

Volleyball booms in the South West

BY DAVID REECE

THE EXETER Volleyball Association runs a number of events each year, each catering for a different sector of the sport.

Sunday's competition (see page 19) was the Mixed Leagues closed tournament and will be followed in April by a Ladies tournament for teams currently playing

in Devon's only Ladies League.

Local recreational teams and guest teams from all over the South West have their chance to join in at the annual Coaver Open tournament in the summer when the association also organises the

Exmouth Beach tournament, open to all teams throughout the South West.

Volleyball is now one of the focus sports for this area. A full time development officer is to be appointed early next year, and over the next five years large sums of money will soon be available for training and the development of junior and women's volleyball.

Training more coaches, referees and officers to help with the growth of the sport is another aim of the organisation. The Exeter and District Volleyball Association has already received an £800 grant for re-equipping the Exeter School sports hall, which is being used for specialist volleyball training. These additional projects have already attracted interest from local organisations.

We are fortunate in the South West to have some of the top National League teams in the country. Volleyball is already the most popular women's team game in the world but here in the UK it still has a long way to go. This is not helped by the lack of venues that can accommodate volleyball.

Despite its popularity in Exeter, there are still three public sports halls where volleyball cannot be played and many local teams are having to travel to sport centres outside Exeter to play their home matches.

Next year will also see the centenary of volleyball, and the event will be marked locally by a four-a-side beach volleyball competition at Exmouth.

Spiking key to Aardvarks' win



CHAMPIONS: Torex Aardvarks Back row - Left to right - Nick Maye, Dave Samuels, Paul Bray. Front row - Rick Partridge, Neil Williams, Dave Lang. Picture: PAT EDWARDS

TOREXE AARDVARKS won the Exeter and District Volleyball Association's first tournament of the season with a 20-12 victory over Exeter College.

This competition for mixed league teams brought 14 teams to the Exeter University sports hall, including league newcomers The King's School from Ottery St Mary and the Otters, a beginners' team from the Torex club.

Teams played in four round robin pools during the morning and this decided which of the three trophies the teams completed for during the afternoon session.

The main event of the day was the cup competition and this was keenly fought for by a number of teams. Last year's winners, Exeter College, played steadily throughout; last season's league champions, Torex Aardvarks, began with a defeat by Teignmouth; Wonford Betablockers, another top Exeter team, never found their form but Wonford Panthers mounted a good challenge and surprised a few teams in the final stages.

In the final, Aardvarks took an early lead but the gap was soon closed when Paul Castle, the College's hard hitting outside spiker, joined their front line attack. He was matched hit for hit by Aardvarks' Dave Samuels, but it was the successful blocking from Dave Lang

and Paul Bray that made the difference between the two teams as Aardvarks won.

Teams missing out on the morning cut, completed in the Plate competition. This produced many close games but it was Crediton Spartans who took the title over Dawlish based Serving You 17-10.

The Recreational competition was

VOLEYBALL BY DAVE REECE AND JERRY FARDON

almost a Torex Volleyball Club lock out, with three of the four teams coming from there.

The morning sessions had given these teams a chance to play some of the top teams in the area, but this competition turned out to be very competitive. During the pool matches, the Torex Crusaders and Destroyers teams could not be separated and produced the tournament's only draw.

In pre-season warm up matches, Second Division Destroyers had beaten First Division Crusaders on a couple of occasions. This form returned and Crusaders went down 18-12.

Final results -
Cup: 1 Torex Aardvarks; 2 Exeter College; 3 Wonford Panthers; 4 Teign-

mouth; 5 Torex Sharks; 6 Wonford Betablockers.

Plate: 1 Crediton Spartans; 2 Serving You; 3 Kings School Ottery; 4 Wanderers.

Recreational: 1 Torex Destroyers; 2 Torex Crusaders; 3 Kirtan; 4 Torex Otters.

This year has seen several major rule changes to the indoor game to try to close the gap with the beach game. The new rules allow players to serve from anywhere behind the base line, accidentally touching the ball below the knee is also permitted, and the handling of the first touch on receive has been relaxed.

The other changes clarify some of the handling and net touch rules, that were brought in last season. With players now hitting the ball at speeds of up to 75 miles per hour, there has always been some controversy over the handling of the ball by the defending team.

By relaxing these rules almost anything is now allowed on the first touch of the ball by the defending team, except for an obvious carry.

Although teams have been using these rules since the start of the 1994/95 season in September, this tournament was the first opportunity for most team coaches to see how other teams have adapted the rules to their advantage.

Champions are looking good

DEFENDING champions Torex Aardvarks put Wonford Panthers firmly in their place as they took a 3-0 victory over their Exeter and District League, Division 1, rivals.

With set scores of 15-3, 15-7, 15-2, Aardvarks always had the upper hand despite this being only their second game of the season. Aardvarks' spiker Dave Lang was the referee's choice as player of the match.

Torex Crusaders were not going to give any early Christmas presents to Serving You who are still looking for their first point in Division 1.

Crusaders won 15-8, 15-8, 15-5 with Serving You's Neil Burnett gaining player of the match award.

In Division 2, AD&S Wanderers leap-frogged over The King's School to take second position following the 15-5, 15-

8, 15-4 victory over Birdmen of Exeter Prison.

Meanwhile, Channings Wood were having better luck as they beat Torex Otters 15-8, 15-4, 15-4.

There are no matches now until after Christmas so the tables see Wonford Betablockers holding on to top spot in Division 1, but Exeter College are only two points behind with two games in hand. Teignmouth are third but unbeaten Torex Aardvarks are contenders to retain their title.

In Division 2, Exeter University are running away with first place and remain unbeaten. Chasing them are experienced AD&S Wanderers and The King's School who have done extremely well so far in their first season.

In the Ladies Division, Torex Eagles are holding off the Exeter University, but Wrafton Labs are just waiting for any

slip-ups with a game in hand.

DIVISION 1				
	P	W	F	A Pt
Wonford Beta	5	3	206	185 16
Exeter Coll ASP A	3	3	134	71 14
Teignmouth	3	2	128	71 10
Torex Aardvarks	2	2	88	48 9
Crediton Spartans	3	2	117	111 9
Wonford Panthers	5	1	147	205 7
Torex Crusaders	2	1	69	66 5
Torex Sharks	4	1	99	153 5
Serving You	3	0	57	135 0
DIVISION 2				
	P	W	F	A Pt
Exeter University	7	7	309	163 33
AD&S Wanderers	4	3	169	109 16
Kings School	4	3	162	124 15
Channings Wood	5	3	166	155 14
Birdmen	6	2	166	248 8
Torex Otters	3	1	92	103 6
Kirtan Watersports	4	1	129	157 6
Torex Destroyers	7	0	173	307 2
LADIES DIVISION				
	P	W	F	A Pt
Torex Eagles	4	3	151	108 14
Exeter University	4	3	132	132 12
Team Wrafton	3	2	111	84 10
Torex Falcons	3	1	91	106 6
Wonford Doleys	4	0	103	158 3

■ Wonford VC are holding free beginners on Sunday nights from January 8. Ring Jerry Fardon (Exeter 420138) for details of this and advanced sessions.



PLATE WINNERS: Crediton Spartans: Back row - left to right - Rob Parr, Neil Davey, Shaun Lee, David Nicks. Front row - Alan Welch, Martin Oran, Graham Newbury, Rob Hutchins. Picture: PAT EDWARDS

THEY DIDN'T KNOW THEY'D WON
THE West Hill School volleyball team of Jennifer Haigh, Carl Harris, Sasha Williams, Annele Daalhuizen and Gemma Rumens were all set to applaud their opponents at a 48-team tournament in Weston-super-Mare when they discovered they were the event's winners.

West Hill battled their way through the round robin heats in their first away tournament coming out with four wins and a defeat.

They mistakenly believed one of the teams had won all five of their matches, but were delighted to find they had taken the event at the Hutton Moor Leisure Centre.

The girls play once a week at the school volleyball club which meets after classes in the summer.