



PRESS RELEASE

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FLORIDA SET TO HOST THE 2019 AVCA SMALL COLLEGE BEACH CHAMPIONSHIPS!

The American Volleyball Coaches Association has selected Hickory Point Beach as the host site of the 2019 Small College Beach Championships!

Eustis, FL – January 8, 2019 – The American Volleyball Coaches Association (AVCA) has selected Hickory Point Beach Sand Volleyball Complex in Tavares, FL to host the 2019 AVCA Small College Beach Championships. The event will be held on April 19-21, 2019. Admission is free and spectators are encouraged to attend!

Beach Volleyball is the NCAA's fastest growing sport, starting with 15 Division 1 programs in 2012 and projected to top 100 collegiate programs by 2020. Throughout its history, the AVCA has filled the need for events while the sport grows towards championship status. From 2012-2015, the AVCA hosted the Collegiate Beach Volleyball National Championships in Gulf Shores, AL until, after just four seasons, beach volleyball reached the 40-program threshold needed for NCAA championship status.

In 2018, Hickory Point Beach hosted the inaugural AVCA Small College Beach Championships where there were 14 different schools. The event drew in an estimated 500 attendees (athletes and spectators). This year, the 2nd Annual Small College Beach Championships will host divisions for DII, DIII, NAIA and Two Year Colleges. The AVCA expects there to be 20 schools competing in the Championships including St. Leo University, University of Tampa and Florida Southern College, making this collegiate beach event the largest team event in the United States.

Hickory Point Beach is a 21-court state-of-the-art sand volleyball complex in Central Florida that currently hosts many USAV, high school, and collegiate beach events annually. The local county government is currently in the process of constructing a new building to support beach volleyball events, which will open on February 23, 2019. The new 4,000 sf support building will have showers, locker rooms, along with a medical room for participating teams and athletes. Additionally, it will have public restrooms, a concession area, a VIP area, an official's locker room, a viewing deck and multi-purpose meeting space.

"We're thrilled to return to Hickory Point Beach for our 2nd AVCA Small College Beach Championships," said AVCA Executive Director, **Kathy DeBoer**. "The 21-court facility and pavilion are ideal for a 'celebration-of-beach-volleyball' event, the addition of the new clubhouse is a game-changer in terms of accommodations, and the Florida Region is the best in the business."

The announcement of Hickory Point Beach being selected as the host venue goes along with the recent partnership agreement the AVCA made with the Florida Region of USA Volleyball. The partnership is designed to link college and youth volleyball by providing the region with information on colleges in the area, familiarizing junior athletes with recruiting rules and providing opportunities for engagement and recognition. Hosting the Small College Beach Championship is a great way to connect the AVCA with the Florida Region of USA Volleyball and the junior athletes in the local area.

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“Partnering with the AVCA to host this collegiate beach event at Hickory Point Beach in Central Florida is an honor,” commented **Steve Bishop**, Executive Director of the Florida Region of USA Volleyball. “We specifically designed and built this 21-court complex, in partnership with the local county government, for events like this one. It is exciting to see the college beach game continue to grow at all levels. My hope is that an event such as this one will serve as a catalyst for continued growth in colleges and high schools across the country. We look forward to hosting the many college programs that will descend on Central Florida in April and we invite beach volleyball fans of all ages to come and cheer on their favorite team.”

About the American Volleyball Coaches Association:

The AVCA, with its headquarters in Lexington, Ky., is managed by Associations International. The mission of the AVCA is to advance the sport of volleyball with AVCA coaches at the epicenter of leadership, advocacy and professional development. With a membership of over 7,200 and counting, the AVCA provides a professional network for those individuals and companies dedicated to enhancing and promoting the sport. Members include collegiate, high school, club, youth and Olympic coaches, as well as volleyball club directors. The AVCA provides education to volleyball coaches, recognition of elite players and coaches, promotion of volleyball competitions throughout the world, and networking opportunities for volleyball products and services providers. Further information is available at www.avca.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 over 14,500 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.

For additional information contact:

Sierra Schomburg, Marketing Coordinator

Florida Region of USA Volleyball, Inc.

t: 352-742-0080 e: sierra@floridavolleyball.org