



USA Volleyball

A Century of Volleyball

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Many games played by Americans are possession sports. Football, soccer, field hockey and basketball have rules and strategies that allow each team to control the ball for extended periods of times. One statistic kept for these sports is "time of possession" of the ball for each team. The game of volleyball, however, is a game of rebound and movement (Bulman, 1994). The ball is never motionless from the moment it is served until it contacts the floor or is whistled dead by an official.

The game is determined by points rather than by time. The size of the court is relatively small for the number of players, creating a congested playing area. Because of this, the game has evolved into one of speed, efficiency, accuracy, supportive movements, and constant communication, making it one of the most complex team sports (Scates, 1984).

This year, 1995, marks the one hundredth anniversary of the invention of volleyball. William G. Morgan, a physical director of the Young Men's Christian Association, in Holyoke, Massachusetts, had the responsibility of developing activities for local businessmen who desired organized games to play for recreational purposes after busy workdays. Basketball, invented in 1881 by James Naismith, proved to be too strenuous for many businessmen. By 1895, Morgan creatively devised an alternative to basketball. Calling it "Mintonette," he incorporated the net from badminton, the ball from basketball, the concept of innings from baseball, and the use of the hands from handball. Keeping the ball in play by hitting the ball over the net with the hands, each team forfeited the ball when three outs were scored (Stokes & Haley, 1984).

The game, because of its use of the hand to bat the ball over the net, was renamed "Volley Ball" in 1896, as suggested by Dr. Alfred Halstead of Springfield College, followed shortly thereafter by the name "Volleyball." Nine innings were played on a court, sized 25 ft. x 50 ft. The serve, assisted by any offensive player, was hit over a 6 ft 6 in net. The basketball, too heavy to easily contact, was replaced by a volleyball, produced by A.G. Spalding (of Spalding Sporting Goods Company). By 1900, the concepts of dribbling and inning were eliminated; the nets were raised to 7 ft. (Kluka & Dunn, 1992).

Twelve years later, the YMCA formed a special committee and developed major rule modifications, including standardizing ball handling. The court was enlarged to 35 ft x 60 ft; the net was raised to 7 ft 6 in; serve rotation of players was incorporated as well as the establishment of the two-out-of-three game match (Scates, 1984).

The game, through YMCA missionaries, was introduced in Canada and Central and South America in the early 1900's. The Philippine Islands, England and Europe were also introduced to the sport by 1914. In 1916, as an avenue of recreation, the American Expeditionary Forces distributed over 16,000 volleyballs to troops stationed in Western Europe during World War I. Soon after the war, several Eastern European countries adopted the game and rapidly began national competitions (Kluka & Dunn, 1992)

The 1920s was the decade of most rapid change in volleyball in the United States. The first men's YMCA National Championships were held in 1922. The National Amateur Athletic Federation (the forerunner to the AAU) sanctioned volleyball as an official national activity in 1923. In 1924, the first intramural volleyball program was instituted at the University of Illinois. The same year, the first interscholastic (high school) volleyball program was begun in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

By 1926, special rules were published for girls and woman in the Red Cover Series of the Spalding Athletic Library Series. Additionally, the National Section of Women's Athletics (NSWA), a division of the American Physical Education Association (APEA), created a separate set of rules for females. Court dimensions were restructured to 30 ft x 60 ft, and no more than 3 contacts per side were permitted (Stokes & Haley, 1984).

By 1928, the YMCA Rules Committee evolved into the United States Volleyball Association (USVBA). The group became responsible for the writing and printing of the rules at a national level as well as the creation and administration of a national open volleyball tournament. Soon thereafter, USVBA began to train and certify officials as well as develop tournament standards (USA Volleyball, 1994).

By the 1930's, NSWA had changed its name to the National Section for Girls' and Women's Sports (NSGWS) and had published a separate rules book for girls and women. The rules were studied at the high school and college levels in volleyball classes and intramural competitions. The University of Washington formed the first men's varsity volleyball program with awards in 1934. In 1938, the State of Pennsylvania sanctioned the first boys' high school championships.

During World War II, American armed forces took the game to the South Pacific as a relaxing alternative to fighting in jungles and on beaches. The Japanese developed a keen interest and flair for the game as well. After the war, college club teams developed rapidly all over the United States as a result of veterans returning to colleges. By 1949, the first college to offer men's scholarships and have a full-time coach was Florida State University. During the same year, the USVBA added a women's division to their national Open Championships (Kluka & Dunn, 1992).

NSGWS became the Division of Girls' and Women's Sports (DGWS) of the American Association for Health, Physical Education and Recreation (AAHPER) in the 1950's. The organization wrote and published guides that included rules recognized as the official volleyball rules for girls and women. Each guide included rules, standards, officiating instructions, and professionally written teaching/coaching articles. DGWS evolved into the National Association for Girls and Women in sport (NAGWS) which has continued to and presently writes and publishes the rules for women's intercollegiate volleyball (NAGWS/AAHPERD, 1994).

Internationally, the Federation Internationale de Volleyball (FIVB) was established in 1947 with 14 member nations serving as the official international governing body for the sport. The first European Championships were held in Rome. The first men's World Championships were held in Prague, Czechoslovakia in 1949, while the first women's World Championships were held in 1952. The 1955 Pan American Games, held in Mexico City, premiered the sport of volleyball (Bulman, 1994).

In 1964, the sport of volleyball was added for men and women into the Olympic Games held in Tokyo. Japanese women and Soviet Union men won gold medals at the games. Not until the success of the U.S. men's and women's teams (gold and silver medals, respectively) in 1984 at the

Olympic Games of Los Angeles did the sport of volleyball, created in the United States, earn its legitimacy in the country of its origin.

During the late 1960's and 1970's, the sport of volleyball erupted within educationally-based institutions throughout the United States. In 1969, the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA) hosted its first national championship at George Williams College. By 1970, the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) held its first national championship for men; in 1971, the Association of Intercollegiate Athletics for women (AIAW), emerging from DGWS, hosted its first intercollegiate national volleyball championship. Eleven years later (1982), the NCAA hosted the first intercollegiate national championships for women at UCLA. AIAW hosted, in 1973, the first Junior/Community College National Championships at Miami-Dade Community College. In 1974, the National Junior College Athletic Association (NJCAA) hosted the first volleyball championship for men at Schoolcraft College.

By 1975, the first national Olympic team to develop a full-time residency program for Olympic-caliber athletes, centered in Texas, was women's volleyball (Scates, 1984). Players selected for the national team could live, work, and train together for the first time. After the success of the men's and women's Olympic Volleyball Teams in the 1984 Olympic Games, the U.S. men's and Women's national teams consolidated their training programs with a national training center located in San Diego, California. Presently, both teams train there regularly (Kluka & Dunn, 1992).

Mixed play (males and females) gained popularity with the advent of Title IX legislation in the 1970's. Its roots branched from the west coast eastward, with rules modifications to enhance play. By the 1980's, the U.S. men's teams won the 1985 World Cup and the 1986 World Championships. This marked the first time in history that the United States men's team had won the "Triple Crown" of volleyball (the Olympic Games, the World Cup, and the World Championships) in consecutive years (1984, 1985, 1986). By the end of the 1980's, the United States had established itself as a world volleyball power in the men's and women's programs (Kluka & Dunn, 1992).

Professional Beach Volleyball and men's and women's six-player professional leagues were established in the early 1990's. Additionally, men's and women's beach volleyball competition have been included in the 1996 Olympic Games to be held in Atlanta.

In 1994, USVBA changed its functional name to USA Volleyball. It continues to serve as the National Governing Body (NGB) for the sport in the United States through the United States Olympic Committee (USOC) family. As such, it serves as the collective voice for the nation in all aspects related to the development of the sport. Its Board of Directors must meet the requirements of the Amateur Sports Act of 1978 by providing the opportunity for grassroots representation as well as affiliated organization representation to assist in the national governance of the sport. This is accomplished through a Delegate Assembly at an annual national convention as well as opportunities for representation with voice and vote on the USA Volleyball's Board of Directors. USA Volleyball also administers indoor and outdoor sand and grass, men's women's coed doubles, triples, four player, and six player volleyball championships; Junior Olympic volleyball for ages 18, 16, 14, and 12 and under; seniors volleyball for ages 30, 35, 40, 45, 50, 55, 60, 65 and over; local, regional, and national championships; and officiating and coaching certification.

The future seems brilliant for the sport of volleyball throughout the world. Whether playing outdoors, in the sand, indoors, with two, three, four or six players, on coed or single-sex teams, people are participating by the millions. The Centennial Celebration is being spearheaded by the FIVB, the

international governing body for the sport. The minting and distribution of gold and silver centennial coins, the publication of a volleyball centennial book, a worldwide volleyball stamp program contest, and volleyball photo contest will be conducted. Additionally, a "History of Volleyball" video will be produced in several countries; the best of each video will be consolidated into the "finest moments" of the sport for "The World Story of Volleyball." William G. Morgan may never have imagined that the sport he invented a century ago would rise to such world prominence. Court size, number of players, the number of contacts permitted, and ball speeds, ranging from well under one kilometer per hour to in excess of one hundred kilometer per hour, contribute to the excitement and popularity of the game for players as well as spectators worldwide. Volleyball will continue to be enjoyed into the next Millennium - *What a century of volleyball!*

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