



MARINERS VOLLEYBALL CLUB



BOWEN PARK

Mariners Volleyball Club
Beach Volleyball Proposal

E-mail: info@marinersvolleyballclub.ca

Web: www.marinersvolleyballclub.ca

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND REQUEST FOR CITY OF NANAIMO & COUNCIL'S CONSIDERATION

Beach Volleyball is a growing sport that provides affordable, healthy, outdoor recreation opportunities for people of all ages.

OUR PROPOSAL:

That the City of Nanaimo & Council commit to the development of three new beach volleyball courts at Bowen Park and upgrades to the existing amenity to include universally accessible viewing areas, upgraded equipment and safety features to enhance the experience for users of the courts and the disc golf course and that this plan be included in the 2021/ 2022 City budget and work plan.

*Issac Bevis & Jeff Webb
- 2017 Team BC Canada
Games Gold Medallists,
"Nanaimo Residents &
Nanaimo Trained"*



CITY OF NANAIMO

STRATEGIC PLAN LINKS:

The City's Strategic Plan contains Livability as a key goal. One of Council's strategic actions is to:

"Support arts, culture and recreation as an integral part of everyday life."

"Continue to ensure our facilities and programs are safe and accessible to all peoples in our community."

Beach volleyball is accessible to people of all ages, abilities and income levels. Providing more beach courts makes this activity even more accessible as participants do not require any specialised equipment. Players do not even need runners, making it a very affordable, healthy activity.

Economic Health is another key goal and beach volleyball has the potential to greatly enhance sports tourism through tournaments and by becoming a base for youth and high-performance training for provincial programs. High quality courts and added player capacity would make Nanaimo the perfect hub for varsity and Volleyball BC competitions.

Post COVID, it will be important to bring people back to our community. Sports tourism and tournaments draw people from all over the island and beyond. These structured events bring people here for several days, supporting local businesses, hotels and providing a great opportunity to showcase what Nanaimo can offer.

Through the years Nanaimo has trained a number of high-level athletes and teams at the Bowen Beach courts. These include but are not limited to: The 2013 Canadian Men's Deaf Team, 2016 Canadian Olympic Beach Athlete Jamie Brodeur, National Men's Team Member Maverick Hatch & 2017 Canada Games Gold Medalists Isaac Bevis and Jeff Webb.

As an organization the Mariners Volleyball Club is primed to invest financial and/or relational support for an upgrade to the Bowen Park Beach Volleyball Courts.

HISTORY

OF THE GAME

Beach Volleyball was first developed as a sport on the beaches of Hawaii and California in the early 20th century. In the 1970's it started to become an organized sport played mainly by surfers and vacationers. In the 1980s beach volleyball started to become very popular in Brazil and soon after started to be governed by the FIVB. As a result of the increased participation and interest it became a trial sport at the 1996 Olympics in Atlanta, Georgia and has been a mainstay since. Beach Volleyball is now one of the fastest growing Olympic sports, but its growth is not strictly found within the Olympic movement.

There are several reasons for why the sport has grown so quickly. One may be that the sport is considered a social and inclusive sport for both men and women to play together and compete on somewhat equal grounds.

Co-ed youth to adult leagues around the country are very popular as the sand reduces the inequalities between participants' athleticism, movement skills and physical strength, so older people can play almost on a level basis with younger adults. The atmosphere and environment can be another aspect of it as it is accompanied by good weather, music and social interaction. Beach volleyball is an excellent workout where players usually do not have to worry about injuries as much as other sports because it is non-contact and played on sand. This sport is fast paced and keeps player's attention. There are no long periods of inactivity like in other sports. All players will participate in nearly every play.

The growth of this sport is especially important for female participants. Women have always had fewer opportunities to

participate in sports but beach volleyball is giving women another avenue to show off their athleticism. As of 2015 Women's beach volleyball was the fastest growing NCAA sport ever (Sorenson, 2015). In the first season as a collegiate sport in 2012, there were 16 programs. Now in 2021, there are 54 schools with women's beach volleyball and more are

on the way. This growth has been seen in the amateur ranks as well. "According to the AVCA nearly 500,000 13–25 year-old females have taken up the sport between 2007 & 2015" (Sorenson, 2015).



*Jamie Broder - 2016
Canadian Olympian and
"Nanaimo Trained"*



BEACH COURTS

IN THE CITY OF NANAIMO

In 2002 the City of Nanaimo partnered with Volleyball BC, Pacific Sport and other key interest groups to develop a plan for the building of Beach Volleyball Courts. During this time the city at Bowen Park was created. Over the years there have been a number of key interest groups utilizing the courts. These included, but are not limited to: Volleyball BC, Mariners Volleyball Club, Vancouver Island Volleyball Association, Vancouver Island University and Vancouver Island Beach Volleyball Academy (Nanaimo District Secondary School Beach Volleyball Academy). During this time, we have seen how beach volleyball is the epitome of multi-generational sport as we have seen everything from recreational activity to our National team and Olympic

*Bowen Park Beach
Courts*



Brooke Shouldice & Victoria Behie - 2011 Provincial Champions, "Nanaimo Residents & Nanaimo Trained"



team athletes utilizing the courts at Bowen Park for recreational usage and high-performance training. Over the past nineteen years the popularity of Beach Volleyball has increased dramatically. At this time the four courts are not currently adequate to sustain the organized and drop in growth of the Beach Volleyball within Nanaimo.

During the summer months that run from May to August, the three main rental user groups (Mariners Volleyball Club, Vancouver Island University & Vancouver Island Beach

Volleyball Academy at Nanaimo District Secondary School) have been able to access time at the Nanaimo Beach Volleyball Courts located at Bowen Park to provide summer programming. Typically, these rentals take up approximately 36 hours per week to service our members with programming. Unfortunately for MVC, every year we are turning boys and girls away due to lack of beach volleyball facility space. We have waiting lists of participants who want to join but we cannot provide sport for them due to lack of venues. Additional

facilities courts would be extremely important for getting organized sport and recreational drop in for kids and adults back to normal through a safe social environment after the global COVID-19 pandemic. For participants to drop in it requires no parent support, no refs, only a ball required... the only challenge is many times the courts are full.

Within Nanaimo the Beach Volleyball courts are used daily by a variety of users. It is critical to recognize that Beach Volleyball is one of the few activities that is inclusive regardless of both ability and socioeconomic status.

The City of Nanaimo's Vision statement is "to be a community that is livable, environmentally sustainable and full of opportunity for all generations and walks of life." Unfortunately, every weekend there are user groups who do not have the opportunity to participate as the courts are being used by rental groups or drop in groups. Definitely a blemish on our mandate to follow Sport for Life guidelines to provide for as many people to participate, for as long as possible.

When looking at other outdoor recreational activities in the city of Nanaimo we can look no further than access to 25 outdoor tennis courts with additional courts being found at a number of local school locations. This is a significant disproportion when you look at the four available courts for beach volleyball, yet allows for 3, 4

SIGNIFICANT NANAIMO BEACH VOLLEYBALL ACCOMPLISHMENTS

JAMIE BRODER – CANADIAN OLYMPIAN - 2016
MAVERICK HATCH – CANADIAN NATIONAL TEAM
ISAAC BEVIS – CANADA GAMES GOLD - 2017
JEFF WEBB – CANADA GAMES GOLD - 2017
VICTORIA BEHIE – PROVINCIAL CHAMPION – 2011 & 2012
SARAH CHASE – PROVINCIAL CHAMPION - 2012
BROOKE SHOULDICE – PROVINCIAL CHAMPION - 2011
KELSEY JOHNSON – PROVINCIAL CHAMPION - 2009
JENNA CARVER – PROVINCIAL CHAMPION - 2009
TAYLOR JOHNSON – NATIONAL SILVER MEDAL - 2007

and 6-a-side recreational versions of the game which allows for significantly more athlete participation.

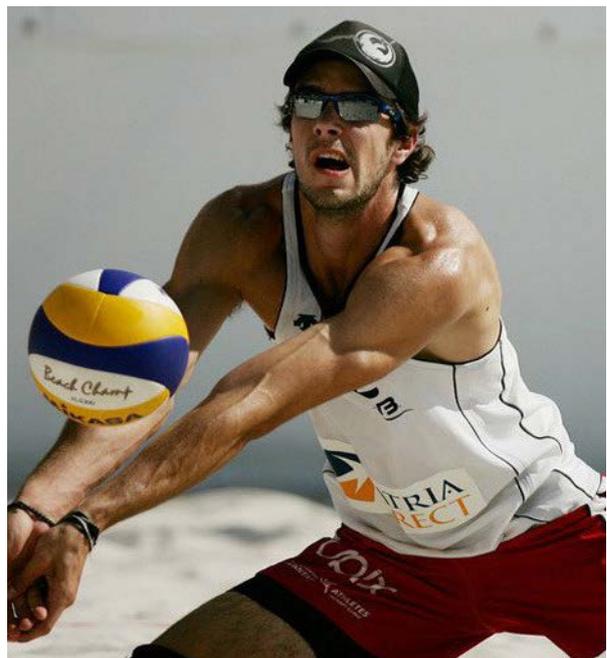
If we look to our neighbours to the north of us, in Parksville, we are emboldened by their proportion of beach access - 38 courts serving a population of 12,500 people. If we look to the interior, we see a significant increase in beach volleyball courts; Kamloops 8 (pop. 80,376), Kelowna 14 (pop. 106,707) and Penticton 8 (pop. 34,772) are all good comparisons when looking at population as well as



popularity within the sport. We are, however, encouraged by the number of community sporting facility relationships that the City of Nanaimo has created over the past number of years/decades when there has been a facility deficit perceived. Projects such as the Mariners Sports Field, the Harewood Lacrosse Box and the Nanaimo Ice Center have created a definitive increase in community access to sporting facilities. Although beach volleyball is the primary sport utilizing the Beach Volleyball courts, the sport of Spike Ball is growing in popularity and there is a group of dedicated players who frequently take up one of the courts. We are hopeful that a city with a population of over 100,000 can work to create a more accessible sporting opportunity for Nanaimo volleyball enthusiasts and satisfy demand while contributing to the City of Nanaimo's Strategic Plan, Livability goals to enhance societal health and well-being.

Upper: Jenna Carver & Kelsey Johnson - 2009 Provincial Beach Champions, "Nanaimo Residents & Nanaimo Trained"

Lower: Maverick Hatch - Team Canada Beach Volleyball, "Nanaimo Trained"



Through the City of Nanaimo's 2019-2022 Strategic plan we have been able to identify a number of Strategic Goals which tie directly into our proposal for increased facility space. These include, but are not limited to:



ECONOMIC HEALTH

Continue to work with the tourism sector to increase tourism in Nanaimo

- Sport Tourism



LIVABILITY

"Proactively plan for Nanaimo's growth and focus on community infrastructure to support an inclusive, healthy, safe and desirable place to live."

- Support arts, culture and recreation as an integral part of everyday life.
- Continue to ensure our facilities and programs are safe and accessible to all peoples in our community.



COVID

Safe outdoor spaces, getting kids back to sport and social programs.

- We will need more options for participation so youth can be supported through sport to help support mental wellness.

Members of Parliament have also identified a number of local priorities for the Nanaimo-Ladysmith constituency when looking at the local labour market needs. Through the development of the Bowen Court Beach Facility these local priorities will be addressed directly:

Support for a specific type of project:
Projects supporting not for profit organizations.

Support for projects that offer programs and/or support to specific target groups:
Children and/or youth

We are also hopeful that the City of Nanaimo will look at the challenges around accessibility to the current Beach Volleyball Court set up. At this time there is no location or opportunity for people in wheelchairs or who have other mobility challenges to watch recreational or competitive beach volleyball take place. There is no ramp to get over the curb and no flat location for viewing. This again ties directly into the City of Nanaimo's 2019-2022 Strategic Plan in creating facilities and programs are safe and accessible to all peoples in our community.



Team Canada National
Deaf Beach Volleyball Team
Trained in Nanaimo in 2013.
Rick Bevis - Head Coach.
"Nanaimo Resident"

(photo taken at competition in Bulgaria)

This is definitely an area that needs to be addressed either within the current set up or within any long-range upgrades to the facility. We have many parents and grandparents with mobility issues or strollers that need this universally accessible

infrastructure to watch their children participate and feel included in the events.

MARINERS

VOLLEYBALL CLUB

Over the past number of years, the Mariners Volleyball Club (MVC) has been the premiere local Nanaimo volleyball club for athletes vested in playing this sport at a performance level, for those youth wanting a recreational sport level experience and for those merely wanting to play this fantastic sport for social connection. The MVC also provides educated leadership and mentorship-style programming to foster development of young coaches, referees and sport staff, the need for which is paramount in our growing sporting community. We are committed to sport education, gender and cultural inclusivity, gender equity, multisport, establishing community liaisons and physical literacy promotion. MVC works in alliance with Volleyball BC and ViaSport, valuing and supporting Sport for Life frameworks.

Since its inception, MVC has grown from 4 teams to over 20 teams with over 300 yearly members. Many of these athletes have moved on to play post secondary volleyball receiving scholarships from some of the top schools in the Canada. Each year these graduated athletes continue to return and utilize the beach courts extensively. Within the last 6 years we have seen over 200 graduating athletes now participate within beach volleyball recreationally in Nanaimo adding to the growing demand for the beach volleyball facilities usage. Through the sport of Beach Volleyball there are a number of opportunities for scholarships outside of Canada. In 2014, Sarah Chase who trained at the Bowen Park Beach Courts from 2012 to 2014, received a scholarship to St. Mary's University in San Francisco to play Beach Volleyball in the NCAA.



*Sarah Chase - NCAA
Beach Volleyball,
"Nanaimo Trained"*

As one of the main user groups of the beach courts, MVC would appreciate and welcome the opportunity to work collaboratively with the City of Nanaimo to discuss future plans and opportunities to increase the number of beach volleyball courts in Nanaimo and/or support an upgrade at the current facility. Within this attached document / proposal you will find a number of items:

Bowen Park Beach Volleyball Development

- Increased number of courts

- Development of accessibility for people of disabilities

- Electrical outlet access to beach courts

- Spectator or participant pavilion

- Additional fencing (to stop balls and discs)

- Cost analysis of new post systems as the current ones are outdated for the current need.

- Appropriate maintenance equipment.

As an organization we are primed to invest financial and/or relational support based through formalized community user agreement / partnership. Mariners Volleyball Club is willing to support City staff in undertaking research, providing data or preparing draft grant applications, fundraising initiatives to offset maintenance costs. We look forward to more conversation and dialogue.

BOWEN PARK

BEACH VOLLEYBALL DEVELOPMENT

Within the attached proposal the Bowen Park Beach Volleyball venue will increase from 4 courts to 7 which will allow for a significant increase in recreational and bookable usage of the courts. There is also a location for a viewing area, temporary tents and is accessible for people with mobility issues and families with strollers. The current structure and layout of the beach volleyball courts is not currently universally accessible.

Within the past 5 years the Mariners Volleyball Club has had two parents who are wheelchair bound and are required to watch their child participate from their car, in hot summer temperatures, as there is no safe and suitable access for them. Many grandparents also face challenges in being able to get close to the courts to watch their athletes train, play or compete.

This layout will also not encroach on the disc golfing area of the park. Using a portion of the parking lot puts the focus on people over cars, encourages multimodal access to the site and does not require any tree removal or disturbance of existing park amenities.



7 COURT LAYOUT WITH VIEWING AREA



COST ANALYSIS

FENCING, EQUIPMENT, AND MAINTENANCE

The existing Bowen Park Beach Volleyball courts require additional fencing. This will help eliminate the number of balls that leave the playing area directly behind courts 3 & 4. It will also aid in the health and safety of the participants. Each year participants on all four courts are hit by golf discs that are thrown in that direction. By adding a large fence around the perimeter of court 3 this will help with protecting the participants.

The courts need an update to all of the existing beach courts and newly developed courts to allow for differentiated net heights. These new posts will allow user groups to ensure net height is suitable for both recreational activities, as well as high-performance programming that utilize the courts.

The courts also require regular maintenance to ensure the sand is safe for all participants. In order to help maintain this safety measure the courts should have an allocated tilling tractor.