

Report on Duncan and Adam's trip to Vic Masters Tournament

Geelong 24/25 July 2010

Duncan and Denise met with Greg Jury on the Friday before the event and discussed the playing format, teams and most importantly the current direction of his business, and that of Beach Volleyball in Victoria. Some time was also spent discussing the possibility of Greg coming to Tasmania to do some coaching. The key points to come out of this were:

Greg Jury is no longer a partner in Vicbeach (www.vicbeach.com.au). Conversely Greg has bought out Peter (Chico) Jones' share in the Geelong indoor centre.

Chico and Tony Hampton are now partners in Vicbeach. Tony has been a regular masters and A level open competitor and has a similar focus to Chico. This less elite focus should benefit their business as a whole. Vicbeach will continue to run the Vic Open and also take over Vic Masters on behalf of Volleyball Victoria and will also continue to hold their own usual weekend and evening competitions and training.

Greg's mind was fully occupied with his vision for the future direction of Australian Beach Volleyball in Australia, a subject he is most passionate about. When we were talking to him his plans had not been approved, but it was interesting to see this weeks email from Adam Sachs which gives a brief update on all this. Interestingly part of his title is Unity Brings Strength, hinting at the need to further align both Beach and Indoor into AVF, a theme I would like to see developed further in Tasmania as well.

In this all inclusive big picture there is also the possibility of Hobart hosting an event (Court to be set up in the centre of Hobart, Council has already been approached). This seems pie in the sky, but if anyone can do it, he can.

This is all in addition to his current OZ v NZ competition which he is running at Bendigo and his regional promotion at Moama.

Also discussed with Greg was the possibility of him coming to Hobart for beach volleyball training. Whilst he is a hard man to tie down he was happy for us to email him a range of possible dates for this to happen. Interestingly many of the Vic players we spoke to including Greg are also keen golfers were immediately keen to combine beach in Tassie with a trip to Barnbougle Dunes.

Since our Geelong trip our honorary Tasmanian, Denise has had a positive meeting with Chico and is going to be a little involved with the administration of Vic Beach and its ongoing promotions. This provided an ideal opportunity for her to speak with him on our behalf. He is also open to coming to Tasmania for coaching purposes and also suggested we email him with some options for dates. The beach committee will be acting on these leads with due haste.

As most events in Melbourne are conducted on weekend, we have suggested that we could utilise the Hobart Showday for training (Thursday 21 October) which was a possibility.

Next steps:

1. Decide on whether Thursday 21 October is an option and/or alternative dates, what format would be ideal for training (Juniors/A/AA)
2. Contact Chico and Greg with list of dates for them to check their availability, costs etc

Circulation of Australia Day Tournament pamphlets

Both Adam and myself met with the vast majority of the Vic Masters participants (40 odd) to hand out the pamphlets and provide an overview of the tournament.

Great response was received primarily due to having pamphlets. (Thanks Mick)

Note, that there is a possible clash with Geelong Audi Week tournament and Round 5 Vicbeach (Sun).

Greg was kind enough to pass on his email list for this event for our use. He also offered the Pan Pacs list from last time which he has.

Next steps: Using Vic Masters email distribution list, send out follow up information about Australia Day tournament. Consider using Pan Pacs' list to promote Aus Day as well.

Will definitely be taking pamphlets to Pan Pacs and promoting our event there as well.

Geelong Indoor Beach Centre - www.geelongvicbeach.com.au

I would regard Greg's Geelong indoor facility as state of the art, as far as my limited experience in Aus goes. He has two full size courts, two rebound sand courts and one multi use netted astro-turf type court. The other most important addition is his salubrious bar area.

From a financial point of view it seems that rebound volleyball is far more profitable than normal beach pairs, especially when taking into account the square metre-age requirements and the number of paying players on the court (we saw kids playing about 8 a side rebound). Even this profit is far exceeded when you get two teams of up to 10 playing dodge ball on a hard court. His other income stream is provided by kids birthday parties for which he is booked up for months ahead.

Greg has invested heavily in technology, and has all game management, timing and scoring fully automated. There are hand held computers for umpires to select games and score on with the results being displayed on big screens on the court, and uploaded to his website instantly. In the bar area there are more screens playing current games from cameras over the courts so that you can finish one more drink without worrying that your game has started! It is also possible to watch a replay of your game accompanied of course, by another beverage. If and when our hard court comp is to find a new home this kind of set up is definitely worth investigating.

In summary the trip was a blast with positives all round. It is obvious that continued networking with our ever increasing circle of master's friends and event organisers will lead to synergies on both sides of the strait.

It seems to me that this more "grass roots" style of competition, where the games are hard but fun and the focus is on socialising rather than attracting elite players is an excellent way to increase player satisfaction and therefore also achieve long term sustainability for the sport. It was also encouraging to note that cooperation between beach and hard court was very much on the table at a national level. To me, these were the major take home lessons and will be highlighting these concepts in our ongoing re-evaluations for the future of VTI.

Duncan McGlashan and Adam Turner