



2023 AVP PRO BEACH VOLLEYBALL TOUR

Season Event #8 • Gold Series #1

Atlanta, Georgia • August 4 – 6, 2023

ABOUT THE TOURNAMENT – The first Gold Series event of the year on the AVP Tour takes place in Atlanta. This is the eighth tournament on this year's schedule. Total prize money for this tournament will be \$300,000, with equal payouts for men and women, and the season payout totals nearly \$1,500,000 before the Championships. This is the largest payday of the season (tied) and features night sessions on both Friday and Saturday.

- The main draw will be a 16-team, double elimination format. Twelve teams from each gender are granted entry directly into the main draw from having sufficient points (from the best four events points totals from their last five AVP, AVPNext and international tournaments). Four teams in each gender earned a berth based on their finish in the Denver event on the Tour Series last month. The main draw begins on Friday, August 4 and concludes on Sunday, August 6, and will be played on three courts at Atlantic Station. Both main draws feature 29 matches in a double-elimination format. General admission costs \$25 while premium seats are available for purchase at avp.com. The championship matches will be at 12:00 pm ET (women) and 1:30 pm ET (men).

- Live streaming of stadium court matches takes place Friday through Sunday on ESPN+ (and in Canada on TSN+). Live streaming on Courts 1 and 2 will take place on the Bally Live app. Dain Blanton, Camryn Irwin, and Matt Prosser will combine to handle the announcing duties on stadium court, while Drew Beyer, Megan Burgdorf, Emily Capers, Victoria Dennis and Ci Michel will call the action on the outer courts. The championship matches will be shown live on ESPNU on Sunday from 12-2 pm ET.

ATLANTA'S ACES – Last year Theo Brunner and Chaim Schalk were the top seeds in all three Gold Series events, but this weekend there is a new team with the number one seed, Andy Benesh and Miles Partain. The duo is playing in just the second AVP event together, having won in their debut in Huntington Beach in May. Benesh was seeded first in a pair of Tour Series events last season (in Muskegon with Avery Drost, finishing third, and then winning in Denver with Miles Evans), but this is his highest seeding in a Pro or Gold Series event. Previously the highest Partain had been seeded was third (three times last year with Paul Lotman).

- The top women's seeds are Kelly Cheng and Sara Hughes. They come into Atlanta with quite a streak, as they have won all three AVP tournaments (including on one the Tour Series) they have played since reuniting on top of the final tournament they played as partners back in 2017 before their split. In Chicago 2017 the duo won, the first career AVP win for both players. After playing with different partners the duo reunited at the end of 2022 and the pair won a Tour Series event in Huntington Beach. This season they have won both times playing on the AVP Tour, in New Orleans and in Huntington Beach. Entering Atlanta they have won 21 consecutive matches, with their last loss coming in Manhattan Beach on August 20, 2017 against Emily Capers / Brittany Hochevar in three sets. They have won 27 of their last 28 matches (including Tour Series).

HOMETOWN HEROES –

- There are no men's players who list Georgia as either their hometown or current residence
- There are no men's players who attended a college in Georgia
- There are no women's players who list Georgia as either their hometown or current residence
- There are no women's players who attended a college in Georgia

FRIDAY NIGHT LIGHTS (AND SATURDAY TOO) – Atlanta will feature night matches both Friday and Saturday. The season opener in New Orleans also had play under the lights. Last year New Orleans, Atlanta and Phoenix all had night sessions (this year's season championships has yet to be announced so there is a chance that night play will also happen).

900 TONS – To build the three courts used at Atlantic Station, 900 tons of sand (enough to fill 50 dump trucks) was brought in from a quarry in southeastern Georgia. It is spread for a depth of 16-18 inches across the three courts, and then following this tournament the AVP is donating the sand to local beach volleyball programs to supplement their courts.

SCHEDULE SNAPSHOT – The 2023 AVP schedule has 12 tour stops, the second most the AVP has had since 2009 (behind the 15 last season). The 12 women's tournaments marks the 10th time in AVP history there have been that many. The nine different states that the Tour is visiting is the second most since the 2008 season (12 different states last year), with only California hosting more than one (this year will be the site of four events). It is only fitting that the AVP began the season in Florida given that three of the first five AVP events ever were in Florida, and in total has hosted the second most events in Tour history. This was the earliest start since 1998 while the mid-October finish is the latest for the Tour (besides last year) since 2013, which previously had been the last time an event was held as late as October. Last year the AVP held one in November and one in December (both of which were firsts on the AVP Tour). Three locations are slated to have night sessions (New Orleans, Atlanta, and the Championships). The combined total of \$1,480,000 in prize money (in addition to the Championships) also features the third most the Tour has distributed since 2009.

• The Tour is divided into four different classifications. One level is the Tour Series, which comprises four different events in four different states from June to October. These events will all have on-site qualifiers the day before the main draw begins. The Pro Series has four events from March through July, including the Tour's first three tournaments of the year. The first three events all will have an on-site qualifier, with the fourth, in Hermosa Beach, using results from a Tour Series event to round out the field. Once again the Gold Series, with three events, will be held towards the end of the season, as the three this year will be 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 one-day single elimination qualifier held in Southern California on August 11. The last type of event is the AVP championships, which will be held in a location to be determined in September. Last season the six-team draws were based on the best two out of the three results in Gold Series events.

2023 AVP Pro Beach Volleyball Tour Schedule

Event Dates	Location	Tournament Format	Prize \$
March 16 - 19	Miami, Florida	16-team double elimination	\$125,000
<i>Taylor Crabb / Taylor Sander win 3rd straight; Brandie Wilkerson (with Melissa Humana-Parades) gets first win</i>			
April 13 - 16	New Orleans, Louisiana	16-team double elimination	\$125,000
<i>Top seeds in both genders win after weather delay, Tri Bourne / Chaim Schalk and Kelly Cheng / Sara Hughes</i>			
May 18 - 21	Huntington Beach, California	16-team double elimination	\$125,000
<i>Andy Benesh / Miles Partain win in their AVP debut; Kelly Cheng / Sara Hughes win second straight AVP title</i>			
June 9 – 11	Virginia Beach, Virginia	Pool play & 18-team single elimination	\$20,000
<i>Four first-time winners; Hagen Smith / Logan Webber and Macy Jerger / Megan Rice claim the Tour Series titles</i>			
June 30 – July 2	Denver, Colorado	Pool play & 18-team single elimination	\$20,000
<i>Billy Allen / Alison Cerutti win in rematch of Virginia Beach event; top seeds Hailey Harward / Kelley Kolinske win</i>			
July 6 - 7	Waupaca, Wisconsin	Pool play & 18-team single elimination	\$20,000
<i>Seain Cook gets first win (with Cody Caldwell); both women are first-time winners Alaina Chacon / Kylie Deberg</i>			
July 7 - 9	Hermosa Beach, California	16-team double elimination	\$125,000
<i>Theo Brunner / Trevor Crabb win in their 2nd event; Corinne Quiggle and Sarah Schermerhorn get first win</i>			
Aug 4 – 6	Atlanta, Georgia	16-team double elimination	\$300,000
<i>First Gold Series event of 2023; one of three 2023 locations to have night sessions</i>			
Aug 18 – 20	Manhattan Beach, California	32-team double elimination	\$300,000
<i>Biggest event on the schedule in terms of both main draw and qualifier sizes; Gold Series event #2</i>			
Sep 1 – 3	Chicago, Illinois	16-team double elimination	\$300,000
<i>Chicago trails only Manhattan Beach on list of most frequented stops in AVP history; Gold Series event #3</i>			
Sep 22 – 23	TBD		
<i>Season Championships; Only invitational on schedule</i>			
Oct 13 – 15	Laguna Beach, California	Pool play & 18-team single elimination	\$20,000
<i>First time the AVP has played in Laguna Beach since 1988; fourth California stop on 2023 Tour</i>			

PRO VOLLEYBALL... INDOORS – The Pro Volleyball Federation is beginning its first season of play with eight teams across North America, including one here in Atlanta. The teams, consisting of 14 women, will play a 16-game schedule beginning in February 2024. On Friday the Atlanta team name, colors, team members and coaching staff will be revealed. The team will play in Gas South Arena (capacity 13,000) in Gwinnett, Ga. Other announced locations include Grand Rapids, Mich., Omaha, Neb., Columbus, Ohio, Orlando, Fla. and San Diego, Calif. Dallas will field a team beginning in 2025.

ATLANTA HISTORY – The AVP has held 10 men's tournaments and seven women's competitions in Atlanta prior to the 2022 season. The men played here four times between 1994-1998, another four times between 2006-2009, and then the last two years. All 10 winning men's teams had at least one player who was an Olympian (either beach or indoors). Karch Kiraly won four times with three different partners, while Jake Gibb / Sean Rosenthal won twice, tying for the most team wins with Karch Kiraly / Kent Steffes. Both 2022 winners, Paul Lotman and Marcus Partain, were first-time winners on the AVP. In 1996 beach volleyball made its debut in the Olympics, and it featured an All-American finale with Karch Kiraly / Kent Steffes defeating Mike Dodd / Mike Whitmarsh. The 10 AVP events and one FIVB event are the only ones ever played in the state of Georgia.

- On the women's side, the AVP event in 1994 was a dual gender event along with all four from 2006 to 2009 and then again the last two years. The seven previous titles were won by 11 different individuals, five of whom were Olympians including three who won medals. The 2021 win by Taryn Kloth and Kristen Nuss was notable for a few different reasons, as the duo was making its debut as partners on the AVP Tour. The duo had to advance from the qualifier as the fourth-seeded qualification team and became just the second women's team to win an AVP title after playing in the qualifier in addition to tying the AVP mark of being the lowest seeded main draw team (14th) to win, equaling the mark set by Emily Day / Summer Ross in Cincinnati 2013. 2022 featured a pair of first-time winners on the AVP Tour, Julia Scoles and Geena Urango.

- Here is a look at the AVP and FIVB tournaments in Atlanta:

MEN – AVP events

Year	1st	2nd	3rd	3rd / 4th
1994	Karch Kiraly / Kent Steffes	Mike Dodd / Mike Whitmarsh	Brent Frohoff / Bruk Vandeweghe	Adam Johnson / Randy Stoklos
1995	Scott Ayakutubby / Karch Kiraly	Mike Dodd / Mike Whitmarsh	Eric Fonoimoana / Ricci Luyties	Bill Boullianne / Brian Lewis
1996	Karch Kiraly / Kent Steffes	Adam Johnson / Jose Loiola	Eduardo Bacil / Randy Stoklos	Scott Friederichsen / Jim Nichols
1998	Adam Johnson / Karch Kiraly	Brent Frohoff / Rob Heidger	Roberto Lopes / Franco Neto	Aaron Boss / Albert Hannemann
2006	Mike Lambert / Stein Metzger	Dax Holdren / Sean Scott	John Hyden / Jeff Nygaard	[3rd] Matt Fuerbringer / Casey Jennings
2007	Jake Gibb / Sean Rosenthal	Mike Lambert / Stein Metzger	Karch Kiraly / Kevin Wong	[3rd] Phil Dalhausser / Todd Rogers
2008	Jake Gibb / Sean Rosenthal	Anthony Medel / Fred Souza	Phil Dalhausser / Todd Rogers	[3rd] John Hyden / Brad Keenan
2009	John Hyden / Sean Scott	Phil Dalhausser / Todd Rogers	Brad Keenan / Nick Lucena	[3rd] Matt Olson / Kevin Wong
2021	Chase Budinger / Casey Patterson	Theo Brunner / Chaim Schalk	Tri Bourne / Trevor Crabb	[3rd] Taylor Crabb / Jake Gibb
2022	Paul Lotman / Miles Partain	Theo Brunner / Chaim Schalk	Phil Dalhausser / Casey Patterson	[3rd] Chase Budinger / Troy Field

MEN – FIVB events (Olympics)

Year	1st	2nd	3rd	4th
1996	Karch Kiraly / Kent Steffes (USA)	Mike Dodd / Mike Whitmarsh (USA)	John Child / Mark Heese (CAN)	Joao Brenha / Miguel Maia (POR)

WOMEN – AVP events

Year	1st	2nd	3rd	3rd / 4th
1994	Nancy Reno / Angela Rock	Linda Chisholm / Linda Hanley	Sandra Pires / Jackie Silva	Cammy Ciarelli / Holly McPeak
2006	Rachel Scott / Elaine Youngs	Misty May-Treanor / Kerri Walsh Jennings	Annett Davis / Jenny Johnson Jordan	[3rd] Nicole Branagh / Holly McPeak
2007	Misty May-Treanor / Kerri Walsh Jennings	Rachel Scott / Tyra Turner	Annett Davis / Jenny Johnson Jordan	[3rd] Dianne DeNecochea / Barbra Fontana
2008	Misty May-Treanor / Kerri Walsh Jennings	Annett Davis / Jenny Johnson Jordan	Angie Akers / Holly McPeak	[3rd] Jenny Kropp / Nancy Reynolds
2009	Nicole Branagh / Elaine Youngs	Dianne DeNecochea / Carrie Dodd	Annett Davis / Jenny Johnson Jordan	[3rd] Lisa Fitzgerald / Brooke Niles
2021	Taryn Kloth / Kristen Nuss	Kelly Cheng / Sarah Sponcil	Crissy Jones / Zana Muno	[3rd] Terese Cannon / Molly Turner
2022	Julia Scoles / Geena Urango	Terese Cannon / Sarah Sponcil	Sara Hughes / Kelley Kolinske	[3rd] Zana Muno/Brandie Wilkerson

WOMEN – FIVB events (Olympics)

Year	1st	2nd	3rd	4th
1996	Sandra Pires / Jackie Silva (BRA)	Monica Rodrigues / Adriana Samuel (BRA)	Natalie Cook / Kerri Pottharst (AUS)	Barbra Fontana / Linda Hanley (USA)

RELATIVELY SPEAKING – Larissa and Lili Maestrini are a married couple that reside in Florida (Winter Garden). They are playing as partners on the AVP Tour for the 20th time with three Tour Series wins to their credit. Kelley Kolinske is married to Billy Kolinske, and they are competing in the same AVP tournament for the third time this season (also Denver on the Tour Series and Hermosa Beach). They also both played in the international Challenge event in La Paz, Mexico in March. Taylor and Trevor Crabb are brothers who were partners for 12 AVP events, finishing second three times and third six times, but now play with different partners. Gage and Lars Basey are brothers who are competing together for the third time on the AVP Tour.

CRABB BOIL – The Crabb brothers have played against each other in each of the last two years in Atlanta, with Taylor winning both times. Overall the two former partners have met each other 24 times, including 20 times on the AVP Tour. Trevor has a slim 13-11 overall lead. On the AVP Tour, Trevor has won five straight times and nine of the last 11 times after Taylor won seven of the first nine AVP meetings. Five of the last six meetings between the brothers on the AVP Tour have required a third set. Three times they have met in a title match, in Hermosa Beach 2017 (Taylor won), in Chicago 2022 (Trevor won) and in Hermosa Beach 2023 (Trevor won).

ATLANTA SAND BITS – Of the 32 men’s players competing this weekend the youngest is 19-year old Gage Basey, and just eight of the players here are still in their 20’s. While 22 players are in their 30’s, the three oldest are John Hyden (50), Phil Dalhausser (43) and Billy Allen (41). Four players are listed at 6’0” while at the other end of the spectrum are 6’9” Andy Benesh and Phil Dalhausser and a pair of 6’8” players (Alison Cerutti and Michael Groselle). The least experienced players here happen to be on the same team, Lars Basey (who is playing in his 5th AVP event ever) and younger brother Gage Basey (who is playing in his 6th AVP event). All other players have competed in at least 25 pro beach events prior to Atlanta. The most veteran players are Phil Dalhausser and John Hyden. Phil Dalhausser, with 62 AVP titles, has the most of any player here, followed by John Hyden (13 AVP wins), Taylor Crabb (11 AVP wins plus an AVP Tour Series win) and Tri Bourne (nine AVP wins). Out of 16 partnerships, two are competing together for the very first time (Chase Frishman / Dave Palm and Cody Caldwell / Jake Dietrich) while the two most experienced tandems are Taylor Crabb / Taylor Sander and Timothy Brewster / Kyle Friend. The teams that have previously won on the AVP Tour are Taylor Crabb / Taylor Sander (two AVP titles plus a Tour Series title), Tri Bourne / Chaim Schalk (in New Orleans 2023), Andy Benesh / Miles Partain (Huntington Beach 2023), Theo Brunner / Trevor Crabb (in Hermosa Beach 2023), Hagen Smith / Logan Webber (on the Tour Series in Virginia Beach 2023) and Billy Allen / Alison Cerutti (Tour Series win in Denver 2023).

• There are also 32 women playing this weekend, and there is just one player who has yet to turn 21 (20-year old Megan Kraft). On the flip side, the three oldest players were all born outside of the U.S. (Larissa Maestrini, 41 years old, Sarah Pavan, 36 and Lili Maestrini, 35). Kristen Nuss (5’6”) and Molly Turner (5’8”) are the shortest competitors, while at the other end of the spectrum are 6’5” Sarah Pavan and a pair of 6’4” players (Jennifer Keddy and Taryn Kloth). All of the women here have played at least 14 previous pro beach volleyball tournaments with the exception of Jaden Whitmarsh (playing in her eighth AVP tournament), while 10 players have played in more than 100 tournaments (led by Larissa Maestrini and Emily Stockman). Larissa Maestrini is the all-time FIVB wins leader with 62 titles, to go with four AVP wins (three of those on the Tour Series). Sara Hughes leads the field with six AVP wins plus one Tour Series victory, followed by Betsi Flint (six AVP wins) and then both Kelly Cheng and Kelley Kolinske with four AVP victories (in addition to one Tour Series win) as well as Taryn Kloth and Kristen Nuss (four AVP titles). Two of the 16 women’s tandems are playing alongside each other for the first time (Sarah Pavan / Geena Urango and Sara Schermerhorn / Molly Turner) while the most experienced are Kelly Cheng / Sara Hughes and Terese Cannon / Sarah Sponcil. There are six teams competing here which have previously won the on the AVP Tour as partners: Kelly Cheng / Sara Hughes (four AVP wins plus a Tour Series victory), Taryn Kloth / Kristen Nuss (four AVP wins), Larissa / Lili (three Tour Series titles, all in 2022), Melissa Humana-Paredes / Brandie Wilkerson (three AVP wins), Terese Cannon / Sarah Sponcil), and Hailey Harward / Kelley Kolinske (one Tour Series win in Denver 2023).

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 15 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 twice. In Atlanta there are no men’s teams playing which have previously won a Gold Series event, but each of the 15 previous champs has at least one member competing here this weekend. On the women’s side there are two teams competing this weekend that have previously won a Gold Series event, as Taryn Kloth / Kristen Nuss have won twice (including the last one held in Chicago 2022) and Kelly Cheng / Sara Hughes won in Chicago 2017. Here is a look at the 15 Gold Series events:

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
9/4/22	Chicago	Tri Bourne / Trevor Crabb	Taryn Kloth / Kristen Nuss

GOLDEN TOPS – This is the 16th Gold Series event since it was introduced in 2017 but Atlanta will be the first time that the number one seeded team on the men's side did not contain a beach Olympian. Each of the 15 previous winning teams on the men's side has had at least one player who had played in the Olympics in either beach or indoor volleyball.

- The women are continuing a tradition of having a Sara (or Sarah) on the top-seeded team in Gold Series tournaments, as this will be the fourth straight event with a Sarah as the number one seed. This weekend Sara Hughes owns the top seed (along with Kelly Cheng), and Hughes was also a number one seed in the final one of 2022 in Chicago. The prior two Gold Series events of 2022 saw Sarah Sponcil as the top seed.

RAIN, RAIN, GO AWAY – Last year in Atlanta there were two rain and lightning delays. The first hit Friday at 5:15 pm, and play resumed at 8:00 pm. Then on Saturday night the weather struck again, causing a delay at 7:37 pm that lasted through the night. Because of the number of matches left to play (and required rest in between for players), it was decided to modify the format and start at 8:00 am. The matches were changed to one set to 28 (except the finals).

ATLANTA'S ABSTRACTS –

- In 1998 the number one-seeded men's team won here but the top seeds haven't been able to win in the six events since then.
- Each of the last six men's championship matches has gone to a third set
- The first three seasons here (that seeds were known), the top two women's seeds battled for the title... the number-one seeded team has played in the championship match each year in Atlanta except in 2021 when #14 defeated #2
- Each of the last three women's championship matches has gone to a third set

FAMILIAR FOES – Two of the big men competing here are very familiar with each other and have similar accomplishments on the court. Phil Dalhausser has won 62 AVP titles plus 38 FIVB gold medals (in addition to other domestic wins). Alison Cerutti won 40 times on the Brazilian Tour plus 25 times on the FIVB. Dalhausser has played in four Olympics, winning gold in 2008 while Alison is a three-time Olympian, winning silver in 2012 and gold in 2016. In Hermosa Beach they faced each other with Alison winning in three sets. They have now played against each other 31 times in their career. Fittingly, five of the six last meetings between the big blockers went to a third set. Dalhausser has won 21 of the 31 meetings, including seven times in a gold medal match, while Alison has won 4 gold medal matches against Dalhausser.

DOMINATING DUO DEBUTS – Twice this season on the Pro Series a men's tandem playing for the first time on the AVP Tour won the title. In New Orleans, Tri Bourne and Chaim Schalk were playing together for the first time on the AVP, although they had previously played three times internationally. The duo went 5-0 on the weekend in winning the title, beating three teams seeded fifth or better. Then in Huntington Beach, Bourne and Schalk advanced to the finals where they would face Andy Benesh and Miles Partain, who had played five times as partners internationally but were making their AVP debuts. Although Bourne and Schalk had sent Benesh and Partain to the contender's bracket the day before, the new duo was up to the challenge and won the finals in a three-set match.

YOU GET A TITLE, AND YOU GET A TITLE – Beginning with the 2021 season finale in Chicago and including the Tour Series, there have been 22 events and 16 different men's teams have won a title. Phil Dalhausser won three times, each time while playing with a partner for the first time ever. Tri Bourne and Taylor Crabb each have four victories in that span. In the 22 championship matches, there were 20 unique matchups, as only Tri Bourne / Trevor Crabb vs Theo Brunner / Chaim Schalk and Billy Allen / Alison Cerutti vs Hagen Smith / Logan Webber have been featured twice.

- Not to be outdone, the women also had 16 different teams claim a title in that same span of 22 tournaments. Taryn Kloth / Kristen Nuss, Larissa Maestrini / Lili Maestrini and Kelly Cheng / Sara Hughes all had three wins each in that span. In the 22 championship matches, there were 21 unique matchups, as only Kelly Cheng / Betsi Flint vs. Taryn Kloth / Kristen Nuss was featured twice.

COLLEGIATE CHAMPIONS – The NCAA first sanctioned women's beach volleyball in 2016 and there have been seven 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 three titles (2021, 2022 and 2023). Here is a look at the eight women who competing in Atlanta who have won a national championship, seven of whom have won a pair of titles and one (Megan Kraft) has won three rings.

Terese Cannon (Southern Cal) 2016, 2017
 Kelly Cheng (Southern Cal) 2016, 2017
 Hailey Harward (Southern Cal) 2021, 2022
 Sara Hughes (Southern Cal) 2016, 2017

Megan Kraft (Southern Cal) 2021, 2022, 2023
 Zana Munro (UCLA) 2018, 2019
 Savvy Simo (UCLA), 2018, 2019
 Sarah Sponcil (UCLA), 2018, 2019

OLYMPICALITY – This week's AVP event features seven men's and six women's players who have played in the Olympics (either indoors or on the beach). Players here have competed for three different countries.

• Men with Olympic experience:

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

Alison Cerutti played beach for Brazil in 2012 (won silver), 2016 (won gold) and 2020 (5th place)

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

John Hyden played indoors in 1996 (ninth place) and 2000 (11th place)

Paul Lotman played indoors in 2012 (fifth place) and was an alternate for the 2016 team

Taylor Sander played indoors in 2016 (won bronze) and 2020 (10th place)

Chaim Schalk played beach for Canada in 2016 (ninth place)

• Women with Olympic experience:

Kelly Cheng played beach in 2020 (fifth place)

Melissa Humana-Paredes played beach in 2020 for Canada (fifth place)

Larissa Maestrini played beach for Brazil in 2008 (fifth place), 2012 (won bronze) and 2016 (fourth place)

Sarah Pavan played beach for Canada in 2016 (fifth place) and 2020 (fifth place)

Sarah Sponcil played beach in 2020 (ninth place)

Brandie Wilkerson played beach in 2020 for Canada (fifth place)

GPS TO THE MAIN DRAW – Here's a look at teams can qualify for each tournament's main draw:

Miami (Pro Series) – on-site qualifier

New Orleans (Pro Series) – on-site qualifier

Huntington Beach (Pro Series) – on-site qualifier

Virginia Beach (Tour Series) – on-site qualifier

Denver (Tour Series) – on-site qualifier

Waupaca (Tour Series) – on-site qualifier

Hermosa Beach (Pro Series) – top 4 teams from Virginia Beach

Atlanta (Gold Series) – top 4 teams from Denver

Manhattan Beach (Gold Series) – on-site qualifier plus top 4 teams from Waupaca

Chicago (Gold Series) – top 4 teams from a single day qualifier in Southern California on August 11

Laguna Beach (Tour Series) – on-site qualifier

SEEDINGS SCHMEEDINGS – On the men's side, the seedings do not seem to be a good indicator of who will win the tournament. Excluding Tour Series events, in the last 17 events just four times did the number one seed emerge victorious. Going back further, at the end of 2014 and start of 2015 top seeded Jake Gibb / Casey Patterson won four consecutive tournaments. However since then, the top seeds have won just 16 times in the 55 tournaments (again, excluding Tour Series).

SEEDINGS SUPREME – In New Orleans a rarity happened on the women's side; the top four seeds advanced to the semifinals and the top two seeds played for the title. The last time both of those things happened in the same tournament was in Santa Barbara in 2012, an event that featured pool play as opposed to the traditional double-elimination bracket. The last time that happened in a double-elimination bracket tournament was in Chicago 2009.

THE SUM OF THE SEEDS – The two finalists in Hermosa Beach were seeded 6th and 13th, and the total of 19 ties for the highest ever in AVP women's history. The other tournament that happened was in Ft. Lauderdale 2022 when seed #8 defeated #11. The semifinals in Hermosa Beach had the 3rd highest sum of seeds in the final four in AVP women's history:

- In Hermosa Beach 2019 the total was 64 (seeds 1, 18, 21, 24) in a 24-team draw
- In Manhattan Beach 2017 the total was 41 (seeds 1, 2, 15, 23) in a 32-team draw
- In Hermosa Beach 2023 the total was 40 (seeds 6, 7, 13, 14) in a 16-team main draw

ALISON'S ACHIEVEMENTS – Three-time Brazilian Olympian Alison Cerutti is returning to the AVP this season, as he played in Glendale, Ariz. in 2009 with Harley Marques, finishing in second place. This will mark his fourth AVP event, but he has accomplished quite a bit since his last appearance. He has won a gold and bronze in his three Olympic appearances. On the Brazilian Tour, he has won 40 golds, 21 silvers and 19 bronzes. In early July he and Billy Allen won in Denver on the AVP Tour Series. His Brazilian Tour awards:

- Three-time Brazilian champion (2009, 2011, 2016)
- Four-time Super Praia champion (2014, 2015, 2016, 2017)
- Six-time Best Attacker (2009, 2011, 2013, 2016, 2017, 2019)
- Six-time Best Blocker (2009, 2010, 2011, 2016, 2017, 2018)

FIRST TIME VICTORS – This season there have been seven AVP tournaments and 12 different individuals have won, including seven who have won for the first time on the AVP (including Tour Series). The first time winners are Alaina Chacon, Kylie Deberg, Macy Jerger, Corinne Quiggle, Megan Rice, Sarah Schermerhorn, and Brandie Wilkerson.

- On the men's side, the seven tournaments have yielded 14 different individuals winning a title.

MIAMI'S MEMORIES – The AVP began its season in mid-March, the earliest the Tour has begun its season since 1998. For the fourth time in the last eight AVP events (excluding Tour Series), both the men's and women's champions were number one seeds. Florida extended its lead of hosting season openers, with its 16th in the 40-year history of the AVP despite the fact this was the first time since 2014 that Florida has hosted an inaugural event.

- You aren't given a top seed, you have to earn it. And Taylor Crabb and Taylor Sander wanted to make sure people knew they earned their top billing. That is not to say they weren't tested however. In the third round they dropped a 21-14 first set to Timothy Brewster / Kyle Friend, but rebounded to win 23-21 in the third set after fending off five match points. In the semis, they again lost the first set but pulled out a 21-19 third-set win over Cody Caldwell / Chase Frishman, this time withstanding three match points. Chase Budinger and Miles Evans lost in the second round but then swept four straight opponents to reach the title match. In the first set the Taylors never trailed in winning 21-14. Budinger and Evans jumped out to early leads in the second set, 9-1 and 12-3, but the Taylors took control and won 21-19, extending their AVP match winning streak to 13 straight. Crabb had 15 kills with just one hitting error plus nine digs, while Sander had six blocks to go with nine kills and seven digs. Both players had two aces in the match. Budinger had 13 kills and one block, while Evans had 13 digs and three aces.

- Melissa Humana-Paredes / Brandie Wilkerson were playing together for just the second time on the AVP, but for the second straight time they advanced to the championship match. After losing to fifth-seeded Larissa Maestrini / Lili Maestrini in the third round, the duo responded with three straight sweeps including the championship match. Humana-Paredes entered Miami having won twice on the AVP Tour but both were in 2019, while Wilkerson had finished in second place four times but in Miami they were able to claim a victory. The stats bore out how they did it, as Wilkerson had 19 blocks and Humana-Paredes led all players with 92 digs and an average of 7.08 per set. In the title match they faced a first time partnership, Betsi Flint and Julia Scoles. Flint and Scoles followed nearly the same path, losing in the third round to the same team that Humana-Paredes / Wilkerson defeated in the semis, second seeded Terese Cannon / Sarah Sponcil. They then defeated Larissa / Lili in the semis. In the title match Humana-Paredes had 12 kills and 18 digs, while Wilkerson recorded 18 kills, 10 digs, two blocks and three aces. On the other side of the net Flint was limited to seven kills but had 19 digs, while Scoles had 21 kills.

#1 Taylor Crabb / Taylor Sander def. #3 Chase Budinger / Miles Evans 21-14, 21-19 (:44)

#1 Melissa Humana-Paredes / Brandie Wilkerson def. #3 Betsi Flint / Julia Scoles 21-16, 24-22 (:53)

NEW ORLEANS NOTABLES – Contrary to rumors, Wilson did not pull its sponsorship of the AVP on Saturday afternoon in New Orleans when the giant Wilson ball went floating away from the site. Instead, it was due to the sudden and intense rain and wind storm that blew in, causing play to be halted at 12:40 pm and about 16 minutes later the ball was seen flying off. Play was resumed that evening at 6:00 pm with an extended night session and an earlier start on Sunday ensured the tournament was finished on time. This was the fourth time that New Orleans hosted an AVP tournament in which seeds were known (2015, 2016, 2022 and 2023), and all eight winning teams (men and women) were top seeds.

- Top seeds Tri Bourne and Chaim Schalk lost just one set en route to the championship match in what was their first AVP event as partners (they had played three international events together). The AVP was guaranteed to have a first-time team as the winner as the opponents were the newly-formed duo of Billy Allen and Troy Field. The third-seeded team also lost just one set in reaching the title match. In the first set, Allen and Field won 27-25 in what was the highest scoring set of a men's championship match since the 2019 season opener. In the next two sets the No. 1 seeds were nearly perfect, with just two hitting errors and three Bourne blocks in winning 21-12 and 15-10. For the match Bourne had 17 kills, two hitting errors and four blocks, while Schalk had 24 kills and 17 digs. Allen had 22 kills and 11 digs while Field added 16 kills, four blocks and 11 digs.

- The top four women's seeds advanced to the semifinals and the top two seeds played for the title. The last time both of those things happened in the same tournament was in Santa Barbara in 2012, an event that featured pool play as opposed to the traditional double-elimination bracket. The last time that happened in a double-elimination bracket tournament was in Chicago 2009. Kelly Cheng and Sara Hughes, the top seeds in the event, seemed to like blowouts in the first set, as their first set scores in the tournament were 21-8, 21-16, 10-21, 8-21 and 21-9. Despite trailing big twice they managed to go undefeated into the title match, where their opponents were a team that brought in a seven-match winning streak, Melissa Humana-Paredes and Brandie Wilkerson. That duo was playing for the title for the third time in as many AVP events as partners. Clearly the day belonged to Cheng and Hughes, who combined for just two hitting errors in the match. Cheng had 17 kills, two blocks and three aces, while Hughes had 13 kills and 14 digs. Humana-Paredes finished with six kills and 10 digs, and Wilkerson had seven kills and one block.

#1 Tri Bourne / Chaim Schalk def. #3 Billy Allen / Troy Field 25-27, 21-12, 15-10 (1:00)

#1 Kelly Cheng / Sara Hughes def. #2 Melissa Humana-Paredes / Brandie Wilkerson 21-9, 21-18 (:41)

HUNTINGTON BEACH HAPPENINGS – Neither gender saw many upsets in Huntington Beach, as there were just seven upsets out of the 29 matches each gender played. For the men, this was the second straight event won by a team that was making its debut as partners on the AVP. The win by Andy Benesh and Miles Partain also snapped a streak of 12 straight AVP tournaments (including Tour Series) held in California the men's winning team had at least one Olympian (beach or indoors) on the roster. The last time no Olympian was on the winning team was in San Francisco 2018. Both championship meetings this year were rematches from the winner's bracket as the teams had played each other just the day before.

- The men's final was shaping up to be the top two seeds, but fifth-seeded Andy Benesh and Miles Partain derailed that plan with a three-set semifinal victory. The duo faced top seeds Tri Bourne / Chaim Schalk, who had already beat Benesh / Partain in a three-set match on Saturday. The finals did not disappoint, as the top seeds won a tight 22-20 first set. In the second set Bourne and Schalk had eight hitting errors compared to just one for Benesh / Partain, who rolled to a 21-11 win to force the tiebreaker. Again in the third set Bourne / Schalk had five hitting errors while Benesh / Partain had just one, with the fifth seeds claiming a 15-11 victory. In the match Benesh had nine blocks and just two hitting errors, while Partain had 12 kills and 13 digs. Bourne had three blocks and two aces (with two of the blocks and both aces coming in the first set) while Schalk added 15 kills and 13 digs.

- The women had just one upset in the winner's bracket, and the number one-seeded team, Kelly Cheng / Sara Hughes, went through the event having lost just one set. Their opponents in the title match, fourth-seeded Betsi Flint / Julia Scoles, had an 8-7 set record en route to their second-place finish. The two teams had met the day before the finals, in the previous event in New Orleans, and in a gold medal match in an international event in December. And with their sweep in the finals Cheng and Hughes continued their perfect record at 4-0 against Flint and Scoles. Cheng had 16 kills and two blocks, while Hughes had 10 kills, no hitting errors, and nine digs. Flint had 15 kills and eight digs and Scoles added seven kills and four blocks.

#5 Andy Benesh / Miles Partain def. #1 Tri Bourne / Chaim Schalk 20-22, 21-11, 15-12 (1:09)

#1 Kelly Cheng / Sara Hughes def. #4 Betsi Flint / Julia Scoles 21-18, 21-18 (:45)

HERMOSA BEACH HEROES – Variety was the theme of 2023 and Hermosa Beach helped maintain that. With this being the seventh AVP event of the year (including Tour Series), seven different men's teams and six different women's teams have won. The men saw all 12 matches on Friday end in two sets, but then in the next two days nine of the 17 matches went to a third set. The women had a first; two players named Megan Rice played against each other. And the two youngest competitors, 15-year old Sarah Wood and 17-year old Ashley Pater simultaneously played in the AVP Juniors National Championship (on different teams, with Wood defeating Pater in the championship match) as well as on the AVP Hermosa Beach event. In one match, their opponent, 35-year old Emily Stockman, was older than the two of them combined.

- The men's final was a bit of a rarity on the AVP Tour, with a pair of brothers facing off against each other. The pair had met the day before, with Trevor and Theo Brunner winning. But Taylor and Taylor Sander won a pair of three-set matches to reach the finals. Taylor and Sander won the first set 21-19, then Brunner and Trevor answered with a 21-13 win in the second set. Brunner and Trevor clinched the title with a 15-10 third-set victory. Brunner had 13 kills, just one hitting error, and eight blocks, while Trevor had 20 kills with only two hitting errors, and eight digs. Taylor had 25 kills and 10 digs, and Sander had 11 kills.

- Hermosa Beach belonged to the underdogs, as 16 of the 29 matches were upsets. That led to four teams in the semifinals whose seeds added up to 40, the third highest in AVP women's history. And the teams in the title match were seeded sixth and 13th, with the total of 19 tying for the highest ever on the AVP (along with Ft. Lauderdale 2022). Corinne Quiggle was playing in her first AVP finals, while teammate Sarah Schermerhorn was in her second one ever. The duo was playing for the 23rd time across all tours, while across the net were teammates who joined forces only due to an injury a few days before the event. Megan J. Rice, who is playing her first season of pro beach volleyball, and Savvy Simo, who was coming off her first career title match (in Denver on the Tour Series) were undefeated heading into the finals. Quiggle and Schermerhorn proved to be too much, winning 21-15, 21-16. Quiggle had 13 digs, Schermerhorn had 14 kills and six blocks, and both players had two aces. Rice had three blocks while Simo had 12 kills and 13 digs.

#2 Theo Brunner / Trevor Crabb def. #3 Taylor Crabb / Taylor Sander 19-21, 21-13, 15-10 (1:04)

#6 Corinne Quiggle / Sarah Schermerhorn def. #13 Megan J. Rice / Savvy Simo 21-15, 21-16 (:46)

BROTHERLY BATTLES – On the AVP Tour there have been eight tournaments in which a pair of brothers faced off against each other in a championship match. From 1986 through June 1991, Sinjin Smith faced off against his younger brother Andrew Smith five times (Sinjin won four times, Andrew won once). The first time it happened was in Arizona on October 5, 1986 when Sinjin defeated Andrew. Following the fifth meeting between the Smiths, no brothers competed against each other in an AVP championship match until July 2017 in Hermosa Beach when Taylor Crabb got his second AVP title by defeating his older brother Trevor. In Chicago 2022 the two brothers met again in an AVP finals, with Trevor winning. Then in Hermosa Beach 2023 Trevor again got the win against Taylor.

2023 QUALIFIER LIST – In the season opener in Miami the highest seeded men’s qualifier team to advance to the main draw was seventh-seeded Ian Satterfield / Jake Urrutia. That marked just the second time since the start of the 2003 season that no team in the top six in the qualifiers managed to advance to the main draw on the AVP Tour. The other instance was in Hermosa Beach 2019, when the seventh seeds were also the highest seeded team to advance. The women in Miami included a pair of teenagers. The women’s number one seed in the qualifier advanced in 11 consecutive tournaments (including Tour Series) before the top seeds failed to do so in Denver in last June. Here’s a look at the teams who have qualified this season (placing in qualifier or qualification tournament seed) and how they finished in the main draw in Pro Series events:

MIAMI - Men (Onsite Qualifier)

Ian Satterfield / Jake Urrutia (Q7) – 9th
 Alex Diaz / Brandon Joyner (Q9) – 9th
 Peter Connole / Steven Roschitz (Q13) – 13th
 Jordan Hoppe / Charlie Siragusa (Q19) – 13th
No seed 6th or better qualified for 2nd time ever

MIAMI - Women (Onsite Qualifier)

Aurora Davis / Megan Gebhard (Q1) – 13th
 Kennedy Coakley / Ashley Pater (Q4) – 13th
 Katie Hogan / Katie Pyles (Q6) – 13th
 Amy Ozee / Mariah Whalen (Q7) – 13th
17-year olds Coakley and Pater qualified

NEW ORLEANS - Men (Onsite Qualifier)

Andrew Dentler / Jacob Landel (Q2) – 9th
 Ian Satterfield / Jake Urrutia (Q4) – 9th
 Djordje Klasnic / Brian Miller (Q6) – 7th
 Noah Dyer / Wyatt Harrison (Q8) – 13th
Satterfield / Urrutia qualify for 2nd straight time

NEW ORLEANS - Women (Onsite Qualifier)

Brook Bauer / Katie Horton (Q1) – 13th
 Kimberly Hildreth / Teegan Van Gunst (Q2) – 7th
 Jessica Gaffney / Kelly Reeves (Q3) – 9th
 Aurora Davis / Lydia Smith (Q5) – 13th
4th seeds forfeited, all other top seeds advance

HUNTINGTON BEACH - Men (Onsite Qualifier)

Andrew Dentler / Jacob Landel (Q3) – 13th
 Skylar del Sol / Lev Priima (Q5) – 9th
 Djordje Klasnic / Brian Miller (Q7) – 9th
 Raffae Paulis / Jeff Samuels (Q9) – 13th
Two teams qualify for 2nd straight time

HUNTINGTON BEACH - Women (Onsite Qualifier)

Larissa Maestrini / Lili Maestrini (Q1) – 9th
 Kimberly Hildreth / Teegan Van Gunst (Q2) – 13th
 Jessica Gaffney / Carly Kan (Q5) – 13th
 Madelyne Anderson / Molly Turner (Q6) – 13th
Hildreth, Van Gunst, Gaffney repeat qualifiers

BIRTHDAYS – Billy Kolinske will turn 37 on Sunday, August 6. While he is the only player celebrating a birthday in Atlanta, Geena Urango just turned 34 on Wednesday, August 2.

INTERNATIONAL UPDATE – So far this season, 18 different teams (nine men, nine women) comprised of players who usually play on the AVP Tour have been to a semifinal on the World Pro Beach Volleyball Tour or NORCECA. The men have won four golds, four silvers and three bronze medals, while the women have won six golds, six silvers and four bronze medals. Andy Benesh / Miles Partain have won one of each type of medal to go with a pair of fourth-place finishes. The duos of Taryn Kloth / Kristen Nuss and Melissa Humana-Paredes / Brandie Wilkerson lead the pack with three medals (two golds, one bronze for each team). This weekend there are no competing events that AVP players would participate in, but for the next AVP tournament in Manhattan Beach, there is also an Elite 16 tournament in Hamburg that will pull some teams away.

• Here is a look at players and teams who competed on the AVP Tour which have been in the semifinals of an international event this year.

MEN

Dave McKenzie / Ben Vaught – Bronze Medal – Mount Maunganui, New Zealand – March 19
 Jordan Hoppe / Charlie Siragusa – Bronze Medal – Coolangatta, Australia – April 2
 Ian Satterfield / Jake Urrutia – 4th Place – Tahiti, French Polynesia – April 8
 Chase Budinger / Miles Evans – Silver Medal – Saquarema, Brazil – April 16
 Andy Benesh / Miles Partain – 4th Place – Saquarema, Brazil – April 16
 Cody Caldwell / Chase Frishman – Gold Medal – Aquascalientes, Mexico (NORCECA) – April 23
 Troy Field / Silila Tucker – Silver Medal – Varadero, Cuba (NORCECA) – May 14
 Ian Satterfield / Jake Urrutia – Silver Medal – Grand Cayman, Cayman Islands (NORCECA) – May 21
 Andy Benesh / Miles Partain – Bronze Medal – Ostrava, Czech Republic – June 4
 Andy Benesh / Miles Partain – 4th Place – Punta Cana, Dominican Republic (NORCECA) – June 8
 Evan Cory / Troy Field – Gold Medal – Helsinki, Finland – July 2
 Andy Benesh / Miles Partain – Gold Medal – Gstaad, Switzerland – July 9
 Theo Brunner / Trevor Crabb – Gold Medal – Espinho, Portugal – July 16
 Andy Benesh / Miles Partain – Silver Medal – Montreal, Canada – July 30

WOMEN

Taryn Kloth / Kristen Nuss – Gold Medal – La Paz, Mexico – March 19
Toni Rodriguez / Savvy Simo – Silver Medal – La Paz, Mexico – March 19
Kelly Cheng / Sara Hughes – Gold Medal – Tepic, Mexico – March 26
Terese Cannon / Sarah Sponcil – Bronze Medal – Itapema, Brazil – April 9
Carly Skjodt / Geena Urango – Silver Medal – Aguascalientes, Mexico (NORCECA) – April 23
Katie Lindstrom / Teegan Van Gunst – 4th Place – Aguascalientes, Mexico (NORCECA) – April 23
Taryn Kloth / Kristen Nuss – Gold Medal – Uberlandia, Brazil – April 30
Kelly Cheng / Sara Hughes – 4th Place – Uberlandia, Brazil – April 30
Katie Lindstrom / Teegan Van Gunst – Gold Medal – Varadero, Cuba (NORCECA) – May 14
Carly Skjodt / Geena Urango – Bronze Medal – Varadero, Cuba (NORCECA) – May 14
Terese Cannon / Sarah Sponcil – Silver Medal – Ostrava, Czech Republic – June 4
Melissa Humana-Paredes / Brandie Wilkerson – Bronze Medal – Ostrava, Czech Republic – June 4
Hailey Harward / Kelley Kolinske – Silver Medal – Punta Cana, Dominican Republic (NORCECA) – June 8
Melissa Humana-Paredes / Brandie Wilkerson – Gold Medal – Jurmala, Latvia – June 18
Kelly Cheng / Sara Hughes – Silver Medal – Gstaad, Switzerland – July 9
Taryn Kloth / Kristen Nuss – Bronze Medal – Gstaad, Switzerland – July 9
Melissa Humana-Paredes / Brandie Wilkerson – Gold Medal – Montreal, Canada – July 30
Betsi Flint / Julia Scoles – Silver Medal – Montreal, Canada – July 30

FROM SPIKES TO MICS – Several of the announcers have gone from spikes to mics. Emily (Day) Capers won nine AVP championships in her time (more than any other woman competing here). Dain Blanton won eight times on the AVP Tour (which would rank fifth among players here) but also boasts an Olympic Gold medal. Matt Prosser won one AVP title (Huntington Beach 2011).

UP NEXT – Following Atlanta there will be a one-weekend hiatus on the AVP Tour before the second Gold Series event in Manhattan Beach. The season's biggest tournament in terms of teams (32 teams from each gender in the main draw), this event will also have an on-site qualifier on Thursday, August 17 before the three-day event begins on Friday, August 18.