



2019 AVP PRO BEACH VOLLEYBALL TOUR – Event #4 Seattle, Washington • June 20 – 23, 2019

ABOUT THE TOURNAMENT – This marks the fifth straight year that Seattle has served as host of an AVP event, and is the second event on this year’s schedule to be televised live (the New York City tournament was live on NBC). Both the men’s and women’s winners of this tournament gain an automatic berth into the season-ending event in Honolulu. Following this tournament, the 2019 AVP season will be halfway completed, as this is the fourth of eight events on the schedule. This marks the 35th consecutive season the AVP has held competitions. Total prize money for this tournament will be \$150,000, with equal payouts for men and women, and the season payout totals \$1,800,000.

- The main draw will be a 16-team, double elimination format. Twelve men’s teams and 11 women’s teams were 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), while one women’s tandem, Piper Monk-Heidrich and Abby Van Winkle, earned a berth by winning the 2018 AVP First National Championship. Those two players, both 19 years old, play beach volleyball at UCLA and won the spot in a title match held on center court in last year’s Hermosa Beach Open. The remaining four teams in each gender must earn a spot via the qualifier tournament, a single elimination event held in two different locations (each with four courts) on Thursday, June 20. The men’s qualifier will take place at Lake Sammamish, while the women’s qualifier will be held at Bottega Park in Snohomish. The total number of teams entered was 52 men and 63 women. The qualifier will consist of 36 matches for the men and 47 matches for the women, while the main draw features 29 matches for each gender. The main draw begins on Friday, June 21 and concludes on Sunday, June 23, and will be played on four courts at Lake Sammamish. General admission is free throughout and premium ticket packages are available at avp.com or onsite. The championship matches will be around 2:30 pm PT and 4:30 pm PT.

- NBC Sports Network will broadcast a championship match live on Sunday at 4:30 pm. Chris Marlowe (play by play) and Kevin Wong (color commentary) will handle the announcing duties, with Dain Blanton contributing sideline reports. Live streaming via Amazon Prime takes place Friday through Sunday. Kevin Barnett, Camryn Irwin and Dain Blanton will combine to handle the announcing duties for Amazon Prime.

GIRL POWER – This weekend’s event is unusual in that there are more women’s teams (63) than men’s (52). Well, unusual for the AVP but not for Seattle. This is the fifth time ever that more women’s teams are competing than men, but the third time that has happened here in Seattle. The other times it has happened were in Seattle and San Francisco in 2016, and in Seattle and San Francisco in 2017. One reason for the amount of women is the influx of teenagers competing; there are 24 women players who are under 20 years old. The 63 women’s teams are the most ever in an AVP event in Seattle, topping the 60 that the men had in 2018.

2019 AVP Pro Beach Volleyball Tour Schedule

Event Dates	Location	Tournament Format	Prize \$ - TV
May 2 - 5	Huntington Beach, California	24-team double elimination	\$200,000 – NBCSN (delayed)
<i>Top seeds in both genders win season opener, Taylor Crabb / Jake Gibb and Alix Klineman / April Ross</i>			
May 16 - 19	Austin, Texas	16-team double elimination	\$150,000 – NBCSN (delayed)
<i>Taylor Crabb / Jake Gibb lose in first round but claim title while Karissa Cook / Jace Pardon get first career win</i>			
June 6 - 10	New York City, New York	16-team double elimination	\$300,000 – NBC (live)
<i>Phil Dalhausser / Nick Lucena defend their NYC title while Alix Klineman / April Ross win their 5th straight event</i>			
June 20 - 23	Seattle, Washington	16-team double elimination	\$150,000 – NBCSN (live)
<i>2018 winners were Taylor Crabb / Jake Gibb and Emily Day / Betsi Flint</i>			
July 25 - 28	Hermosa Beach, California	24-team double elimination	\$200,000 – NBCSN (delayed)
<i>2018 winners were Theo Brunner / John Hyden and Sara Hughes / Summer Ross</i>			
August 15 - 18	Manhattan Beach, California	32-team double elimination	\$300,000 – NBCSN (live)
<i>2018 winners were Phil Dalhausser / Nick Lucena and Alix Klineman / April Ross</i>			
Aug 27 – Sep 1	Chicago, Illinois	24-team double elimination	\$300,000 – NBCSN (delayed)
<i>2018 winners were Taylor Crabb / Jake Gibb and Alix Klineman / April Ross</i>			
Sep 20 – 22	Honolulu, Hawai'i	16-team double elimination	\$200,000 – NBCSN (delayed)
<i>2018 winners were Phil Dalhausser / Nick Lucena and Alix Klineman / April Ross</i>			

SEATTLE HISTORY – The AVP men came to Seattle three straight years (1988-90) but 2015 marked the first time ever that Seattle has played host to a professional beach volleyball tournament on the women's side. The three AVP tournaments marked the only time that pro beach volleyball events have been held in the state (not counting the Hot Winter Nights exhibitions that happened in Everett and Spokane in 2008) before 2015. In the first four years that the AVP has played in Seattle, the tournaments were held in August. Ironically, the 2016 Seattle event marked the only one on the 2016 schedule in which it did not rain at some point during an AVP event. In 1989 Tim Hovland collected his 50th career victory here in Seattle, and in 1990 Kiraly claimed his 40th title. It has been a different storyline more recently though, as in 2015 Ryan Doherty got his first career AVP title, in 2016 Billy Allen won for his first time ever, then in 2017 Stafford Slick collected his first AVP victory. In 2016 Lane Carico got her first AVP win as well. Each of the men's championship matches the last three years have featured at least one Crabb (Taylor or his brother Trevor) playing for the title. On the women's side, all four of the previous title matches here have featured at least one Ross (April or Summer, who are not related). The results from the previous tournaments held in Seattle:

MEN – AVP events

Year	1st	2nd	3rd	[3rd] / 4th
1988	Mike Dodd / Tim Hovland	John Hanley / Dan Vrebalovich	Jay Hanseth / Leif Hanson	Pat Powers / Jon Stevenson
1989	Mike Dodd / Tim Hovland	Brent Frohoff / Karch Kiraly	John Hanley / Dan Vrebalovich	Kent Steffes / Jon Stevenson
1990	Brent Frohoff / Karch Kiraly	Tim Hovland / Kent Steffes	Sinjin Smith / Randy Stoklos	John Eddo / Sean Fallowfield
2015	Ryan Doherty / John Mayer	Phil Dalhausser / Nick Lucena	Tri Bourne / John Hyden	[3rd] Jake Gibb / Casey Patterson
2016	Billy Allen / Theo Brunner	Taylor Crabb / Trevor Crabb	Jake Gibb / Casey Patterson	[3rd] Avery Drost / Gregg Weaver
2017	Billy Allen / Stafford Slick	Trevor Crabb / Sean Rosenthal	Taylor Crabb / Jake Gibb	[3rd] Jeremy Casebeer / John Mayer
2018	Taylor Crabb / Jake Gibb	Phil Dalhausser / Nick Lucena	Jeremy Casebeer / Reid Priddy	[3rd] Theo Brunner / John Hyden

WOMEN – AVP events

Year	1st	2nd	3rd	3rd
2015	Jennifer Fopma / April Ross	Lane Carico / Summer Ross	Kim DiCello / Kendra Van Zwieten	Brittany Hochevar / Misty May-Treanor
2016	Lane Carico / Summer Ross	Jennifer Fopma / Brittan Hochevar	Kim DiCello / Kendra Van Zwieten	Angela Bensed / Geena Urango
2017	Summer Ross / Brooke Sweat	Betsi Flint / Kelley Larsen	Jennifer Fopma / Kelly Reeves	Skylar Caputo / Sarah Pavan
2018	Emily Day / Betsi Flint	Caitlin Ledoux / April Ross	Kelly Claes / Brittany Hochevar	Amanda Dowdy / Irene Pollock

2018 SEATTLE RECAP – For the second straight event, the same men's teams competed in the title matches but it did end a streak of first-time winners as in the previous three years a men's player had won his first ever AVP title in Seattle. The women, meanwhile had one streak continue and one come to a halt. The one that continued was that a first-time partnership (at least on the AVP Tour) had now reached the title match for the third straight event. Coming to an end, however, was an eight-event long streak in which the women's championship match was decided in a sweep.

- Phil Dalhausser and Nick Lucena entered the Seattle finals with a perfect 14-0 match record to start the 2018 season, and were facing a rematch from the New York championship match – Taylor Crabb and Jake Gibb. This marked the first time two teams had played each other for an AVP title in consecutive tournaments since late 2014 (when Jake Gibb / Casey Patterson defeated Ryan Doherty / Nick Lucena in both Cincinnati and Atlantic City). Crabb and Gibb won in a sweep, ending the early season reign by Dalhausser and Lucena.

- Parity continues to be the story on the women's side as not only was there a third different team winning the AVP championship, but six different teams have competed in the finals this year. Second-seeded Emily Day / Betsi Flint were able to perform a difficult task – defeat the same team twice in as many days. Caitlin Ledoux / April Ross, who were playing together for the first time, made it about as difficult as possible in producing one of the most thrilling finals in history. After the two teams split the first two sets by identical 21-19 scores, the third set was tight the whole way, and each team had six match points as there were 29 serves since the match point freeze.

#2 Emily Day / Betsi Flint def. #3 Caitlin Ledoux / April Ross 19-21, 21-19, 18-16 (1:17)

#3 Taylor Crabb / Jake Gibb def. #1 Phil Dalhausser / Nick Lucena 21-16, 21-19 (:51)

SEATTLE'S SUPERB SPIKERS – The top-seeded men's team, Taylor Crabb and Jake Gibb, hold a familiar spot, as they have been seeded first in all four AVP events this year. The last time a team began an AVP season with four straight events being seeded number one was in 2015, when Jake Gibb and Casey Patterson were the top seed in each of the first four tournaments. The defending Seattle champs, Crabb and Gibb enter this year's tournament with a 15-4 match record on the AVP Tour.

- For the women, Kelly Claes and Sarah Sponcil are the number one seeds despite having played in just one previous AVP tournament as partners (finished second in New York City earlier this month). Claes was seeded first here last year as well (with partner Brittany Hochevar), which marked the first time in her career she had held the top spot. She was also a number one seed in Manhattan Beach in 2018, so this will be her third time as a number one seed. Sarah Sponcil is enjoying being the top seed for the first time in her AVP career, improving on her previous best, which was fifth in the New York City event two weeks ago.

WHEN BEING FIRST ISN'T GOOD – Being the top seed has not been a favorable thing in the past events in Seattle. In the last four years here, the number one seed has won just once, when Jennifer Fopma and April Ross claimed the 2015 women's championship. The other seven titles in the two genders went to other seeds, and in fact the only other finals appearance by a number one seed was last year when Phil Dalhausser / Nick Lucena finished second.

SEATTLE SAND BITS – Of the 104 men's players competing this weekend, there are four teenagers competing, including 17-year olds Travis Hannemann and Miles Partain and 19-year olds Kacey Losik and Marcus Partain, while 11 players are 40 or older, led by 46-year olds John Hyden and Christopher Shipps and two who are 44 years old; Kevin Smallwood and Ricardo Santos. Of the heights known, the shortest are David Vander Meer (5'9"), Bobby Jones (5'10") and Ric Cervantes (5'11") while at the other end of the spectrum is 7'1" Ryan Doherty, 6'11" Kristopher Johnson and 6'9" Andy Benesh. Five players have played in at least 200 events. Jake Gibb is playing in his 296th pro beach tournament, followed by Sean Rosenthal (276th), Ricardo Santos (252nd), John Hyden (236th) and Adam Roberts (207th). Out of 52 partnerships, 16 are competing together for the very first time and only two have played together 20 or more times before New York City (led by Taylor Crabb / Jake Gibb 33 events and Billy Allen / Stafford Slick 20 events). There are four teams competing here which have previously won an AVP title (Taylor Crabb / Jake Gibb six AVP titles, Billy Allen / Stafford Slick, Ryan Doherty / John Hyden and Ed Rattledge / Roberto Rodriguez).

- There are 126 women playing this weekend, and the field includes 24 teenagers with the three youngest being just 15 years old (Piper Ferch, Bailey Showalter, and Aris Vetter). On the flip side, the three oldest are all over 40 year old; Jennifer Solm (42), Josie Lehman (41) and Suzana Manole (40). Of the heights known, Katie Lindstrom and Jade Race measure 5'4" while Lisa Reed and Katie Spieler are both 5'5". At the other end of the spectrum is Falyn Fonoimoana (6'4") and five players who stand at 6'3". The most experienced players are Brittany Hochevar (195th tournament), Emily Day (155th), Priscilla Piantadosi-Lima (146th) and Josie Lehman (100th). Two of the three individuals with the most career AVP victories are teammates; Emily Day (eight AVP wins) and Betsi Flint (four), while Brittany Hochevar also has four AVP victories. The women feature 30 tandems (out of 63 total) playing alongside each other for the first time and two having played together 20 or more times (Emily Day / Betsi Flint 23 previous events and Kelley Larsen / Emily Stockman 21 events). There are just two teams competing here which have previously won an AVP title as partners; Emily Day / Betsi Flint (two) and Karissa Cook / Jace Pardon (one).

2019 QUALIFIER LIST – Here's a look at the teams who have qualified this season (qualification tournament seed) and how they finished in the main draw:

HUNTINGTON BEACH - Men

Marty Lorenz / Raffe Paulis (Q1) – 17th place
 Duncan Budinger / Kyle Friend (Q3) – 17th place
 Spencer Sauter / Ben Vaught (Q4) – 13th place
 Branden Clemens / Dylan Maarek (Q5) – 17th place
 Daniel Dalanhese / Andrew Dentler (Q9) – 17th place
 Christian Honer / Logan Webber (Q15) – 13th place
 Kacey Losik / Lev Priima (Q22) – 17th place
 Alex Diaz / Yamil Yanes Rodriguez (Q39) – 17th place
39th seeded team lowest to advance since Manhattan Beach 2016

AUSTIN - Men

Eric Beranek / Marty Lorenz (Q2) – 13th place
 Bruno Amorim / Skylar del Sol (Q3) – 7th place
 Daniel Dalanhese / Joe Hillman (Q12) – 13th place
 Paul Lotman / Gabriel Ospina (Q25) – 9th place
Top seeded team fails to advance for 7th time since start of 2015

NEW YORK CITY - Men

Chase Frishman / Piotr Marciniak (Q1) – 9th place
 Michael Brunsting / Ty Loomis (Q3) – 13th place
 Paul Lotman / Gabriel Ospina (Q15) – 13th place
 Peter Connole / Steven Roschitz (Q20) – 13th place
Connole advances to his first AVP main draw ever

HUNTINGTON BEACH - Women

Jessica Sykora / Brittany Tiegs (Q4) – 9th place
 Emily Hartong / Alexa Strange (Q5) – 17th place
 McKenna Thibodeau / Madison Witt (Q14) – 17th place
 Lauren DeTurk / Sasha Karelov (Q16) – 17th place
 Traci Callahan / Maria Clara Salgado (Q18) – 7th place
 Marija Milosevic / Megan Rice (Q22) – 17th place
 Audrey Norse / Nicole Nourse (Q24) – 17th place
 Megan Kraft / Delaynie Maple (Q26) – 13th place
Kraft/Maple youngest team to ever qualify; 2 sets of twins qualify

AUSTIN - Women

Mackenzie Ponnet / Sheila Shaw (Q3) – 13th place
 Kimberly Hildreth / Sarah Schermerhorn (Q7) – 2nd place
 Meghan Mannari / Taylor Nyquist (Q8) – 5th place
 Lauren Dickson / Katie Lindelow (Q12) – 9th place
Hildreth / Schermerhorn 4th qualifier ever to play for title

NEW YORK CITY - Women

Amanda Dowdy / Corinne Quigglee (Q1) – 13th place
 Kimberly Hildreth / Sarah Schermerhorn (Q6) – 13th place
 Taylor Nyquist / Tory Paranagua (Q13) – 9th place
 Annika Rowland / Teegan Van Gunst (Q15) – 13th place
Rowland / Van Gunst 3rd set of twins to qualify in 2019

GOLD SERIES – The Gold Series is a three-event series featuring the tournaments in New York City, Manhattan Beach, and Chicago. This series is used in part to determine the teams eligible to compete in the season-ender in Hawai'i. There will be 16 teams in each gender competing in Hawai'i, with the winners of any of the non-Gold Series events automatically gaining a berth. Then additional teams up to 10 entries will be selected based on the Gold Series Standings (best two of the three tournaments). The remaining six teams will come in the form of two wild cards and four teams from a qualifier taking place the day before the Hawai'i main draw. Here is a look at who has secured a berth in Hawai'i and how they achieved it:

MEN

Taylor Crabb / Jake Gibb (won Huntington Beach)

WOMEN

Alix Klineman / April Ross (won Huntington Beach)

Karissa Cook / Jace Pardon (won Austin)

DOUBLE TAKE – The women's qualifier in the season opener in Huntington Beach was very notable. There were two sets of twins that advanced, and being seeded 14th and 24th this was certainly not a given. McKenna (Witt) Thibodeau and Madison Witt, who both played at Arizona and Cal Baptist, were competing in their fifth AVP tournament, while Audrey and Nicole Nourse, a pair of 18-year old twins, were playing together for the sixth time on the AVP Tour.

- In addition, a pair of 16-year olds advanced to the main draw, becoming the youngest team ever to qualify on the AVP. Megan Kraft, who was 16 years, 7 months and 5 days old when she qualified, was the fourth youngest individually to do so on the women's side, while Delaynie Maple (16 years, 10 months, 23 days) was the sixth youngest.

- In New York City, a third set of twins advanced from the qualifier. Annika (Van Gunst) Rowland and Teegan Van Gunst won three qualifier matches to reach the main draw. The twins both competed indoors at Georgia Tech followed by one season on the beach at Georgia State.

HUNTINGTON HAPPENINGS – Both the men's and women's top-seeded teams won on the same weekend in the season opener in Huntington Beach. Jake Gibb became just the third different player to win an AVP title after turning 43 years old (joining John Hyden and Karch Kiraly). Alix Klineman and April Ross continued their hot streak, as they won their 20th straight match and fourth consecutive AVP title.

- Taylor Crabb and Jake Gibb looked anything but the top seeds at the start of the tournament, outlasting a team from the qualifier in three sets only to lose to the other Crabb (Trevor) in the next round. Facing elimination, the duo won four matches (three of them in a third set) to reach the championship match. On the other side of the net was a team making its AVP debut as partners, Chase Budinger and Casey Patterson. A close first set could not derail the team with more experience, as Crabb and Gibb won for the fifth time together on the AVP Tour.

- The top seeds in the women's field, Alix Klineman and April Ross, looked very much like an elite team. The pair swept their first three opponents then outlasted the number two seeds in the semifinals to reach the championship match. Their foes were also an elite team, but seeded 14th due to not having much experience on the AVP Tour. Melissa Humana-Parades / Sarah Pavan of Canada had a similar route to the finals, sweeping four teams before overcoming a challenging semifinal test. The Canadians had to play each of the events' top four seeds in the competition and in the end, Klineman and Ross won a thrilling three-set victory. Klineman / Ross had reached match point at 14-11, but Humana-Parades / Pavan fought back to take the lead at 15-14 with one match point try. However Ross and Klineman tied it up and then a bit later scored two straight points to win 17-15 on their sixth match point try.

#1 Alix Klineman / April Ross def. #14 Melissa Humana-Parades / Sarah Pavan 18-21, 21-12, 17-15 (1:14)

#1 Taylor Crabb / Jake Gibb def. #6 Chase Budinger / Casey Patterson 27-25, 21-14 (:48)

AUSTIN ANALYSIS – While a number of teams were competing in an FIVB event in Brazil, there was plenty of intrigue and history being made in Austin. Taylor Crabb and Jake Gibb rebounded from a first round loss to win the title, while Kimberly Hildreth / Sarah Schermerhorn became just the fourth women's team to ever advance from the qualifier all the way to the championship match.

- Taylor Crabb and Jake Gibb won their third straight AVP open event, but they made history doing it. By getting upset in the first round, they became just the third team seeded #1 to lose in the first round to a #16 seed (others were in Seattle 2016 and New York 2017). In order to win the title, Crabb and Gibb had to play seven matches, four of which required a third set to determine the winner. After beating fourth-seeded Jeremy Casebeer / Chaim Schalk, who hadn't even lost a set entering the finals, Crabb and Gibb also became just the second AVP team to ever lose its first match and come back to win the tournament (only other time was Mike Lambert / Stein Metzger in Huntington Beach 2007).

- The women's championship match pitted a team playing together for just the second time (**#4** Karissa Cook / Jace Pardon) against a team whose previous best finish was 13th (Kimberly Hildreth / Sarah Schermerhorn). Both teams had to overcome quite a bit to reach the title match, as Cook and Pardon lost in the second round and had to win four straight elimination matches. Two of those went to a third set and three were against teams seeded seventh or better. On the other side of the net, Hildreth and Schermerhorn entered the finals undefeated, having won three qualifier matches and all four main draw matches, dropping just one set in that span. Cook and Pardon proved too much though, winning in a sweep.

#1 Taylor Crabb / Jake Gibb def. #4 Jeremy Casebeer / Chaim Schalk 21-16, 21-16 (:52)

#4 Karissa Cook / Jace Pardon def. #14 (Q7) Kimberly Hildreth / Sarah Schermerhorn 21-11, 21-11 (:38)

NEW YORK CITY IN A NUTSHELL – In the first of the three-event Gold Series, the New York City tournament appropriately saw the men's top two seeds battle, but it was in the semifinals. The top two seeds on the women's side were on course to meet for the championship until the second seeds were upset in the semifinals.

- For the second straight event, a team lost its first match but fought back to reach the title match. Seventh-seeded Tim Bomgren and Troy Field, who were playing together for just the third time, lost a three-set match to begin the tournament. But after that, the duo did not lose a single set en route to the finals. The title match appearance was the third ever for Bomgren, while it marked a first for Field. Across the net was the team of Phil Dalhausser and Nick Lucena, who are nearly unbeatable in the Big Apple. The pair won in 2016 and 2018, and placed ninth in 2017 after withdrawing from the event due to Lucena's wife going in labor. With the sweep of Bomgren and Field in the championship match, Dalhausser and Lucena improved to 16-2 in New York City matches (including a forfeited match).

- Kelly Claes and Sarah Sponcil were playing together for the first time ever on the AVP (had played six times together on the FIVB Tour). Seeded fifth, the pair lost to top-seeded Alix Klineman / April Ross in the match to reach the semifinals, but then won their next two matches to force a rematch in the championship. Klineman and Ross continued their impressive streak, winning their 25th consecutive AVP match (18 of them by sweeps). The title marked the fifth straight AVP victory the pair has won in their partnership, and they have now won six times in their nine events.

#2 Phil Dalhausser / Nick Lucena def. #7 Tim Bomgren / Troy Field 21-14, 21-16 (:40)

#1 Alix Klineman / April Ross def. #5 Kelly Claes / Sarah Sponcil 21-19, 22-20 (1:02)

FABULOUS 40's – In the season opening tournament in Huntington Beach, Jake Gibb joined Karch Kiraly and John Hyden as the only players to ever win an AVP title at the age of 43 or older. He then added another title in the following event in Austin. From the Cincinnati event in September 2015 through Austin, there have been 28 AVP events and 14 of the men's titles have been won by a player age 40 or older. In those 28 championship matches, at least one player has been over the age of 40 a total of 19 times.

FAMILIAR CHAMPIONS – In the last six AVP tournaments, the men's winners have been one of two teams. Taylor Crabb and Jake Gibb have won three times, while Phil Dalhausser and Nick Lucena, who are not competing here this weekend, have also won three times. The women can make that same claim, but mostly due to the fact that Alix Klineman and April Ross have won five of the past six AVP events. However, they will not be competing here this weekend.

DON'T CALL IT THE LOSERS BRACKET – On the men's side five of the last seven AVP champions have come from the contender's bracket, with only Manhattan Beach in 2018 and New York City in 2019 crowning an undefeated winner, providing confirmation that it is best to refer to it as contender's bracket as opposed to loser's bracket. The success of teams which had at least one loss is more of a recent phenomenon though, as in the 31 previous tournaments, just four times did a team suffer one loss but come back to win the tournament.

- In Austin Taylor Crabb and Jake Gibb became just the second AVP team to ever lose its first match but then rebound to win the championship. In New York City, Tim Bomgren and Troy Field nearly duplicated that feat, having lost their first match then storming back into the title bout before losing and finishing in second place.

INTERNATIONAL UPDATE – While there is not an FIVB tournament this weekend, many of the usual top players on the AVP Tour are overseas. Last weekend was a four-star event in Warsaw, Poland, while next week is the prestigious World Championships in Hamburg, Germany. Rather than make the long trip from Poland to Seattle, then back to Germany, most players chose to remain in Europe as the stakes are especially high for this year's World Championships. The event, which takes place every odd year, has huge Olympic qualifying ramifications. Here are the teams representing the U.S. which are entered in the World Championships:

MEN: Phil Dalhausser / Nick Lucena (6th seed), Taylor Crabb / Jake Gibb (7), Tri Bourne / Trevor Crabb (13), Billy Allen / Stafford Slick (29)

WOMEN: Alix Klineman / April Ross (5), Sara Hughes / Summer Ross (11), Kelley Larsen / Emily Stockman (15), Kelly Claes / Sarah Sponcil (16), Brooke Sweat / Kerri Walsh Jennings (wildcard, 18)

IN MEMORIUM – Sadly the AVP Tour recently lost one of its main draw players, as Eric Zaun passed away on June 10 at the age of 25 years old. Zaun played 21 AVP events with a best of third in San Francisco 2017, which marked the first career semifinal for his partner, Ed Ratledge. Before that Ratledge had played 138 AVP tournaments without reaching a semifinal, the second most in history. Zaun was a regular on the AVP Tour since the start of the 2017 season, while also competing internationally on both the FIVB Tour as well as in NORCECA events. He was selected as the 2017 AVP Rookie of the Year. Zaun was from Cherry Hill, N.J. and went to Limestone College in Gaffney, South Carolina.