



**MINISTERIAL STATEMENT  
To the House of Assembly**

**by  
The Hon. Owen K. Darrell, JP, MP  
Minister of Tourism & Transport, Culture & Sport**

**EMANCIPATION COMMEMORATION AND CUP MATCH 2025**

***Friday 18<sup>th</sup> July 2025***

---

**Mr. Speaker,** I rise today to acknowledge one of the most defining moments in our collective history: the emancipation of our ancestors from the brutal system of slavery.

This year's emancipation commemoration theme, *"Time Tells Our Truth: A Legacy of Freedom"*, as set by the Department of Culture, invites us to confront the realities of our past, honour the strength of those who came before us, and consider the legacy we continue to shape today.

**Mr. Speaker,** Emancipation Day holds deep historical and cultural meaning for Bermuda. It forms the foundation of our beloved Cup Match holiday, a two-day observance first established by the Friendly Societies in the aftermath of slavery. Today, Cup Match is marked by cricket,

celebration, and community pride, but its roots remain grounded in our people's fight for justice, freedom, and dignity.

**Mr. Speaker,** the first day of Cup Match is officially recognized as Emancipation Day, a public holiday dedicated to commemorating the abolition of slavery in Bermuda. On this day, we honour those who endured and resisted enslavement, and those who demanded better for future generations. The second day of the Cup Match holiday is Mary Prince Day, a tribute to one of Bermuda's most courageous activists and a beloved National Hero.

**Mr. Speaker,** Mary Prince was born into enslavement and became the first woman of African descent to write an autobiography detailing the horrors of enslavement in the British Empire. Her narrative, "The History of Mary Prince," gave powerful testimony to the lived realities of enslaved people and became a vital piece of the abolitionist movement. Through her words, she exposed injustice, shifted public sentiment, and helped move history. Her story still echoes today, not only as a record of the past but also as a reminder that truth-telling is itself an act of resistance.

**Mr. Speaker,** the Department of Culture has curated a calendar of events to mark the commemoration of emancipation. These events, organized in collaboration with community partners, provide a platform for education, reflection, and celebration. This is available to view on [culture.bm](http://culture.bm).

**Mr. Speaker,** among these events is one of our signature offerings: the Dr. Kenneth E. Robinson / Cyril Outerbridge Packwood Memorial Lecture, now in its 16th year. This annual lecture honours two of Bermuda's most respected Black historians and continues their mission of preserving and interpreting our history with care and integrity.

**Mr. Speaker,** this year's lecture will be delivered by Ms. Cheryl Packwood, a cultural advocate, legal scholar, and descendant of the Packwood family. Her talk is entitled *"Unravelling the Narrative – A Critical Legal Study of the Institutionalisation of Slavery in Bermuda."* Drawing from her recent research, Ms. Packwood will explore how systems of law and policy were used to legitimise and sustain slavery in Bermuda. She will offer a critical lens into the legal foundations of injustice and examine how those legacies still shape our society today.

**Mr. Speaker,** commemorating emancipation is not just about remembering the past. It is about claiming the full truth of our history, and recognising the legacy of strength, courage, and resistance that we inherit. It is also about holding ourselves accountable to continue pushing for justice, equity, and dignity in every corner of our society.

**Mr. Speaker,** this year's theme, *"Time Tells Our Truth: A Legacy of Freedom"*, is both a call and a challenge. The passage of time does not erase truth – it reveals it. And in telling that truth, we honour our ancestors, educate our children, and shape a better future for generations yet to come.

**Mr. Speaker** may this year's commemoration be one of reflection, recognition, and unity. May it inspire us to continue the work of freedom, not just in memory, but in action. And may we all enjoy a safe and joyous Cup Match filled with the spirit of community.

**Mr. Speaker,** on the sporting side of the upcoming Emancipation celebrations, in just two weeks July 31<sup>st</sup> and August 1<sup>st</sup> we come together to celebrate a cherished and time-honoured tradition, a true reflection of the spirit of Bermuda, The Annual Cup Match Classic! This iconic event unites us as a community, transcending boundaries of age, race, and

background, to revel in our shared love for cricket, camaraderie, and the vibrant culture that makes our island so unique.

**Mr. Speaker**, this is truly the time of year when the spirit of rivalry and unity shines brightest. You will see workplaces and homes proudly adorned in light blue and dark blue or red and blue, and many dressed head to toe in their team colours. This is definitely the time of year where if you get caught wearing the wrong colours, you will be sure to be called out.

**Mr. Speaker**, I would like to express my gratitude to this year's host, St. George's Cricket Club, under the leadership of President Mishael Paynter and his committee, organizers, sponsors, and countless volunteers who are working tirelessly to make this year's Cup Match possible.

Each year, the Government is pleased to provide a financial contribution to the host club to support their efforts in delivering this beloved national event—and this year will be no different. We all look forward to the fun and revelry of Cup Match, but the Government also wants to ensure that we celebrate safely; **Mr. Speaker** to that end, the Ministry of Tourism & Transport, Culture & Sport will also be providing funding to an

engineering company to ensure that the scaffolding at the event has been professionally assessed.

**Mr. Speaker,** in addition to acknowledging the hard work of Mr. Paynter and St. George's Cricket Club, I would also like to thank the Somerset Cricket Club President Richard Scott and his team. Both of your clubs' dedication and commitment ensure this celebration remains a cherished highlight on our calendar.

**Mr. Speaker,** Before I conclude, I would be remiss if I did not highlight the much anticipated 27<sup>th</sup> Annual Mini Cup Match, hosted by the Bermuda Government. This celebrated event is scheduled to take place on Thursday, July 24<sup>th</sup> at the Sea Breeze Oval, located on the grounds of Bailey's Bay Cricket Club. This year's match will see Somerset, the defending champions, face off against St. George's at 10:30 a.m. The young athletes participating, aged 8 to 14 have been diligently preparing over the past three weeks as part of the Department of Sport and Recreation's Next Innings! Summer Day Camp. Their training has been guided by former Cup Match players Irving Romaine and Onias Bascome, alongside dedicated camp staff.

**Mr. Speaker**, each year, Mini Cup Match not only brings joy and excitement but also provides a promising glimpse into the future of cricket in Bermuda. We are especially grateful to CG Insurance for once again sponsoring this annual classic and for their continued commitment to nurturing the sport among our young people.

**Mr. Speaker**, as we embark on this festive journey, let us embrace the spirit of Cup Match wholeheartedly. I would like to encourage the public to attend the last Cup Match trials at each club on Saturday, July 26<sup>th</sup>, and stay for the exciting selection process that evening.

Also, Colt Cup Match will follow on Sunday, July 27<sup>th</sup> at 11:00 am at St. George's Cricket Club where you can witness the up-and-coming players take on each other. I look forward to the Cup Match trials and stopping in on my fellow Bermudians setting up their camps over the next two weeks.

The first day of Cup Match will mark my third time as Minister participating in the special pregame moment of greeting players and officials just before the coveted first ball. I am honoured to be a part of this year's game and know that this festive event symbolizes the bonds that tie us together, connected through heritage, pride, and unity. It is a

time when families, friends, and even strangers come together to create lasting memories, forming connections that withstand the test of time.

Happy Cup Match to all! **Thank you, Mr. Speaker.**