

DAILY SOUND



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Community volleyballers unite



BY PETER DUGRE

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The weather cooperated for a great day of volleyball at East Beach and so did rivals from Dos Pueblos, San Marcos and Santa Barbara high schools. On Saturday, 80 past and present varsity players and coaches put their colors aside to team up for the second-annual Reunion Volleyball Tournament to raise funds for each of the high schools.

Tournament organizer, Tom Hinkle, felt like it was a great opportunity to get all of the kids together from a community rich in volleyball talent before the summer was over. "A lot of kids here are playing in college, or leaving to start their college careers, and this is their last weekend to get together before taking off to train," said Hinkle, whose daughters Katherine and Jane play at Cal Poly and UCSB. The winning teams from the tournament include a couple of big names that graduated through the volleyball programs at SBHS and went on to AVP volleyball careers.

The winner was a team with Marcelo Duarte of SBHS 1989 who played AVP, as well as Sammie Brown DPHS 2010, Cole Arutian DPHS 2009, and Maddy Hamilton SBHS 2010. Runners up had Ben Koski SBHS 1997 also of the AVP, Terri Willis SMHS 1979, Ricky Hayes DP 2008, and Annie Villanueva SBHS 2008. Also in the tournament of AVP experience was Jeff Minc. Even though players from three schools that are historical rivals took to the sand together, no reticent grudges were to be seen as mix-matched teams of four competed and cheered each other on throughout the day. The only thing that

became heated was the sun-scorched sand, but players endured, some with the help of socks.

On Friday night before the tournament, coaches and organizers rated the players by skill-level and dropped their names into grab bags to select teams and even the playing field. This also ensured that players were able to experience playing with others who may have been rivals, and in some cases, were able to see if their coaches made good teammates.

“The four person format is great because there are longer rallies and everyone gets touches. It’s also a good chance to play with rivals,” said coach Chad Arneson of SBHS boys varsity volleyball.

The tournament began in 2007 when Tom and Julie Hinkle were brainstorming fundraisers to defray costs of sending a girls’ team to Hawaii. Last year’s tournament was such a success that they decided to do it again. The proceeds of this year’s event will go to each of the three high-schools. Sponsors including Los Arroyos, Jordanos, Prudential, and Beniflex each covered the costs of putting together the tournament and participants signed over their entry fees to the school of their choice.

Hinkle reminisced about volleyball at East Beach as an important family event for him, his wife and his daughters. And before that experience, he learned the trade of putting on volleyball tournaments from his father, who organized tournaments at Laguna Beach.

“It’s family fun,” said Hinkle, “and it’s a way to keep my daughters together.”