlighted a holistic approach to developing student-athletes, where sporting excellence goes hand in hand with academic success, personal commitment and responsible citizenship.

He also emphasized the importance of transferable skills such as resilience, leadership, discipline and teamwork—qualities that are essential both on the field and in everyday life. Beyond his professional sports career, Jacob Brown shared his perspective as a parent currently supporting his son's college recruitment journey. This experience gives him valuable insight into the challenges faced by young athletes and their families as they build a balanced future.

Proud to be associated with this initiative, he concluded: "I am very proud to be part of this program. I hope to remain involved and return very soon." Through this testimony, the CEES reaffirms its ambition to support every student-athlete in achieving their academic, athletic and civic goals, using sport as a powerful tool for education, personal development and success.

« Your sport will shape you, but who you become off the field will define your future. »

Leslie Ardon : STRUCTURING AND SUPPORTING THE CEES CST PROGRAM

> Could you introduce yourself and tell us about the mission of the Territorial Sports Centers (CST) program?

I am Leslie Ardon, Head of the Performance Pathways Department at the CEES in Saint-Martin. I oversee programs dedicated to promising young athletes, including the Territorial Sports Centers (CST), which currently support nearly 70 student-athletes, from primary school through high school. The mission of the CST program is clear: to help every young athlete build a threefold pathway combining academic success, athletic development and responsible citizenship. Our goal is to develop well-rounded, committed young people who can achieve lasting success without having to choose between education and sport.

> What added value does the CST program bring to the territory?

We coordinate and secure each young athlete's development in close collaboration with sports clubs, the National Education system, families and partners. For Saint-Martin, the CST is an essential asset. It enables young people to pursue their ambitions while benefiting from structured support. The message is clear: talent is not only identified here—it is nurtured and developed over time.

> What values guide the support provided to these young athletes?

Three core values shape our work: discipline, autonomy and responsibility. Beyond athletic performance, we help young

people become organized, committed and resilient. Success is most meaningful when academic progress, sporting achievement and personal development grow together.

> What were the highlights of this year's program?

The Rising Talents ceremony is certainly the flagship event, but the greatest achievements are built throughout the year. Support provided at Soualiga College, training camps during school holidays, workshops and exchanges between participants all contribute to visible progress in confidence, organization and maturity.

> What role do partners play in the success of the program?

They are essential. Sports clubs, federations, businesses and institutions strengthen the program far beyond their financial, institutional or material support. They create opportunities, open new pathways and reinforce the credibility of each athlete's journey. Rising Talents is also an opportunity to express our gratitude, because every success is the result of a collective effort.

> What is your greatest source of satisfaction following this edition?

The collective success behind every individual achievement. Behind every award recipient stands an entire support network: families, coaches, teachers,

clubs and the educational team. Seeing all these people come together around a young athlete is our greatest reward.

> What are the next challenges for the Performance Pathways Department?

We want to continue strengthening the program by enhancing CST supervision, expanding access to higher education through the Sports Mobility Scholarship and the High-Level Athlete Support Scholarship, and providing even more individualized guidance.

Our goal remains unchanged: to help Saint-Martin's young talents build a sustainable pathway toward excellence.

> A final message to the award recipients and partners?

To the award recipients: be proud of what you have achieved. This recognition celebrates your hard work, commitment and progress, but it is only one step in your journey. Keep learning, training, respecting your academic commitments and believing in your ambitions.

To our partners: thank you for your trust and commitment. Your support directly strengthens the opportunities available to young athletes across the territory and helps provide them with the best possible conditions for success.

Together, we are proving that a community which believes in its youth can transform sport into a powerful driver of education, responsibility and opportunity.

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Thank you to all our partners, parents, student-athletes, technical staff and volunteers who contribute every day to the success of the CEES!

