



October 16, 2015

Dear BVA Members,

The 2014-2015 year saw some challenges and changes within the organization as we continued to develop volleyball on the island and abroad. The executive board witnessed the departure of Elisabeth Rae and Mike Bengson as co-presidents, Amy Chan and Adam Veriker as vice presidents, Ryen Robinson as secretary and Paul Bohus as treasurer. In addition to the continued efforts of Stacey Madeiros-Cooke (Co-President and Coaching Commissioner), and Sophia Sontag (Youth Development Chairperson and Referee Chair), the board welcomed the arrival of Ariel Mierzejewski as Co-President, Danielle Miller, David LaHuta, Alex Cabe and Kristina Mierzejewski as Vice Presidents, Michael Zhao as Treasurer, Shiloh Whalen as Equipment Manager and Christina Duff as Secretary.

There was adequate participation in winter leagues along with the re-emergence of the Mardi Gras reverse coed tournament. Although there was a slight decline in spring league registrations, summer league saw a surge in participation across almost all divisions: QOB, Recreational Coed 4s and 2s. All four summer tournaments were well attended and continued to show the increasing popularity of 2s volleyball in Bermuda. Our final tournament of the year, sponsored by Coppertone, saw increased exposure through the efforts of David LaHuta as VP of Public Relations & Media Communications with articles in the Royal Gazette and Bernews. Not only did we increase awareness of the dangers with sun exposure, we succeeded in raising \$3,600 for the Bermuda Cancer and Health Centre.

With the help of Bill Bucci, we were happy to certify 5 new referees, as well as recertify 2 referees through our Referee Certification Program. We were also able to send coaches away to participate in USA Volleyball's Beach CAP I, Indoor CAP I and CAP II certification programs. We are happy to report that all the programs were successfully completed!

The Bermuda Open, sponsored in part by Bermuda Tourism Authority, was held April 10-12, 2015. It was a continued success thanks mainly in part to the efforts of Stacey Madeiros-Cooke, Co-President and Tournament Director. This year's tournament boasted 4 Junior and 4 Women's teams in two separate divisions for the first time. Bermuda's two women's teams placed 2nd and 4th respectively.

Bermuda remained competitive in International competition at the NATWEST games placing 4th in the Indoor Men's division and 5th in the indoor Women's division. Beach volleyball saw men and women both clinching a 6th place finish. Bermuda also saw a women's 7th place finish at the ECVA event in Antigua.

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The BVA also shared the expertise of international coach Trevor Theroulde for our membership and national teams during the summer. We will see his return this month to continue member development with clinics along with training of the national team.

Our youth program showed continued growth with the introduction of our After School Program (ASP). The ASP's success was largely due to the contributions of our Youth Development Chairperson, Sophia Sontag. We were able to introduce volleyball to the primary level students in 10 different public schools over the course of the school year.

There was a campaign to expand the Sand Lizard's Volleyball Club into a three tier program targeting youth, average and advanced players. Although the youth and advanced did not materialize; there was a successful sophomore season of the main Sand Lizard's Volleyball Club. This included multiple new coaches helping to develop theory and practice of 2s volleyball on the island.

The Bermuda Volleyball Association sought to represent, promote and continue the development of volleyball during a time of considerable transition. This year represented both a learning curve with new leadership along with a fresh perspective. The BVA increased its exposure through greater involvement in media and embraced its membership through utilization of social media. We hope to become truly reflective of our membership as a consequence of this new real time engagement of members in an era of increased connectivity. We look to continue our support and cultivation of volleyball on the island through a calculated strategy of engaging our youth to produce long term players while providing a better experience for our members.

We would like to say a big thank you to Donna Smith, JNT girls' coach and Juanita Blee, WNT coach who have stepped down from coaching this year. They have given so much of their time, passion and expertise over their tenure. They will be greatly missed.

The 2015 – 2016 year will see a greater push with our youth programs, a higher development of our national teams and greater international presence. We welcome the feedback, support and constructive criticism from our membership as it helps strengthen and mold our philosophy on the governance of volleyball on the island. As change is the only constant; this year will continue to see transition with the exit of Ariel Mierzejewski as he departs the island and the well-deserved promotion of Sophia Sontag as Co-President for the BVA. We look forward to an excellent year of volleyball on the island and off.

Sincerely,

Stacey Madeiros-Cooke – Co President

Ariel Mierzejewski – Co President

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