



Beach Volleyball

- John Kessel, USA Volleyball Director of Education, Grassroots, Disabled & Beach Volleyball

Beach Volleyball is a very popular and fast growing sport all over the world. At the same time it is a sport recognized by major international sport associations such as the International Olympic Committee and the International Volleyball Federation. Beach Volleyball is a fun game that can help you accomplish your goals of becoming a world-class athlete. The doubles game can also be played on the grass, using the same portable net systems and rules.

In 1996 Beach Volleyball was, for the first time, part of the Olympic Games. 24 Men's Teams from 19 different nations and 18 Women's Teams from 13 nations participated in the event. The American Men finished first and second in Atlanta. 1997 the U.S. hosted the 8th Beach Volleyball World Championships at the UCLA Tennis Center. In the 2000 Olympics in Sydney, with 48 teams from 23 nations, the USA Men's team took home the gold again, while the other USA men and women's teams all tied with three 5th place finishes. Athens in 2004 will be played under the lights and promises to be another great competition.

Beach Volleyball is big! Especially in the United States where the AVP drives a professional volleyball circus bigger than in any other country. USA Volleyball, AAU, and the California Beach Volleyball Association (CBVA) have hosted thousands of major beach volleyball tournaments. For over a decade, the U.S. Junior Olympic Beach Volleyball Championships have been held for kids in the 18, 17, 16, 15, 14, 13, and 12 & under age brackets. The International Volleyball Federation (FIVB) staged the first ever Junior World Championships in the summer of 2001 and added the Youth Worlds in 2002. Beach Volleyball now has a World University Games Championships - USA Women won the gold medal in 2002 - and in 2005 will be in the Deaflympics.

History of Beach Volleyball

Beach Volleyball was played for the first time in the USA in the 1920s, but for decades it has been played only for fun and recreation. Only in the last decade, this discipline has received world-wide recognition under the leadership of the FIVB President Dr. Rubén Acosta. Thanks to the collaboration of 217 affiliated National Federations and the enthusiasm of more than 50 million players, Beach Volleyball has become one of the most popular summer sports around the globe. Beach Volleyball should also be grateful to all the kings and queens of the beach who dedicated their lives to the sport and have preserved the legacy of a lifestyle imitated by players all over the world. The beach has always been their home, and the only prize they ever sought after was victory. The spirit born in the early 1920s, combining fair-play and enthusiasm has been kept alive to this day. Today, we can admire one of the most spectacular sports ever, on the best beaches of the world. Names like Gene Selznick, Jim Menges, Ron Van Hagen, Sinjin Smith, Randy Stoklos, Mike Dodd, Karch Kiraly, Kent Steffes, Dain Blanton, Eric Foniomoana, Jenny Johnson Jordan, Annett Davis, Holly McPeak, Misty May, Barbra Fontana, Kathy Gregory, Nina Matthews, Linda Hanley, Mary Jo Peppler, Liz Masakayan, Jackie Silva, Sandra Pires and many others are part of a team that has maintained the sense of tradition of the former game, brilliantly paving the way to the Olympic Games.

U.S. JR. OLYMPIC BEACH VOLLEYBALL CHAMPIONSHIPS

The U.S. Junior Olympic Beach Volleyball Championships are held in late July to early August for 18, 17, 16, 15, 14, 13, 12, and under, boys and girls. www.usavolleyball.org for more info or contact Mike Chandler, USAV Director of Events at mike.chandler@usav.org

1996/2000 Olympic Games USA Beach Volleyball Results

<u>Men</u>	<u>Women</u>	<u>Men</u>	<u>Women</u>
Kiraly/Steffes 1 st (<i>Olympic Gold Medal</i>)	Hanley/Fontana 4 th place	Blanton/Fonoimoana 1 st (<i>Olympic Gold Medal</i>)	May/McPeak 5 th Place
Dodd/Whitmarsh 2 nd (<i>Olympic Silver Medal</i>)	Reno/McPeak 7 th place	Heidger/Wong 5 th Place	Johnson- Jordon/Davis 5 th Place
Smith/Henkel 5 th place	Castro/Richardson 13 th place		

Why should you play beach volleyball ?

The beach game is GREAT for improving your indoor skills/game. Whatever your weaknesses are, you get to work on them a ton. Unlike the 6 person game, you touch the ball in every rally, and with just two of you covering the court, you learn to read and anticipate much better. Dealing with the sun and wind helps you be more adaptable. Player height is less important outdoors -- ball control and skill is most important. You get to be outside in the sun, often in beautiful settings. It is a great way to improve your jump, as there are just two of you to block and hit every rally. Communicating effectively is essential in the sport, and the game helps you and your teammate to grow stronger together.

Karch Kiraly:

"A lot of indoor players are specialists, but on the beach you need to play all phases well, and you need a lot of ball control."

Scrambling Around

It used to be different. Coaches of indoor volleyball programs wanted their players to avoid playing games at the beach. Rich McLaughlin, former Loyola Marymount University men's volleyball coach explains how the sand game benefited his players: "I've always told my players to play in games at the beach during the off season. It helps in so many ways. First, there are fewer guys around that can bail out your mistakes. Playing at the beach works your ball control skills. It seems it's always the beach player who steps in from the back row to set the ball after one of those inspirational digs by the setter. Those transition plays win matches." "The sand also helps you work on your speed and agility. Indoors you'll expand your digging range and be quicker in pursuit after balls. A player like Corin Bemus (AAA) really shows that he played a lot of beach ball. He can do it all out there – hit, set, block and coaches love to have those types of athletes. Staying focused during a beach game requires a big level of concentration. Deal with any distraction after the game. During the game, focus on jump serving and passing. Set personal goals. And, of course, I remind them of the LMU way – compete, don't just play."

Rick was AA high school and earned his AAA with Sam Blood a few years later. Most top level coaches encourage their players to play as much as they can on the beach. Just refrain on the day of the match.

MAIN BEACH VOLLEYBALL ASSOCIATIONS

- USAV - USA Volleyball (National Governing Body), USA; fax (719) 228-6899. 715. S. Circle Drive, Colorado Springs, CO 80910, *toll free 1-88USVOLLEY*. Email beach@usav.org - www.usavolleyball.org
- CBVA (California Beach Volleyball Association), 28925 Pacific Coast Highway, Suite 101, Malibu, CA 90265 • Tel: 800-350-CBVA (2282) • www.cbva.org, or email:info@cbva.com
- FIVB (Fédération Internationale de Volleyball - International Volleyball Federation), Switzerland; email beach@fivb.ch -- <http://www.fivb.ch>
- Pro Beach Volleyball – www.avptour.com