

London Volleyball Association

London has had an amazing year.

Starting with two of members - Katie Murphy and Ahn Ngumen - accompanying the Olympic Bid team to Singapore, escorted by their Coach Gary Beckford.

Since that team won the Olympics, the face of volleyball has been changing rapidly in London. The challenges facing the Association are immense, but the opportunities are such that we can only consider success.

One step to meeting those challenges was the staging of the London Challenge Trophy. The first event staged by the London Association at Crystal Palace, was a great success volleyball wise, although it lost money. The event saw Corporate Volleyball, Sitting Volleyball, Outdoor Social Volleyball and the Elite Challenge all taking place on the same day and same venue! Some 500 people involved.

The "Challenge" of this event was the top London League teams taking on the top National League teams from London. The London League teams did rise to the Challenge, and produced a number of upsets, with London University fielding the losing teams in both the Finals, to Malory Ladies and London Docklands. Much thanks to David Rijvers, John Lowney and Cormac Byrne for their efforts on this event.

The London League is still going strong, with 50 teams entered this season, and more already showing interest for next season. Polonia V.C. has graciously accepted our policy of insisting that new teams, what ever their pedigree, entering at the bottom. Next season, Polonia Benedicts will have reached our Premier division, without losing a match on their progress through Division 2 and 1. We believe this policy ensures that teams fully value their place in our top Division, and will work to maintain a team in that Division.

On the Development of Volleyball, much progress is being made in working with partners in the Local Government and Education sectors. Whitton V.C. has established a Centre of Excellence in conjunction with St. Mary's University, reaching out to schools in Richmond. Polonia are working closely with LB Ealing. Tower Hamlets V.C. continue their work with the London Borough of the same name, White Eagles with LB Wandsworth. We have adverts out for Community Sports Coaches at the Leyton Orient SCORE Centre, and expect them in Waltham Forest and Tower Hamlets shortly.

Thanks to the work of Chris Baker of London Spikers with Hackney Council, supported by the EVA Beach Commission, we have a Beach Court in Shoreditch, within sight of the Britannia L.C., home to the EVA Cup Finals some years ago.

I have been pleased to welcome a number of EVA Officers to London on a number of occasions this year, and genuinely welcome this additional support from the National Governing Body.

All in all a great year for Volleyball in London.

Charlie Orton