



2023 AVP PRO BEACH VOLLEYBALL TOUR

Season Event #10 • Gold Series #3

Chicago, Illinois • September 1 – 3, 2023

ABOUT THE TOURNAMENT – The third and final Gold Series event of the year on the AVP Tour takes place in Chicago in its traditional calendar spot, Labor Day weekend. This is the 10th 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).

- The main draw will be a 16-team, double elimination format. The field is comprised of 12 teams from each gender being 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 a one-day single elimination qualifier which was held in Huntington Beach on August 11. The main draw begins on Friday, September 1 and concludes on Sunday, September 3, and will be played on three courts at the Oak Street Beach. Both main draws feature 29 matches in a double-elimination format. General admission is free while premium seats are available for purchase at avp.com. The championship matches will be at 1:30 pm CT (men) and 3:00 pm CT (women).

- 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 3:00-5:00 pm CT.

CHICAGO'S CAPTAINS – The number one men's seeds in Chicago, Andy Benesh and Miles Partain, have won both previous AVP tournaments they have played as partners. They have a 10-1 match record, with the sole loss coming to top-seeded Tri Bourne / Chaim Schalk in Huntington Beach. Out of their 11 matches played entering Chicago, seven have come against teams seeded fifth or higher. The duo is one of just two teams which have won multiple titles this season on the AVP Tour (including Tour Series), joining Taylor Crabb and Taylor Sander in that feat. Each of those teams has won one of the previous two Gold Series events held so far this year. In between winning their two AVP titles this season, Benesh and Partain have been both busy and successful on the international stage, including winning an Elite 16 event in Gstaad in which they twice defeated the defending World Champs and Olympic Gold Medalists (Anders Mol and Christian Sorum of Norway), just the second time in history that has happened. Currently they are tied for third in the Olympic ranking. 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), and then this duo was the top seeded team in Atlanta, so this is the second time he has been a number one seed in a Pro or Gold Series event. Previous to this year the highest Partain had been seeded was third (three times last year with Paul Lotman), and now is the top seed for the second time.

- The top women's seeds are not a surprise, as Taryn Kloth and Kristen Nuss have won five times on the AVP Tour in their relatively short partnership (began at the start of 2021). What is surprising is the fact that this is the first time ever these two have been seeded number one. In their 13 AVP tournaments entering Chicago, the pair has never finished lower than fifth, and is 5-1 in championship matches. To boot, they are the defending champs in Chicago, having won the title in impressive fashion. Last year they had to play five consecutive matches against teams seeded fifth or better, and they went to a third set in each of the last four of those matches. Their performance domestically is certainly not a fluke, as they are currently ranked third in the Olympic rankings. This is the first time either player has been seeded number one.

THREE FOR THREE – Andy Benesh and Miles Partain have been teammates for two prior AVP events and have won both of them. That feat has been accomplished by three other men's teams in AVP history, John Hanley / Jon Stevenson (who won the first two AVP tournaments ever held) in 1984, Adam Johnson / Ricci Luyties in 1991, and Jake Gibb / Stein Metzger in 2005. This weekend though, Benesh and Partain will be looking to secure their third win in their first three AVP events as partners, something that just one other team has accomplished. In 1997 Jose Loiola and Kent Steffes began the season (and their partnership) by winning in Phoenix, Riviera Beach and Clearwater before the wheels fell off and they settled for third place in Fort Myers.

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>Andy Benesh / Miles Partain win 2nd event; Taryn Kloth / Kristen Nuss become the 7th different team to win</i>			
Aug 17 – 20	Manhattan Beach, California	32-team double elimination	\$300,000
<i>Taylor Crabb Taylor Sander end Trevor Crabb's streak; #1 Betsi Flint / Julia Scoles lose first match but win title</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>			

ORIGINAL SIX – The AVP is celebrating its 40th year of existence, and in the first season of competition (1984) the Tour played in six states, with Illinois being one of those. Besides California, the AVP held stops in Arizona, Colorado, Florida, Hawai'i and Illinois. That year there were just two women's tournaments, in Clearwater, Fla. in June and in Chicago in August. In that 1984 event there were 96 men's teams (just five from California) and 59 women's teams in the field. The state of Illinois has hosted an AVP tournament in 33 (including this year) of the 40 years that the AVP has been in existence, which is second only to California's 40.

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 32 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 23 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 10 AVP events in Chicago, nine different men's teams have won. And this season no men's team is competing that has won here before. One team on the women's side won three consecutive times here (2018, 2019 and 2021) but Alix Klineman and April Ross will not be competing this year. Klineman and 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. There are two women's tandems competing this weekend that have won here previously, as Kelly Cheng / Sara Hughes won in 2017 and Taryn Kloth / Kristen Nuss claimed last year's title. 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 Trambli	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
2022	Tri Bourne / Trevor Crabb	Taylor Crabb / Taylor Sander	Phil Dalhausser / Casey Patterson	[3rd] Jake Dietrich / Hagen Smith

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
2022	Taryn Kloth / Kristen Nuss	Melissa Humana-Paredes/Brandie Wilkerson	Kelly Cheng / Betsi Flint	[3rd] Terese Cannon / Sarah Sponcil

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

RELATIVELY SPEAKING – This event could feature the fewest relatives of any tournament this season on the AVP Tour. 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.

• The qualifier to get into Chicago however, is a different story. That single elimination tournament was held in Huntington Beach on August 11. It featured Larissa and Lili Maestrini, a married couple that reside in Florida (Winter Garden) with three Tour Series wins to their credit. There was a set of twin sisters who played together, Veronica and Victoria Corcoran. And then there were sisters who competed on different teams, Abby and Tessa Van Winkle. But they say you can't keep family apart, which proved to be the case in this event. The sisters had to face each other in the first round of the qualifier, with older sister Abby winning 21-19, 21-16.

BROTHERLY BATTLES – On the AVP Tour there have been nine 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. However in the last AVP tournament in Manhattan Beach, younger brother Taylor not only won the match, he earned a plaque on the pier and ended his brother's three-year streak of winning in Manhattan Beach. Here in Chicago the two Crabbs are on the same side of the bracket and could potentially meet up in the match to get into the semifinals. Both could have to beat former Olympic Gold Medalists in order to do so though (Phil Dalhausser for Taylor and Alison Cerutti for Trevor).

CHICAGO SAND BITS – There are 32 men’s players competing this weekend, with 11 in their 20s, 19 in their 30s and two in their 40s. The youngest are a pair of 21-year olds (Caleb Kwekel and Miles Partain) while the oldest are 43-year old Phil Dalhausser and 41-year old Billy Allen. There are five players listed 6’0” while at the other end of the spectrum are 6’9” Phil Dalhausser and Andy Benesh. Six of the men were either born or raised outside of the country (two in Brazil, Canada, Scotland, Serbia and Switzerland), while 15 are from California. Currently 24 of the 32 players live in California, with Florida, Hawai’i, Louisiana, Michigan and Minnesota also represented. The least experienced player Garrett Peterson (competing in his 17th event) while the most veteran player is Phil Dalhausser (who is closing in on 300 pro beach events). Phil Dalhausser, with 62 AVP titles, has the most of any player here, followed by Taylor Crabb (12 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 (Jake Dietrich / Chase Frishman and Caleb Kwekel / Garrett Peterson) while the two most experienced tandems are Taylor Crabb / Taylor Sander and Timothy Brewster / Kyle Friend. The seven teams that have previously won on the AVP Tour are Taylor Crabb / Taylor Sander (three AVP titles plus a Tour Series title), Andy Benesh / Miles Partain (in Huntington Beach 2023 and Atlanta 2023), Tri Bourne / Chaim Schalk (in New Orleans 2023), Theo Brunner / Trevor Crabb (in Hermosa Beach 2023), Hagen Smith / Logan Webber (on the Tour Series in Virginia Beach 2023), Cody Caldwell / Seain Cook (Tour Series win in Waupaca 2023) and Billy Allen / Alison Cerutti (Tour Series win in Denver 2023).

• There are 32 women playing this weekend, with 22 in their 20s and 10 in their 30s. The youngest ones are 22-year olds Lexy Denaburg and Devon Newberry, who both play beach volleyball at UCLA but have never been partners on the sand. Sarah Pavan, 37, and Emily Stockman, 35, are the two oldest competitors here. Kristen Nuss (5’6”) is the shortest competitor, while at the other end of the spectrum are 6’5” Sarah Pavan and 6’4” Taryn Kloth. The least experienced player here is Megan J. Rice, who began her pro beach volleyball career this season and is playing in her eighth AVP tournament. Meanwhile eight players have played in more than 100 tournaments (led by a player who is competing for the last time, Emily Stockman). Sara Hughes leads the field with seven AVP wins, followed by Betsi Flint (six), Kelly Cheng (five) and Kelley Kolinske with four AVP victories (in addition to one Tour Series win). Of the 16 women’s tandems, five are playing alongside each other for the first time while the most experienced are Kelly Cheng / Sara Hughes and Taryn Kloth / Kristen Nuss. There are seven teams competing here which have previously won on the AVP Tour as partners: Taryn Kloth / Kristen Nuss (five times including in Chicago last season), Kelly Cheng / Sara Hughes (3 times including in Chicago 2017 plus one Tour Series win), Betsi Flint / Julia Scoles (in Manhattan Beach 2023), Corinne Quiggle / Sarah Schermerhorn (in Hermosa Beach 2023), Melissa Humana-Paredes / Brandie Wilkerson (in Miami 2023), Macy Jerger / Megan Rice (one Tour Series win in Virginia Beach 2023), 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 17 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 14 different individuals win a Gold Series event, and every team to have won has included at least one Olympian (beach or indoors) with the exception of the Atlanta 2023 event. On the women’s side there have been 16 different players to claim a title, with April Ross, Alix Klineman, Sarah Hughes, Taryn Kloth and Kristen Nuss the only players to have won more than twice. In Chicago there are three men’s teams competing which have won a Gold Series event (the winners of the last four Gold Series events held). The women’s side also has three teams in Chicago who have previously won, with Taryn Kloth / Kristen Nuss a three-time winner, Kelly Cheng / Sara Hughes winners from the first year (2017 in Chicago), and last tournament’s champions in Manhattan Beach, Betsi Flint / Julia Scoles. Here is a look at the 17 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
8/6/23	Atlanta	Andy Benesh / Miles Partain	Taryn Kloth / Kristen Nuss
8/20/23	Manhattan Beach	Taylor Crabb / Taylor Sander	Betsi Flint / Julia Scoles

WILL THE REAL SLIM SHADY PLEASE STAND UP – Megan Rice aka Megan J. Rice (who played beach volleyball at Loyola Marymount and lives in Hermosa Beach, Calif.) made her pro beach volleyball debut in the qualifier in New Orleans. Meanwhile Megan Rice (who played beach volleyball at Florida Atlantic and lives in Highland Beach, Fla.) has played on the AVP Tour since 2016. Both of the Megan Rices competed in the qualifier in Huntington Beach and in the main draws in both Virginia Beach and Denver, without facing each other. Then in Hermosa Beach the two players met in the second round, with Megan J. Rice winning in three sets. It is believed to be the first time that two players with the same name have played against each other. Here in Chicago the two players will again face each other if they both win, or both lose, their first round matches.

STOCKMAN IS STOPPING – Chicago will mark the final pro beach event for Emily Stockman, who at 35 is the second oldest competitor here. Stockman helped her Winthrop team to the NCAA Tournament as a freshman, then was the Conference Player of the Year after transferring to Wichita State, where she left as the all time leader in kills per set and was chosen to the school's Hall of Fame. After playing professional in four different European countries, Stockman turned to the beach. She advanced to the semifinals with six different partners, last doing so last event in Manhattan Beach. She and Kelley Kolinske won in Seattle 2019, her only AVP victory. She has shown no signs of slowing down, as in 2022 she played in 15 international events, the most of any female on the World Beach Pro Tour.

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.

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 seven women who competing in Chicago who have won a national championship, all of whom have won a pair of titles.

Kelly Cheng (Southern Cal) 2016, 2017
Tina Graudina (Southern Cal) 2021, 2022
Hailey Harward (Southern Cal) 2021, 2022
Sara Hughes (Southern Cal) 2016, 2017
Zana Munro (UCLA) 2018, 2019
Julia Scoles (Southern Cal) 2021, 2022
Savvy Simo (UCLA), 2018, 2019

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

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

Alvaro Filho played beach for Brazil in 2020 (5th 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)

Tina Graudina played beach for Latvia in 2020 (fourth place)

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

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

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

OLYMPIC REMATCHES – Tina Graudina is on the same side of the bracket in Chicago as two of her foes in the Tokyo Olympics. She could face Brandie Wilkerson (and her current partner Melissa Humana-Paredes) if both teams either win or lose their first match. Graudina and her international partner Anastasija Samoilova defeated Wilkerson (and Heather Bansley) in three sets in Tokyo in the match to reach the semifinals. Graudina is also on the same side of the bracket as Kelly Cheng (and current partner Sara Hughes). Cheng (and then partner Sarah Sponcil) handed Graudina a loss in pool play to kick off the Olympic competition.

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)

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 19 events just five 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 17 times in the 57 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

FROM WORST TO FIRST – There was history made in Manhattan Beach on the women's side, as a number 32-seed defeated a number one seed for the first time ever (as far as seeds are known dating back to 2002). Chloe Loreen and Natalie Robinson shocked top seeds Betsi Flint and Julia Scoles in a three-set match in the first round. Prior to that #1 seeds had been 60-0 against #32 seeds. But then Flint and Scoles shocked everyone else as they grinded through the contender's bracket and after playing three matches all three days, emerged victorious with a place on the pier as their reward.

FIRST TIME VICTORS – This season there have been nine AVP tournaments and 16 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 nine 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)

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 (including in both 2003 and 2004 in Chicago) but also boasts an Olympic Gold medal. Matt Prosser won one AVP title (Huntington Beach 2011).

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

Raffe 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

600 WINS – In Manhattan Beach Phil Dalhausser surpassed 600 match wins in his AVP career (including Tour Series). Nearly half his wins (296) came in a four-year span from 2006-2009, when he had between 71 and 80 match wins in each of those seasons. This weekend will mark his 160th career AVP tournament, and entering the event he has a career record of 602-165 (.785). Dalhausser has had a losing match record in two years while playing on the AVP Tour, his first season in 2003 and a shortened 2021 season which saw him forfeit from one of the two tournaments he played. In 2010 he had a perfect season with Todd Rogers, compiling a 34-0 match record while losing just six sets. However he did not win each tournament, as he won five times in his six tournaments played. The outlier was the season opener in Ft. Lauderdale, when he reached the title match but weather prevented the finals from being played. So he and Rogers shared a second-place finish with Matt Fuerbringer / Nick Lucena.

CHICAGO'S CHRONICLES –

- Men’s seeds have been known for the past 19 AVP tournaments in Chicago... a number one or two seed has won 12 of those times, including each of the last four times playing here... in 10 of those 19 years though, a team seeded eighth or lower has made it to the semifinals, including a team from the qualifier in 2021 (Paul Lotman / Miles Partain) and the 16th-seeded team (in a 16-team draw) last year with Jake Dietrich / Hagen Smith
- Match data is known for 15 men’s finals in AVP history, and the team winning the first set is undefeated at 15-0... just three times the title match went to a third set, including last year (18-16 third set)
- There have been 20 women’s teams crowned champions in Chicago on the AVP Tour, and in just two of those seasons neither player on the winning team had played at a PAC-12 school... in 2015 Nicole Branagh (Minnesota) and Jenny Kropp (Nebraska) won and then last season Taryn Kloth (Creighton and Louisiana State) and Kristen Nuss (Louisiana State) claimed the title
- In the first eight years that seeds were known in Chicago (2002-2009), the women’s winning team was seeded either first or second... however in the last seven AVP competitions here teams seeded first or second won just twice (#1 team won in both 2019 and 2021)
- Match data is known for 15 women’s finals in AVP history, and the team winning the first set is 12-3... the exceptions were in 2002, 2008 and 2016

BIRTHDAYS – Two men and five women will celebrate birthdays in the month of September, but none of them fall during this week’s tournament.

INTERNATIONAL UPDATE – So far this season, 24 different teams (11 men, 13 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 seven golds, nine silvers and five 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 (two golds, one silver, one bronze) and Melissa Humana-Paredes / Brandie Wilkerson (two golds, one bronze) lead the pack. Outside of Futures and Challenge events, there are three Elite 16 tournaments left this season (in Paris at the end of September, in Dubai at the beginning of November, the Tour Finals in Doha in December plus the World Championships in Tlaxcala, Mexico from October 6-15. Andy Benesh / Miles Partain, Theo Brunner / Trevor Crabb and Tri Bourne / Chaim Schalk are entered in the main draw on the men's side of the World Championships, while there are seven women's teams who compete on the AVP Tour, including three of the top four. Taryn Kloth / Kristen Nuss, Sara Hughes / Kelly Cheng, Melissa Humana-Paredes / Brandie Wilkerson, Therese Cannon / Sarah Sponcil, Tina Graudina / Anastasija Samoilova, Betsi Flint / Julia Scoles, and Hailey Harward / Alix Klineman are all entered in the main draw. Klineman earned a wildcard spot, and this will mark her third pro beach tournament since winning the Gold Medal in Tokyo in August 2021 as she recently gave birth to a son (Theodore).

• 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
 Hagen Smith / Logan Webber – 4th Place – Baden, Austria – August 27

WOMEN

Tina Graudina / Anastasija Samoilova – 4th Place – Doha, Qatar – February 5
 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 – Aquascalientes, Mexico (NORCECA) – April 23
 Katie Lindstrom / Teegan Van Gunst – 4th Place – Aquascalientes, 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
 Tina Graudina / Anastasija Samoilova – Bronze 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
 Taryn Kloth / Kristen Nuss – Silver Medal – Hamburg, Germany – August 20
 Xolani Hodel / Iya Lindahl – Silver Medal – El-Alamein, Egypt – August 26
 Kimberly Hildreth / Teegan Van Gunst – Silver Medal – Brno, Czech Republic – August 27
 Lexy Denaburg / Carly Kan – Gold Medal – Seoul, Korea – August 27