

Hit the beach in the Hills



Hills volleyball players Georgie Rowe, Mark Nielsen and Belinda Huff. Photo by Iain Bond

by Natalie Koufos

The beach is moving to the hills, with The Mountain Beach Volleyball season beginning in February at the Mount Lofty Sports Center.

The competition began in January last year and prior to Christmas, recreational competitions were held with players coming from Strathalbyn and the Adelaide Hills area.

The Mountain Beach Volleyball Club competition will be played on brand new courts.

Brian Kempe, the president of the Mount Lofty League Volleyball Club, said that volunteer efforts helped get the courts up and running.

The project cost \$200,000 and was completed without federal, state or local government money.

"Local businesses, volunteers and the local volleyball community helped build the new courts and they have international standard

lighting and spectator facilities," Brian said.

Local beach volleyball player Sam Boehm joined the Mount Lofty League Volleyball Club when he was 14 years old when he was attending Heathfield High.

He is now 23 years old and will compete in this year's London Olympics.

"When I was 16 years old I played state for Mount Lofty League Volleyball Club, then I decided to try beach volleyball and when I was 18 I joined the Australian Institute of Sport," Sam said.

"Mount Lofty League Volleyball Club helped me develop my skills in volleyball, they accelerated my learning and they are always looking to develop youngsters' skills."

2010 was a big year for Sam.

He was Australian Beach Volleyball Champion and he and his team placed 7th on the Beach Volleyball World Tour in 2010

where he spent five months in Europe playing on different beaches.

Sam loves the sport and said that it requires great skill.

"Beach volleyball is athletic because you do everything like jumping, diving and sprinting."

At the Mount Lofty Sports Center there are three courts available to play beach volleyball and junior competitions are held each Friday night of the term while a senior community competition starts in the first week of February.

Within the senior community, there is an A grade league and a recreational competition which runs on Monday and Thursday nights for seven weeks.

Both divisions can play on teams of either two or four players.

"We are happy to open up more nights for people to play and we are expecting team numbers to grow and we will accommodate for that," Brian said.

If you haven't played volleyball, or think you need more practice there may be coaching available in the near future.

"We are trying to run low level coaching clinics, with instructions on how to pass the volleyball," he said.

"There appears to be a demand for coaching and we will provide whatever the customers need."

Beach volleyball helps you get fit and increases hand eye coordination and playing on sand doesn't have as much impact as gravel.

"Playing beach volleyball isn't as hard on your knees and ankles and it's a lot better to fall on sand," he said.

The club encourages recreational participation.

"We have workmates come in and have a hit and kids after school playing, having fun and meeting new people," he said.

Mount Lofty League Volleyball Club is one of six state league clubs in South Australia, it was established in 1986.

Want to take part? Visit the Mount Lofty Volleyball website www.mtloftyvolleyball.com.au and nominations are closing on Wednesday February 1.