



JUNIOR VOLLEYBALL REPORT TO THE HVA AGM 2019/20

THIS YEAR

This year we managed to host two successful junior competitions before lockdown brought everything to an abrupt halt. A Hampshire festival in November 2019 and a SEVA U14s Grand Prix event in January 2020 both attracted large numbers of teams both from within Hampshire and from neighbouring counties Berkshire, Sussex, Surrey and Kent.

Both events received praise from coaches, team managers, parents and players. The SEVA event was described as *“a very enjoyable tournament, very well run with plenty of volleyball for all.”* *“...was fabulously run, thank you all!”* *“...set the standard for everyone else”*. *“... it was cool, I really loved it”*.

Organising and running junior competitions brings with it many challenges and these events cannot run without the time and support offered by volunteers so I would like to offer my thanks to everyone who played their part. In particular I would like to thank Ryan Gunner at Cams School for the amount of time and energy he has given to enabling our events to happen and ensuring their success.

Plans for the next HVA festival which was due to be hosted by the New Forest Volleyball Club in March 2020 were put on hold. The Hampshire School Games volleyball competition, due to be held in June 2020 in Aldershot, which the HVA were going to organise, was cancelled for 2020.

LOOKING AHEAD

Looking ahead, the limit of 30 people to a court/hall, including adults, will seriously restrict any junior competitive opportunities we may wish to offer so it is very much a matter of ‘watch this space’.

Looking further ahead we know that the challenge of, what might on the surface appear to be simple, setting up and running junior volleyball is enormous for anyone considering doing so. The standards and expectations are quite rightly high and there are many hurdles and barriers to overcome – the need for Level 2 coaches who have the time to offer; the requirements for safeguarding and first aid training; suitable, affordable, available venues that have the necessary equipment; the costs of set up e.g. volleyballs, ball carts; the means to attract and retain juniors when there are so many options out there for them; and now of course, the need to be COVID-19 compliant. The list is long and I know we could all probably add more to it. In spite of all of this it can be done! It takes a ‘can-do’ attitude, determination, money, teamwork and long-term commitment on the part of a group of volunteers.

Within the HVA we would love to see more, organised opportunities for juniors to learn our sport in Hampshire. Juniors are the future of the sport and we need to strive to promote volleyball as a great sport that has so much to offer its participants. We have the experience, knowledge and desire to support anyone who wishes to set up junior volleyball and will welcome all enquiries from anyone thinking of setting up a club.

Beverley Cooper
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