

**Steve Bishop @ FL Region VB**

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**From:** AVCA Media Relations [media@avca.org]  
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**To:** steve  
**Subject:** NCAA Approves Sand Volleyball as a Collegiate Sport

For Immediate Release:  
American Volleyball Coaches Association  
Lexington, Ky. -

**NCAA Approves Sand Volleyball as a Collegiate Sport**

**LEXINGTON, Ky.** (April 21, 2009) - The NCAA Division I Legislative Council added sand volleyball to the list of emerging sports for women, it was announced today, clearing the way for schools to use the sport toward minimum sponsorship requirements and minimum financial aid awards. NCAA Division II had already voted to add sand volleyball to the emerging sports list at the 2009 NCAA Convention in January.

"The opportunity to play sand volleyball in the spring will spur growth in the sport. I wish I had that opportunity when I was at Stanford!" said 2008 Olympic Beach Gold Medalist, Kerri Walsh. "Additionally, this development will give more women an opportunity for a professional volleyball career in the United States."

Capitalizing on the recent success of USA Volleyball's beach teams in the Olympics and the growth in grassroots programs, the NCAA's Committee on Women's Athletics made the recommendation to add the sport to the emerging sports list last summer.

"The United States has a proud and successful history in sand volleyball, having won at least one gold medal in every Summer Games since the discipline was added to the Olympic program in 1996," said USAV CEO Doug Beal. "This move by the NCAA is wonderful, particularly in light of the increased varsity athletic opportunities for young women at the collegiate level and the synergy with already existing USA Volleyball programs."

The NCAA will call the new sport "sand" volleyball, rather than "beach" volleyball, in hopes that the sport will have broad appeal across the country and not be confined to coastal areas. Already schools including The University of Texas, the University of Nebraska, and the University of Utah are competing in collegiate competitions in the spring.

"The addition of sand volleyball to the list of collegiate options is significant for our sport," said Kathy DeBoer, Executive Director of the American Volleyball Coaches Association. "With more than 400,000 girls playing high school volleyball, we welcome the addition of collegiate roster spots."

The group most responsible for spreading the popularity of the sport beyond the California coast is the Association of Volleyball Professionals (AVP) which hosts a series of competitions on man-made courts at in-land locations like Cincinnati, Ohio, Atlanta, Ga., and Las Vegas, Nev. The AVP also sponsors a series of indoor sand competitions in January and February called "Hot Winter Nights" in cold-weather cities like Omaha, Ne. and Grand Rapids, Mich.

"We are thrilled that the NCAA has voted to make sand volleyball a collegiate sport," said Jason Hodell, CEO of AVP Pro Beach Volleyball. "The vote confirms the momentum behind the sport of beach volleyball, and we are excited to help grow our sport on the college level and create new beach volleyball stars around the country."

The NCAA will spend the next year developing the rules that will govern sand volleyball as a collegiate sport, including regulations on financial aid, playing dates and recruiting. Institutions will be able to sponsor varsity programs starting in the 2010-2011 academic year.

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