

# Phil and Rob Bessell's Beach Volleyball Trip March 2010

## CAIRNS

Round 11 of the Queensland Beach Volleyball tour took place on the 5<sup>th</sup>/6<sup>th</sup> March 2010. The location was on the Cairns waterfront; a Local Council owned artificial arena made up of 3 permanent courts. Entries mainly included experienced AAA and AA players including elite Sandogs and Bond Uni teams, with approximately 30.

Results on the QBVT website have not been published at the time of writing this. We played 2 pool games on Friday 5<sup>th</sup>. Both games were lost in 2 sets however we pushed both teams and got within a few points in each set.

We played 2 games on the Sat (1 pool and 1 elimination). We lost our last pool game narrowly 2-1. For the first time since competition started, we actually thought we had the skill and experience to defeat this team, however the heat and humidity eventually took its toll (36<sup>o</sup>, humid and no cloud). Our final elimination game was probably our best. Thankfully the game started late in the afternoon and we managed to rehydrate and mentally prepare ourselves. We lost 2-1 (18-9, 16-18, 13-15) however we really took the game to them and lost to unforced errors and less experience.

Although we didn't win any games in Cairns, we were competitive and most importantly, we took away plenty of experience and knowledge.

## MELBOURNE

Round 6 of the Vic Beach season took place on the 14<sup>th</sup> March and approximately 100 participants. The event location was Port Melbourne Beach. Several courts had permanent poles, other courts had to be set up. In total, there were 18 courts. We entered in the AA division and the competition format was elimination (you play in pools and the top teams continue to an elimination format where the last team standing wins).

### Results:

#### Game 1:

Warren Hart & Shaun Broadbent	Phil Bessell & Rob Bessell	0-2 (9-18, 10-18)
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#### Game 2:

Brent Van Rooyen & Jason Willi	Phil Bessell & Rob Bessell	0-2 (13-18, 7-18)
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#### Game 3:

Tom Lane & John Manca	Phil Bessell & Rob Bessell	2-1 (5-18, 18-10, 15-6)
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#### Game 4 QF:

Phil Bessell & Rob Bessell	Anthony Szkuldecki & Peter Kit	1-2 (18-16, 13-18, 7-15)
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The Victorian round produced a mixed bag of results for us. Although the level of competition was of a lower standard than Cairns, we had some great wins. Our first 2 games were just what we needed. These gave us a chance to really punish the opposition with our hitting power and reach. Our third game unfortunately had the very best and worst plays of our trip. We convincingly beat our opponents in the first set with easily the best

beach volleyball we have ever produced. The 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> sets however were easily our worst. The other team resorted to a lot of second hits over the net and it really put us off our game.

Nevertheless, we finished on top of our pool and progressed to the Elimination finals. We lost the quarter final in a hard fought game.

## **PLAYING LESSONS**

Both Rob and myself have gained plenty of experience and knowledge from playing in Cairns and Victoria. It was a big step from playing “socially” with players we are very familiar with in Tassie compared to elite players from the mainland (certainly the AAA players in Cairns).

The Cairns teams hit hard and with precision to gaps on court and blocked very strongly, a style of play we were expecting but have not experienced very much in Tasmania. The benefit is that we now know what is required to go to the next level.

The following points are certain physical and mental attributes we have learnt and will endeavour to improve for the future!

- An elite beach volleyball player needs to be fit. You need to be agile and be able to move well on court. Importantly you need to have the endurance to last the duration of the event (particularly in very hot conditions).
- You need to pass well, set well and hit winners. Players need to have a variety of hitting options, not necessarily power spikes only. At the elite level, all players are expected to spike winners from the set so therefore most set plays involve a blocker. You need to have excellent court awareness and the ability to roll balls over the block or cut balls at an angle.
- Player communication is vital for success. From the very start of the serve, the team must have a designated centre serve passer. A good defence generally has a blocker and passer. Communicating the blocking option (eg line or cut) is important for the passer’s general defensive position on court. The ability for the blocker to come off the net quickly if the opposition’s set is bad is crucial.
- Team mentality and preparedness. The team has to have confidence in their ability and have a “never say die” attitude. Focus always needs to be on winning the next point. Importantly you need to know your partner and provide each other with support during the game.
- Practice, practice and practice (and coaching). Obvious, but at the elite level, players will train weekly rain hail or shine.

## **EVENT MANAGEMENT**

This trip was valuable to me, not only as a player, but also to experience different tournament formats and event management outside of Tasmania. I met with both the QBVT event manager and Vic Beach manager. In summary:

- Both events required registration and payments via their websites. This eliminated entries on the day and ensured a smooth start to the tournament.

- Both events had laptops to store game results and registrations. In Cairns and Victoria, referees recorded results on paper first.
- Both Cairns and VIC have access to permanent poles/nets. Equipment set-up was minimal and games started on time. More importantly, players could arrive at the event and virtually start warm-ups/playing without being required to set up.
- The Cairns tournament had plenty of sponsorship which fully covered the costs of 'booking' the council owned courts, the use of night lighting and prizes. This in turn attracted more people to enter the event.
- The Victorian competition was run by VicBeach, a business operated by Peter 'Chico' Jones and Greg Jury. People remunerated for their work ensures a successful event.

I hope to discuss with the Beach Subcommittee some of these things to see if it can be used or adapted for our future tournaments.

I have attached some photos from the Cairns tournament. Unfortunately, our official photographer was required to play in Melbourne so we do not have any photos from the Victorian tournament.

On behalf of Rob and myself, I'd like to thank Volleyball Tasmania for their financial support for our trip. I'd also like to personally thank Steve Ibbott for his efforts in booking airfares and taking the time to prepare some very useful playing advice for us.

Phil Bessell



