

Countdown to the 2004 Olympic Games in Athens



With only six months to go until the beginning of the largest sports event of our era, the preparation

for the Volleyball teams already qualified for the 2004 Olympic Games in Athens, Greece is in full swing.

Major news to come out of the post Christmas period has been the appointment of a new women's coach in Greece with Giannis (John) Nikolakis returning to the national team after six years since his first stint. He will replace Takis Floros when his one-year contract starts on April 1.

Nickolakis, who at 39 is considered one of the best coaches in Greece, was in charge of the national women's team from 1994 to 1997, when he recorded 41 victories in 62 games. More recently he has been Stelios Prosalikas' collaborator with the men's national team.

Meanwhile, team preparation has started in earnest for World Cup women's champions China and both the men's and women's teams from USA.

Following a well deserved break, some of the USA men's Volleyball team have begun Olympic preparations. More than half of the players on the national team roster play professionally overseas with Lloy Ball, Ryan Millar and Kevin Barnett all playing in Italy, Clay Stanley and Dave McKenzie in Greece, Riley Salmon and Erik Sullivan in Russia, Brook Billings in Japan, Gabe Gardner in Brazil, Rich Lambourne in the Netherlands and Donald Suxho in Turkey.

But head coach Doug Beal still has nine players, who have been on a break since USA qualified for the Olympics by win-



The Peace and Friendship Stadium, will play host to Volleyball at the 2004 Olympic Games on the coast of Faliro, Athens

ning the NORCECA Olympic Qualifying Tournament on Jan. 10. These nine players will be practicing at the United States Olympic Training Center in Colorado Springs: Scott Bunker, Tom Hoff, Adam Naeve, Vernon Podlewski, Jim Polster, Reid Priddy, Chris Seiffert, Curt Toppel and Mac Wilson.

Meanwhile, Beal's counterpart Toshi Yoshida has started putting his women's team through their paces with the Olympics in mind.

With a ticket to Athens safely secured thanks to a bronze-medal finish at last year's World Cup, Yoshida has called in four new players - Cynthia Barboza, Nicole Davis, Jennifer Joines and Ogonna Nnamani - into his squad to join three-time Olympian (1992, 1996 and 2000) Tara Cross-Battle and 2000 Olympians Robyn Ah Mow-Santos and Sarah Noriega in the squad, which also includes: Wiz Bachman, Lindsey Berg, Greichaly Cepero-Febres, Sarah Drury, Tayyiba Haneef, Brittany Hochevar, Tracy Stalls and Elisha Thomas.

The remainder of the national team plays overseas. Heather Bown, Nancy Metcalf, Danielle Scott, Stacy Sykora and Logan

Tom all play in Italy, while Keba Phipps is in Brazil.

Meanwhile, Chinese women's head coach Chen Zhonghe announced last month that his team will contest the 2004 World Grand Prix and the Athens Olympic Games with the same lineup from the victorious 2003 FIVB World Cup in Japan.

On the announcement of his 18-member squad, Chen also declared his team has begun a three-month intensive training program, showing that the Chinese team is moving into top gear to prepare for the Olympic Games.

The 18 players are: Wing Spikers: Yang Hao, Zhang Yuehong, Chu Jinling and Wang Yimei, Wang Lina, Yang Shuang. Middle Blockers: Liu Yanan, Zhao Ruihui, Zhang Ping, Chen Jing, Zhao Jing. Opposites: Zhou Suhong, Li Shan, Wang Ting. Setters: Feng Kun, Song Nina. Libero: Zhang Na, Li Yan.

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VOLLEYBALL

NEW TECHNICAL COORDINATOR APPOINTED



New FIVB Technical Coordinator Mr. Helgi Thorsteinsson gives Iceland Minister of Sports and Education Mr. Tómas Ingi Olrich, a former Volleyball player himself, an FIVB award recognizing the strong relationship with Iceland in December.

The FIVB is pleased to announce the appointment of Mr. Helgi Thorsteinsson as FIVB Technical Coordinator, where he will take on the general responsibility for all matters concerning technical, medical, coaching, refereeing and development as well as Rules of the Game, Sports Aid Programmes and Volleyball World Vision 2012.

Thorsteinsson, 41, from Iceland, started with the FIVB in September 2003, being responsible for Volleyball World Vision 2012, technical matters and the homologation of sports material but will now undertake an expanded role in one of the most important areas of the FIVB.

"As the sport of Volleyball continues to grow the demands of the FIVB are increasing all the time, so Mr. Thorsteinsson will be a crucial asset to an already dedicated team," FIVB President Dr. Rubén Acosta said.

"Mr. Thorsteinsson brings with him into his new role all the attributes of loyalty and trust strongly developed in Iceland," FIVB General Manager Mr. Jean-Pierre Sepey said. "His experience in Institutional Management and in Volleyball in general are key ingredients to his continued success with the FIVB."

Thorsteinsson, who now lives in Lausanne with his wife and two children, has a strong background in Volleyball having involved himself in the daily operations of Volleyball over the past 20 years.

While playing division Volleyball in Iceland from 1984 to 2003, he became a well known figure through activities in European Volleyball. He has also been the Secretary General for the Icelandic Volleyball Federation for 10 years and served as a member of the Icelandic National Olympic Committee, representing Volleyball.

Japan public TV visits FIVB

The FIVB General Manager Mr. Jean-Pierre Sepey was pleased to host on behalf of the FIVB President Dr. Rubén Acosta the Japanese public television station Nippon Hoso Kyokai (NHK) at the FIVB headquarters in Lausanne at the start of February.

NHK, the number one television company in Japan, took footage of the FIVB and its staff and interviewed Mr. Sepey as part of their material for a 75 minute programme on "The Olympic Games and television".

For many years the Olympic Games and television have evolved into a seamless relationship, which enables all the animation, thrills and excitement of sport to be seen right around the world.

As part of the programme NHK is looking at the history of the Olympic Games, speaking to International Federations and IOC president Dr. Jacques Rogge to illustrate the work that goes on behind the scenes in the build up to Athens 2004. The programme is set to be shown on March 22 at 19:30 on NHK channel 1.



The FIVB General Manager, Mr. Jean-Pierre Sepey with the Japanese public television station Nippon Hoso Kyokai (NHK)

All Contributions Welcome!

Please send us your comments and articles to:

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Cracking showdown in store in country vs country play off



Emanuel & Ricardo claimed gold at the 2003 World Championship

Two of Beach Volleyball's super powers Brazil and USA face off during February in a country v country playoff in what is expected to be a sensational showpiece of the sport on Ipanema Beach in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

Brazil's King of the Beach team Ricardo and Emanuel (2003 world champions and Swatch-FIVB World Tour ranking winners) will play USA's Dain Blanton (2000 Olympic champion) and Jeff Nygaard in one match.

The women's showdown will see Brazil's Gerusa da Costa Ferreira and Vanilda dos Santos Leão play USA's world champion pairing of Kerri Walsh and Misty May.

Having dominated Beach for years these two Beach Volleyball juggernauts are renowned for their steep history in the sport and passion for the game making for a superb match-up of skill and guile. And with US\$10,000 up for grabs for the winners of each of the one-match contests, the match up is set to be exhilarating.

Both matches will be an exciting prelude to the opening event on the 2004 Swatch-FIVB World Tour, which begins in Brazil on March 9 with a women's Open event in Fortaleza and a men's Open in Salvador.

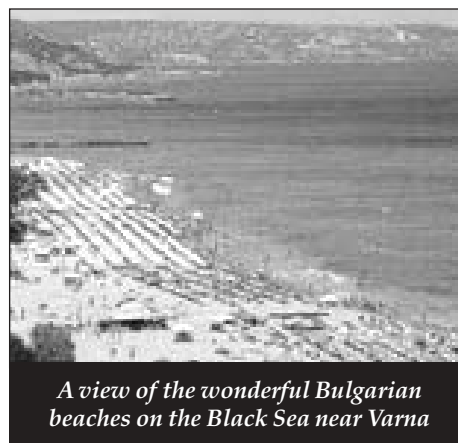
See March edition of **XPress** for results

Bulgaria explores Beach Volleyball opportunities

The Bulgarian Volleyball Federation was pleased to welcome the FIVB Beach Volleyball coordinator Mr. Angelo Squeo in February as they explored the possibility of increasing their presence in Beach Volleyball.

With such a strong history in Volleyball the Bulgarian Volleyball Federation has recognized an opportunity to capitalize on the popularity of the sport and presented to Mr. Squeo their proposal to launch a "Copacabana-like" project on the Golden Sands beaches near Varna, Albena and Varna city on the Black Sea. Such a project includes the provision of numerous Beach Volleyball courts sprinkled along the action packed beaches and a proposed Challenger event in Varna.

"We are committed to host a \$30,000 32-team Men's Challenger event most likely in September," said Bulgarian Volleyball Federation vice-president Dr. Mitko Kirilov Ivanov. "We have the human resources and the infrastructure to make this a real success".



A view of the wonderful Bulgarian beaches on the Black Sea near Varna

"The visit was very encouraging," Mr. Squeo said. "Mr. Ivanov, the Bulgarian Minister of Sport, Mr. Luciano, deputy minister Feim Chaushev and Bulgarian Beach Volleyball coordinator Mr. Stefan Demerdzhiev all showed the passion and determination, which is required to host a Beach Volleyball event."

"There are some wonderful resorts in Bulgaria and I look forward to supporting their plans to enter the Beach Volleyball extravaganza."

Mr. Ivanov outlined Bulgaria's plans to not only organize an FIVB event but a national tour with the hope of producing

a men's team who will qualify for the Olympics, with an eye on Beijing in 2008. With such an encouraging infrastructure the Bulgarian Federation hope to make Varna the capital of Beach Volleyball in the Balkans.

"The basic facilities are there and with promoters, television support and sponsors all expressing their interest, there is the platform to make a success of it," Mr. Squeo said.

The first step into the Beach Volleyball arena for the Bulgarian Federation could be in September when Bulgaria aims to host an FIVB Challenger event in Varna.

SWATCH and FIVB announce the new visual for the SWATCH-FIVB World Tour 2004

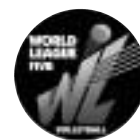


SWATCH and the FIVB are pleased to introduce the new visual for the SWATCH-FIVB World Tour 2004. This visual will be viewed on posters, on the podium backdrop etc., and will be seen at the launch of the SWATCH-FIVB World Tour which begins in Brazil on March 9.

The FIVB Beach Volleyball department is pleased to announce the completion of the publication, "The road to the Olympics" which includes the 2003 final report and also looks ahead to the 2004 season. For more information check our website or send an email to: beach@fivb.org

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For more Beach Volleyball news and updates visit our website at: www.fivb.org

VOLLEYBALL
PROVISIONAL CALENDAR ANNOUNCED FOR 2004 WORLD LEAGUE


	Weekend 1 4-6 June	Weekend 2 11-13 June	Weekend 3 18-20 June	Weekend 4 25-27 June	Weekend 5 2-4 July	Weekend 6 9-11 July
POOL A						
BRA		BRA v ESP	BRA v POR	BRA v GRE		
GRE	GRE v BRA	GRE v POR				GRE v ESP
ESP	ESP v POR		ESP v GRE		ESP v BRA	
POR				POR v ESP	POR v GRE	POR v BRA
POOL B						
FRA		FRA v JPN	FRA v BUL	FRA v POL		
BUL	BUL v FRA				BUL v POL	BUL v JPN
JPN	JPN v POL			JPN v BUL	JPN v FRA	
POL		POL v BUL	POL v JPN			POL v FRA
POOL C						
ITA	ITA v CHN	ITA v CUB		ITA v SCG		
CHN			CHN v ITA	CHN v CUB	CHN v SCG	
SCG		SCG v CHN	SCG v CUB			SCG v ITA
CUB	CUB v SCG				CUB v ITA	CUB v CHN


VOLLEYBALL
PROVISIONAL CALENDAR ANNOUNCED FOR 2004 WORLD GRAND PRIX

Date	City/Teams	City/Teams	City/Teams
Week 1: 07-11 July	Group A <i>Bangkok, Thailand</i> USA CUBA KOREA THAILAND	Group B <i>Miao Li, Chinese Taipei</i> CHINA BRAZIL GERMANY DOMINICAN REPUBLIC	Group C <i>Kawasaki, Japan</i> RUSSIA ITALY POLAND JAPAN
Week 2: 12-18 July	Group D <i>Manila, Philippines</i> KOREA BRAZIL POLAND DOMINICAN REPUBLIC	Group E <i>Hong Kong</i> CHINA ITALY USA THAILAND	Group F <i>Indonesia</i> RUSSIA CUBA GERMANY JAPAN
Week 3: 19-24 July	Group G <i>To be decided</i> USA RUSSIA GERMANY THAILAND	Group H <i>Hefei, China</i> CHINA ITALY POLAND DOMINICAN REPUBLIC	Group I <i>Jeju City, Korea</i> BRAZIL CUBA KOREA JAPAN
Week 4: 27 July-01 August FINALS	ITALY For the final round Italy plus the top five ranked teams after the preliminary rounds will qualify		