



PRESS RELEASE

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Florida Region of USA Volleyball Announces Winners for the Florida Pro Best of the Beach, Presented by the Norelli Family Foundation.

Phil Dalhausser and Delaney Knudsen Mewhirter win the inaugural event and are crowned the Best of the Beach!

Eustis, FL – November 12, 2020 – The Florida Region of USA Volleyball is proud to provide this follow up announcement on the 2020 Florida Pro Best of the Beach, presented by the Norelli Family Foundation. The event was held on November 6-8, 2020 at Hickory Point Beach in Tavares, FL and offered \$60,000 in prize money (or \$30,000 per gender).

Winners of the Florida Pro Best of The Beach were **Phil Dalhausser** (Orlando, FL) and **Delaney Knudsen Mewhirter** (Valencia, CA). Both winning athletes received \$7,000 each and the remaining prize purse was paid out to the remaining 30 main-draw athletes.

Play began on Friday (Nov. 6) with qualifying rounds, then continued with the main draw on Nov. 7-8. A total of 56 athletes were on the start list, 28 women and 28 men. Sixteen of each gender began qualification on Friday (Nov.6) and the winners of each pool moved on to Saturday (Nov. 7) for the main draw pool play. Coming out on top of the men's main-draw pool play on Saturday were **Taylor Crabb, Miles Partain, Phil Dalhausser** and **Chaim Schalk**. Women's main-draw pool play winners were **Delaney Knudsen Mewhirter, Kelly Kolinske, Sarah Schermerhorn** and **Allie Wheeler**.

Phil Dalhausser came into the tournament ranked as main draw #3 (USA volleyball ranking).

"I just came out here to have some fun," Dalhausser said. "I've always loved the KOB format, I always had fun with it, and I thought, 'Oh my gosh, this is under an hour away from my house, this is perfect.' I just had some fun with it, squeaked out of pool, and today was just like gravy, playing with house money."

Dalhausser selected **Avery Drost** as his partner for the main draw bracket play and they defeated **Miles Partain** and his selected partner **Theo Brunner** in the men's semifinals to move on to the men's final. In the men's final, Dalhausser and **Avery Drost** defeated **Taylor Crabb** and his selected partner and brother **Trevor Crabb**, 17-21, 21-17, 15-10.

"We started off strong the first set, but then the Crabbs made some plays to win the first one," Dalhausser stated. "Then they jumped up early. But we had a huge momentum shift and it just stayed on our side all the way through the second and third sets."

Drost added: "When Phil's on your team, you're always in it. Just keep siding out and staying in it. I wanted to reward him for picking me up."

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Delaney Knudsen Mewhirter came into the tournament ranked as main draw #8 (USA volleyball ranking).

“I think I’m a jack of all trades, and I’ve always been that type of player,” Delaney said. “This format allowed me to shine. I just have fun playing volley and it’s easier to have fun when you win.”

Mewhirter selected **Kelly Claes** as her partner for the main draw bracket play and they defeated **Allie Wheeler** and selected partner **Kim Hildreth** in the women’s semifinals to move on to the women’s final. In the women’s final, Mewhirter and Claes beat **Kelley Kolinske** and her selected partner **Emily Stockman**, 22-20, 21-16.

“It’s an overwhelming feeling,” Mewhirter told The SpikeNet. “I didn’t expect to win it coming here so it’s just such a bonus. There’s no one I would rather had won it with so it’s just so special to win it with Kelly.”

Claes added: “We talked a little last night about strategy, Delaney usually plays left side and she usually blocks. But she wanted to switch it up a little for this one. I think she played great and it was super fun to play with her.”

Additional information on the event can be found here: www.floridavolleyball.org/florida-pro-best-of-the-beach.

Steve Bishop, the Executive Director for the Florida Region of USA Volleyball commented, “This event exceeded all of our expectations. From our event partners who made it possible, to our amazing event team that executed on all cylinders, to the talented athletes that battled for every point, to the fans that came from many points near and far, we could not be more proud of the weekend’s activities. The feedback we received was extremely positive and we were humbled to have so many talented athletes travel to Hickory Point Beach for the event. Finally, the financial support from Miami Volleyball Academy, Visit Lake and the Norelli Family Foundation was instrumental and should be highlighted. Additionally, our other event partners such as Molten, Smack Sportswear, Regenxx, SpikeNet, Tim Britt Photography, Rx Massage Therapy, BracketPal, BallerTV and Rock Tape helped make it a success. We hope that this event, produced during a worldwide pandemic, shows what can be accomplished when everyone works together towards a shared vision.”

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 14,500 members. Indoor and outdoor programming is available for adults, juniors, coaches and officials. The Florida Region of USA Volleyball is headquartered in Eustis, FL and manages the 21-court Hickory Point Beach Sand Volleyball Complex in Tavares, FL. Additional information on the Florida Region can be found at: www.FloridaVolleyball.org.

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