



2022 AVP PRO BEACH VOLLEYBALL TOUR

Season Event #12 • Gold Series Event #3

Chicago, Illinois • September 2 – 4, 2022

ABOUT THE TOURNAMENT – The AVP Tour is holding its third and final Gold Series event of 2022 in Chicago, Illinois. A fixture over the Labor Day weekend, this is the 12th on the 16-tournament schedule that the AVP Tour has this year. As well, this tournament is key for entry into the AVP Championships in Phoenix at the end of September. The payout for this tournament is \$300,000, split evenly between men and women. The season payout totals \$1,975,000 for the AVP, which is in its 39th season.

- The main draw will be a 16-team, double elimination format. For the men 12 teams and for the women 11 teams were granted entry directly into the main draw from having sufficient points (from the best four events points totals from their last six AVP and AVPNext tournaments). The remaining teams in each gender earned a spot by being the top finishers in the 40th annual Seaside (Oregon) Beach Volleyball Tournament that ended August 14. The main draw begins on Friday, September 2 and concludes on Sunday, September 4, and will be played on three courts at the Oak Street Beach. General admission is free each day while premium seating is available for additional costs. The championship matches will be around 1:30 pm CT for the women and 2:30 pm CT for the men.

- Live streaming of both stadium court and court 1 takes place all three days on the AVP's YouTube channel (@avpbeach). Dain Blanton, Camryn Irwin, Rich Lambourne, Matt Prosser and Mark Schuermann will handle the announcing duties. The finals will be broadcast on a tape-delayed basis on three networks, FS1, Bally Sports regional networks and the Tennis Channel.

CHICAGO'S CAPTAINS – Theo Brunner and Chaim Schalk won in Hermosa Beach, and are now number one (seed) in Chicago, the fourth straight event with the top billing. Their partnership on the AVP Tour has been filled with success, as they have been in the semifinals seven of their previous eight AVP tournaments and in the championship match five times. The duo has been in the title match in four straight AVP tournaments, which was last done by Taylor Crabb / Jake Gibb in 2019-2020. The last team to do it in five consecutive tournaments was Phil Dalhausser / Nick Lucena in 2017-18. Plus, they finished fourth in the World Championships in June, the highest finish by an American tandem in that prestigious event. This marks the fifth time for Brunner with a top seed, the first time was in the 2018 Hermosa Beach Open, which he won with John Hyden. Chicago will mark the fourth time ever that Schalk has held the top spot going into an AVP tournament. This year Brunner and Schalk have played 30 matches (23-7 record) entering Chicago, with 17 of those matches coming against teams seeded eighth or better. In their last three AVP tournaments, they have had just three three-set matches. Brunner has a best in Chicago of fifth in 2016 with Billy Allen, while Schalk has played in two semifinals in Chicago, placing second in 2018 with Tim Bomgren and third in 2019 with Jeremy Casebeer.

- A new women's team has grabbed the number one seed for Chicago, as Sara Hughes / Kelley Kolinske have earned the top spot after their win in Manhattan Beach. They are the fourth different women's team to hold the top spot in either a Pro Series or Gold Series event this season. On the AVP Tour they are 17-8 in matches, including 15-0 when winning the first set and 1-8 when losing the first set. Five of their eight match losses this season have come to teams seeded either first, second or third and six of their eight losses have come to teams with at least one beach Olympian. Hughes was seeded first in three straight events in 2018 (winning twice before placing second in Chicago), and this is the first time since then for her to hold a number one seed. Kolinske was seeded first twice in 2017, placing seventh the first time and then winning in San Francisco, and hasn't been the top seed again until this weekend. Hughes won her first time playing in Chicago (in 2017 with Kelly Cheng), then placed second in 2018 with Summer Ross, third in 2019 and fifth in 2021 (both of those times with Brandie Wilkerson). Kolinske is playing here for the seventh time, with her best finishes being a second-place finish with Betsi Flint in 2016 and a third place with Zana Muno last year.

HOMETOWN HEROES –

- There are no men's players who list Illinois as their current residence
- There are no men's players who currently live in a different state but list their hometown in Illinois
- There is one men's player who attended a college in Illinois:
Cody Caldwell (Loyola Chicago)
- There is one women's player who lists Illinois as her current residence:
Molly Turner (Naperville)
- There are no women's players who currently live in a different state but list their hometown in Illinois
- There are no women's players who attended a college in Illinois

SCHEDULE SNAPSHOT – The 2022 AVP schedule looks vastly different than years past in several regards. This season's slate has 16 tour stops, the most the AVP has had since 2009 (also 16 that year), and more than the past 3 years combined. While there have been several years with more men's events, the 16 women's tournaments has been surpassed just twice (18 in both 2007 and 2008). The 12 different states that the Tour is visiting is the most since the 2008 season (also 12 different states). Two tournaments will be held in November plus one in December, which marks a first for the AVP Tour, as previously October was the latest that an event has ever been held up to this point. Three locations are slated to have night sessions (New Orleans, Atlanta, and Phoenix). The combined total of \$1,975,000 in prize money also features the most the Tour has distributed since 2009. This season the AVP has stopped using freeze scoring on match points.

- The Tour is divided into four different classifications. One level is the Tour Series, which comprises seven different events in seven different states from June to November. These events will all have on-site qualifiers the day before the main draw begins. The Pro Series has five events from May through December. Unlike in years past, these tournaments will not have an on-site qualifier. Instead, the first two events will use AVPNext tournaments to round out the field, while the last three will rely on specific Tour Series tournaments to determine the final teams. The Gold Series, with three events, will be held in August and September. Each of the three will have a different manner of qualifying. Atlanta will use a Tour Series event, Manhattan Beach will have an on-site qualifier the day before, and Chicago will use an AVPNext tournament. The last type of event is the AVP championships, which will be held in Phoenix in September. Entry for the six-team draws will be based on the best two out of the three results in Gold Series events.

2022 AVP Pro Beach Volleyball Tour Schedule

Event Dates	Location	Tournament Format	Prize \$ - TV
May 6 - 8	Austin, Texas	16-team double elimination	\$125,000 – FS1 and Bally's RSN <i>Andy Benesh gets first career win (with Phil Dalhausser); Taryn Kloth and Kristen Nuss collect 2nd career win</i>
May 27 - 29	New Orleans, Louisiana	16-team double elimination	\$125,000 – FS1 and Bally's RSN <i>Phil Dalhausser / Casey Patterson win in their first event together; Kelly Cheng / Betsi Flint win in hostile territory</i>
June 10 - 12	Muskegon, Michigan	24-team double elimination	\$50,000 <i>Dave Palm / Roberto Rodriguez win; Larissa Maestrini (with Lili Maestrini) gets first AVP win since 2009</i>
July 1 - 3	Denver, Colorado	24-team double elimination	\$50,000 <i>Andy Benesh wins again (with Miles Evans) while Larissa and Lili Maestrini get second consecutive title</i>
July 7 - 9	Oshkosh, Wisconsin	24-team double elimination	\$50,000 <i>Dave Palm / Roberto Rodriguez duplicate their feat in Muskegon; Carly Kan / Kaitlyn Leary both first time winners</i>
July 8 - 10	Hermosa Beach, California	16-team double elimination	\$125,000 – FS1 and Bally's RSN <i>Theo Brunner / Chaim Schalk win long 3-set title match; Terese Cannon / Sarah Sponcil both first time winners</i>
July 22 - 24	Atlantic City, New Jersey	24-team double elimination	\$50,000 <i>Cody Caldwell and 40-year old David Lee win; 40-year old Larissa Maestrini and Lili Maestrini win for 3rd time</i>
July 29 - 31	Ft. Lauderdale, Florida	16-team double elimination	\$125,000 – FS1 and Bally's RSN <i>Tri Bourne / Trevor Crabb go 10-0 in sets; Tina Graudina wins in her 2nd AVP event ever with Hailey Harward</i>
Aug 5 - 7	Atlanta, Georgia	16-team double elimination	\$300,000 – FS1 and Bally's RSN <i>Four 1st time winners (Paul Lotman, Miles Partain, Julia Scoles, Geena Urango) after lightning forces modification</i>
Aug 18 - 21	Manhattan Beach, California	32-team double elimination	\$300,000 – FS1, Bally's, Tennis Ch. <i>Tri Bourne / Trevor Crabb repeat as MBO champs; Sarah Hughes and Kelley Kolinske first time MBO winners</i>
Aug 26 - 28	Virginia Beach, Virginia	24-team double elimination	\$50,000 <i>Four 1st time winners (Tim Bomgren, Piotr Marciniak, Deahna Kraft, Allie Wheeler)</i>
Sep 2 - 4	Chicago, Illinois	16-team double elimination	\$300,000 – FS1, Bally's, Tennis Ch. <i>Chicago trails only Manhattan Beach on list of most frequented stops in AVP history; Gold Series event #3</i>
Sep 23 - 24	Phoenix, Arizona	6-team double elimination	\$100,000 – FS1 and Bally's RSN <i>Only invitational on schedule; AVP last played in Arizona in 2009; inaugural AVP event in 1984 was in Arizona</i>
Nov 11 - 13	Huntington Beach, California	24-team double elimination	\$50,000 <i>Huntington Beach is fourth most frequented stop in AVP history; third California stop on 2022 Tour</i>
Nov 18 - 20	Clearwater, Florida	24-team double elimination	\$50,000 <i>Florida held second most AVP events behind California</i>
Dec 2 - 4	Tavares, Florida	16-team double elimination	\$125,000 <i>Latest date an AVP tournament has ever been held; replaces Atlantic City event scheduled for September</i>

CHICAGO HISTORY – The Windy City has a rich history with the AVP, hosting events every year since the AVP began playing in 1984 through 2009 with the exception of 2001. On top of the 31 AVP men's events here, P&R had tournaments in 1983 and 2012, Wide Open had one in 2011 and there was an FIVB dual gender tournament in 2000. Chicago has held the most domestic tournaments of any location outside of the state of California. In each of the first 25 AVP championship matches, there was at least one individual who has competed in the Olympics in beach volleyball, but that streak ended in 2015. There have been 22 different men's teams which have won titles on the AVP here. In 1999, Kiraly's win gave him 140, overtaking Sinjin Smith for the all-time lead. Todd Rogers won three times in his career here with three different partners. In 2004, the Chicago event was the first domestic tournament following the Athens Olympics, and both winners had just competed in Athens. Ironically though, Dain Blanton and Jeff Nygaard, who were 0-3 in the Olympics, went undefeated in Chicago, while Misty May-Treanor and Kerri Walsh Jennings, who did not lose a single set in their seven Olympic matches, not only lost a match but also two other games yet still won the title. Amazingly, May-Treanor / Walsh Jennings became the first women's team since the reorganization in 2001 that had won a title with one loss, having lost in the winner's bracket semifinals (all 43 other winners had been undefeated). The 2005 event offered the most prize money ever (at the time) for a dual-gender domestic event (\$375,000). In 2006, after winning for the fourth straight time in Chicago, Walsh Jennings eclipsed the \$1 million mark in career earnings. In 2007, 14th-seeded Jenny Kropp and Jenny Pavley became the lowest seeded team in AVP history to reach the semifinals (since eclipsed). The 2017 winners set records on both ends of the spectrum in both genders. John Hyden (along with Theo Brunner) won the men's title at 44 years, 10 months and 27 days old, becoming the oldest player to win an AVP event, surpassing Karch Kiraly's mark. On the women's side, Kelly Cheng and Sara Hughes won, becoming the youngest women's team to win (combined age of 44 years, 6 months, 6 days), bettering the previous mark held by Betsi Flint and Kelley Larsen in Mason in 2015. Cheng and Hughes combined age was less than Hyden's. In the last nine events in Chicago, eight different men's teams have won. The same teams on the women's side have won the past three times here (2018, 2019 and 2021) but Alix Klineman and April Ross will not be competing this year. Alix Klineman and April Ross became just the second women's tandem to win consecutive AVP titles, joining Misty May-Treanor / Kerri Walsh Jennings who won four in a row. Chicago 2016 was the first AVP event to use match point freeze scoring. Here is a look at the tournaments in Chicago:

MEN – AVP events

Year	1st	2nd	3rd	3rd / 4th
1984	Mike Dodd / Tim Hovland	Sinjin Smith / Randy Stoklos	John Hanley / Jon Stevenson	Robert Chavez / Jeff Southcott
1985	Mike Dodd / Tim Hovland	Mark Eller / Andrew Smith	Ricci Luyties / Steve Obradovich	Andy Fishburn / Jay Hanseth
1986	Sinjin Smith / Randy Stoklos	Scott Ayakutubby / Brent Frohoff	Mike Dodd / Tim Hovland	Leif Hanson / John Hanley
1987	Sinjin Smith / Randy Stoklos	Andrew Smith / Dan Vrebalovich	Scott Ayakutubby / Steve Obradovich	John Hanley / Jon Stevenson
1988	Pat Powers / Jon Stevenson	Sinjin Smith / Randy Stoklos	Brent Frohoff / Andrew Smith	John Hanley / Dan Vrebalovich
1989	Sinjin Smith / Randy Stoklos	Mike Dodd / Tim Hovland	John Hanley / Dan Vrebalovich	Rudy Dvorak / Craig Moothart
1990	Sinjin Smith / Randy Stoklos	Tim Hovland / Kent Steffes	Brent Frohoff / Karch Kiraly	Wally Goodrick / Craig Moothart
1991	Karch Kiraly / Kent Steffes	Brent Frohoff / John Hanley	Eric Boyles / Shawn Davis	Mike Dodd / Ricci Luyties
1992	Karch Kiraly / Kent Steffes	Mike Dodd / Tim Hovland	Adam Johnson / Ricci Luyties	Brent Frohoff / Mike Whitmarsh
1993	Brian Lewis / Randy Stoklos	Mike Dodd / Mike Whitmarsh	Karch Kiraly / Kent Steffes	Scott Ayakutubby / Tim Hovland
1994	Karch Kiraly / Kent Steffes	Mike Dodd / Mike Whitmarsh	Troy Tanner / Wes Welch	Eduardo Bacil / Jose Loiola
1995	Scott Ayakutubby / Karch Kiraly	Adam Johnson / Jose Loiola	Brent Frohoff / Rob Heidger	Eduardo Bacil / Tim Hovland
1996	Adam Johnson / Jose Loiola	Mike Dodd / Mike Whitmarsh	Scott Ayakutubby / Brian Lewis	Eduardo Bacil / Randy Stoklos
1997	Jose Loiola / Kent Steffes	Randy Stoklos / Troy Tanner	Mike Dodd / Mike Whitmarsh	Dain Blanton / Canyon Ceman
1998	Kent Steffes / Mike Whitmarsh	Dain Blanton / Eric Fonoimoana	Rob Heidger / Troy Tanner	Brian Lewis / David Swatik
1999	Adam Johnson / Karch Kiraly	Roberto Lopes / Franco Neto	Dain Blanton / Eric Fonoimoana	Dax Holdren / Todd Rogers
2000	Dax Holdren / Todd Rogers	Jose Loiola / Emanuel Rego	Adam Johnson / Karch Kiraly	Canyon Ceman / Brian Lewis
2002	Eric Fonoimoana / Dax Holdren	Eduardo Bacil / Fred Souza	Mike Lambert / Lee LeGrande	[3rd] Carl Henkel / Casey Jennings
2003	Dain Blanton / Jeff Nygaard	Canyon Ceman / Mike Whitmarsh	Brent Doble / Karch Kiraly	[3rd] Scott Ayakutubby/Brian Lewis
2004	Dain Blanton / Jeff Nygaard	John Hyden / Mike Lambert	Paul Baxter / Scott Wong	[3rd] Jake Gibb / Adam Jewell
2005	Todd Rogers / Sean Scott	Karch Kiraly / Mike Lambert	Matt Fuerbringer / Casey Jennings	[3rd] Jake Gibb / Stein Metzger
2006	Mike Lambert / Stein Metzger	Phil Dalhausser / Todd Rogers	Jake Gibb / Sean Rosenthal	[3rd] Dax Holdren / Sean Scott
2007	Mike Lambert / Stein Metzger	John Hyden / Brad Keenan	Nick Lucena / Mark Williams	[3rd] Ty Loomis / Hans Stolfus
2008	Phil Dalhausser / Todd Rogers	Jake Gibb / Sean Rosenthal	John Hyden / Brad Keenan	[3rd] Nick Lucena / Sean Scott
2009	John Hyden / Sean Scott	Phil Dalhausser / Todd Rogers	Jake Gibb / Sean Rosenthal	[3rd] Pedro Brazao / Matt Prosser
2015	Brad Keenan / Ty Trambie	Ryan Doherty / John Mayer	Casey Jennings / Billy Kolinske	[3rd] Todd Rogers / Stafford Slick
2016	Phil Dalhausser / Nick Lucena	Tri Bourne / John Hyden	Taylor Crabb / Trevor Crabb	[3rd] Ryan Doherty / John Mayer
2017	Ryan Doherty / John Hyden	Phil Dalhausser / Nick Lucena	Jeremy Casebeer / John Mayer	[3rd] Billy Allen / Stafford Slick
2018	Taylor Crabb / Jake Gibb	Tim Bomgren / Chaim Schalk	Ed Ratledge / Roberto Rodriguez	[3rd] Jeremy Casebeer/Reid Priddy
2019	Taylor Crabb / Jake Gibb	Phil Dalhausser / Nick Lucena	Chase Budinger / Casey Patterson	[3rd] Jeremy Casebeer/Chaim Schalk
2021	Chase Budinger / Casey Patterson	Tri Bourne / Trevor Crabb	Paul Lotman / Miles Partain	[3rd] Billy Allen / Andy Benesh

MEN – non-AVP events

Year	1st	2nd	3rd	3rd / 4th
1983	Mike Dodd / Tim Hovland	John Hanley / Jon Stevenson	Sinjin Smith / Randy Stoklos	Robert Chavez / Steve Obradovich
1988	Andy Fishburn / Dane Selznick	Rick Arce / Chris Hannemann	Mike Fitzgerald / Eugene LeDuff	Dave Morehouse / Wes Welch
2011	John Hyden / Sean Scott	John Mayer / Matt Prosser	Braidy Halverson / Adam Roberts	[3rd] Ty Loomis / Mark Williams
2012	Ryan Doherty / Casey Patterson	Avery Drost / Ty Trambie	Stein Metzger / Mark Williams	[3rd] Brad Keenan / John Mayer

WOMEN – AVP events

1984	Linda Hanley / Dale Keough	Nancy Cothron / Donna Townsend	Kathy Hanley / Beth Rogers	Kathy Kehoe / Patti Walsh
1986	Linda Hanley / Nina Matthies	Patty Dodd / Janice Harrer	Linda Chisholm / Heather Hafner	Lori Forsythe / Jeanne Goldsmith
1993	Linda Chisholm / Holly McPeak	Nancy Reno / Angela Rock	Rita Crockett / Linda Hanley	Cammy Ciarelli / Jackie Silva
1994	Cammy Ciarelli / Holly McPeak	Nancy Reno / Angela Rock	Sandra Pires / Jackie Silva	Linda Chisholm / Linda Hanley
1999	Liz Masakayan / Elaine Youngs	Annett Davis/Jenny Johnson Jordan	Holly McPeak / Gabrielle Reece	Patty Dodd / Angela Rock
2002	Annett Davis/Jenny Johnson Jordan	Holly McPeak / Elaine Youngs	Nancy Mason / Rachel Wacholder	[3rd] Carrie Dodd / Leanne McSorley
2003	Misty May-Treanor / Kerri Walsh	Holly McPeak / Elaine Youngs	Jennifer Meredith/Wendy Stammer	[3rd] Nancy Mason/Dianne DeNecochea
2004	Misty May-Treanor / Kerri Walsh	Annett Davis/Jenny Johnson Jordan	Carrie Dodd / Nancy Mason	[3rd] Holly McPeak / Elaine Youngs
2005	Misty May-Treanor / Kerri Walsh	Mimi Amaral / Tatiana Minello	Rachel Wacholder/ Elaine Youngs	[3rd] Jennifer Kessy / Holly McPeak
2006	Misty May-Treanor / Kerri Walsh	Rachel Wacholder / Elaine Youngs	Dianne DeNecochea/Tammy Leibl	[3rd] Nicole Branagh / Holly McPeak
2007	Annett Davis/Jenny Johnson Jordan	Angie Akers / Brooke Hanson	Barbra Fontana / Alicia Polzin	[3rd] Jenny Kropp / Jenny Pavley
2008	Misty May-Treanor / Kerri Walsh	Nicole Branagh / Elaine Youngs	Annett Davis/Jenny Johnson Jordan	[3rd] Jennifer Kessy / April Ross
2009	Nicole Branagh / Elaine Youngs	Jennifer Kessy / April Ross	Annett Davis/Jenny Johnson Jordan	[3rd] Tatiana Minello / Priscilla Lima
2015	Nicole Branagh / Jenny Kropp	Kim DiCello / Kendra Van Zwieten	Amanda Dowdy / Heather McGuire	[3rd] Lane Carico / Summer Ross
2016	Lauren Fendrick / Brooke Sweat	Betsi Flint / Kelley Larsen	Ali McColloch / Geena Urango	[3rd] Lane Carico / Summer Ross
2017	Kelly Cheng / Sara Hughes	Summer Ross / Brooke Sweat	Lauren Fendrick / April Ross	[3rd] Emily Day / Brittany Hochevar
2018	Alix Klineman / April Ross	Sara Hughes / Summer Ross	Terese Cannon / Sarah Sponcil	[3rd] Kelly Cheng / Brittany Hochevar
2019	Alix Klineman / April Ross	Emily Day / Betsi Flint	Sara Hughes / Brandie Wilkerson	[3rd] Kelly Cheng / Sarah Sponcil
2021	Alix Klineman / April Ross	Larissa Maestrini / Lili Maestrini	Kelley Kolinske / Zana Muno	[3rd] Taryn Kloth / Kristen Nuss

WOMEN – non-AVP events

Year	1st	2nd	3rd	3rd / 4th
1985	Nancy Cothron/Donna Townsend	Anne Crocker / Marcie Rasmussen	Kathy Bay / Fran Knapiewitz	Julie Bowser / Kathy Drumboski
1987	Linda Chisholm / Jackie Silva	Patty Dodd / Dale Hall	Linda Hanley / Nina Matthies	Lori Forsythe / Jeanne Goldsmith
1996	Holly McPeak / Nancy Reno	Barbra Fontana / Linda Hanley	Elaine Roque/Dennis Shupryt Knoop	Karolyn Kirby / Angela Rock
1997	Liz Masakayan / Elaine Youngs	Lisa Arce / Holly McPeak	Krista Blomquist/Christine Podraza	Karrie Poppinga / Angela Rock
2011	Jenny Kropp / Whitney Pavlik	Jennifer Fopma / Tracy Jones	Emily Day / Heather McGuire	[3rd] Erin Gray / Olaya Pazo
2012	Jenny Kropp / Whitney Pavlik	Priscilla Lima / Tyra Turner	Kristen Batt-Rohr/Raquel Ferrerira	[3rd] Jennifer Fopma / Brooke Sweat

CHICAGO SAND BITS – Out of the 32 men's players competing, eight are in their 20's (with the youngest being 20-year old Miles Partain), 17 are in their 30's, and seven are in their 40's (with the oldest being 49-year old John Hyden, 45-year old Ed Ratledge and 44-year old Reid Priddy). There are five players listed at 6'0" while the tallest are a pair of 6'9" 6'8" players (Andy Benesh and Phil Dalhausser). There are two players here who haven't played at least 20 events (Taylor Sander and Jake Dietrich) while three have played in at least 100 events (Phil Dalhausser, John Hyden and Casey Patterson). Across all tours Phil Dalhausser has won 102 titles, which is more than the number of pro beach events that 22 of the 32 players have even competed in. As for partnerships, Evan Cory and Dave Palm are playing together for the first time and Cody Caldwell and Ed Ratledge are playing for the second time. Two partnerships have competed at least 20 times prior to Chicago (led by Tri Bourne / Trevor Crabb and Theo Brunner / Chaim Schalk). There are five teams here which have won on the AVP Tour previously, and all have won this season: Bourne and Crabb have won four AVP titles, Brunner / Schalk one, Phil Dalhausser / Casey Patterson one, Paul Lotman / Miles Partain one, Andy Benesh / Miles Evans one Tour Series.

• Among the 32 women's players there is one teenager (19-year old Megan Kraft), 16 players in their 20's, 13 in their 30's and two in their 40's (40-year old Larissa Maestrini and 40-year old Lauren Fendrick). Kristen Nuss (5'6") and Kimberly Hildreth and Molly Turner (both 5'8") are the shortest competitors, while at the other end of the spectrum are Sarah Pavan at 6'5" and Taryn Kloth at 6'4". The least experienced player in the field is Carly Skjodt, who has played just eight events previously, while two women's players have played more than 200 events previously (Lauren Fendrick and Emily Day). Larissa Maestrini is the all-time FIVB wins leader (62) and has the most AVP wins in 2022 of any player here (three, along with Lili Maestrini). With nine AVP victories, Emily Day leads the pack all-time, and Betsi Flint has six. There are only three women's players who have never won a pro beach tournament on any level. Of the 16 women's tandems, four of the teams are playing alongside each other for the first time including two of the top five seeds (Melissa Humana-Paredes / Brandie Wilkerson and Tina Gaudina / Sarah Pavan), along with Lauren Fendrick / Geena Urango and Carly Skjodt / Molly Turner. The most experienced tandem here is Terese Cannon / Sarah Sponcil, who have played 14 times previously. Including the Tour Series there have been nine different teams which have won a title this season (in the 11 events total), and six of those teams are playing in Chicago (the other three have split up and at least one player from each of those teams is competing here).

RELATIVELY SPEAKING – Larissa and Lili Maestrini, who are partners on the court and the seventh-seeded women's team, are married. Taylor and Trevor Crabb are brothers and former partners who are now playing on different teams.

SWEET 16 – John Hyden and Ed Ratledge are both playing in Chicago for the 16th time, which is the most of any player in history. Hyden has won three times, in 2009 with Sean Scott, in 2011 with Sean Scott on a different tour, and in 2017 with Ryan Doherty. Additionally, he finished second three other times (in 2004 with Mike Lambert, in 2007 with Brad Keenan and in 2016 with Tri Bourne). He first played in Chicago in 2002, before Miles Partain had his first birthday. Ratledge also first played in the Windy City in 2002, and he had his best Chicago finish in 2018 with Roberto Rodriguez, finishing in third place.

NINE IS FINE – For the women, Lauren Fendrick will be playing in Chicago for the 9th time, which is the most of any active player. Fendrick's first time playing in Chicago was in 2003, which is before Megan Kraft had her first birthday. Fendrick won in 2016 with Brooke Sweat, and also placed third in 2017, her last time playing here, with April Ross. In 2016 she lost her first round match then won seven straight matches to capture the title. She has won 10 of her last 12 matches in Chicago entering this weekend.

OLYMPICALITY – This weekend's Chicago Open draw does not include either Alix Klineman or April Ross, who won the Olympic Gold medal in Tokyo one year ago and won the Chicago Open for each of the last three times. But it does have many other Olympians, with nine men and seven women who have played either indoors or on the beach.

• Men with Olympic experience:

Tri Bourne played beach in 2020 (as a substitute for Taylor Crabb)

Phil Dalhausser played beach in 2008 (won gold), 2012, 2016, and 2020

John Hyden played indoors in 1996 and 2000

David Lee played indoors in 2008 (won gold), 2012 and 2016 (won bronze)

Paul Lotman played indoors in 2012

Casey Patterson played beach in 2016

Reid Priddy played indoors in 2004, 2008 (won gold), 2012 and 2016 (won bronze)

Taylor Sander played indoors in 2016 (won bronze) and 2020

Chaim Schalk played beach for Canada in 2016

• Women with Olympic experience:

Kelly Cheng played beach in 2020

Lauren Fendrick played beach in 2016

Tina Graudina played beach for Latvia in 2020

Melissa Humana-Paredes played beach for Canada in 2020

Larissa Maestrini played beach for Brazil in 2008, 2012 (won gold) and 2016

Sarah Pavan played beach for Canada in 2016 and 2020

Sarah Sponcil played beach in 2020

Brandie Wilkerson played beach for Canada in 2020

GOLD SERIES HISTORY – The AVP Tour introduced the Gold Series in 2017. Each season, with the exception of 2020, there have been three events which have comprised the Gold Series, and to date a total of 14 tournaments have been held. Phil Dalhausser / Nick Lucena have won four times while the women's team leader is Alix Kleinman / April Ross, with six titles. Individually, Ross has won seven times to lead all players. On the men's side, there have been 12 different individuals win a Gold Series event, and every team to have won has included at least one Olympian (beach or indoors). On the women's side there have been 15 different players to claim a title, with April Ross, Alix Klineman, and Sarah Hughes (three titles) the only players to have won more than once. In Chicago there are four teams playing, two in each gender, that have previously won a Gold Series event (Tri Bourne / Trevor Crabb and Paul Lotman / Miles Partain on the men's side and Taryn Kloth / Kristen Nuss and Sara Hughes / Kelley Kolinske on the women's side).

Date	Location	Men's Winners	Women's Winners
6/11/17	New York City	Taylor Crabb / Jake Gibb	Lauren Fendrick / April Ross
8/20/17	Manhattan Beach	Phil Dalhausser / Nick Lucena	Emily Day / Brittany Hochevar
9/3/17	Chicago	Ryan Doherty / John Hyden	Kelly Cheng / Sara Hughes
6/10/18	New York City	Phil Dalhausser / Nick Lucena	Sara Hughes / Summer Ross
8/19/18	Manhattan Beach	Phil Dalhausser / Nick Lucena	Alix Klineman / April Ross
9/2/18	Chicago	Taylor Crabb / Jake Gibb	Alix Klineman / April Ross
6/9/19	New York City	Phil Dalhausser / Nick Lucena	Alix Klineman / April Ross
8/18/19	Manhattan Beach	Trevor Crabb / Reid Priddy	Melissa Humana-Paredes / Sarah Pavan
9/1/19	Chicago	Taylor Crabb / Jake Gibb	Alix Klineman / April Ross
8/15/21	Atlanta	Chase Budinger / Casey Patterson	Taryn Kloth / Kristen Nuss
8/22/21	Manhattan Beach	Tri Bourne / Trevor Crabb	Alix Klineman / April Ross
9/5/21	Chicago	Chase Budinger / Casey Patterson	Alix Klineman / April Ross
8/7/22	Atlanta	Paul Lotman / Miles Partain	Julia Scoles / Geena Urango
8/21/22	Manhattan Beach	Tri Bourne / Trevor Crabb	Sara Hughes / Kelley Kolinske

THE STATE OF THE STATES – The 32 men's players currently live in six different states, with 26 from California, two from Florida, and one each from Arizona, Hawai'i, Louisiana and Michigan. Two of the players are originally from outside of the United States, Phil Dalhausser from Switzerland and Chaim Schalk from Canada. Eleven of the 16 teams in the field live in the same states.

- The 32 female players currently live in 10 different states. California leads the pack with 19 players, followed by Florida with four, Hawai'i with two, and one each from Arizona, Illinois, Louisiana, Michigan, New York, North Carolina and South Dakota. Between the men and women, a total of 10 states are represented here. Seven women were born or raised outside of the U.S, including Tina Gaudina (Latvia), Melissa Humana-Paredes (Canada), Larissa Maestrini (Brazil), Lili Maestrini (Brazil), Karolina Marciniak (Poland), Sarah Pavan (Canada) and Brandie Wilkerson (Switzerland / Canada). Ten of the 16 teams have both partners living in the same state.

WE ARE THE CHAMPIONS – The NCAA first sanctioned women's beach volleyball in 2016 and there have been six national champions crowned since then (none in 2020 due to COVID). Southern Cal won the first two (in 2016 and 2017), then UCLA claimed the next two (2018 and 2019). After the one-year hiatus, Southern Cal, with coach Dain Blanton, have won the past two titles (2021 and 2022). Here is a look at the seven women who competing in Chicago who have won a national championship, each of whom have won a pair of titles.

Terese Cannon (Southern Cal) 2016, 2017
 Kelly Cheng (Southern Cal) 2016, 2017
 Tina Gaudina (Southern Cal) 2021, 2022
 Sara Hughes (Southern Cal) 2016, 2017
 Megan Kraft (Southern Cal) 2021, 2022
 Savvy Simo (UCLA), 2018, 2019
 Sarah Sponcil (UCLA), 2018, 2019

IRONMAN AWARDS – Prior to this weekend there have been 11 AVP tournaments, and since two were overlapping, the most any one player could have played is 10 so far. Evan Cory and Billy Kolinske are in sole place atop the list of tournaments played as partners (eight times), but will not be competing together this weekend. Timothy Brewster and Kyle Friend have played seven events together already, and will be playing in their eighth in Chicago to tie for the lead. Individually, Avery Drost has played 10 times so far, the most of any players, and will be competing this weekend for the 11th time.

- On the women's side Larissa and Lili Maestrini, the Tour Series winners in Muskegon, Denver and Atlantic City, will be competing for the 11th time this year, the most of any women, and all as partners. They are a full two tournaments ahead of the next competitors, as nine women have played in eight AVP events so far this year. Team-wise, Larissa and Lili have played 10 times as partners, and two teams have played eight times previously; Aurora Davis / Teegan Van Gunst and Deahna Kraft / Allie Wheeler, neither of which will be playing in Chicago.

CHICAGO CHAMPIONSHIPS – Match data is available for the last 14 AVP tournaments held in Chicago. For the men, 12 of the 14 title matches since 2002 have been sweeps, with 2004 and 2009 having the only three-set matches. In addition to six straight sweeps, the team winning the first set has won all 14 times there is data (since 2002). The winning team in each of the last three Chicago tournaments has come from the contender's bracket

- For the women, five of the 14 AVP tournaments since the start of the 2002 season have been three-set matches. Notably, the first set of a Chicago championship is rarely close, as just three of the 14 title matches saw the team losing the first set score at least 18 points.

WINDY CITY FREEZE – The 2016 season finale in Chicago was the first AVP event to implement the match point freeze, which stayed in effect until the start of this season. Some notable matches were affected by the new format that event. In the men's semifinals, #3 seed Ryan Doherty / John Mayer led #6 seeds Phil Dalhausser / Nick Lucena 14-13 in the third set. But then the match point freeze went into effect and lasted 27 minutes and 40 serves, and 13 let serves had to be replayed. Dalhausser / Lucena was able to come back and win the match 19-17, and went on to win the tournament. In the women's final, #9 Betsi Flint / Kelley Kolinske won the first set 21-14, but then #4 Lauren Fendrick / Brooke Sweat won set two 21-10. So of course the third set was a tight one, with Fendrick / Sweat pulling it out 19-17. The women's final had 32 serves in that third set once the freeze began, and five serves were let serves that had to be redone.

IT'S QUALITY, NOT QUANTITY – Since the 1991 season, this will be the 25th time the AVP has had a men's event in Chicago. This is just the third time the main draw has been 16 teams, as the 2021 and 2015 tournaments were also 16-team draws. The field has usually been 32 teams (13 times in that span), but was 48 teams twice and 24 teams seven times.

- The women are competing in Chicago for the 16th time since 1999, and this is also the third time that the field has been 16 teams. The draw was also 20 teams once, 24 teams six times, and 32 teams six times.

DIVERSIFICATION – There have been six Pro and Gold Series events thus far, and a different women's team has won each time while five different men's teams have won (Tri Bourne / Trevor Crabb are the only team to win multiple times). Phil Dalhausser has been on the winning team twice. On the Tour Series, four different men's teams have won the five titles (Dave Palm / Roberto Rodriguez won twice), and Andy Benesh has won both a Pro Series title as well as a Tour Series event. On the women's side Larissa and Lili Maestrini have won three Tour Series titles, with the other titles going to Carly Kan / Kaitlyn Malaney and Deahna Kraft / Allie Wheeler.

2022 QUALIFIER LIST – In on-site qualifiers for both the men and women, all top-seeded qualifier teams have advanced to the main draw. So far three men's and two women's qualifier teams have been one match win away from reaching the semifinals. Here's a look at the teams who have qualified this season and how they finished in the main draw:

AUSTIN - Men (qualifier in Panama City, Fla.)

Caleb Kwekel / Marty Lorenz (2nd in QT) – 13th
 Mark Burik / Dave Palm (3rd in QT) – 13th
 Raffe Paulis / Jeff Samuels (5th in QT) – 13th
 Lev Priima / Silila Tucker (5th in QT) – 13th
Burik replaced by Roberto Rodriguez in MD

NEW ORLEANS - Men (qualifier in San Antonio, Texas)

Noah Dyer / Chase Frishman (2nd in QT) – 7th
 Skylar del Sol / Andrew Dentler (3rd in QT) – 5th
 Lev Priima / Silila Tucker (3rd in QT) – 13th
 Dave Palm / Roberto Rodriguez (5th in QT) – 13th
 Cody Caldwell / Adam Roberts (5th in QT) – 13th
Caldwell / Roberts replaced a MD team

MUSKEGON - Men (on-site qualifier)

Kyle Friend / Brandon Joyner (#1 QT seed) – 13th
 Christian Honer / David Vander Meer (#3) – 17th
 TJ Jurko / Dylan Zacca (#4) – 9th
 Nolan Albrecht / Tomas Goldsmith (#6) – 17th
 Devon Bruki / John Schwengel (#7) – 17th
 Bradley Connors / Brett Greiner (#8) – 13th
 Mark Bucknam / Jake Fleming (#12) – 17th
 Frank Field / Tyler Penberthy (#15) – 17th
Jurko / Zacca 2 MD losses were to #1, #3 seeds

DENVER - Men (on-site qualifier)

Travis Mewhirter / John-Michael Plummer (#1 QT seed) – 5th
 Caleb Kwekel / Max Martin (#2) – 17th
 Brian Miller / Raffe Paulis (#4) – 17th
 Angel Dache / Alex Diaz (#5) – 17th
 TJ Jurko / Dylan Zacca (#7) – 17th
 Gage Basey / Lars Basey (#14) – 17th
 Jeffrey Houghton / Trenton Sellers (#22) – 17th
 Jordan Hoppe / Diego Perez (#41) – 9th
2nd time since 2015 a seed 41st or lower advanced

WAUPACA - Men (on-site qualifier)

Devon Burki / John Schwengel (#1 QT seed) – 17th
 Gage Basey / Ryan Smith (#4) – 13th
 Nolan Albrecht / Kevin Knight (#5) – 9th
 Kevin Coyle / Daniel Leathers (#8) – 13th
 Lars Basey / Ian Carlson (#10) – 17th
 Zephyr Dew / Kacey Losik (#15) – 9th
 Jordan Hoppe / Diego Perez (#19) – 17th
 Guille Jimenez / Tyler Penberthy (#27) – 5th
Basey brothers split but still both qualified

AUSTIN - Women (qualifier in Panama City, Fla.)

Carly Kan / Kaitlyn Leary (2nd in QT) – 13th
 Jessica Gaffney / Molly Turner (3rd in QT) – 9th
 Toni Rodriguez / Savvy Simo (3rd in QT) – 7th
 Aurora Davis / Teegan Van Gunst (5th in QT) – 9th
 Carly Skjodt / Geena Urango (5th in QT) – 9th
Skjodt / Urango replaced a MD team

NEW ORLEANS - Women (qualifier in San Antonio)

Jessica Gaffney / Molly Turner (1st in QT) – 9th
 Toni Rodriguez / Savvy Simo (3rd in QT) – 5th
 Brook Bauer / Katie Horton (3rd in QT) – 9th
 Mackenzie Ponnet / Chelsea Rice (5th in QT) – 9th
 Macy Jerger / Abby Van Winkle (5th in QT) – 13th
 Megan Gebhard / Kahlee York (5th in QT) – 13th
Last 2 teams replaced MD teams

MUSKEGON - Women (on-site qualifier)

Ashley McGinn / Sarah Wood (#1 QT seed) – 13th
 Makenzie Griffin / Eunyce Vercosa (#2) – 17th
 Tambre Nobles / Melissa Powell (#3) – 17th
 Jenna Johnson / Raelyn White (#5) – 13th
 Kaeli Crews / Lexie Hamilton (#7) – 17th
 Denise De Vine / Anna Dunbar (#9) – 17th
 Kylie Bryan / Jessica Jendryk (#11) – 17th
 Kylie Deberg / Kahlee York (#13) – 17th
14-year old Wood youngest to ever qualify

DENVER - Women (on-site qualifier)

Brook Bauer / Katie Horton (#1 QT seed) – 13th
 Tiffany Creamer / Megan Gebhard (#2) – 17th
 Josephine Kremer / Payton Rund (#5) – 17th
 Iya Lindahl / Tessa Van Winkle (#6) – 17th
 Olivia Beyer / Maria Kliefoth (#9) – 17th
 Kaylie McHugh / Kristi Tekavec (#14) – 17th
 Charlie Ekstrom / Amy Ozee (#20) – 17th
 Taylor Nutterfield / Avery Poppinga (#23) – 13th
Two teams seeded 20th or lower advance for the first time since Manhattan Beach 2019

WAUPACA - Women (on-site qualifier)

Denise De Vine / Angela Rego (#1 QT seed) – 17th
 Kelly Bryan / Jessica Jendryk (#2) – 13th
 Sarah Senft / Hannah Wentland (#3) – 17th
 Kristein Heldt / Jessica Horwath (#4) – 17th
 Julia Borges / Ainsley Patrick (#5) – 17th
 Amy Ozee / Maria Whalen (#6) – 5th
 Kaeli Crews / Abbie Hughes (#7) – 7th
 Parker Bracken / Hannah Brister (#9) – 17th
The top 5 QT seeds did not have to play in QT

2022 QUALIFIER LIST cont'dATLANTIC CITY - Men (on-site qualifier)

Michael Groselle / Nathan Yang (#1 QT seed) – 13th
 Max Martin / Dylan Zacca (#2) – 9th
 Bradley Connors / Brett Greiner (#5) – 13th
 Nolan Albrecht / Tomas Goldsmith (#6) – 17th
 Guille Jimenez / Tyler Penberthy (#8) – 17th
 Nathaniel Miller / Garrett Peterson (#10) – 17th
 Christian Honer / Ben Vaught (#13) – 17th
 Spencer Loch / Alex Ukkelberg (#14) – 17th

Just 2 of 26 QT matches went to a third set

MANHATTAN BEACH - Men (on-site qualifier)

Marty Lorenz / Adam Roberts (#1 QT seed) – 9th
 Travis Mewhirter / John-Michael Plummer (#3) – 17th
 Peter Connole / Silila Tucker (#4) – 17th
 Michael Groselle / Nathan Yang (#7) – 25th
 Kevin Coyle / Alex Ukkelberg (#21) – 25th
 Ric Cervantes / Jonah Seif (#27) – 17th
 Devon Burki / Shane Cervantes (#40) – 25th
 Frank Field / Tal Shavit (#47) – 25th

Cervantes brothers on different teams advance

VIRGINIA BEACH - Men (on-site qualifier)

Frank Field / Tyler Penberthy (#1 QT seed) – 17th
 Nolan Albrecht / Tomas Goldsmith (#2) – 9th
 Josue Casteillo / Kevin Knight (#5) – 17th
 Mark Bucknam / Jake Fleming (#6) – 13th
 Bruno Amorim / Jake Urrutia (#8) – 17th
 Bryce Ernsberger / Brett Rosenmeier (#10) – 13th
 Jake MacNeil / Alexander Russell (#13) – 7th
 Kevin Coyle / Daniel Leathers (#14) – 17th

Just 2 of 31 QT matches went to a third set

ATLANTIC CITY - Women (on-site qualifier)

Tiffany Creamer / Kristi Tekavec (#1 QT seed) – 13th
 Kathryn Hogan / Bree Scarbrough (#2) – 17th
 Heather Friesen / Agniesszka Pregowska (#3) – 17th
 Iya Lindahl / Tessa Van Winkle (#4) – 13th
 Amy Ozee / Mariah Whalen (#5) – 7th
 Julia Colina / Regan McGuire (#6) – 17th
 Tambre Nobles / Eunyce Vercosa (#9) – 17th
 Avery Poppinga / Sara Putt (#10) – 17th

Just 1 of the 20 QT matches went to a third set

MANHATTAN BEACH - Women (on-site qualifier)

Kimberly Hildreth/Karolina Marciniak (#1 QT seed) – 7th
 Molly Turner / Torrey Van Winden (#2) – 7th
 Brook Bauer / Katie Horton (#3) – 17th
 Katie Spieler / Carly Wopat (#4) – 25th
 Cecilia Agraz / Tano Stephens (#9) – 25th
 Megan Gebhard / Kate Reilly (#10) – 25th
 Maria Clara Salgado / Abby Van Winkle (#21) – 25th
 Audrey Nourse / Nicole Nourse (#27) – 25th

Nourse twins advance

VIRGINIA BEACH - Women (on-site qualifier)

Heather Friesen/Agniesszka Pregowska (#1 QT) – 13th
 Cammie Manwill / Violeta Slabakova (#2) – 7th
 Victoria Dennis / Katie Lindstrom (#4) – 17th
 Alison Denney / Alexa Downie (#5) – 13th
 Alexa Fernandez / Maria Kliefoth (#6) – 21st
 Ashley Pater / Bree Scarbrough (#9) – 9th
 Avery Poppinga / Brooke Van Sickle (#10) – 17th
 Eric Brok / Mackenzie Morris (#19) – 17th

Fernandez (16 years old), Pater (17) advance

AUSTIN ANALYSIS – The first day of the AVP season opener in Austin was a bit of a surprise, as despite the numerous new pairings all 24 matches between the two genders were all won by the teams with the better seedings. There was quite the divergence in the two genders' winning teams though. On the women's side, Taryn Kloth and 5'6" Kristen Nuss won (who last year became the shortest women's player to win an AVP event since 5'6" Barbra Fontana won an AVP event in August 2001 in Manhattan Beach). On the men's side, the first domestic team ever to play in which both players were at least 6'9" tall paired up for the first time and won the title (Andy Benesh and Phil Dalhausser).

- Especially with the start to the tournament which saw no upsets on Friday, and with #1 seeds winning five of the prior six AVP events, it seemed quite likely that top-seeded Melissa Humana-Paredes and Sarah Pavan were on course to winning in Austin. The pair lost just one set in reaching the title match, and would face Kloth and Nuss, who were playing their third match of the day in the Texas heat, which saw the heat index over 100 degrees. The youngsters took an 18-13 lead before the Canadian pair closed the gap to 20-18, but Kloth and Nuss prevailed 21-18. In the second set Kloth and Nuss scored five straight points early and cruised to a 21-13 win for their second career victory.

- The top four men's seeds advanced to the semifinals for the first time since Austin 2017 (since then the AVP had 29 tournaments without that happening). Benesh and Dalhausser lost just two sets en route to winning the title, the first ever for Benesh. Dalhausser won an AVP season opener for the ninth time in his career (most ever by any player) and got his 60th career AVP title. And his success in Texas continued, as he has won seven of the nine times he has played an AVP event in Texas, with a 42-4 match record (winning 38 of the last 39). Chase Budinger and Troy Field, also a team playing together for the first time, had swept all four opponents leading up to the championship match. In the first set of the title match, Budinger and Field held a 19-17 lead, but Benesh had one block and Dalhausser had a pair of blocks in closing out the set on a 4-0 run.

#6 Taryn Kloth / Kristen Nuss def. #1 Melissa Humana-Paredes / Sarah Pavan 21-18, 21-13 (:42)

#1 Andy Benesh / Phil Dalhausser def. #4 Chase Budinger / Troy Field 21-19, 21-18 (:52)

NEW ORLEANS NOTATIONS – The big storyline about the AVP Tour returning to New Orleans for the first time since 2016 was the connections to the area, especially on the women's side. Four of the 32 women's players had competed in beach volleyball at LSU, including both players on the second-seeded tandem of Taryn Kloth and Kristen Nuss.

- None of the men's teams competing in New Orleans had ever won an AVP title together, so it came down to individual experience. And the team with the most experience (both in terms of age and AVP titles) was the tandem of Phil Dalhausser and Casey Patterson, who were seeded first and playing together for the first time as well. The duo was the sixth oldest to ever play in an AVP main draw, but they were the strongest on Sunday when it mattered the most. In the semifinals and championship match on Sunday, Dalhausser had 10 blocks and five aces, while Patterson had 55 kills and 26 digs. The duo outlasted third-seeded Taylor Crabb and Taylor Sander in three sets after the Taylors won the first set and led 17-15 in the second set.

- The partisan crowd got what it wanted with former LSU stars Taryn Kloth and Kristen Nuss advancing to the championship match. However the team across the net, Kelly Cheng and Betsi Flint, was seeded first for a reason. Cheng and Flint played a nearly flawless match, as Cheng hit an outstanding .720 (20 kills in 25 attempts with just 2 hitting errors) and Flint hit .533 with eight digs. Uncharacteristically, Kloth had just one block in the match and Nuss only six digs. Cheng / Flint took a 4-3 lead in the first set and didn't trail in the match after that point.

#1 Phil Dalhausser / Casey Patterson def. #3 Taylor Crabb / Taylor Sander 17-21, 21-19, 15-13 (1:07)

#1 Kelly Cheng / Betsi Flint def. #2 Taryn Kloth / Kristen Nuss 21-15, 21-15 (:37)

MUSKEGON'S MEMORIES – The AVP Tour was making history with its first ever Tour Series Event in Muskegon, Michigan. But on the first day that history was overshadowed by a 14-year old. Sarah Wood, at the age of 14 years, 1 month and 16 days old, became the youngest player (male or female) to advance from the qualifier into an AVP main draw, beating the previous mark by over two years.

- The men's championship match featured two teams that reached the title match undefeated, but not without some serious tests. Second seeded Evan Cory / Billy Kolinske won four matches, three of them in three sets, to reach the finals. Across the net was ninth-seeded Dave Palm / Roberto Rodriguez, who had teamed up this season only due to a late injury to Palm's partner before the season opener. Palm and Rodriguez won a pair of three-set matches, and in the title match were playing their fourth straight match against a team seeded fourth or better. Palm and Rodriguez won the first set handily, 21-14, then held off Cory and Kolinske 26-24 in the second to capture the title. In that second set neither team led by more than two points and there were 16 ties. Palm had seven blocks in the match.

- The women weren't done making history in the qualifier. Larissa and Lili Maestrini, the top seeds in the event, won the title and in doing so make Larissa the first woman at least 40 years old to win a domestic event since 2009. The couple achieved the mark by beating seventh-seeded Julia Scoles and Geena Urango as Lili had four blocks and Larissa added 13 kills and 14 digs. Urango, who had five aces in the semifinal match, was unable to register any in the finals.

#1 Larissa Maestrini / Lili Maestrini def. #7 Julia Scoles / Geena Urango 21-17, 21-16 (:46)

#9 Dave Palm / Roberto Rodriguez def. #2 Evan Cory / Billy Kolinske 21-14, 26-24 (:48)

DENVER DOCUMENTED – The AVP Tour played at altitude for the first time since 2008 with a Tour Series event in Denver. And just like the towering Rocky Mountains in the backdrop, the top teams were able to peak with their performance as the number one seeds won in both genders. That was a bit of a surprise as early on the results indicated something very different. On Saturday, there were 36 main draw matches for each gender. The men had 11 upsets and 19 three-set matches, while the women had 12 upsets and 18 three-set matches. But in the end, the top teams prevailed.

- Andy Benesh was seeded number one and was the tallest (tied) player in the event at 6'9". He was also playing his fourth AVP tournament of the year with a fourth different partner. Joining him on the sand this event was Miles Evans, who had previously advanced to one AVP semifinal in his career (second in Hermosa Beach 2019 with Ryan Doherty). The duo suffered a loss in the first round, then had to win six straight elimination matches to reach the championship match, which they won. In that stretch of must-wins, they beat Phil Dalhausser, won in the rematch against the team which defeated them in the first round, and beat the number three and four seeds in the semis and finals. Across the net in the finals were Evan Cory and Billy Kolinske. Kolinske and Evans had been teammates for 30 international events. Benesh had four blocks and three aces in the title match, while Evans had 23 kills and 15 digs, while Cory had 13 kills and 12 digs and Kolinske had five blocks.

- Larissa and Lili Maestrini, the top seeds in the event, continued to live up to their billing. Although they weren't immune to the upset bug, losing to the 13th-seeded team, they rebounded with consecutive wins over the teams seeded second and third to reach the championship match. The semifinal was a rematch of the Muskegon championship match against Julia Scoles and Geena Urango, and it did not disappoint, with Larissa and Lili winning 18-16 in the third set. In the finals they faced a team playing for just the second time on the AVP Tour, Carly Kan and Kaitlyn Leary. Larissa and Lili trailed just once in the match, at 1-0 in the second set, cruising to a second consecutive title. Larissa had eight digs and two aces while Lili was outstanding all round, hitting .600 (18 kills with just three hitting errors) and adding three blocks and two aces. Kan had 12 kills, six digs and one block while Leary had eight kills.

#1 Larissa Maestrini / Lili Maestrini def. #7 Carly Kan / Kaitlyn Leary 21-13, 21-13 (:33)

#1 Andy Benesh / Miles Evans def. #4 Evan Cory / Billy Kolinske 22-20, 21-17 (:47)

WAUPACA'S WONDERMENTS – For the first time since 1988 the AVP had concurrent events. And for the Tour Series event in Oshkosh, Wisconsin, it was also concurrent with the Waupaca Boatribe Tournament, one of the world's largest outdoor volleyball tournaments, as this one consisted of 348 grass courts for a four-day event. Both the men's and women's winners began the tournament seeded number one and ended up taking home the title.

- Dave Palm and Roberto Rodriguez earned their top seed partly due to winning together in Muskegon. In the Waupaca Open, the duo lost just one set while advancing to the championship match. On the other side of the net was sixth-seeded Timothy Brewster and Kyle Friend, who were perhaps more impressive in their run to the finals, having swept all four matches and winning each set by an average score of 21-15. Palm / Rodriguez seemed destined to cruise to another title, winning the first set 21-16 behind the strength of Palm's five blocks in the set. The second set was a game of runs, as both teams had early 4-0 runs, then both teams exchanged 5-0 runs. Palm added another six blocks in the set but Brewster / Friend, playing together for just the second tournament, withstood six match point tries to win the set and force a tiebreaker. In the third set the four players combined to have 24 kills and just one hitting error, and Palm / Rodriguez prevailed 15-12, with Palm ending with 12 blocks and Rodriguez with 29 kills and 18 digs. Brewster finished with 25 kills and 17 digs, while Friend had 17 kills and three blocks.

- The best two teams on Friday morning, number one-seeded Carly Kan / Kaitlyn Leary and second seeds Katie Dickens / Jennifer Keddy, found themselves the top two teams on Saturday afternoon when it was time for the title match. Both teams, however, took a difficult route, as an early morning loss for both pairs on Saturday meant they had to play four matches that day including the finals. Dickens / Keddy had two leads in the entire championship match, at 1-0 to start each set. Outside of that, the finals were mostly error-free, with the four athletes combining for 62 kills and just five hitting errors in the match. Kan was a difference-maker, with 19 kills, eight digs and three aces, while Leary had 13 kills. Dickens had 12 kills and eight digs, while Keddy had 18 kills and just one hitting error to go with a service ace.

#1 Carly Kan / Kaitlyn Leary def. #2 Katie Dickens / Jennifer Keddy, 22-20, 21-16 (:38)

#1 Dave Palm / Roberto Rodriguez def. #6 Timothy Brewster / Kyle Friend 21-16, 26-28, 15-12 (1:07)

HERMOSA BEACH'S HAPPENINGS – In Hermosa Beach the men saw players win who hadn't won since 2018 and 2019, while both of the champions on the women's side were first-time AVP winners. The fans in California, seeing their first AVP tournament of the year in the state, were treated to a pair of three-set finals, something that has happened just once prior in the 22 previous tournaments (including Tour Series), as it also happened in Atlanta 2021.

- In the first round of the men's tournament, there was just one upset in the eight matches. But was it ever a big one. The 16th-seeded team, Jake Dietrich / Hagen Smith, who gained entry into the tournament based on CBVA results, knocked off top-seeded Tri Bourne / Trevor Crabb. In the second round Dietrich and Smith upended eighth-seeded Billy Allen / Jeremy Casebeer in a round that saw seeds two, four, six and eight all sent to the contender's bracket. Theo Brunner / Chaim Schalk, the second seeds, were able to rebound from the loss to advance to the title match, meeting up with fifth-seeded Taylor Crabb / Taylor Sander, who had lost just one set en route to the finals. This was the 12th time Schalk had ever played against Crabb, with Crabb winning 10 of those meetings. The two Schalk wins, though, have both come in AVP finals after Brunner and Schalk won in three sets for the Hermosa Beach title. Brunner had 20 kills and three blocks while Schalk had 22 kills and 13 digs, with both players hitting at least .500. Crabb had 25 kills, 11 digs and two aces, and Sander had 12 kills and three blocks.

- In 34 women's events leading up to New Orleans earlier this year, just once did the championship match pit the top two seeds. Excluding the Tour Series events, Hermosa Beach marked the second straight time the top two tandems met for the title. Both of the teams in Hermosa Beach were undefeated in matches leading up the finale, but they both required a third set several times in order to stay in the winner's bracket. This match between #1 Terese Cannon / Sarah Sponcil and #2 Kelly Cheng / Betsi Flint came with some emotions, as Cheng and Sponcil had been teammates for 10 AVP events and 25 FIVB tournaments, including placing ninth in the 2020 Tokyo Olympics. Cannon was playing in her first ever AVP championship match and Flint was looking to defend her Hermosa Beach title, having won in 2019 the last time the AVP played here. Cannon / Sponcil held a slim 7-6 lead in the first set before scoring six straight points to take control. In the second set Cheng and Flint had their only lead of the match at 2-1. In the match Cannon had seven kills, no hitting errors and six blocks, while Sponcil had 17 kills, 15 digs and two aces. Cheng had 12 kills and one block while Flint had seven kills and 14 digs, but the team committed 13 hitting errors compared to just two by their opponents.

#1 Terese Cannon / Sarah Sponcil def. #2 Kelly Cheng / Betsi Flint 21-12, 21-15 (:36)

#2 Theo Brunner / Chaim Schalk def. #5 Taylor Crabb / Taylor Sander 22-20, 24-26, 15-9 (1:14)

ATLANTIC CITY'S ACHIEVEMENTS – What is becoming more frequent on the AVP Tour is having players who have turned 40 winning the title, especially on the men's side. In Atlantic City there was a first for the Tour, an event in which both a men's (David Lee) and women's (Larissa Maestrini) champion were at least 40 years old. That feat was made all that more impressive given the high heat (in the air and on the sand). In the qualifier there were a combined total of 46 matches, and just five of them went three sets. But it was a different story in the main draw, as of the 90 combined main draw matches, 33 required a tiebreaker.

ATLANTIC CITY'S ACHIEVEMENTS cont'd

- Cody Caldwell and David Lee were playing together for the first time ever. Caldwell entered this tournament having won four AVP main draw matches in his short career. In Atlantic City the duo went 6-0 in matches, including defeating seeds two, three, four and five. They needed a third set in three of their wins, but as the 10th seeds manage to pull off five upsets in winning the title. Their opponents in the championship match, Avery Drost and Chase Frishman, were considerably more experienced, as this was their 17th overall tournament together. But a loss on Saturday meant the duo had to play four matches on Sunday, against seeds one and three followed by a 1:28 minute semifinal before the title match. The championship match saw very few hitting errors, as all four players hit at least .563. The big difference in the match was the serving of Caldwell (six aces) and Lee (three aces).

- Larissa and Lili Maestrini, the top seeds in the event, continued their roll in the Tour Series, capturing their third title in as many events. The duo has a 15-1 match record on the Tour Series and have lost just six sets total. The finals was a rematch from a Sunday morning match against Aurora Davis and Teegan Van Gunst. Davis and Van Gunst suffered both of their losses against the top seeds, going 4-0 in all other matches. In the championship match, Larissa had 12 kills in 15 attempts with no hitting errors, and added eight digs. Lili had a pair of blocks and seven digs to go with her 14 kills. Davis had 10 kills and nine digs plus a pair of aces, while Van Gunst had 10 kills, one block and one ace.

#1 Larissa Maestrini / Lili Maestrini def. #5 Aurora Davis / Teegan Van Gunst 21-16, 21-15 (:47)

#10 Cody Caldwell / David Lee def. #4 Avery Drost / Chase Frishman 21-15, 21-18 (:51)

FORT LAUDERDALE'S FEATS – Friday's play began with 15 consecutive sweeps between the two genders, but the day ended with seven of the last nine matches going to a third set. The men saw the top four seeds all advance undefeated into the winner's bracket semifinals, which is somewhat of a rarity that it also happened in Austin, marking just the first time since 2017 that it has happened twice in a season. In the fourth Pro Series event of the year, both genders saw the fourth different winning team of 2022.

- The men's championship match in Fort Lauderdale was rare in that it was the top two seeds battling for the title, something that had happened just twice in the previous 31 events (excluding Tour Series) before this one. The top seeds, Theo Brunner and Chaim Schalk, entered the match having won nine consecutive AVP matches including four against teams seeded fifth or better. Their opponents, second-seeded Tri Bourne / Trevor Crabb, had won six of their last seven matches, with the only loss coming to Brunner and Schalk in Hermosa Beach. The first set was tight, with Bourne / Crabb winning 23-21, but in the second set Bourne and Crabb did not have a single hitting error while cruising to a 21-14 win. For the match, Bourne had 14 kills and six blocks, while Crabb had 10 kills and eight digs. Brunner had 13 kills and three blocks, and Schalk had a double-double with 11 kills and 11 digs.

- The women had had two straight Pro Series events with the top two seeds in the championship match, but in Fort Lauderdale it was the complete opposite. In fact, the combined seeds of the teams (19) was the highest ever for a women's title match on the AVP Tour. Either team winning would be just the sixth time an AVP event was won by a team seeded eighth or lower. All four players had played at Southern Cal, and this match in particular meant a certain household was getting a trophy regardless of the result, as Hailey Harward and Julia Scoles are roommates. As the eighth seeds, Harward was teaming with Tina Gaudina, who was playing in just her second AVP event ever. And while this was their first pro tournament as partners, they entered the tournament on a 30-match winning streak when the pair played together at USC in 2022. Scoles and Geena Urango, seeded 11th, had dropped a match on Friday which sent them to the contender's bracket. That meant that in the heat of Florida, they had to win four straight elimination matches to reach the finals. The title match ended up being their sixth consecutive three-set match, and Gaudina and Harward claimed the title. Gaudina had 16 kills, nine digs and six blocks, while Harward had 20 kills and 17 digs. Scoles, facing heat exhaustion, had seven kills and two aces while Urango took 48 swings, getting 16 kills and 16 digs.

#8 Tina Gaudina / Hailey Harward def. #11 Julia Scoles / Geena Urango 19-21, 21-15, 15-6 (1:03)

#2 Tri Bourne / Trevor Crabb def. #1 Theo Brunner / Chaim Schalk 23-21, 21-14 (:53)

ATLANTA'S ACCOLADES – Atlanta was a tournament of firsts. On Friday around 5:15 pm, lightning moved into the area, halting play, with heavy rains following shortly thereafter. The venue was cleared and competition resumed at 8:00 pm, but with the decision to only play the first round of the winner's bracket (and not the second round as scheduled). Due to that, Saturday's play began much earlier, at 10:00 am. On Saturday, a bit after 7:30 pm, lightning struck again, along with a steady rain, and after about an hour and a half wait it was decided to postpone play until Sunday. Because of the number of matches still to play the AVP had a first (or at least in a long while); changing the format of a match in a main draw once it has started. There have been other instances of qualifier matches changing, or even main draw changing from a double elimination to a single elimination, but this was the first in anyone's memory that during a main draw the scoring format had changed. The third round of the winner's bracket, as well as the seventh and fifth place matches, were all changed to one set to 28 points. The end result of all this was another first, well, four firsts to be exact. Each of the four winners were first time AVP champions.

ATLANTA'S ACCOLADES cont'd

- Trevor Crabb had guaranteed a victory, but his younger brother Taylor sent him home with a ninth place finish, his worst AVP placing since June 2018 in New York City (also ninth place). Top-seeded Theo Brunner and Chaim Schalk looked poised to collect their second win of the season despite an early loss which sent them to the contender's bracket, as they hadn't lost a single set from that point in reaching the championship match for the fourth time in their seven events together. On the other side of the net were a pair of players competing in an AVP finals for the first time, Paul Lotman and Miles Partain. The nerves were apparent as Lotman and Partain had six hitting errors and three service errors in a first set won by the number one seeds 21-17. Whatever adjustments were made after that set clearly worked, as the sixth-seeded duo had just two hitting errors and one service error in the next two sets combined. Partain became just the second player, male or female, to win an AVP event before turning 21, as he was 20 years, 6 months, 22 days old and only Scott Ayakutubby (twice in 1984) had won at that young an age. Lotman finished with 12 kills and two blocks, while Partain had 27 kills (and a .512 hitting percentage) and 16 digs. Brunner had 19 kills and three blocks and Schalk ended with five kills and eight digs.

- Top seeds Terese Cannon and Sarah Sponcil looked much more like the team that won in Hermosa beach than the team that finished in ninth place in Fort Lauderdale. The duo hadn't lost a single set in reaching the title match, and had the advantage in playing two women who had never experienced a victory on the AVP Tour. The seventh-seeded Julia Scoles / Geena Urango duo mirrored what the men's underdogs had done; lost a second round match but then did not drop a set in reaching the finals. Scoles / Urango took the first set but then in the second set had just six kills compared to four hitting errors. The third set was tight, with Scoles / Urango taking a lead at 4-3 that they would not relinquish, but Cannon / Sponcil fought off three match points before falling 16-14. Scoles had 15 kills and two blocks and Urango had 14 kills and 14 digs, while Cannon notched 21 kills and five blocks and Sponcil had 15 kills and 16 digs.

#7 Julia Scoles / Geena Urango def. #1 Terese Cannon / Sarah Sponcil 21-17, 12-21, 16-14 (1:05)

#6 Paul Lotman / Miles Partain def. #1 Theo Brunner / Chaim Schalk 17-21, 21-14, 15-9 (1:07)

MAGICAL MANHATTAN BEACH – In a year of 16-team and 24-team draws, the 2022 Manhattan Beach Open stands out (among other reasons) as the only one on the schedule with 32 teams in the main draw. Including the on-site qualifier, 100 men's teams battled for a spot on the pier, the biggest draw since 2019, while 67 teams were competing on the women's side. The second of three Gold Series events, this tournament also had huge implications for the AVP Championships at the end of September.

- The women's championship match pitted former teammates against each other. Second-seeded Sara Hughes / Kelley Kolinske battled #3 Kelly Cheng / Betsi Flint for the title just one day after Cheng / Flint sent Hughes / Kolinske to the contender's bracket. Flint and Kolinske had won two AVP titles and two FIVB titles when they were partners, while Cheng and Hughes had one AVP championship to their credit. The first set looked every bit like a match between familiar foes, with Hughes / Kolinske winning 21-18, but then Cheng / Flint responded with a dominant 21-11 set two win. Cheng / Flint looked poised to win the MBO title as they led 13-10 in the third set, but Hughes and Kolinske managed to score five straight points to claim the title. Hughes ended with nine kills and nine digs, while Kolinske had 20 kills, nine digs and a block. Cheng contributed 11 kills, eight digs and two aces, and Flint had 20 kills, 14 digs and one ace.

- For just the second time in Manhattan Beach Open history (for which seeds were known), the top two seeds played in the championship match, as the other time was in 2006. Top seeds Theo Brunner / Chaim Schalk marched into the championship match undefeated, and were playing for the title for the fourth straight time on the AVP Tour. Tri Bourne and Trevor Crabb, seeded second, had won in Fort Lauderdale but then placed ninth in Atlanta. They too were undefeated in Manhattan Beach entering the finals as they looked to successfully defend their 2021 MBO title. This match belonged to last year's winners, as Bourne and Crabb cruised to a sweep, giving Crabb his third consecutive MBO plaque, the first time a men's player had accomplished that since 2006-08 (Phil Dalhausser and Todd Rogers). Bourne had 12 kills, nine digs, two aces and a block, while Crabb had 14 kills, eight digs and two blocks. Brunner had 10 kills and three blocks, and Schalk had seven kills and four digs.

#2 Sara Hughes / Kelley Kolinske def. #3 Kelly Cheng / Betsi Flint 21-18, 11-21, 15-13 (:58)

#2 Tri Bourne / Trevor Crabb def. #1 Theo Brunner / Chaim Schalk 21-17, 21-14 (:50)

VERY BEST IN VIRGINIA BEACH – The AVP hadn't played in Virginia Beach since 2010, but made a big splash alongside the 60th annual East Coast Surfing Championship. Two teenagers were able to qualify, 16-year old Alexa Fernandez and 17-year old Ashley Pater. Then in the main draw Fernandez had her first match against Sarah Wood, the 14-year old who this year became the youngest player to ever qualify and her third match was against Pater. Late Saturday afternoon play was halted for 1:12 due to lightning, forcing an earlier start on Sunday. And the heat Sunday definitely affected the players, including Cody Caldwell, who needed a medical timeout at 15-15 in the third set of the fifth place match due to the heat. When it was all over, for the second time in three AVP tournaments, four first-time winners were crowned.

VERY BEST IN VIRGINIA BEACH cont'd

• Larissa and Lili Maestrini won the first three Tour Series events they played in, and went undefeated in reaching the championship match in Virginia Beach. The top-seeded team brought in a 19-1 match record on the Tour Series to the title match. Their opponents were also undefeated, third-seeded Deahna Kraft / Allie Wheeler. But both of those players were playing in their first ever AVP finals. In addition to the finals experience, there was a big difference in age as well, as the combined age of Larissa and Lili was 79 years, and for Kraft and Wheeler it was 49 years. In the first set, Larissa and Lili overcame an early 4-1 deficit and seemed to be in control at 18-16, but the youngsters finished on a 5-1 run to win 21-19. In the second set, Larissa and Lili led 18-15, and again Kraft / Wheeler went on a 5-1 run. Larissa and Lili had set point at 22-21 but Kraft / Wheeler scored the last three points to win the first title for both players. Kraft finished with 20 kills, nine digs and two blocks, while Wheeler had 10 kills, 10 digs, and two aces. Larissa had 16 kills, 13 digs and two aces, and Lili had 16 kills and two blocks.

• Outside of Dave Palm / Roberto Rodriguez, each Tour Series event had a different men's winner and Virginia Beach would continue that. Both teams in the championship match had reached the finals undefeated. #2 Avery Drost / Chase Frishman had a pair of three-set matches on Saturday but then on Sunday had to play just one match to get to the title match thanks to a semifinal forfeit. Fifth-seeded Tim Bomgren / Piotr Marciniak had a difficult road, having to play the top seeds in the semifinals and then the second seeds in the championship match. The first set was a game of runs, with Drost / Frishman having two 5-1 runs while Bomgren / Marciniak had runs of 6-1 and 5-0 before closing the set on a 5-2 run, winning 21-16. In the second set Bomgren / Marciniak started out strong with a 7-1 lead. Drost / Frishman were able to pull within 15-13 but Bomgren / Marciniak held them off for a 21-16 championship-clinching win, the first for both players. Bomgren ended with 18 kills and 10 digs, while Marciniak had 10 kills with no hitting errors, and three blocks. Drost had 11 kills and two blocks, and Frishman had 11 kills and 10 digs.

#3 Deahna Kraft / Allie Wheeler def. #1 Larissa Maestrini / Lili Maestrini 21-19, 24-22 (:50)

#5 Tim Bomgren / Piotr Marciniak def. #2 Avery Drost / Chase Frishman 21-16, 21-16 (:49)

INTERNATIONAL UPDATE –

• Here is a look at AVP players / teams which have been in the semifinals of an FIVB event this year:

MEN

Andy Benesh / Miles Evans – Silver Medal – Songkhla, Thailand – April 17

Miles Evans / Logan Webber – Silver Medal – Rhodes, Greece – May 22

Theo Brunner / Chaim Schalk – 4th place – Rome, Italy (World Championships) – June 19

WOMEN

Kelly Cheng / Betsi Flint – 4th Place – Rosarito, Mexico – March 27

Taryn Kloth / Kristen Nuss – Gold Medal – Coolangatta, Australia – April 3

Zana Muno / Toni Rodriguez – Bronze Medal – Coolangatta, Australia – April 3

Sara Hughes / Kelley Kolinske – Gold Medal – Itapema, Brazil – April 17

Taryn Kloth / Kristen Nuss – Gold Medal – Kusadasi, Turkey – May 22

Terese Cannon / Sarah Sponcil – Bronze Medal – Kusadasi, Turkey – May 22

Melissa Humana-Paredes / Sarah Pavan – Gold Medal – Jurmala, Latvia – June 5

Sara Hughes / Kelley Kolinske – 4th Place – Jurmala, Latvia – June 5

Jessica Gafney / Molly Turner – Bronze Medal – Klaipeda, Lithuania – June 5

Sophie Bukovec / Brandie Wilkerson – Silver Medal – Rome, Italy (World Championships) – June 19

Megan Kraft / Savvy Simo – Gold Medal – Balikesir, Turkey – June 19

Brook Bauer / Katie Horton – Silver Medal – Balikesir, Turkey – June 19

Megan Kraft / Emily Stockman – Gold Medal – Bialystok, Poland – June 26

Brook Bauer / Katie Horton – 4th Place – Bialystok, Poland – June 26

Corinne Quiggle / Sarah Schermerhorn – Silver Medal – Espinho, Portugal – July 17

Madelyne Anderson / Molly Turner – Gold Medal – Ciro Marina, Italy – July 17

Melissa Humana-Paredes / Sarah Pavan – Gold Medal – Birmingham, England (Commonwealth Games) – August 7

Kelly Cheng / Betsi Flint – Gold Medal – Hamburg, Germany – August 14

BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS – No players will celebrate a birthday during this three-day event.

NEXT UP – The AVP will have its longest break of the season (two weekends) since the one it had after the third event (two weekends off between Muskegon, Mich. and Denver). Next up will be the AVP Championships in Phoenix on September 23-24, an invitational event that features six teams from each gender. Those teams are earning a spot via the three Gold Series events.