



# 2022 AVP PRO BEACH VOLLEYBALL TOUR

## Season Event #8 • Pro Series Event #4

Fort Lauderdale, Florida • July 29 – 31, 2022

**ABOUT THE TOURNAMENT** – The AVP Tour is continuing a three-week East Coast swing, with all three stops being different levels. The first was the Atlantic City Open, the fourth Tour Series event of the season. This weekend is a Pro Series event in Fort Lauderdale, Fla., and then the first Gold Series event of 2022 in Atlanta, Ga. Florida has hosted the second most AVP events of any state (trailing just California), but this will be the first time since 2014 the AVP has played in the state and first time since 2010 in Fort Lauderdale. This event is the eighth on the 16-tournament schedule that the AVP Tour has this year, so this will conclude the first half of the season. Total prize money for this tournament will be \$125,000, with equal payouts for men and women, and the season payout totals \$1,975,000 for the AVP, which is in its 39th season.

- The main draw will be a 16-team, double elimination format. 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 and AVPNext tournaments). The remaining four teams in each gender earned a spot by being the top finishers in the Tour Series event in Denver July 1-3. The women pulled one more team in from the Denver tournament to replace Melissa Humana-Paredes / Sarah Pavan, who are competing internationally. The main draw begins on Friday, July 29 and concludes on Sunday, July 31, and will be played on three courts at 1100 Seabreeze Ave. General admission is free each day. The championship matches will be around 2:00 pm ET for the women and 3:00 pm ET for the men.

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

**FORT LAUDERDALE'S FINEST** – Theo Brunner and Chaim Schalk won in Hermosa Beach, and are now number one (seed) in Fort Lauderdale. Their partnership on the AVP Tour has been filled with success, as they have been in the semifinals four of their previous five AVP tournaments. Plus, they finished fourth in the World Championships in June, the highest finish by an American tandem in that prestigious event. This marks the second time for Brunner with a top seed, the first time was in the 2018 Hermosa Beach Open, which he won with John Hyden. Fort Lauderdale will mark the first time ever that Schalk has held the top spot going into an AVP tournament. This year Brunner and Schalk have played 12 matches entering Fort Lauderdale, and seven of them were win-or-go-home matches, including the Hermosa Beach finals.

- Just like the men, the top seeded women's team also won in Hermosa Beach. Terese Cannon and Sarah Sponcil played a pair of events in 2018, then reunited this season, finishing fifth in Austin and winning in Hermosa Beach. The duo was also seeded first in Hermosa Beach, which was the first time Cannon had ever been seeded first. Fort Lauderdale marks the third time being number one for Sponcil (also in Seattle 2019 with Kelly Cheng, finished third). In their AVP partnership, they have played 21 matches entering Fort Lauderdale, and are a perfect 11-0 when winning the first set. All six of their match losses have come to teams seeded fifth or higher in the tournament.

### **HOMETOWN HEROES** –

- There are five men's players who list Florida as their current residence:

Phil Dalhausser (Orlando), Nick Lucena (Tallahassee), Piotr Marciniak (Port St. Lucie), Dave Palm (Coral Springs), Roberto Rodriguez (New Smyrna Beach)

- There is one men's player who currently lives in a different state but lists his hometown in Florida:

Kyle Friend (Boca Raton)

- Of the colleges known, there are two men's player who attended a college in Florida:

Phil Dalhausser (Central Florida), Nick Lucena (Florida State)

- There are three women's player who lists Florida as their current residence:

Macy Jerger (Fort Myers), Larissa Maestrini (Celebration), Lili Maestrini (Celebration)

- There is one women's player who currently lives in a different state but lists her hometown in Florida:

Corinne Quiggle (Ponte Vedra Beach)

- Of the colleges known, there is one women's player who attended a college in Florida:

Macy Jerger (Florida State)

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

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

### 2022 AVP Pro Beach Volleyball Tour Schedule

Event Dates	Location	Tournament Format	Prize \$ - TV
<b>May 6 - 8</b>	<b>Austin, Texas</b>	16-team double elimination	\$125,000 – FS1 and Bally's RSN <i>Andy Benesh gets first career win (with Phil Dalhausser); Taryn Kloth and Kristen Nuss collect 2nd career win</i>
<b>May 27 - 29</b>	<b>New Orleans, Louisiana</b>	16-team double elimination	\$125,000 – FS1 and Bally's RSN <i>Phil Dalhausser / Casey Patterson win in their first event together; Kelly Cheng / Betsi Flint win in hostile territory</i>
<b>June 10 - 12</b>	<b>Muskegon, Michigan</b>	24-team double elimination	\$50,000 <i>Dave Palm / Roberto Rodriguez win; Larissa Maestrini (with Lili Maestrini) gets first AVP win since 2009</i>
<b>July 1 - 3</b>	<b>Denver, Colorado</b>	24-team double elimination	\$50,000 <i>Andy Benesh wins again (with Miles Evans) while Larissa and Lili Maestrini get second consecutive title</i>
<b>July 7 - 9</b>	<b>Oshkosh, Wisconsin</b>	24-team double elimination	\$50,000 <i>Dave Palm / Roberto Rodriguez duplicate their feat in Muskegon; Carly Kan / Kaitlyn Leary both first time winners</i>
<b>July 8 - 10</b>	<b>Hermosa Beach, California</b>	16-team double elimination	\$125,000 – FS1 and Bally's RSN <i>Theo Brunner / Chaim Schalk win long 3-set title match; Terese Cannon / Sarah Sponcil both first time winners</i>
<b>July 22 - 24</b>	<b>Atlantic City, New Jersey</b>	24-team double elimination	\$50,000 <i>Cody Caldwell and 40-year old David Lee win; 40-year old Larissa Maestrini and Lili Maestrini win for 3rd time</i>
<b>July 29 - 31</b>	<b>Ft. Lauderdale, Florida</b>	16-team double elimination	\$125,000 – FS1 and Bally's RSN <i>Three of the first six AVP tournaments ever were held in the state of Florida</i>
<b>Aug 5 - 7</b>	<b>Atlanta, Georgia</b>	16-team double elimination	\$300,000 – FS1 and Bally's RSN <i>First Gold Series event of 2022; one of three 2022 locations to have night sessions</i>
<b>Aug 18 - 21</b>	<b>Manhattan Beach, California</b>	32-team double elimination	\$300,000–FS1, Bally's, Tennis Ch. <i>Biggest event on the schedule in terms of both main draw and qualifier sizes; Gold Series event #2</i>
<b>Aug 26 - 28</b>	<b>Virginia Beach, Virginia</b>	24-team double elimination	\$50,000 <i>Just the second time since 2002 that the AVP has a tournament in Virginia (along with 2010 in Virginia Beach)</i>
<b>Sep 2 - 4</b>	<b>Chicago, Illinois</b>	16-team double elimination	\$300,000–FS1, Bally's, Tennis Ch. <i>Chicago trails only Manhattan Beach on list of most frequented stops in AVP history; Gold Series event #3</i>
<b>Sep 16 - 18</b>	<b>Atlantic City, New Jersey</b>	16-team double elimination	\$125,000–FS1, Bally's, Tennis Ch. <i>Only city on the 2022 schedule to host two events; first time in AVP history a city outside of California hosts twice</i>
<b>Sep 23 - 24</b>	<b>Phoenix, Arizona</b>	6-team double elimination	\$100,000 – FS1 and Bally's RSN <i>Only invitational on schedule; AVP last played in Arizona in 2009; inaugural AVP event in 1984 was in Arizona</i>
<b>Nov 11 - 13</b>	<b>Huntington Beach, California</b>	24-team double elimination	\$50,000 <i>Huntington Beach is fourth most frequented stop in AVP history; third California stop on 2022 Tour</i>
<b>Nov 18 - 20</b>	<b>Clearwater, Florida</b>	24-team double elimination	\$50,000 <i>Latest date an AVP tournament has ever been held; Florida held second most AVP events behind California</i>

**FORT LAUDERDALE HISTORY** – Fort Lauderdale has not hosted many AVP tournaments in the past, but that belies the fact that Florida has been an integral part of the AVP Tour from the start. In fact, three of the first six AVP events were held in the Sunshine State, and Florida has hosted more events than any other state besides California. The men have played here 10 times previously while the women have played six times. The last time the AVP played in the state of Florida though was in June 2014 (St. Petersburg). The last time the AVP was here, in 2010, the tournament was one to remember. The weather deteriorated during the women's championship match, and it was determined that the men's final could not be played, so Phil Dalhausser / Todd Rogers and Matt Fuerbringer / Nick Lucena, the teams in the finale, were both granted second place finishes and they split the prize money.

- There have been nine completed men's events in Fort Lauderdale, and six different players have won twice here. In Olympic history there have been six American men who have won a gold medal, and five of them have won here or were slated to play in the finals. Nick Lucena (one of the two second-place finishers), John Hyden (third place) and Billy Allen (third place) are the three players competing this year that also played in the 2010 event.

- Misty May-Treanor and Kerri Walsh Jennings dominated Fort Lauderdale, with the team winning four of the six titles, and May-Treanor added another win in the 2010 event (with Nicole Branagh). In fact Fort Lauderdale was the place where the May-Treanor / Walsh Jennings AVP dynasty all began, as it was the location of Walsh Jennings' AVP debut. The team not only won that event but went 39-0 in matches during the 2003 season in winning all eight tournaments. Their run continued into 2004, including the Fort Lauderdale event that year, reaching 12 straight tournament titles and 64 consecutive match wins. None of the women playing this weekend had played the last time the AVP was here in 2010.

- Here are the results of the AVP tournaments held in Fort Lauderdale:

#### **MEN – AVP events**

Year	1st	2nd	3rd	3rd / 4th
1984	John Hanley / Jon Stevenson	Andy Fishburn / Jay Hanseth	Mike Dodd / Tim Hovland	[4th] Ricci Luyties / Steve Obradovich
1985	John Hanley / Jon Stevenson	Andy Fishburn / Jay Hanseth	Sinjin Smith / Randy Stoklos	[4th] Scott Ayakatabby / Brent Frohoff
1986	Sinjin Smith / Randy Stoklos	John Hanley / Jon Stevenson	Mike Dodd / Tim Hovland	[4th] Roger Clark / Dane Selznick
1990	Karch Kiraly / Kent Steffes	Sinjin Smith / Randy Stoklos	Craig Moothart / Jon Stevenson	[4th] John Hanley / Dan Vrebalovich
1991	Sinjin Smith / Randy Stoklos	Tim Hovland / Kent Steffes	Mike Dodd / Brent Frohoff	[4th] John Hanley / Bruk Vandeweghe
2003	Eric Fonoimoana / Dax Holdren	Matt Fuerbringer / Casey Jennings	Paul Baxter / Carl Henkel	Canyon Ceman / Mike Whitmarsh
2004	Sean Rosenthal / Larry Witt	Matt Fuerbringer / Casey Jennings	Jason Ring / George Roumain	Todd Rogers / Sean Scott
2005	Jake Gibb / Stein Metzger	Dax Holdren / Jeff Nygaard	Dain Blanton / Kevin Wong	Sean Rosenthal / Larry Witt
2006	Jake Gibb / Sean Rosenthal	Mike Lambert / Stein Metzger	Dain Blanton / Eric Fonoimoana	Dax Holdren / Sean Scott
2010	[2nd] Matt Fuebringer / Nick Lucena	Phil Dalhausser / Todd Rogers	John Hyden / Sean Scott	Billy Allen / Braidy Halverson

#### **WOMEN – AVP events**

Year	1st	2nd	3rd	3rd / 4th
1986	Linda Hanley/Nina Matthies	Kathy Hanley/Anna Prousalis	Nancy Cothron/Donna Townsend	[4th] Mary Jo Peppler/Wendy Stevenson
2003	Misty May-Treanor/Kerri Walsh Jennings	Holly McPeak/Elaine Youngs	Dianne DeNecochea/Nancy Reynolds	Annett Davis/Jenny Johnson Jordan
2004	Misty May-Treanor/Kerri Walsh Jennings	Holly McPeak/Elaine Youngs	Carrie Dodd/Nancy Reynolds	Annett Davis/Jenny Johnson Jordan
2005	Misty May-Treanor/Kerri Walsh Jennings	Rachel Scott/Elaine Youngs	Jennifer Kessy/Holly McPeak	Carrie Dodd/Nancy Reynolds
2006	Misty May-Treanor/Kerri Walsh Jennings	Jennifer Kessy/Nancy Reynolds	Rachel Scott // Elaine Youngs	Annett Davis/Jenny Johnson Jordan
2010	Nicole Branagh/Misty May-Treanor	Angie Akers/Tyra Turner	Priscilla Lima/Tatiana Minello	Jennifer Kessy/April Ross

**FORT LAUDERDALE SAND BITS** – Out of the 32 men's players competing, just six are in their 20's, with the youngest being 20-year old Miles Partain. There are four players who are at least 40 years old, with the oldest being 49-year old John Hyden). Timothy Brewster and Taylor Crabb, both 6'0", are the shortest players here while 6'9" players Andy Benesh and Phil Dalhausser are the tallest. All of the players have played in at least 20 events with the exception of Taylor Sander, who has played in seven previous tournaments (AVP and international) and John Sutton (eight AVP). The most experienced in terms of events played are Nick Lucena, Phil Dalhausser and John Hyden all of whom have competed more than 250 times. Those three players also are among the leaders in tournaments won, as Dalhausser has won 61 AVP titles, Nick Lucena 16 and John Hyden 13. As for partnerships, Avery Drost / Miles Evans are playing together for the second time, while Phil Dahuasser / John Sutton are partners for the second time. Just two teams have played more than 10 events previously, Tri Bourne / Trevor Crabb and Theo Brunner / Chaim Schalk.

- Unlike the men, most of the women are in their 20's, as 23 of the 32 players have yet to turn 30 (and four others are exactly 30). The youngest here are a pair of 23-year olds, Dahna Kraft and Savvy Simo, while two of the three oldest are partners (40-year old Larissa Maestrini and 34-year old Lili Maestrini), as Emily Day is 23 years old as well. Kristen Nuss (5'6") and Molly Turner (5'8") are the shortest competitors, while at the other end of the spectrum are two 6'4" players, Taryn Kloth and Jennifer Keddy. The three players with the least amount of tournament experience include Carly Skjodt (sixth event ever), Jennifer Keddy (seventh) and Julia Scoles (eighth), while three women's players have played more than 100 events previously (Emily Day, Larissa Maestrini, and Lili Maestrini). Larissa Maestrini is the all-time FIVB wins leader (62) and has the most AVP wins in 2022 of any player here (three, along with Lili Maestrini). Emily Day, with nine AVP victories, leads the pack, and Betsi Flint has six.

**FORT LAUDERDALE SAND BITS cont'd** - Of the 16 women's tandems, Tina Graudina / Hailey Harward are playing alongside each other for the first time and four other tandems have played either once or twice previously. The two teams with the most experience have each played 11 times before, Terese Canon / Sarah Sponcil and Jessica Gaffney / Molly Turner.

**RELATIVELY SPEAKING** – Larissa and Lili Maestrini, the fourth seeds on the women's side, are married. Billy and Kelley Kolinske are also a married couple competing here. Taylor and Trevor Crabb, who are brothers and former partners, are now on separate teams but who could meet in the quarterfinals if each is undefeated.

**2022 QUALIFIER LIST** – A good omen for team's seeded first in on-site qualifiers is that for both the men and women, all top-seeded qualifier teams have advanced to the main draw. So far three men's and two women's teams which got into the main draw via a qualifier have been one match win away from reaching the semifinals. 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:

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

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

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

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

MUSKEGON - Men (on-site qualifier)

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

DENVER - Men (on-site qualifier)

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

WAUPACA - Men (on-site qualifier)

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

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

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

NEW ORLEANS - Women (qualifier in San Antonio)

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

MUSKEGON - Women (on-site qualifier)

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

DENVER - Women (on-site qualifier)

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

WAUPACA - Women (on-site qualifier)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**HERMOSA BEACH'S HAPPENINGS cont'd**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**THE STATE OF THE STATES** – The 32 men's players currently live in six different states (California, Florida, Hawai'i, Louisiana, Michigan and Minnesota). Three of the players are originally from outside of the United States, Phil Dalhausser from Switzerland, Piotr Marciniak from Poland, and Chaim Schalk from Canada.

- The 32 female players currently live in 10 different states (Arizona, California, Florida, Hawai'i, Illinois, Louisiana, New York, North Carolina, South Dakota and Texas). Between the men and women, a total of 12 states are represented here. Four women were born or raised outside of the U.S, including Tina Graudina (Latvia), Larissa Maestrini (Brazil), Lili Maestrini (Brazil) and Brandie Wilkerson (Canada).

**BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS** – No player here will have a birthday during the three-day event. In fact, between the 64 men's and women's players, just one has a birthday in the whole month of July (Brandie Wilkerson, July 1).

**IRONMAN AWARDS** – Prior to this weekend there have been seven AVP tournaments, and since two were overlapping, the most any one player could have played is six so far.

Dave Palm / Roberto Rodriguez, who won in Muskegon and Waupaca, will be playing for the seventh time in Fort Lauderdale, the only men's team that can make that boast. Individually, Avery Drost will be competing for the seventh time, as will Logan Webber. Two other players, Lev Priima and Silila Tucker, have also played in the maximum of six events so far but will not be playing in Fort Lauderdale.

- On the women's side there are two teams which have played in six previous tournaments. Larissa and Lili Maestrini, the winners in Muskegon, Denver and Atlantic City, as well as Karolina Marciniak / Megan Rice. Marciniak and Rice are not playing in Fort Lauderdale, though, but Larissa and Lili will continue their streak. The only individual outside of those teams that has played in the maximum number of events is Katie Spieler, who will not be competing here.

**OPPOSITES ATTRACT** – Phil Dalhausser has won twice this season on the AVP Tour, winning while playing with a partner for the first time in both of those events. Andy Benesh and Olympian Casey Patterson had a bit more experience than this week's partner, John Sutton. Due to Patterson's wife Lexi having a baby, Dalhausser needed a late substitution, so he chose his friend and partner in the Tour Series event in Denver. Entering this season Sutton had played in seven AVP qualifiers, and had won just three sets (one of which was due to his opponents being late and forfeiting the first set). While Sutton is 1-9 in AVP matches in his career (qualifiers and main draw), Dalhausser has a 27-9 match record over the past three seasons on the AVP Tour. The duo is seeded 14th, which is the lowest for Dalhausser on the AVP Tour since Hermosa Beach 2004 (seeded 16th), which happened to be his first AVP semifinal as he and Nick Lucena defeated Olympians Karch Kiraly, Dax Holdren. Stein Metzger, Dain Blanton and Jeff Nygaard en route to placing third.

**INTERNATIONAL UPDATE** – The Commonwealth Games are taking place in Birmingham, England from July 30 through August 7, with the top seeds being Melissa Humana-Paredes and Sarah Pavan, who otherwise would be in Atlanta.

This weekend Iya Lindahl and Lydia Smith are playing in an international event in Ljubljana, Slovenia

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

#### MEN

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

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

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

#### WOMEN

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**NEXT UP** –The AVP Tour concludes its East Coast swing with the first Gold Series event of the year in Atlanta next weekend, August 5-7. Atlanta will be a three-day main draw with 16 teams in each gender and a purse of \$300,000. Additionally, it will be one of the three tournaments used as qualifying for the six-team AVP Championships in Phoenix in September.