

POST'S
GUIDE
to the
PAN AM
GAMES



BEACH VOLLEYBALL

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By Nick Faris, National Post

Venue

Chevrolet Beach Volleyball Centre
at Exhibition Place, Toronto.

Venue acronym

PBV

Landmark status

Low

The volleyball centre was built as a temporary venue on the Exhibition grounds, west of the downtown core on the Lake Ontario shore. Organizers are importing 3,000 metric tonnes of sand to erect a series of courts.

Other events at venue

None

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Transit options

Line 1 subway to Union Station, then 509 streetcar west to venue. The 511 Bathurst streetcar also runs to the Ex from Bathurst station on the Line 2 subway.

For exact directions, try:

Triplinx.ca

[TTC trip planner](#)

Schedule

July 13-16 — Preliminary rounds

July 17-18 — Quarter-finals

July 19 — Semifinals

July 20 — Classification matches

July 21 — Gold- and bronze-medal matches

[See the full competition schedule at the Pan Am website](#)

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How it works

It shares the basic components of indoor volleyball: through bumps, sets and spikes, each side has three hits or less to knock the ball over the net and have it land within the boundaries of their opponent's half. All scores count for one point, not just when you're holding serve, and the scoring side serves to start the next rally.

Everything else about beach volleyball is slightly smaller. Instead of six-a-side teams, players compete in pairs. Matches are best-of-three sets up to 21 points (but only to 15 for a deciding third set). The court measures 16 by 8 metres, rather than the indoor dimensions of 18 by 9. And, of course, the sport is played on sand.

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Teams competing

Men

Group A Canada, Guatemala, Nicaragua, Uruguay

Group B Aruba, Brazil, Mexico, Venezuela

Group C Argentina, Cuba, St. Lucia, United States

Group D Chile, El Salvador, Puerto Rico, Trinidad and Tobago

Women

Group A Canada, Cayman Islands, Puerto Rico, Uruguay

Group B Brazil, Chile, Costa Rica, Nicaragua

Group C Colombia, El Salvador, Guatemala, United States

Group D Argentina, Cuba, Mexico, Trinidad and Tobago

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Canada's teams

Men

Josh Binstock and Sam Schachter, both Richmond Hill, Ont.

Women

Melissa Humana-Paredes, Toronto, and Taylor Pischke, Winnipeg.



Binstock, left, and Schachter at FIVB St. Petersburg Grand Slam in June.

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Tournament format

The top finisher in each round-robin group moves directly to the quarter-finals; second- and third-place teams advance to the pre-quarter-final stage. From there, a single-elimination bracket determines the medal winners.

Results from 2011 Pan Ams

Men

1. Brazil; 2. Venezuela;
3. Argentina

Women

1. Brazil; 2. Mexico; 3. Puerto Rico

Why it's worth watching

To see everyone's favourite friendly beach game played at an exponentially higher level; to soak in the July sun; and to see if Brazil's dy-

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nasty — they swept the gold medals at the last two Pan Am Games — marches on or loses its throne.

Competition outlook

Brazil, a beach volleyball power, is sending its fourth-best pair, who are still ranked No. 20 in the world. Canada's Binstock and Schacter are the highest-ranked pair in the event at No. 6 in the world. The pairs from Mexico and Venezuela are also ranked in the top 25.

The Canadian women have never won a Pan Am medal, but enter 2015 as the event's top-ranked side at No 14. Brazil (21st) and Argentina (24th) are the next highest-ranked pairs.

Photograph: Mike Carlson / Getty Images
