

THE VICTORIOUS VOYAGE OF VOLLEYBALL

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VENICE GULF COAST LIVING MAGAZINE

When it comes to recreation, few things are as rewarding as meeting up with friends or family for an invigorating game of volleyball. Whether you choose to hit the courts, go to the beach, or head to the pool, this favorite pastime offers the perfect blend of exercise and fun and has been enjoyed for decades by people all over the world.

Volleyball began more than a century ago when William G. Morgan, a physical education director for the YMCA in Holyoke, Massachusetts, created a game called Mintonette in 1895. Using techniques from basketball, tennis, and handball, the sport was designed for local businessmen who wanted a less strenuous alternative to basketball that was still challenging enough to require some athletic effort.

In 1896, it was introduced nationally during a YMCA Sports Conference at Springfield College. While viewing one of the demonstration games, Professor Alfred T. Halstead is said to have suggested that the sport's name be changed to "volley ball" since the players seemed to be volleying the ball back and forth over the net. A vote was taken at the conference and the new moniker was approved; however, it wasn't until 1952 that the one-word version in use today emerged after an official decision was made by the U.S. Volleyball Association.

History denotes that the first ball ever used for the game was a basketball, which proved to be too cumbersome. At the request

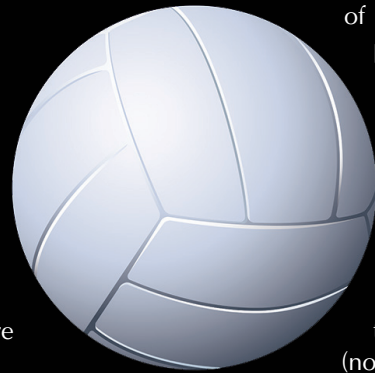
of the inventor, A.G. Spalding & Bros. fashioned the first volleyball, which contained a round rubber inner tube covered in leather. Although first introduced to men, soon women and children began playing and many games took place outside.

To accommodate these changes, the size and weight of the ball were modified to suit the age of the participants as well as the environment where the sport was being played.

Still in its infancy state, volleyball was just four years old when the YMCA took the game to Canada, the Orient, and the Southern Hemisphere. In 1905, it reached Cuba, and two years later, it was presented as one of the most popular outdoor sports at the first Playground of America Convention, (now, the National Recreation Association).

An official set of rules was published by the YMCA in 1897, but it wasn't until the regulations were revised in 1912 that interest in the game began to increase. In 1916, the height for the net was set at eight feet, the service rotation rule was adopted and indoor teams were limited to six players per side. Still, as the sport spread to other countries, so did the playing styles. Soon, new techniques such as the spike, the three-contact rule, and the forearm pass emerged and were accepted as part of the playing strategy.

By 1915, volleyball stepped onto the beach scene with the first game on record played in Pacific Palisades, California.



A match on the sand originally was like the indoor version with six players stationed on each side of the net. Fifteen years later, beach volleyball changed when a man named Paul "Pablo" Johnson began playing with just two people while waiting for other team members to arrive. Although many continued to play the beach style with more players, the challenge of having only two members per team grew in popularity, escalating the game to an elite level. Eighteen years would pass before the first two-man tournament would be held at Will Rogers State Beach in California. The following year, the first tournament to offer a prize took place in Los Angeles, where the best teams were awarded with a case of Pepsi®.

Indoor volleyball had its first foray into the Olympics when it was played as part of an American Sports demonstration event in the 1924 Summer Olympics in Paris, France, but it was not added to the official program until 1957. Seven years later, four decades after its Paris debut, volleyball athletes competed in the 1964 Summer Olympics in Tokyo, Japan. It would be more than 30 years before beach volleyball was fully recognized as an Olympic sport.

A lower-impact version of the sport, water volleyball developed as a refreshing alternative enjoyed by people of all ages. Individuals can get together and play a game in their private pools or at locations such as recreational centers and resort communities. Depending on the size of the pool, teams of up to eight players can participate.

Today, volleyball is played globally for physical education in schools, athletic training in fitness centers, competition in national championships, and as a fun recreational activity. It's hard to believe that what was once created as a game of leisure has turned out to be one of the most popular and well-loved competitive sports of all time.

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