



## Beach Newsletter, December 22<sup>nd</sup> 2006

Since the end of the 2006 edition of the ***Volleyball England Beach Tour (VEBT)***, we have been hard at work taking feedback and preparing for next year's, bigger and better edition of the VEBT.

We are now very pleased to release our provisional calendar for the 2007 VEBT. In addition to the tournaments already confirmed, there are many more new exciting tournaments and locations that will be confirmed in the near future.

This week saw British beach volleyball make the historic announcement of the two new world-class coaches who will spearhead our Olympic beach volleyball programme over the next few years.

These are very exciting times for our sport and we hope you are looking forward to 2007 as much as we are.

On behalf of the Volleyball England Beach Commission, I would like to wish you all a Merry Christmas and a healthy, happy and successful year 2007, both on and off the sand!

*Mark Kontopoulos*  
Beach Commission President  
Volleyball England





## Tour Calendar

In keeping with the VEBT's philosophy of maximising participation, providing a platform for all levels of competition from novice to elite and junior to senior, and engaging new, existing and previous tournament promoters with the widest geographic spread possible, the VEBT calendar for 2007 features several new, exciting locations around the country.

The tournaments have been renamed from "Majors" and "Regionals" to "Grand Slams" and "Opens" respectively. This brings us more in line with the FIVB's naming of tournaments and helps avoid confusion over the previous names that we used. The structure and philosophy of both Grand Slams and Opens will remain the same though.

The provisional dates for the VEBT 2007 are:

- 16 & 17 June. Croyde Gold Coast, King & Queen of the Beach
- 23 & 24 June. Bridlington Open
- 14 & 15 July. Sandbanks Classic Grand Slam
- 27 – 29 July. Weymouth Classic Grand Slam
- 25 & 26 August. Great Yarmouth Classic Grand Slam
- 31 August. Yellowwave, Brighton, Volleyball England Junior Beach Championships
- 1 & 2 September. Yellowwave, Brighton 2007 VEBT Finals

In addition, we are in very promising negotiations to hold Opens at several more locations, including: Gloucester, Ruislip Lido London, Exmouth and at least two other new, exciting locations in the northeast and southeast of England.

You will notice that some of the above locations (such as Gloucester and Ruislip Lido) are not coastal, but inland. Yes, the VEBT is spreading and is no longer restricted to natural beaches!

We are planning on an early-June start to the 2007 VEBT, so watch this space for updates to the above calendar.

If you or someone you know would like to host a VEBT event, then please get in touch with Damien Searle, Beach Commission Events Director, at [damiensearle@hotmail.com](mailto:damiensearle@hotmail.com) and/or Mark Kontopoulos, Beach Commission President, at [markonto@yahoo.com](mailto:markonto@yahoo.com)

## **The 2007 VEBT Finals**



Volleyball England's Beach Commission is pleased to announce that the 2007 VEBT Finals have been awarded to Yellowwave in Brighton.

With their excellent new 6 court facility due to open in March 2007 and the very hard work that the Yellowwave team has put into pitching and preparing for this event, the Beach Commission feels that this event will be one to remember.

The 2007 VEBT Finals will see an increase in the number of qualifying teams as the 24 best ranked teams from each gender will be eligible to compete. Matches will be played over the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> of September.

More details on the 2007 VEBT Finals will follow in due course.

## **Volleyball England Junior Beach Championships**

In another exciting development, we are pleased to announce the Volleyball England Junior Beach Championships, which will be held at the new Yellowwave facility in Brighton, on the day before the 2007 VEBT Finals. This will involve the best junior players from around the country competing for the top honours in English junior beach volleyball.

More details on this tournament will follow in the near future.

## **Coaching and "Come and Try" sessions on the VEBT!**

The Beach Commission is presently working on two excellent initiatives that will contribute to the further development of the VEBT.

The first one involves the provision of coaching clinics by experienced coaches at as many VEBT events as possible. These will be available only for registered players at each event and will aim for sessions that cater for all levels of play on the Tour. This should make an excellent contribution to raising the standard of play on the VEBT by allowing everyone to have access to quality beach coaching.

The second initiative involves getting the wider population involved with our sport. Members of the public will be encouraged to "come and try" the game in a bid to raise awareness of the sport and attract new players. And who knows, we may even find the next big beach volleyball talent!

## **GB Beach Appoint Two Coaches and Check Out Horse Guards' Parade**

Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> December 2006

Two top international coaches have been appointed by British Volleyball to lead GB to the Beijing 2008 and London 2012 Olympic Games from January 2007.



Jörg Ahmann and Jeff Alzina along with some of Britain's top players attended a press call on the 19<sup>th</sup> of December in London and checked out Horse Guards' Parade where Beach Volleyball will be held at the London 2012 Olympic Games.

Jörg Ahmann, a beach volleyball Olympic medallist for Germany in 2000 and a top international coach will be leading the programme here in the UK at Bath University where two indoor and outdoor Beach Volleyball Courts will be constructed.

"Britain is in the same place as Germany was with Beach Volleyball a few years ago. With a new programme and coaches in place, it's exciting how British players will develop...I am excited about getting started next year" says Jörg

Assisting Jörg will be Jeff Alzina, an experienced coach from the US, who has coached numerous Olympians, fine tuning their match skills, and will be coaching the top pairings at Hermosa Beach, California.

"The players will be training over in Hermosa Beach, the birthplace of Beach Volleyball. There they will be training six days a week, high intensity with the US national squads where some NBA, NFL and AVP players train, in both group and individual training" said Jeff.

"I worked for the Greek national team after Athens 2004 had been announced and when they were still ranked in the 60s. After working with the players, they qualified for Sydney 2000 and were ready for Athens 2004. I can't wait to start working with Lucy and Denise and hopefully more pairs next year" he added.

Lucy Boulton had just returned from her success in Australia, where she and Denise Johns played at a Vodafone Beach Tour event over the weekend, coming in at an impressive second place (see report below). Lucy, Zara Dampney, Shauna Mullin and two young male beach volleyballers Luke and Jake Sheaf were on hand to answer some questions from the press and check out the venue they aspire to play at.

## **Boulton and Johns Make Final Down Under**

Monday 18<sup>th</sup> December 2006

Lucy Boulton and Denise Johns, one of Britain's best beach volleyball partnerships, played in the Vodafone Beach Tour over last weekend in Australia. This event was at Port Macquarie's Town Beach and was host to some of Australia's best female players.

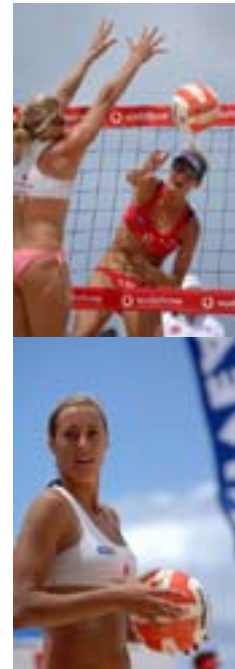
In the first round the pair faced Kyranakos and Sharpe and won impressively in two sets 21-9, 21-13. They then faced the new and promising young partnership of Palmer and Barnett, winning 2-0 in a closer match (21-18, 21-19) which pushed them through to the next round.

Round 3 was a trickier affair, with Lucy and Denise coming up against Nicole Sanderson and Summer Lochowicz, both previous beach volleyball Olympians. The Brits were beaten 2-1 (20-22, 21-18, 15-11) but had a second bite of the cherry when they beat Palmer and Barnett again 2-0 (21-18, 21-17).

In the semi-finals Lucy and Denise beat Pottharst and Akers 2-1 (17-21, 21-17, 15-12). This win is made all the more impressive by the fact that Kerri Pottharst has played for Australia in all three Olympics where beach volleyball has been played, Atlanta 1996, where she won Bronze, Sydney 2000 where she won Gold and the Athens 2004 Olympic Games.

Lucy and Denise progressed to the final of the event against Nicole Sanderson and Summer Lochowicz. Both Sanderson and Lochowicz represented Australia in the 2004 Athens Olympics with separate partners and the pair were number 1 seeds at this event. Despite starting well and putting the Australian pair under pressure by winning the first set, Denise and Lucy couldn't hold off and eventually lost the game 2-1 (15-21, 21-12, 15-11). However, this appearance put the British pair 14th on the Australian Tour's ranking, thus putting a fantastic end to a memorable year of British beach volleyball.

Following their appearance on the SWATCH FIVB World Tour this summer, Lucy received several votes for Rookie of the Year, which eventually went to one of China's up and coming stars. Lucy's serve also gained some attention as it was the fastest serve recorded at the Phuket leg of the World Tour at 77.5km/h! Overall on the World Series, her serve was ranked 6th, an amazing claim to fame for the 20 year old star.



## **Damien Searle now registered for England**

Damien Searle, international beach volleyball referee and Events Director on the Volleyball England's Beach Commission, has had his international referee registration transferred from Australia to England.

"England is where I live and where my parents are from, so it would be great to represent the country on the international refereeing stage. This year I have been assigned to a Grand Slam in Stavanger and three Opens: Marseille, France (men's & women's), Aland, Finland (men's & women's) and Stare Jablonki, Poland (men's)."

He is now busy preparing for his new assignments on the 2007 SWATCH FIVB World Tour and of course for his organisational and refereeing responsibilities on the VEBT!

## **Beach Commission**

Since the 2006 VEBT ended, there have been some changes to the composition of the Beach Commission.

Morph Bowes and Trudi Else have now left the Beach Commission after putting in lots of hard work during their time with us. They are sincerely thanked for their efforts by everyone on the Commission.

Laurie Gerschwitz is the latest addition to the Beach Commission and he will be fulfilling the role of Senior Development and Performance officer.

The Commission's composition is:

President	Mark Kontopoulos
Events	Damien Searle
Refereeing	Jeff Brehaut
Junior Development	Julie Garrard
Senior Development	Laurie Gerschwitz
Coaching	Denise Austin
Male Player Representative	Joe Mildred
Female Player Representative	Natali Deftereos

## **Updates**

Also tickets are now on sale for the **Big Bash and Awards Evening** in April 2007, visit the website now for more details and to order tickets online.

For all Beach Volleyball news updates, please keep checking [www.volleyballengland.org](http://www.volleyballengland.org)