



## VOLLEYBALL

Judging the many positive reactions it can be concluded that the Beach Volleyball Tournament, held during the Annual Regatta, has earned its place. It is drawing people to the beach, that otherwise would not have been there, thus helping to make the Regatta such a great weekend. Over the years the Regatta has moved from a pure sailing event where the battle was fought merely on the water, to one that offers continuous excitement on the beach as well. The catamaran beach starts and the volleyball have made that happen.

Some have been participating in both events; others just came for the sailing or the volleyball. The tournament had a fantastic turnout of 10 teams. Like last year we choose the format of 4-aside and the teams had to compete in two pools of five of which the top two would go through to the semis.

On Thursday 20 (!) matches were played in a tight schedule starting at 10 and finishing around 17.30 hrs. Despite the variety in skill levels within each pool, all matches were played in good spirit and enjoyed a good number of enthusiastic supporters. Many great saves, digs, sets, spikes and serves could be observed, which makes beach volleyball so exiting to watch. After many fierce battles the score at the end of the first day was:

POOL I				POOL II			
		POINTS	PLACE			POINTS	PLACE
I-1	EXPLORATION A	8	1	II-1	MUSCATS	0	5
I-2	GIANTS	4	3	II-2	SHARKIES	2	4
I-3	NCL	0	5	II-3	ABA	6	2
I-4	DAYAKS-1	6	2	II-4	DAYAKS-2	4	3
I-5	WILDCATS	2	4	II-5	EXPLORATION B	8	1

This meant that both the Exploration teams A and B made it to the semis, where they had to play respectively the ABA and the Dayaks-1. For the last two years the Dayaks had won the tournament, but this year the opposition turned-out to be younger and stronger than ever before. Not only were there the students from the ABA, but also the two very eager Exploration teams. Last year the both the latter teams lost in the semi's; this time they seemed designed for success.

Both semis were played as 'best of three sets'. The ABA put-up a good match, but could not stop the Exploration A team who blasted into the final with 15-6, 15-10. In the other semi the Dayaks tried everything to prevent an 'all-Exploration' final. After loosing the first set with 10-15, they won the second with 15-8 and hence a third set had to bring the decision. Here Exploration showed quite convincingly what their intensions were and sent the Dayaks packing: 2-15.

This year's final therefore was between the two strong, all Omani, Exploration teams, who rightfully celebrated that they had completed their mission. The final started very promising, with both teams not giving away much. It was only too bad that Exploration-B's best striker had to retire with injury. The balance swung towards Exploration A, who won with 15-9, 15-9.

This brought an end to the tournament and after the prize giving celebrations really started, featuring extensive photo sessions and with the strong support of our well known live band with the applicable name "Still thinking about it".



Plans for next year? Yes, many suggestions, both good and bad were heard. Most would wish to play more and in particular would like to see that not only the top four teams continue on Friday. We will look into it and try to make the Regatta Volleyball Tournament bigger and better.

If you wish to play more regularly (beach or indoor), please contact me.  
Jan Willem van Lienden, UEC7

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