

SPORTS

Volleyball club gives upstart spikers chance

By Michael Workman
Staff Writer

You've probably seen it on ESPN. Four men on a sunny California beach, running, jumping and diving, while hundreds of fans cheer.

Pro beach volleyball has become a popular sport, but it bears little resemblance to the game that the UNC men's club volleyball team plays.

"Six-on-six is a lot more organized," said Anthony Monaghan, co-president of the UNC men's volleyball club. "There are plays to set up. It's a lot more complicated than beach volleyball."

But the popularity of two-on-two beach volleyball has translated into increased interest in the 12-man version.

Jamie Grimstead, co-president of the UNC club, said, "I think the two-on-two beach volleyball has caught on a lot. With the interest in that growing, I think the interest in seeing good volleyball is growing."

Grimstead's personal interest in volleyball certainly has grown since he came to UNC. Before college, his volleyball experience consisted of recreational play at a swim club during high school.

Grimstead decided to try out for the team during his freshman year after seeing an announcement for tryouts.

"I never really had any formal training until I got here," he said.

Team captain Matt Dunlap also did not play organized volleyball until he arrived at UNC, but, like Grimstead, he has seen an explosion of interest since then.

"I definitely see the interest in volleyball around here," he said. "There's just so much potential as far as the sport growing."

So why doesn't UNC have a varsity men's team?

Athletic department officials say there simply isn't enough money.

Joe Sagula, UNC women's volleyball coach, said, "Based on the fact that we have such a large Division I program... I would tend to think it's not going to happen in the near future."

Beth Miller, associate athletic director for non-revenue sports, said, "We've discussed it at times, and we've come to the conclusion that it wouldn't be prudent from a financial standpoint."

Dick Baddour, senior associate athletic director, said the athletic department was trying to avoid cutting sports.

"I don't see any expansion in intercollegiate sports," he said. "We're just trying to hold on to what we have."

But Grimstead said he thought UNC and other ACC schools might launch varsity programs soon.

"It shouldn't be much time at all — two or three years — until most of the ACC schools turn varsity," he said.

Brian Johnson, a senior member of the team, said coaches and captains from ACC club volleyball teams meet at the ACC Tournament each year to discuss ways to encourage their schools to adopt varsity teams.

Sue Tyler, senior associate athletic director at the University of Maryland, said Maryland had tried to start a men's varsity program last year, but the school's faculty council voted against the proposal because of a lack of funds. The disparity between men's and women's sports that existed at Maryland was also a factor, she said.

No such gap exists at UNC, however, and some players believe the men's team should receive varsity status.

Grimstead said, "(The club team is) very similar to a varsity program, except we don't have as much money (and) we don't recruit."

Johnson said many of the players could compete at the varsity level.

"I know that a lot of players here have thought about transferring (to a school with a varsity program) because they were qualified to play there," he said.

Jones said she thought the team had the dedication necessary to be a varsity team.

"I think you find that in men's club volleyball there's just a lot of dedication, and everybody wants to go varsity," she said.

That dedication was reflected in the team's twice-a-week two-hour practice schedule and away-match slate, which included trips to Washington, D.C., Lexington, Va., and Lynchburg, Va.

The club compiled a 12-4 record during the regular season against a schedule that included Kentucky, Appalachian State, William and Mary, East Carolina, Virginia Tech and George Washington, in addition to the team's ACC slate.

Despite a disappointing first-round loss to eventual champion Maryland in the ACC Tournament March 28 in Fetzer Gym, Jones said she was pleased with the team's effort during the regular season. The loss ensured that UNC would stay home from the NCAA Club Volleyball Tournament.

"It's a shame that it's already over, because I think that they would only get better," he said.

That improvement is hardly surprising in light of the squad's relative lack of experience. Like Grimstead and Dunlap, most of the players did not compete in organized volleyball before coming to UNC, and the players appreciate the opportunity the program offers.

"It's the only quality volleyball team you can really play on around here where you can get a lot of practice and compete," Grimstead said.

Cold cash gives Mets enough talent to win

By Matt Johnson
Staff Writer

Baseball used to be won the old-fashioned way: You earned it.

During the off-season, one team decided to change all that by acquiring a team the not-so-old-fashioned way. They bought it.

In the process, the New York Mets made themselves the trendy pick to win the National League East division in 1992. Newly hired general manager Al Harazin came in with money to burn, and burn it he did.

Harazin spent \$40 million to sign free agent outfielder Bobby Bonilla and first baseman Eddie Murray. Then he unloaded disgruntled veterans Kevin McReynolds and Gregg Jefferies in a mega-deal that brought two-time Cy Young Award winner Bret Saberhagen from Kansas City.

Harazin's new-look Mets boast a switch-hitting murderer's row of Bonilla (.302, 18 home runs, 100 runs batted in), Murray (.260, 19, 96) and Howard Johnson (.38, 117). The offense had better be good, because the defense will be horrible.

Saberhagen (13-8, 3.07 earned run average) joins Dwight Gooden and David Cone in a starting rotation long on talent and short on consistency.

The Pittsburgh Pirates are the polar opposite of the Mets. The Pirates don't even have enough cash to keep around their established stars. The Pirates were forced to bid goodbye to Bonilla when the bidding hit \$29 million. Then they dealt 20-game winner John Smiley, a potential free agent, to Minnesota, and released bullpen ace Bill Landrum.

For at least one more year, though, manager Jim Leyland will fill his lineup card with enough talent to be in the hunt at season's end. Barry Bonds, despite his tendency to annoy teammates and mouth off to his manager, has few, if any, peers in today's game.

Center fielder Andy Van Slyke, shortstop Jay Bell and pitchers Doug



Drabek and Zane Smith will give Leyland ample weaponry.

After floundering around in the division basement for much of the last decade, the Philadelphia Phillies have finally righted themselves. The centerpiece of the Phillies' attack is sparkplug Lenny Dykstra. When not driving into trees, the center fielder is one of the game's top leadoff men. The Phillies went 36-27 with him in the lineup last year and 42-57 with him in a hospital bed or on the bench.

The Montreal Expos will run, run, and run some more in '92. The Expos stole a major-league-leading 221 bases last year, led by center fielder Marquis Grissom (76 steals), second baseman Delino DeShields (56) and outfielder Ivan Calderon (31).

Montreal has some of the game's best young talent, but beyond 35-year-old wonder Dennis Martinez (14-11, 2.39), pitching will be a problem.

When the big acquisition for the Chicago Cubs during the off-season is Mike Morgan, a career 67-104 pitcher, you know it's going to be another long season for loyal Cub fans. Chicago's pitching staff boasted the highest ERA in the league last year, and the Cubs did little to fix that.

On the bright side, the Cubbies boast two potential Hall of Famers in second baseman Ryne Sandberg (.291, 26, 100) and right fielder Andre Dawson (.272, 31, 104).

Like the Expos, the St. Louis Cardinals are another team with bright young talent and not enough pitching. Felix Jose, Ray Lankford, Bernard Gilkey, Todd Zeile and Omar Olivares are all bright spots in the future of the Cardinals' organization, but for now, St. Louis will have to suffer.

Davis will lift Dodgers to title

By David J. Kupstas
Staff Writer

If you are a baseball fan, you had to love the 1991 National League West race.

The Atlanta Braves rallied from 9 1/2 games down at the All-Star break to take the division title and shake off the image of America's Lovable Losers.

The Los Angeles Dodgers not only blew that huge lead, they had the balls to whine about the Braves' schedule and about opponents rooting for Atlanta.

What could possibly happen in 1992 for an encore?

Somehow, the Los Angeles Dodgers always manage to finish near the top. In order for the Dodgers to take this tough division, shortstop Jose Offerman must be ready for prime time. Kal Daniels and Todd Benzinger must equal departed first baseman Eddie Murray's output. Orel Hershiser must return to form, and Ramon Martinez needs to rebound from a shaky spring.

What will put Tom Lasorda's team over the top is new left fielder Eric Davis, finally happy after joining best buddy Darryl Strawberry in the Dodger outfield. Look for Eric the Blue to overcome injury problems and finally become a franchise player.



Unlike other recent rags-to-riches stories, the Atlanta Braves do not figure to fade back into oblivion anytime soon. They have built themselves into a contender the right way — via the farm system. The organization has produced Dave Justice, Ron Gant, Brian Hunter, Jeff Blauser, Steve Avery and Tom Glavine, among others. And there's more help on the way.

Major housecleaning has made the Cincinnati Reds the popular choice to win the West and possibly the World Series for the second time in three years. In a tight, tight race, Cincinnati will fall just short.

Accused of resting on his laurels after 1990's world championship, general manager Bob Quinn made some much-needed improvements to Lou Piniella's pitching staff. Tim Belcher and Greg Swindell join Tom Browning and Jose Rijo to form one of the top fourmes in baseball.

A clear break between the upper and lower divisions begins with the San

Diego Padres. The Padres are a good team but could use another starting pitcher, a third baseman and an outfielder or two — and perhaps a manager. When four departed players publicly take shots at manager Greg Riddoch, you have to wonder if there isn't some substance to it.

As for the Houston Astros, well, maybe next year.

The Astros are in the midst of a major rebuilding process. Unloading Glenn Davis last season was a step in the right direction, as Houston obtained in that trade No. 1 starter Pete Harnisch and top-notch outfielder Steve Finley.

A true superstar must emerge from among second baseman Craig Biggio, Luis Gonzalez, shortstop Andruw Cedeno and 1991 Rookie of the Year first baseman Jeff Bagwell.

Pitching has always been a weakness for the San Francisco Giants, and it still is. Bill Swift is the No. 1 starter. Enough said.

The Giants could have gotten a bona fide No. 1 starter for Kevin Mitchell, but they settled for Swift, Mike Jackson and Dave Burba from the Mariners.

The Giants need another big bat to go with Will Clark (.301, 29, 116) and Matt Williams (.268, 34, 98).

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