



PRESS RELEASE



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## INTERNATIONAL BEACH VOLLEYBALL TOUR IN LAKE COUNTY, FL TO FEATURE FLORIDA ATHLETE

The North American, Central American and Caribbean Volleyball Confederation (NORCECA) Continental Tour will be making its only stop in the United States at Hickory Point Beach Sand Volleyball Complex in Tavares, FL. The event will take place September 11<sup>th</sup> – 13<sup>th</sup>, 2015.

**Tavares, FL – September 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2015** – Lake County, FL is set to make an international impact on the rapidly growing sport of beach volleyball! Hickory Point Beach, the new 21-court sand volleyball complex located in Tavares, FL, will host the only NORCECA Continental Tour stop for the United States. The event will be held September 11<sup>th</sup> – 13<sup>th</sup>, 2015 and will consist of 32 international teams (16 men/16 women) from across the NORCECA Confederation, which includes 35 member countries from North America, Central America and the Caribbean.

One of the athletes representing the United States for this event is Fort Lauderdale, FL native, **Kendra Van Zwieten**. She recently came in second place at the Association of Volleyball Professionals (AVP) Kingston Chicago Open and took the gold medal at 2015 NORCECA Punta Cana (Dominican Republic.) “The reason why I enjoy competing in NORCECA events is because they are different than other events,” said Van Zwieten. You get to travel to different locations and it’s always exciting. You never know what to expect!” Van Zwieten commented that she is excited to return to her home state and to play at Hickory Point Beach. “It’s real nice to be in a familiar area and it’s just a short drive from home. I’m really looking forward to competing!”

The event will be co-hosted by the Florida Region of USA Volleyball, Central Florida Sports Commission, Lake County Economic Growth and Florida Sports Foundation.

In conjunction with the tour, the Florida Region of USA Volleyball will be hosting a new national beach event the same weekend at Hickory Point Beach. The US National Beach Championships (USNBC) will welcome the top amateur adult athletes from across the United States.

These two events will bring an influx of national and international athletes to Lake County, leaving a lasting, positive impact on the economy. **Robert Chandler**, Director of Lake County Economic Growth, said that he is excited about the future of sand volleyball in Lake County. “We knew that when we entered into a partnership with Steve Bishop and the Florida Region of USA Volleyball on the Hickory Point Beach venue that big things would be on the horizon for sports tourism in Lake County,” Chandler commented, “but in just 8 months, they have thoroughly exceeded even our most lofty expectations. Securing the only United States stop for the NORCECA Continental Beach Tour is just one more testament to the professionalism and determination the Florida Region of USA Volleyball staff possesses in their efforts to make Hickory Point Beach the nation’s premiere sand volleyball facility.”

The NORCECA Continental Tour is an official event, accredited and recognized by the Federation Internationale de Volleyball (FIVB.) The agreement was made between NORCECA, USA Volleyball and the Florida Region of USA Volleyball. This location was chosen because all specifications and requirements needed for the tour stop were met at this venue.

Holding this international event in Tavares, FL is a dream come true for Florida Region of USA Volleyball Executive Director and President, **Steve Bishop**. “When we presented the Hickory Point Beach Sand Volleyball Complex concept to the Lake County Board of County Commissioners in 2013, hosting the first ever NORCECA international beach volleyball event in Florida was on the long range plan. We are pleased to be able to announce that it was moved to the short range plan last year and will become a reality in 2015. With 32 international teams playing

alongside up to 50 amateur adult beach teams from across the USA, this will be an important event for our local community. Introducing our great sport to the residents of Lake County and Central Florida has been a longtime personal goal and it is happening at Hickory Point Beach with camps, clinics, leagues and tournaments. I appreciate our great partners that have helped us make this happen and I want to personally invite the local community and the volleyball community in general to join us in September for a historical beach volleyball event in Tavares, FL USA!"

Tavares, FL joins other NORCECA Continental Tour stop locations across the globe, including the Cayman Islands, Mexico, Dominican Republic, Puerto Rico, Canada, Cuba, Antigua, St. Lucia, Guatemala and Tobago. This international event will highlight this area of Central Florida and will put Tavares, FL on the map as a globally recognized beach volleyball destination. **John Bisignano**, President and CEO of the Central Florida Sports Commission, commented, "We are thrilled that Lake County has been awarded the only beach tour stop in the US for the NORCECA Continental Tour. With the event drawing athletes from up to 35 different countries, it is a great opportunity for Central Florida to showcase our world class venues, attractions and accommodations. Hickory Point Beach Sand Volleyball Complex has been instrumental in supporting the growth of sand volleyball and the Central Florida Sports Commission is honored to be part of the team supporting that vision."

Hickory Point Beach, completed early July 2014, is officially Florida's largest single-site beach volleyball complex. The Florida Region partnered with Lake County, Florida and Lake County Water Authority to jointly build the project on the 68-acre Hickory Point Recreational Complex, next to Lake Harris. This state-of-the art facility offers professional level net systems, stadium quality lighting, a professional speaker/intercom system, antennas & pads on every court, short court lines, 24 inches of top quality washed white sand, 20 feet minimum between courts (side-to-side) and 35 feet minimum between courts (end-to-end.)

Additional amenities available at the complex include free parking onsite, permanent restrooms, beautiful views of Lake Harris, a children's playground, outdoor showers near courts, a nature trail, a swimming area, BBQ grills with picnic table, a free boat ramp with dock access and much more. Additional information can be found at [www.HickoryPointBeach.com](http://www.HickoryPointBeach.com).

#### **About NORCECA:**

The North, Central America and Caribbean Volleyball Confederation (NORCECA) is an incorporated, non-profit organization responsible for all volleyball activities that take place in its zone. NORCECA is the continental confederation that represents its thirty-five (35) member countries at the International Volleyball Federation (FIVB) level. The Confederation is responsible for, among other things, the staging of Olympic and World Championship zone qualification tournaments, as well as Continental Championships for both men and women in Indoor and Beach Volleyball. Additional information on NORCECA can be found at [www.NORCECA.net](http://www.NORCECA.net).

#### **About USA Volleyball:**

USA Volleyball, founded in 1928, is the National Governing Body (NGB) for the sport of volleyball in the United States and is recognized by the Federation Internationale de Volleyball (FIVB) and the United States Olympic Committee (USOC). Additional information on USA Volleyball can be found at: [www.USAVolleyball.org](http://www.USAVolleyball.org).

#### **About Florida Region of USA Volleyball:**

The Florida Region of USA Volleyball is a 501c3 non-profit that began operations in the 1960's and was officially incorporated in 1982 to promote the sport of volleyball and to create competitive playing opportunities for volleyball enthusiasts of all ages throughout the State of Florida. The Florida Region is one of the 40 regional volleyball associations under the umbrella of USA Volleyball and currently serves approximately 12,500 members. Indoor and outdoor programming is available for adults, juniors, coaches and officials. The Florida Region of USA Volleyball headquarters is located in Eustis, FL. Additional information on the Florida Region can be found at: [www.FloridaVolleyball.org](http://www.FloridaVolleyball.org).

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