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FÉDÉRATION INTERNATIONALE
DE VOLLEYBALL

THE FUTURE OF BEACH VOLLEYBALL TODAY



As the fourth President of the International Volleyball Federation, it is my great pleasure to present you with this important report into the current state of international beach volleyball.

Historically, beach volleyball has been the junior partner to volleyball but, like all good partnerships, the role of each of our disciplines has evolved over time, and beach volleyball is currently enjoying an unprecedented spell in the spotlight.

In 2010, during my presidency of the FIVB Beach Volleyball Commission, we launched the Beach Volleyball Continental Cup. It was seen as a way to provide

more opportunity to play beach volleyball across all continents, as well as providing a ticket to the Olympic Games for the successful nations.

I knew that the Continental Cup was a good idea for the development of beach volleyball, but I honestly never envisaged the extent to which it has influenced the current explosion of the sport globally. The success of the inaugural Continental Cup was the launchpad for the changes we have made throughout beach volleyball and the new structure we have outlined for the period 2013-2016.

Our aims are to grow the sport worldwide; to increase the number of participating national federations; to increase the role

of the confederations; to increase the importance of all levels of events; to increase the number of promoters; to create more opportunities for players to play; to allow new teams and new countries to enter the World Tour easily; and to ensure high quality events without over-burdening promoters.

We witnessed an extraordinary FIVB Beach Volleyball World Championships in Poland, in which new countries like Paraguay, Thailand and Vanuatu not only took part, but were genuinely competitive. Meanwhile, the FIVB Beach Volleyball World Tour featured a record-breaking 10 Grand Slam events in 2013, including the

United States for the first time in a decade, as well as a first-ever World Tour stop in Argentina.

This report documents the rise and rise of beach volleyball, from its origins on the beaches of California to its first Olympic appearance in 1996, the first FIVB World Championships in 1997, the pageantry and drama of Horse Guards Parade in 2012 and looking ahead to what will perhaps be its finest hour, on Copacabana Beach at the 2016 Olympic Games in Rio.

I hope you enjoy reading about it as much as I have enjoyed dedicating myself towards the development of this truly wonderful sport. ■

Dr. Ary S. Graça F°
FIVB President

TIME TO EVALUATE WHAT HAS BEEN ACHIEVED AND LOOK AHEAD TO WHAT IS TO COME



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A NEW DIRECTION FOR BEACH VOLLEYBALL

The sport that began life on the beaches of California has grown so much and it now faces an incredibly exciting future

“In 1996 in Atlanta, beach volleyball was included on the Olympic Games programme for the first time”

Beach volleyball as a sport has come a long way since the first nets were erected on the beaches of Santa Monica, California, in the 1920s. Thanks to a few imaginative enthusiasts back then, a beach volleyball trail was blazed right through the last century and it is now one of the most popular summer sports in the world and a jewel in the Olympic crown.

The first international FIVB-sanctioned beach volleyball tournament was held on Ipanema Beach in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in 1987 – the start of what is now known as the FIVB World Tour. In 1996 in Atlanta, beach volleyball was included on the programme of the Olympic Games for the first time, and the very next year saw the first edition of the FIVB Beach Volleyball World Championships.

In the first decade of this century, beach volleyball continued to grow, culminating in the introduction in 2010 of the Beach Volleyball Continental Cup – the brainchild of the then Beach Volleyball Commission President and now President of

the FIVB, Dr. Ary S. Graça Fº. The Continental Cup provided a total of seven tickets per gender to the 2012 Olympic Games in London, breaking the trend of previous Games where the complete Olympic quota of 23 teams (plus host nation) was determined only via the World Tour rankings.

Instead, 143 countries took part in the Olympic qualification process, which ran from 2010 to 2012 across 71 tournaments and 54 organising federations – remarkable numbers that have set the tone for the next edition, which will get under way in 2014.

Such was the success of the inaugural Continental Cup that it has changed the philosophy of the international beach volleyball season for 2013 and beyond, with new organisers and a record number of World Tour tournaments giving more players around the world the chance to play at the top level.

As beach volleyball looks ahead to the second century of its existence, thanks to its new direction under the guidance of President Graça it is a sport that is thriving on so many different levels, and one with an extremely bright future. ■

Left: The FIVB Beach Volleyball World Championships, Rome 2011



Following on from the success of the FIVB Beach Volleyball Continental Cup and the 2012 Olympic beach volleyball competition at Horse Guards Parade in London, the 2013 season in beach volleyball has been one of the most progressive in the history of the sport. The FIVB Beach Volleyball World Championships in Stare Jablonki and a record number

of 10 Grand Slam tournaments were the highlights of a modernised FIVB Beach Volleyball World Tour in 2013, while World Championships at Under-19, Under-21 and – for the first time – Under-23 level were also successfully staged.

The 10 Grand Slams, held across four of the five FIVB confederations in nine different countries, represented an increase from eight in 2012 and six in 2011, while the beach volleyball season running over ➤

PROVIDING OPPORTUNITIES

Changes to the structure of beach volleyball are designed to get more people playing throughout the world



another significant change, the format of all the tournaments – whether FIVB World Championships, FIVB World Tour Grand Slam or FIVB Open – are the same, featuring pool play followed by single elimination knockout rounds.

“Following a very successful year in 2012, the FIVB Beach Volleyball World Tour Council sought a new vision for 2013



nine months was also a first and record prize money of \$6,575,000 (and Bonus Pool) was on offer. At the heart of the calendar were changes voted in by the FIVB Beach Volleyball World Tour Council at the end of 2012, which sought to widen the competitions available for players and the opportunities for national federations to host tournaments.

To provide opportunities for

up-and-coming players, there were also seven FIVB Beach Volleyball Open competitions scheduled in the 2013 calendar, made up of five mixed-gender and two women-only tournaments, ensuring all five Confederations hosted an FIVB event in 2013.

The FIVB World Ranking system embraces beach volleyball events at intercontinental, continental and national level, and, in

“Countries such as Vanuatu, Venezuela and Kazakhstan are now big players internationally”

and beyond in order to capitalise on the tremendous momentum of the past 12 to 24 months,” Beach Volleyball Commission President and FIVB Board of Administration member Vicente Araujo said.

“Thanks to the vision three years ago of the FIVB President Dr. Ary S. Graça Fº, who at the time as Beach Volleyball Commission President introduced

many initiatives for the betterment of beach volleyball, the Continental Cup illustrated how popular beach volleyball is when national federations and athletes are given the chance to play.

“More tournaments and more players are involved, consequently strengthening beach volleyball across all levels. We now see many of

the stars from the Continental Cup competing successfully on the World Tour and World Championships. Countries such as Vanuatu, Venezuela and Kazakhstan are now big players on the international stage.

“The aim looking forward is to create further opportunities for players, create a sustainable beach volleyball event structure and to provide more occasions ➤

“Thanks to the vision three years ago of the FIVB President Dr. Ary S. Graça Fº, the Continental Cup illustrated how popular beach volleyball is when national federations and athletes are given the chance to play.”



Gstaad is one of the FIVB World Tour's most spectacular stops

“In another key development to assist continued growth, the FIVB modified the entry process for the FIVB World Tour and Open events”

for athletes worldwide to play our wonderful sport.”

In another key development to assist with continued growth, the FIVB also modified the entry process for the FIVB World Tour and Open events where National Federation ranking points are used instead of individual player points, putting the onus on the federations to provide a better support platform for their players. ■

FIVB Beach Volleyball Circuit 2013

19
venues

16
countries

4
FIVB Confederations as hosts

9
months

10
Grand Slam tournaments

6,575,000
dollars prize money (and Bonus Pool)

4
tournaments hosted by China

1
FIVB event held in 1987

632
FIVB events held by end 2012*

*Including Open, Grand Slam and Olympics



SHOWCASE GOING FROM STRENGTH TO STRENGTH

The biennial flagship tournament continues to grow, as witnessed this summer on the banks of the beautiful Mazurian Lakes in Poland

The FIVB Beach Volleyball World Championships have built up a reputation as the players' tournament. It is one of the undoubted highlights of the sporting year, as well as a much-desired title for the players on the FIVB Beach Volleyball World Tour.

Prior to the first tournament in its current format in 1997, there were 10 world championships held in Rio de Janeiro every year between 1987 and 1996, and now they are held every two years,

outside of the Olympic Games.

Beach volleyball is growing in popularity, reaching new horizons with more and more countries playing our beautiful game, and the World Championships showcase this talent and growth. The ninth edition of the event in its current format, which was staged in Stare Jablonki, Poland in early July this year, added memorably to that legacy.

It was a tournament that surpassed expectations. It may not have finished in the way that most anticipated, but a year on from when 45,000

spectators flocked to watch beach volleyball each day at the London 2012

Olympic Games, the FIVB Beach Volleyball World Championships showed that the sport is in rude good health.

Surprise results were the order of the day, with new teams establishing themselves in the upper echelons of the sport. Chief among these were the men's champions, Alexander Brouwer and Robert Meeuwse of the Netherlands, ►





who were joined on the podium by bronze medallists Jonathan Erdmann and Kay Matsyk. Their third place was their best ever result, while their female German compatriots Karla Borger and Britta Büthe went one better and won silver, their first-ever FIVB medal.

There were also new nations taking part. In the women's competition, Paraguay's Michelle Valiente Amarilla was

the youngest competitor at the World Championships, aged 15 years and two months, when she played alongside Patricia 'Pati' Caballero. "We have talked to almost every media back home," Valiente Amarilla said. "Football is the most important sport in our country, but everyone is cheering for us now and we have a lot of fans. Everyone is keeping their fingers crossed for us."

Like their Paraguayan rivals, Thailand's Varapatsorn Radaron and Tanarattha Udomchavee became the first team from their country to feature at a World Championships, as did Vanuatu's Elwin Miller and Henriette Iatika, who enjoyed a sensational run in the tournament. They finished second in their pool, beating Czech Republic's Olympians



"There were new nations taking part, including Paraguay and Thailand in the women's competition"



Kristyna Kolocova and Marketa Slukova in the elimination round and only falling to No.1 seeds and eventual winners Chen Xue and Zhang Xi of China after holding set point in the first set.

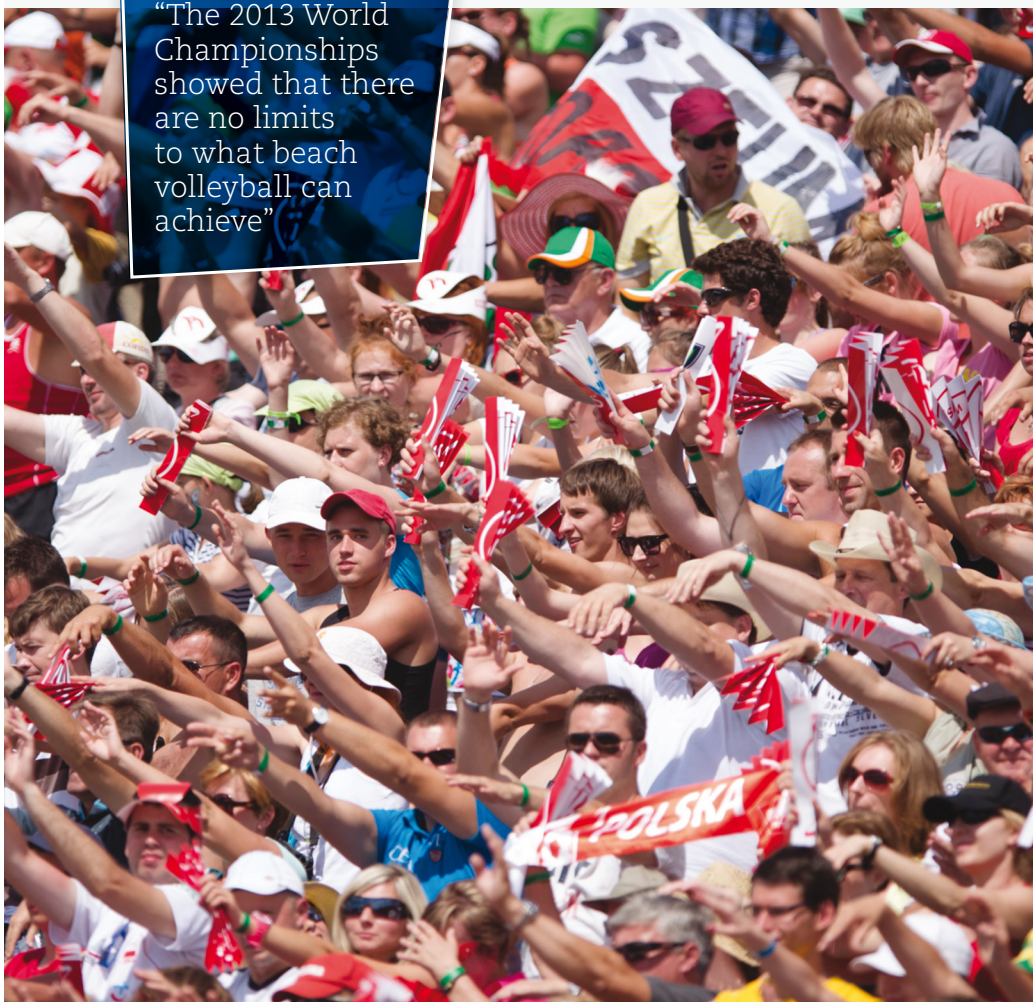
Other key highlights saw four different confederations (South America, Asia, Europe and NORCECA) represented in the women's Final Four for the first time since 2011, while



the record number of points (124) for a two-set men's match on the FIVB World Tour was set when Germany's Markus Bockermann and Mischa Urbatzka beat Alexey Sidorenko and Alexandr Dyachenko of Kazakhstan 29-27, 35-33 in the Round of 32.

Away from the courts, the grounds were a sea of life as sun-baked bathers went for a swim in the lake, children ➤

“The 2013 World Championships showed that there are no limits to what beach volleyball can achieve”



Stare Jablonki by Numbers

192
athletes taking part

31
nationalities

104
matches per gender

22
international
referees

200
Mikasa balls

1,000,000
dollars prize
money

60,000
dollars first prize
per gender

300
volunteers

250
accredited media

9,000
seats on Central
Court

2,100
tons of sand

tried to replicate the skills they had witnessed on court and the hungry sated their appetite with the wide range of refreshments on offer.

The tone was set when there was barely a space to be found during a spectacular opening ceremony and it continued for the rest of the week. The FIVB's new sponsor, Honda, was very much involved and contributed greatly to the

overall pleasurable experience of the event.

The FIVB Beach Volleyball World Championships Mazury 2013 showed that with thorough and professional organisation there are no limits to what beach volleyball can achieve. After Rome 2011, another level has been set for the event and beach volleyball can look to the future with great confidence and optimism. ■



HISTORY MADE BY UNDER-23s

For the first time in 2013, an FIVB Under-23 tournament was added to the U19 and U21 beach volleyball events



The first ever edition of the FIVB Beach Volleyball U23 World Championships took place in Myslowice, Poland, from June 5-9, 2013 and it was fitting that Polish duo Piotr Kantor and Bartosz Losiak should become the first male champions; Germany's Victoria Bieneck and Isabell Schneider took the inaugural women's title.

Myslowice, 70 kilometres from Krakow, is no stranger to organising high level volleyball competitions, having successfully hosted the U19 and U21 World Championships in 2006 and 2007 respectively. It has also hosted several stops on the FIVB World Tour.

Teams from all five continents took part in the historic U23 event, which was also used as extra promotion for the FIVB Beach Volleyball World Championships in Stare Jablonki, northern Poland, which took

"Teams from all five continents took part in the historic U23 event"

place shortly afterwards.

There were 29 countries represented in the men's tournament and 24 in the women's, with an overall participation of 34 countries. With 32 teams per gender there were tough match-ups from the start as teams pushed themselves hard to secure the unique distinction of being the first ever FIVB U23 world champions.

It meant that the U23 World Championships began with representatives of three of the five confederations standing on the podium at the end of a tournament which also offered places to developing teams to

take part in a major tournament for the first time and side from St. Lucia and Kenya were two of the teams that learned about tournament life in Myslowice.

As FIVB President Dr. Ary S. Graça Fº explains: "These tournaments are crucial for the well-being of beach volleyball today and in the future. They are seen primarily as a way for players to develop and learn the skills and discipline needed to become top-level athletes however they are equally important for the individual cities and federations concerned as it provides an opportunity to demonstrate their capacity to organise a tournament and in turn host larger tournaments in the future. One of my key goals is to provide more opportunities for players to play for the benefit of the individual athletes and the long-term growth of our sport." ➤

Left: Polish duo Piotr Kantor and Bartosz Losiak became the first male U23 World Champions on home sand
Right: All the medallists made history at the first-ever U23 World Championships





Fresh Start In Umag

After two years being hosted by Halifax, Canada, the 2013 edition of the FIVB Beach Volleyball U21 World Championships took place from June 19-23 in Umag, a coastal town in north-west Croatia which hosted the Under-19 World Championships in 2011.

Brazil and Poland took the honours in Umag, thanks to Gustavo Carvalhaes and Allison Cittadin in the men's event and Katarzyna Kociolek and Jagoda Gruszczynska in the women's.

For the first time in Umag the FIVB organised an intercontinental tournament to give newly developing teams already eliminated at the U21 World Championships the opportunity to gain some more playing experience.

Burundi, Togo, Namibia, Egypt, Trinidad and Tobago, St. Lucia, Venezuela and Iran took part.

Return to Porto

Porto, Portugal's second city, hosted the FIVB Beach Volleyball Under-19 Championships for a second time, and they put this experience to good use to successfully run the latest edition of an event which began back in 2002 in Xylokastro, Greece.

Portugal itself has a long history

of hosting FIVB international beach volleyball events with 13 men's tournaments and nine women's events having been held in Espinho, two for each gender on the island of Porto Santo in addition to the 2010 U19 World Championships in Porto.

Germany's Moritz Reichert and Clemens Wickler on the men's side and women's pair Eduarda Santos Lisboa and Taina Silva Bigi from Brazil claimed the gold medals this year. ■



UNIVERSAL APPROVAL

The success of the Continental Cup has been the driving force behind the impressive increase and participation worldwide for further change to the sport

3

years from decision to delivery

5

continents taking part



Ever since the FIVB introduced its international circuit in 1987, beach volleyball has grown exponentially. Last summer's celebration on Horse Guards Parade was another opportunity to show the world just how far the sport has come, and how universal it is thanks to the efforts made by the FIVB and its partners over the past quarter of a century.

But in many ways the most significant development in beach volleyball under the FIVB occurred in 2010 with the introduction of the Continental Cup, a country versus country competition that takes place over three years and ends with the winning country from each continent booking a place at the Olympic Games, with two further tickets on offer for the runners-up to play off for.

The idea behind the Continental Cup is to make Olympic qualification more

attainable for all nations while also, through sub-zonal and zonal phases, increasing the amount of high-level beach volleyball competition taking place on each continent, thus developing the sport.

The FIVB invested unprecedented resources over three years into the Continental Cup – including the World Cup Final – in order to ensure complete activation across the different territories,

“The idea behind the Continental Cup is to make Olympic qualification more attainable for all nations, thus developing the sport”

zonal and sub-zonal. While the confederations organise their own Continental Cup tournaments, each with its own final round for men and women to follow the zonal stages, the FIVB helps with the provision of equipment and support across the technical, financial, press and marketing divisions.

The success of the first edition of the Continental Cup can be measured in many ways: in South America, for example, Venezuela's men and Argentina's women qualified for the Olympics for the very first time; Africa has seen World Tour stops in South Africa and Morocco, but it had never had a continental competition of this sort before; and North, Central America and the Caribbean (with the exception of USA and to a lesser extent Canada) has never provided regular players for FIVB events, but their Continental Cup was a great ►

71

tournaments
held worldwide

14

women at
Continental
Cup Finals and
2013 World
Championships

success in terms of participation, allowing them to further develop their own continental tour.

"The Continental Cup has boosted beach volleyball all over the world," says FIVB President Dr. Ary S. Graça Fº, who was responsible for the development of the Continental Cup during his time as FIVB Beach Volleyball Commission President. "The presence at the Olympics for the first time of teams like Venezuela, Mauritius and Argentina sent out the right message. It told every country, regardless of size or wealth, you can be there."

And that message carried over into the 2013 FIVB Beach Volleyball World Championships in Stare Jablonki, Poland. In total, there were four men's teams and three women's teams who competed at the World Championships having come

through the Continental Cup.

Mexico's Juan Virgen and Lombardo Ontiveros made it to the knockout stages, while Chilean cousins Esteban and Marco Grimalt and Venezuela's Leon Colina Chourio and Jackson Henriquez picked up valuable experience of top-level competition. There were debut appearances for Paraguay, Thailand and Vanuatu, while another Venezuela men's pairing, Igor Hernandez and Jesus Villafane, followed up becoming the first beach volleyball players from their country to participate in the Olympic Games by recording a famous victory over Ryan Doherty and former world and Olympic champion Todd Rogers in Stare Jablonki.

"Since the Olympic Games, more and more young people in Venezuela are interested in beach volley," Hernandez said. "We got support from the government after the Olympics. Thanks to that we

143

participating
national
federations

19

men at Continental Cup Finals
and 2013 World Championships

were able to start different projects and encourage young people to play beach volleyball. We organise events for the junior and youth groups now in Venezuela."

And so the legacy of the Continental Cup is already bearing fruit, not only in Venezuela but in numerous countries whose players have experienced playing at a more competitive level. The worldwide player base has also been immeasurably broadened. Next year, the Continental Cup starts all over again, and this time it's on the Road to Rio. ■

53

organisers
staging
events

7

Olympic berths
per gender

HOTTEST TICKET IN TOWN

Since its introduction in 1996, beach volleyball has gradually become one of the highlights of the Olympic Games

Beach volleyball became part of the full Olympic programme for the first time in 1996 and it proved an instant hit with the fans on Atlanta Beach who packed the specially-created arena day after day. The Americans among them were rewarded when Karch Kiraly and Kent Steffes brought home

the men's gold medal, beating compatriots Mike Dodd and Mike Whitmarsh in the final.

Four years later in Sydney, Atlanta bronze medallists Natalie Cook and Kerri Pottharst stormed to victory on home sand in front of 10,000 ecstatic Aussies on Bondi Beach. The unquestionable success of beach volleyball in Atlanta and then in Sydney dispelled any doubts about the sport's future. ►





"Making beach volleyball an Olympic sport proved a wise move; it's fantastic to watch and the fans play a big part in making such a great spectacle."

"Making beach volleyball an Olympic sport proved a wise move; it's fantastic to watch and the fans play a big part in making it such a great spectacle," said then IOC President Juan Antonio Samaranch after he attended a beach volleyball match at the Sydney Olympics in 2000.

In Athens in 2004, a new beach phenomenon from the US known as Kerri Walsh and

Misty May won all seven of their matches without dropping a set, repeating the feat in Beijing four years later with fellow Americans Phil Dalhausser and Todd Rogers winning the men's competition.

The 2012 Olympic beach volleyball tournament will live long in the memory of all of those who took part as a player, a spectator, a volunteer, an official, a media representative



London 2012 Beach Volleyball Numbers

33,995,000

TV viewers
watching per
minute

31,000,000

page views on
London2012.com

4,371,388

page views on
fivb.org

616,505

page views on
Youtube.com/
Olympics

38,704

increase in
Facebook fans
(July-Sept)

7,859

increase in Twitter
followers (July-Sept)

425,000

spectators

1,000

volunteers

96

athletes taking part

23

nationalities
represented

or a television viewer. There was a party atmosphere every day at Horse Guards Parade and the Olympics had never seen anything like it.

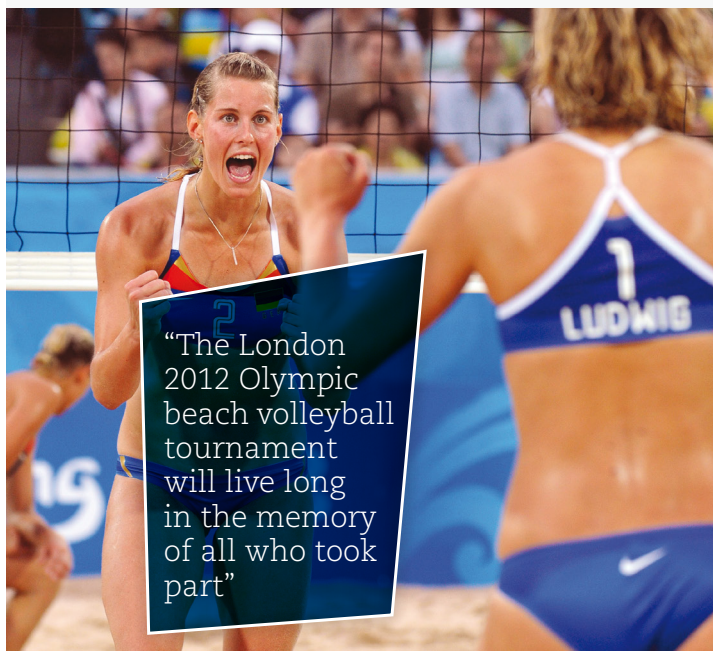
British Prime Minister David Cameron was one of many famous faces to take in a session of beach volleyball during the Games, and with the likes of the Prince of Monaco, Sir Paul McCartney, former UN Secretary General Kofi Annan and

Microsoft founder Bill Gates in attendance, beach volleyball at Horse Guards Parade was arguably the hottest ticket in town.

The women's event produced the first all-American final after Olympic debutants Jen Kessy and April Ross surprisingly knocked out world champions and No.1 seeds Larissa França and Juliana Felisberta da Silva. In the final, however, they were ➤

"Few venues in London caught the imagination quite like the historic Horse Guards Parade, which was transformed into a high-energy beach volleyball arena." www.olympic.org





no match for their legendary compatriots, Misty May-Treanor and Kerri Walsh, who took their third straight Olympic gold medal, while Larissa and Juliana settled for bronze.

The top-seeded men's pair, Emanuel Rego and Alison Cerutti of Brazil, also failed to win gold after being beaten in the final by Julius Brink and Jonas Reckermann, who became the first German pair to win

gold in any volleyball event and the first Europeans of either gender to win beach volleyball gold. Bronze medallists Martins Plavins and Janis Smedins won Latvia's first medal of any kind at the 2012 Olympics.

The level of support at the beach volleyball competition in London was truly staggering, given that beach volleyball is not a traditional sport in Great Britain. A total of 425,000 fans



filled the stands during the 13 days of competition. Their enthusiasm and willingness to be carried along by the athleticism of the players as well as the music and dancing created an unbelievable energy and was the icing on the cake for the players fighting for Olympic glory.

And so the show rolls on to 2016 and Rio de Janeiro's legendary Copacabana Beach, in so many ways the spiritual home

of beach volleyball. London was undoubtedly spectacular and by common consent the best yet, but if anywhere can go one better, then Rio can. Beach volleyball will be one of the blue riband events of Brazil's Olympic Games, so look forward to having your senses stimulated and your mind blown by some of the best athletes on the planet in one of the greatest settings imaginable. ■

"The level of support at the beach volleyball competition in London was staggering with 425,000 fans filling the stands"

THE ROAD TO RIO

The 2016 Olympic beach volleyball tournament will be the climax of a three-year period full of highlights

We are going back to Copacabana in Rio with the idea to create a platform for the next 10 years. If I can imagine a place where the sport can really succeed, it is in Brazil and Copacabana is the ideal beach."

So said Beach Volleyball Commission President and FIVB Board of Administration

member Vicente Araujo, looking ahead to the 2016 Olympic Games, when beach volleyball will take centre stage. In a country where the sport is phenomenally popular, nowhere is it more popular than Rio.

In 1993, former IOC President Juan Antonio Samaranch was invited to an FIVB beach volleyball tournament there ►



"If I can imagine a place where the sport can really succeed, it is in Brazil"

and was highly impressed with what he witnessed. It was a monumental step towards the IOC accepting the sport into the Olympic programme.

"Playing in Rio, for me and all Brazilians, is a dream," said World Championship silver medalist Alvaro Filho, one of the rising stars of Brazilian beach volleyball. "The experience will be the most amazing possible. Brazil loves beach volleyball and you will witness a very good Olympics there."

The Rio de Janeiro Games will also mark a welcome return home for FIVB President Dr. Ary S. Graça Fº, who also serves on the IOC's Sport for All Commission. "I can assure you beach volleyball will be a success, maybe the best success at the Olympics," he said.

For 2016, a 12,000-capacity stadium will be built on Copacabana beach in the Zona Sul area of Rio. "Like we did in London, we want to show the beautiful surroundings and in Rio it will be the ocean and the Morro Dois Irmãos," Araujo said. "Just like Horse Guards Parade, we want to create a picture that will remain in the minds of people forever."

"The passion for beach volleyball in Brazil is huge now and I think Copacabana in Rio will be more exciting than the Maracanã"

"The passion for beach volleyball in Brazil is huge now and I think Copacabana in Rio will be more exciting than the Maracanã," Brazilian beach volleyball legend Emanuel Rego said, comparing the future Olympic beach volleyball site to Brazil's venerable football stadium.

But the road to Rio is a long one, with many other highlights along the way as the sport of beach volleyball continues its thrilling evolution at the start of the 21st century. The FIVB World Tour will continue as the bedrock of the professional game, with new venues and new federations continually being sought as organising partners for a stop on this ever-popular beach volleyball roadshow.

And, while the World Tour visits more and more countries, the second edition of the Beach

Volleyball Continental Cup starts in 2014 and promises to spread the development of the game even further and wider, culminating in the FIVB Beach Volleyball World Cup Final and, of course, places at the Rio Olympics for the lucky winners.

And then in 2015 there is the next edition of the FIVB Beach Volleyball World Championships, being staged in the Netherlands – a wonderful example of just how the sport is growing, with Dutch men's pair Alexander Brouwer and Robert Meeuwse surprise winners at the 2013 World Championships. "Our ambition is to create the biggest beach volleyball event ever on the beach of Scheveningen," said Michael Everaert, Netherlands Volleyball Association Sports Director.

From the Netherlands to Rio via countless other countries on every continent, beach volleyball continues to attract new admirers. Over the coming years, the FIVB is determined to create better and better conditions for all stakeholders, from players and fans to sponsors and broadcasters. But the beauty of beach volleyball lies in its simplicity, and that will never be forgotten. ■



FIVBTM

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