



2020 AVP Champions Cup Series

Event #1 – Monster Hydro Cup presented by Acer

Long Beach, California • July 17 - 19, 2020

ABOUT THE TOURNAMENT – The AVP’s streak of 35 consecutive seasons holding competitions was put into serious jeopardy with the COVID-19 pandemic. Originally the AVP had eight events scheduled, with all the locations in 2019 again serving as hosts, but the AVP had to make the tough decision to cancel all of those events. However there will be a 36th straight year of competition as the Champions Cup Series was created to provide an opportunity to allow athletes to play although no fans are allowed at this event. All three events in the Series will be held in the same facility in Long Beach, California, with the qualifier taking place on three courts and the main draw on two courts. One notable difference is that these victories are not scheduled to be counted towards an individual’s all-time win tally.

- The inaugural weekend of the series is the Monster Hydro Cup Presented by Acer. A total of \$200,000 in prize money will be paid out to the two genders, and unlike almost all previous AVP events, all teams in the qualifier are guaranteed some prize money. In addition, the teams will be competing for a share of an additional \$50,000 bonus pool per gender, which will be paid out to the top three teams in the entire series. That means that in just these three tournaments, a total of \$700,000 of prize money is available to the athletes.

- The main draw will be an eight-team, double elimination format, marking just the third such time this format has been used since the start of the 2010 season (also used in Atlantic City in 2013 and in Honolulu in 2018). The qualifier tournament is a single elimination event held on Friday, July 17, with 12 teams competing for the final two spots in the main draw. With six teams automatically seeded into the main draw, that means the total number of teams entered is 18 in each gender as the field was capped due to space limitations (13 men’s teams and 11 women’s teams were turned away). The qualifier will consist of 10 matches for both genders, while the main draw features 13 matches for each gender. The main draw begins on Saturday, July 18 and concludes on Sunday, July 19. The championship matches will be around 11:30 am PT and 1:30 pm PT.

- NBC will broadcast a men’s match on a tape-delayed basis on Saturday, July 18th at 12:30 pm PT, and then will also televise the women’s championship match live on Sunday, July 19 at 1:30 pm PT. Chris Marlowe (play by play) and Kevin Wong (color commentary) will handle the announcing duties, with Dain Blanton contributing sideline reports. Live streaming via Amazon Prime takes place Saturday and Sunday on both of the main draw courts. Kevin Barnett, Camryn Irwin and Dain Blanton will combine to handle the announcing duties for Amazon Prime.

CHAMPIONS CUP SERIES – The Champions Cup Series is a three-event series featuring tournaments in consecutive weekends all being played in the same location in Long Beach, California. The same 18 teams, barring any injuries, will compete in all three events. Entry was determined by the normal point system used by the AVP. For these three tournaments, though, no additional AVP seeding points will be awarded and the victories will not count towards an athlete’s all-time victory count. On top of the \$200,000 in prize money given out at each of the three tournaments, there will be \$100,000 in bonus money for the top three finishers in the series. The top team in each gender will win the Champions Cup and a \$25,000 bonus, while the second place team is awarded the Silver Cup and \$15,000, and the team in third place garners the Bronze Cup and \$10,000.

- To determine the top three teams, the seed index method will be used (one point for first place, two points for second place, three points for third place, five points for fifth place, etc...). The team with the lowest average will win the Champions Cup. To break ties, the following will be used:

Two-way tie-breakers: 1) Head-to-head results throughout the series, including Qualifier matches, 2) Head-to-head set ratio, 3) Head-to-head point ratio, 4) The higher result between the teams at the final event, 5) The team with a higher finishing position at either the first or second event, 6) Overall series set ratio, and 7) Overall series point ratio.

Three-way tie-breaker: 1) The higher result in the final event.

- The last time the AVP had three tournaments in the same season with just eight teams in the main draw was in 1995, when the men had four indoor events in February which all featured eight teams. For outdoor events you need to go back to 1994, when the women had 12 such events. For the men, the last time they had three outdoor events with eight-team draws was in 1991.

- Here are the three tournaments and the dates which comprise the Champions Cup Series, all of which will offer \$200,000 in prize money:

The Monster Hydro Cup – July 17-19

The Wilson Cup – July 24-26

The Porsche Cup – July 31-August 2

LONG BEACH HISTORY – The AVP has held five men's tournaments and three women's competitions in Long Beach prior to the 2020 season. The men played here in 1984 (the first season of competition for the AVP), 1985, 2007, 2008 and 2010. The eight different players who have won here (Phil Dalhausser and Todd Rogers won in both 2007 and 2010) have impressive credentials, as six of them are in the top eight in all-time AVP wins, with the other two ranking 11th and 22nd. Six of the eight are Olympians, combining to win two golds and one silver in their 12 Olympic appearances. Todd Rogers won for the second time here along with Phil Dalhausser in 2010, with that victory being his 52nd and final AVP title in his career.

• On the women's side, the WPVA held five tournaments here between 1989 and 1996, while the BVA had one event in 2000. The three AVP women's competitions have all been won by Misty May-Treanor, twice with Kerri Walsh Jennings and once with Nicole Branagh. That 2010 victory marked the last AVP win for May-Treanor, her 66th all-time to rank her second behind only Walsh Jennings (77). While just three different women have won here, all three can be found in the top six on the all-time AVP wins list. Each of them was an Olympian, with May-Treanor winning three gold medals in her four Olympics while Walsh Jennings has collected three gold medals and one bronze in her four beach Olympics.

• Additionally, the FIVB has held four dual-gender competitions in Long Beach from 2013-2016. Dalhausser won two golds and two silvers in those four events, and the 2014 win for Rosenthal was the last FIVB title he has won. April Ross and Kerri Walsh Jennings won two golds and one silver. Here is a look at the AVP and FIVB tournaments in Long Beach:

MEN – AVP events

Year	1st	2nd	3rd	3rd / 4th
1984	Sinjin Smith / Randy Stoklos	Mike Dodd / Tim Hovland	John Hanley / Jon Stevenson	Andy Fishburn / Jay Hanseth
1985	Mike Dodd / Tim Hovland	Ricci Luyties / Steve Obradovich	Scott Ayakatabby / Brent Frohoff	Sinjin Smith / Randy Stoklos
2007	Phil Dalhausser / Todd Rogers	Jake Gibb / Sean Rosenthal	Mike Lambert / Stein Metzger	[3rd] John Hyden / Brad Keenan
2008	Jake Gibb / Sean Rosenthal	Phil Dalhausser / Todd Rogers	Dax Holdren / Bill Strickland	[3rd] Nick Lucena / Sean Scott
2010	Phil Dalhausser / Todd Rogers	John Hyden / Sean Scott	Bill Strickland / Aaron Wachtfogel	[3rd] Jake Gibb / Sean Rosenthal

MEN – FIVB events

Year	1st	2nd	3rd	4th
2013	Phil Dalhausser / Sean Rosenthal	Adrian Gavira / Pablo Herrera	Daniele Lupo / Paolo Nicolai	Jake Gibb / Casey Patterson
2014	Phil Dalhausser / Sean Rosenthal	Grzegorz Fijalek / Mariusz Prudel	Theo Brunner / Todd Rogers	Alexander Walkenhorst/Stefan Windscheif
2015	Alison Cerutti / Bruno Oscar Schmidt	Phil Dalhausser / Nick Lucena	Adrian Gavira / Pablo Herrera	Alexander Brouwer / Robert Meeuwssen
2016	Evandro Goncalves / Pedro Solberg	Phil Dalhausser / Nick Lucena	Alexsandr Samoilovs/Janis Smedins	Marrco Caminati / Alex Ranghieri

WOMEN – AVP events

Year	1st	2nd	3rd	3rd
2007	Misty May-Treanor / Kerri Walsh Jennings	Rachel Scott / Tyra Turner	Nicole Branagh / Elaine Youngs	Jennifer Kessy / April Ross
2008	Misty May-Treanor / Kerri Walsh Jennings	Jennifer Kessy / April Ross	Nicole Branagh / Elaine Youngs	Angie Akers / Holly McPeak
2010	Nicole Branagh / Misty May-Treanor	Annett Davis / Jenny Johnson	Jordan Rachel Scott / Elaine Youngs	Angie Akers / Tyra Turner

WOMEN – FIVB events

Year	1st	2nd	3rd	4th
2013	Talita Antunes / Taiana Lima	Carolina Salgado / Maria Clara Salgado	Katrin Holtwick / Ilka Semmler	Emily Day / Summer Ross
2014	April Ross / Kerri Walsh Jennings	Agatha Bednarczuk / Barbara Seixas	Natalia Dubovcova/Dominika Nestarcova	Elsa Baquerizo / Liliana Fernandez
2015	Talita Antunes / Larissa Franca	April Ross / Kerri Walsh Jennings	Laura Ludwig / Kira Walkenhorst	Louise Bawden / Taliqna Clancy
2016	April Ross / Kerri Walsh Jennings	Elsa Baquerizo / Liliana Fernandez	Chantal Laboureur / Julia Sude	Katrin Holtwick / Ilka Semmler

FABULOUS 40's – In the 2019 season opening tournament in Huntington Beach, Jake Gibb joined Karch Kiraly and John Hyden as the only players to ever win an AVP title at the age of 43 or older. He then added another title in the following event in Austin, then closed the year with a pair of wins in Chicago and Honolulu. From the Cincinnati event in September 2015 through the season ender in 2019, there have been 33 AVP events and 17 of the men's titles have been won by a player age 40 or older (compared to the 16 which haven't). A winning player has been in his 20s just 12 times. In those 33 championship matches, at least one player has been over the age of 40 a total of 23 times. In Manhattan Beach Reid Priddy won his first title ever, and doing so at the age of 41 years, 10 months and 17 days meant he became the sixth different player to win after turning 40 (in addition to John Hyden, Karch Kiraly, Mike Whitmarsh, Jake Gibb and Ed Ratledge).

A-TEAM IS A-MAZING – Alix Klineman and April Ross have been quite impressive as a partnership. The duo has played in 12 AVP tournaments, winning seven times, finishing second three times, and placing third twice. They have won six of the last eight times they have played on the AVP Tour, and in that span have posted a 39-2 match record, with both losses coming against Melissa Humana-Paredes / Sarah Pavan in championship matches. In their AVP history, the tandem has a 45-2 record when winning the first set, including winning the last 34 straight matches when claiming the first set (were 20-0 last season).

LONG BEACH SAND BITS – Of the 36 men's players competing this weekend, there is one teenager competing, 18-year old Miles Partain and just eight players in their 20s while 17 are in their 30s. Meanwhile 10 players are 40 or older, with the two oldest being John Hyden at 47 and Ricardo Santos at 45. There are four players who stand 6'0" (Eric Beranek, Taylor Crabb, Skylar del Sol and Chase Frishman) while at the other end of the spectrum are 7'1" Ryan Doherty, 6'9" Andy Benesh and 6'9" Phil Dalhausser. Three players went to Long Beach State (Taylor Crabb, David Lee and Trevor Crabb after transferring from Puget Sound). Jake Gibb is playing in his 309th pro beach tournament, followed by Sean Rosenthal (281st), Phil Dalhausser (269th), Nick Lucena (266th) and Ricardo Santos (256th), while there are three players who have competed in less than 20 pro beach events (Andy Benesh 12 previous events, David Lee 13 and Miles Partain 16). There are 21 players competing in Long Beach who have won at least one AVP title entering this weekend, led by Phil Dalhausser (57), Jake Gibb (34), Casey Patterson (15), Nick Lucena (14), John Hyden (13) and Sean Rosenthal (12). Out of 18 partnerships, six are competing together for the very first time, including fifth-seeded Jeremy Casebeer / John Hyden. The most prolific partnerships are Phil Dalhausser / Nick Lucena 97 events before Long Beach, Taylor Crabb / Jake Gibb 46, Billy Allen / Stafford Slick 32 and Maddison McKibbin / Riley McKibbin 27). There are three men's teams here which have previously won an AVP event (Phil Dalhausser / Nick Lucena 12, Taylor Crabb / Jake Gibb 8 and Billy Allen / Stafford Slick 1).

- The 36 women playing this weekend all range in age from 23 to 38. There are three players who are 23 (Crissy Jones, Corinne Quiggle and Sarah Sponcil) while two players are 38 (Lauren Fendrick and April Ross). Katie Spieler is the shortest at 5'5" while Kendra VanZwieten measures 5'6". At the other end of the spectrum are Alix Klineman and Sarah Pavan (6'5") and 6'4" Kathryn Hogan. None of the players here attended Long Beach State. The least experienced pro beach players are Crissy Jones (eight prior events), Susannah Muno (nine), Kathryn Hogan (11) and Carly Wopat (12), while the most experienced is April Ross (254th tournament) followed by Lauren Fendrick (226th) and Emily Day (166th). April Ross has tallied 36 AVP victories, far and away the most of any player here, followed by Emily Day (9) and Alix Klineman (7). A total of 15 women here have previously won an AVP tournament. The women feature three tandems (out of 18 total) playing alongside each other for the first time (Amanda Dowdy / Susannah Muno, Kathryn Hogan / Molly Turner and Brittany Tiegs / Carly Wopat) and five having played together 20 or more times before Long Beach (Melissa Humana-Paredes / Sarah Pavan 40, Kelley Larsen / Emily Stockman 34, Alix Klineman / April Ross 31, Kim DiCello / Kendra VanZwieten 27 and Kelly Claes / Sarah Sponcil 22). There are five teams competing here which have won an AVP title as partners previously, Alix Klineman / April Ross (7), Melissa Humana-Paredes / Sarah Pavan (2), Karissa Cook / Jace Pardon (1), Kim DiCello / Kendra VanZwieten (1) and Kelley Larsen / Emily Stockman (1).

RELATIVELY SPEAKING – There is a valid reason for some of the players competing in Long Beach to not practice social distancing, as a number of them are related to other players. The McKibbin brothers, Maddison and Riley, are teammates, while the Crabb brothers, Taylor and Trevor, are on opposing teams. The women's tandem of Lane Carico and Karolina Marciniak is unique in that both athletes are married to players competing on the men's side in Long Beach (Carico is married to Chaim Schalk while Marciniak is married to Piotr Marciniak). Another married couple who are both competing here are Billy Kolinske and Kelley (Larsen) Kolinske, who got engaged on stadium court in Chicago in August 2019 and were married earlier this year.

DAY LIKES THE MONTH – Perhaps no other player was as excited to see the AVP schedule two of the three events this season in July than Emily Day. Since 2015, there have been seven AVP tournaments in the month of July, and Day has won five of them (with three different partners). Of the two she did not win, once she did not compete in the tournament and in the other she placed fifth. In those six events, she has compiled a 30-4 match record, including winning 16 of her last 17 AVP matches in the month of July.

- For the men, July has not been about one player but quite the opposite. In the last five AVP tournaments in July (since 2017), there have been 10 different winning players. For four of those players, it remains as their only AVP title (Chase Budinger, Ed Ratledge, Roberto Rodriguez, and Maddison McKibbin), while it is the one of two for Ty Loomis.

WIN EARLY AND OFTEN – In AVP championship matches, it's best to win early. On the men's side, the team winning the first set has won the match in 22 of the last 25 title matches (88.0% win rate in that span). That figure is a bit above the rate the entire Tour saw (for men) last year, as teams that won the first set went on to win the match 82.8% of the time. On the women's side, the team claiming the first set has a 35-6 record in the last 41 finals (85.3%), but four of those losses have come since Seattle in 2018 (in the last 14 championship matches). In 2019 women's teams won 81.9% of the matches after winning the first set. The men were more likely to go to a third set (38.3% of all matches in 2019 went three sets), while for the women 33.5% of all 2019 matches required the tiebreaker.

ODE TO OLYMPIANS – On the men's side each of the winning teams in 2019 included at least one Olympian (including Indoor Olympians). In 2018, seven of the eight winning teams contained an Olympian and 13 of the 16 teams playing in the championship matches had at least one player who had competed in the Olympics.

NO CANDLES NEEDED – During the three weeks of the Champions Cup Series, just one player among the 72 athletes (men and women combined) will be having a birthday. On July 21, Eric Beranek will turn 24 but no one else will be getting any older.