

Top Jamaican shooters take aim at Florida Champs

Top Jamaican shooters say they are ready to take on their American counterparts in the Area 6 Pistol Championships, which will be hosted at the Ancient City Shooting range in St Augustine, Florida, starting today.

Leading the charge for Jamaica will be Lesgar Murdock, Orville Henriques and Sue Ann Henriques, while the American challenge will be lead by World Champion Blake Miguel, Manni Bragg and Shannon Smith. Americans generally dominate the top places at International tournaments, but Murdock opened prospects for a serious dent in those expectations when he defeated Smith at the recent Jamaica Invitational Pistol Tournament, hosted by the Jamaica Rifle Association at its Mountain View headquarters. Smith, a Grandmaster, with a much higher ranking than Murdock who is Master class, was left in second place. Interestingly, at the Florida Open held in February, Smith was a close second beaten by just 40 points by Miguel. Murdock finished in fifth place with Henriques in seventh. Murdock, who trains in the US, declared in an interview that defeating Smith was a huge benchmark in his quest to take on the best in the world. "Beating Smith here tells me I can go to international tournaments and win, not just participate," Murdock said. As for this weekend's Area Six, which starts tomorrow at 8 a.m., he was more than ready for a much bigger breakthrough. "The Area Six will be important and I intend to be ready for it." Henriques, who came third in the JIPT, has a best finish of second place achieved last year at the Double Tap Championship in Wichita, Texas. This performance is the best finish in recent memory by a Jamaican in the Limited Section in a major tournament in the US. He then participated and won the monthly challenge match hosted by Manchester Pistol and Rifle Club last weekend. However, while the levels of shooters who participated are nowhere near the class of the international field, the stages at the MRPC were so designed to reflect international standard. Henriques was very fast, but more importantly shot clean, not recording a single mite. He made the trip to Florida on Monday so he could get in adequate practice. Following a session yesterday, Henriques said: "I was able to get in a lot of rounds (at practice) and I should report with good form come Friday." Jamaica Star