

## Steve Bishop-Florida Region USAV

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**From:** Bill Kauffman [bill.kauffman@usav.org]  
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### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### Sand Volleyball a Go in NCAA Division I

**COLORADO SPRINGS, Colo. (Jan. 15, 2010)** – The NCAA decided Friday afternoon at its Division I business meeting held in Atlanta to approve the addition of sand volleyball to its list of emerging sports for women, a position supported by USA Volleyball (USAV), American Volleyball Coaches Association (AVCA) and Association of Volleyball Professionals (AVP).

By a vote of 166 yes, 118 no and one abstention in favor of the override with each institution holding one vote at the NCAA Convention, an override measure attempting to strike down the original addition of sand volleyball to the emerging sport list failed to pass with only 58.5 percent. The override measure needed a five-eighths majority, or 62.5 percent, to overturn the legislation. The NCAA Division I Board of Directors will determine the effective date during its meeting on Jan. 16. The AVCA has asked the NCAA Division I Board of Directors to push back the original effective date from Aug. 1, 2010, to Aug. 1, 2011, so adequate time can be spent determining the sport's legislative parameters.

The sand volleyball proposal, known officially as No. 2008-59, has drawn support from many groups outside of the USA Volleyball, the AVP and the AVCA as a way to add new opportunities for women to compete collegiately in a popular domestic and Olympic sport. Further, USAV views the addition of sand volleyball as a way to engage a new generation of volleyball players at the youth levels with the potential of collegiate scholarship looming in the future.

"I applaud the work of our USA Volleyball leadership and colleagues at the NCAA, AVCA and AVP who have enabled sand volleyball to be offered to aspiring female athletes nationwide at the NCAA Division I and II levels," USA Volleyball Chairman of the Board David Schreff said. "We are truly one worldwide sport, played on two court surfaces, hardwood and sand. The far-sighted university administrators, athletic directors and coaches took a huge step to grow the sand discipline and to inspire girls and young women to explore playing on sand as well as indoor court volleyball."

As an emerging sport for women within the NCAA, sand volleyball would also expand the existing pipeline of athletes and coaches for the U.S. to maintain its competitive advantage in the international levels of the sport. The U.S. swept the men's and women's Olympic beach gold medals in 2008. Misty May-Treanor (Costa Mesa, Calif.) and Kerri Walsh (Saratoga, Calif.) have become celebrities after winning their second consecutive Olympic gold medal at the 2008 Olympic Games in Beijing, while Phil Dalhausser (Ormond Beach, Fla.) and Todd Rogers

(Santa Barbara, Calif.) captured the 2008 Olympic Games gold medal. The U.S. has won at least one gold medal in Olympic beach volleyball since it was initiated in 1996.

"While beach volleyball has been a very popular professional and Olympic sport here in the United States and abroad, today's NCAA vote further advances the sport into the mainstream of collegiate athletics in this country," USA Volleyball Chief Executive Director Doug Beal said. "Collegiate sand volleyball becomes a viable option for college athletes aspiring to scholarships and continuing to increase their skill level in the sport. While many of our international beach volleyball athletes do not take up the sport until after their college indoor careers are over, this vote will impact USA Volleyball's ability to offer beach volleyball opportunities to a wider and younger set of players who want to train and compete in our High Performance pipeline."

"The addition of sand volleyball to both NCAA Division I and II programs is an inspiring victory that will further legitimize the outdoor doubles discipline," USA Volleyball Director of Beach Programs Ali Lamberson said. "USA Volleyball is prepared to support NCAA institutions by increasing all of our beach programming including the annual Beach Collegiate Challenge, Beach Coaching Education (BCAP), Beach High Performance and National Teams, the Junior Beach Tour, grassroots and development camps, and more. In addition, we are working with the USAV Beach Volleyball Officials Commission to provide training opportunities for new beach officials. USAV is ready to continue to lead the way in sand volleyball development opportunities."

Kathy DeBoer, serving as the AVCA's executive director, has coordinated the coaching organization's efforts for the last couple years to see this proposal become a reality. Yet, she also understands the NCAA vote is only one point on the timeline to make sand volleyball what it can be.

"This vote will create an explosion of opportunity at all levels," DeBoer said. "Having said that, there will be challenges for all of us to support this growth. It's what we wanted; now we must deliver for those who want to play and coach."

Jason Hodell, chief executive officer for the AVP and the only active professional volleyball league in the United States, echoed similar comments in that the NCAA vote will send the sport into a growth movement.

"The AVP is thrilled with the result of today's vote," AVP Chief Executive Officer Jason Hodell said. "NCAA sand volleyball will grow our beautiful sport tremendously and provide wonderful opportunities for women to participate in collegiate athletics."

One key constituent group backing sand volleyball at the NCAA Division I level was the participants themselves. The NCAA's national Student-Athlete Advisory Council supported the sand volleyball initiative.

"Wherever you can create opportunities for student-athletes to play the sport they love, it's a positive," SAAC Chair Matt Baysinger told the NCAA News. "We understand the sentiment that it may create an advantage for the schools that offer it now, but that's a small piece of the puzzle."

Tyra Turner, who is part of the USA Volleyball Board of Directors as a beach athlete representative, is excited about the opportunities that will exist now with the addition of sand volleyball scholarships at the college level. She played collegiately without the benefit of a sand program at University of Central Florida, having earned all-conference twice and AVCA all-region once before graduating in 1998.

"Today is a great day for women's athletics," Turner said. "NCAA accepting sand volleyball will offer many opportunities for young women. To see the significant growth and advancement of a sport I hold dear to my heart is exciting. Sand volleyball is no longer that emerging sport. We have gold medals and the top teams in the world. I am so grateful to the many people who have worked diligently to make this dream a reality. As a current

professional player, it so inspiring to see young athletes enthusiastic about this amazing sport.”

As a beach athlete, Turner has amassed nearly \$500,000 in career earnings since 2003. She partnered with Angie Akers to win a silver and bronze medal during the 2009 FIVB Beach Tour, one year after she teamed with Rachel Wacholder to earn three silvers and a bronze on the FIVB circuit.

While sand volleyball will only affect the women’s game at the NCAA level, the addition has received support from current men’s beach volleyball players such as Sean Scott, who also serves on the USAV Board.

“Today is a great day for the sport of volleyball,” Scott said. “NCAA sand volleyball will help grow the sport as a whole and provide opportunities for the next generation of female athletes. As both an AVP professional beach volleyball player and USA Volleyball Board member, I look forward to assisting in the birth of a new collegiate sport.”

Although the NCAA has now formally adopted sand volleyball at the Division I level (as well as Division II in previous legislation) with this vote, USA Volleyball’s efforts to create a similar beach/sand experience for grassroots levels that already exists for youth indoor volleyball will be at the forefront in the coming days and months.

“USAV will now move into a higher gear in broadening our youth and young adult developmental efforts through sanctioned events and clinics,” Schreff said. “We will further work with our 40 regions and 5,100 clubs to find those who can invest in new and expanded sand courts to train the next generation of sand/beach players who just love volleyball in all of its forms. We will work with our national beach tour partners at the AVP and with those far-sighted companies who can sponsor and license programs designed to promote the sand/beach opportunities of the sport. We encourage more girls and young women to become members of USA Volleyball and to learn from the great athletes, coaches and officials who have built the foundation for this far-reaching and exciting development.”

Up until recently, sand volleyball was on track to become an emerging sport at the NCAA Division I level. The original proposal, crafted by the Committee on Women’s Athletics as a way to increase opportunities for female athletes, was initially passed by a wide margin. In April of 2009, sand volleyball was on track to be added to the emerging sport list as the NCAA Division I membership approved the measure by over 74 percent. However, 63 schools supported a request for a revote, called an override, in May of 2009. According to an NCAA News release distributed Jan. 6, the NCAA Division I Legislative Council reconsidered the proposal in July of last year amid the concerns and about 65 percent of the group supported sand volleyball. The NCAA Division I Board decided to allow the Legislative Council’s action to stand, meaning a successful override would require a five-eighths majority of those Division I delegates present and voting at the NCAA Division I business meeting to overturn the legislation.

However, institutional objections from several athletic conferences to sand volleyball gained steam over the last few months leading to the NCAA Convention vote. Some of the reasons cited include competitive advantage for schools with large budgets and geographical location on the West Coast. Some individuals against sand volleyball believe the new sport would hurt the indoor version of the game. Other concerns related to additional financial, compliance and personnel burdens associated with adding a new sport.

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