



Date: July 30, 2003

TO: Board Members - Parks and Recreation
FROM: General Manager - Parks and Recreation
SUBJECT: MANAGEMENT OF SAND VOLLEYBALL

RECOMMENDATION

A. THAT all sand volleyball play be restricted to areas designated by the Park Board.

B. THAT the Board designate the 1998 trial volleyball areas at Locarno (6 courts at the Sailing Centre and 2 courts at the picnic site), Spanish Banks East (8 courts) and Spanish Banks West (8 courts) as permanent sand volleyball locations.

C. THAT on a one year trial basis, the Board increase the volleyball area at Kitsilano Beach from four to seven courts and install a manual watering system for the 1999 volleyball season.

POLICY

On May 11, 1998, the Board passed motions to set up trial sand-volleyball courts at Locarno, Spanish Banks and Kitsilano Beaches. A full transcript of this motion is in Appendix B.

BACKGROUND

On May 11, 1998, staff submitted a report to the Board regarding the management of volleyball on Vancouver beaches (Appendix A). In approving the sand-volleyball management plan on a trial basis for the 1998 season of play, the Board directed staff to investigate methods of reducing the impact of sand volleyball on other users of the beaches and neighbouring residents. After the trial period, staff met with the stakeholders to evaluate the dedication of sand volleyball areas and make recommendations for the future of volleyball on Vancouver beaches.

DISCUSSION

The table below indicates the designated sand-volleyball court areas and the number of courts installed for the 1998 season of play.

Beach	Proposed	Implemented	Comments
Spanish Banks	8 east and 8 west permanent posts	courts installed in June	Developed as proposed.
Locarno Picnic Area	3 courts - permanent posts	1 court installed in July	Two courts would be best given the geometry of this location.
Locarno - Sailing Centre	6 courts - anchoring system	installed in July	More secure anchor bolts will be needed for the logs.
Kitsilano Beach	8 courts	only 4 installed	Public access was increased between courts. The Plan was to increase to seven courts; but this was not implemented in 1998.

Staff also investigated inexpensive methods to control the dust at Kitsilano Beach. Fine particles of sand easily become airborne on warm dry windy days. Active sports such as sand volleyball contribute to this problem. The intent at Kitsilano Beach was to increase the number of courts and also test the dust abatement experiment. Replacement of sand and inexpensive watering systems were considered. Unfortunately, no inexpensive solution could be found so the number of courts remained at the pre-trial number (4) of courts. Hence, the Board is being asked to only approve the addition of courts at Kitsilano Beach on a one year trial basis, similar to Locarno and Spanish Banks in 1998.

Community Consultation

The community consultation for the sand-volleyball trial period consisted of two processes. As the “new” volleyball areas were established, signs were placed adjacent to the courts informing the public of the volleyball trial period as well as indicating methods for comment. Signs were placed at Spanish Banks and Locarno Beaches. Staff received ten responses from the comment line: six were positive, three were negative and one suggested better supervision of the volleyball area (Appendix C). A meeting of volleyball stakeholders and resident groups was held at the conclusion of the trial period. Eight people attended representing the perspective of volleyball players, Kitsilano residents and Point Grey residents (Appendix B). Following are the public comments and staff evaluation:

Public Comment	Staff Evaluation
<p>Controlling play in non-designated areas was a concern. In some situations, sand volleyball participants played outside of designated areas. Better public information is required to identify the designated sand volleyball location and explain the procedures to participants of sand volleyball.</p>	<p>This will be accomplished with signage that clearly identifies the designated areas and pamphlets that explain the procedures for volleyball on the beach. These pamphlets will be distributed by lifeguards, BCVA and sport rental companies. In addition, play in non-designated areas could further be reduced through the strategic placement of logs.</p>
<p>Some proponents preferred a first come, first serve use of the beach with no designated uses.</p>	<p>Given the increasing demand for sand volleyball, unrestricted use of Vancouver beaches would have a significantly negative impact on passive beach enjoyment.</p>
<p>Dedication of specific beach space for volleyball was also encouraged by some respondents. Sand volleyball courts should be available for the public on a first come, first serve basis.</p>	<p>Designating sand volleyball areas is similar to the Board's practices for tennis and sport courts. As in the case of tennis or sport courts, the Board permits a limited amount of "organized play" in designated areas. e.g. tournament and club play.</p>
<p>Desire was expressed to expand the designated volleyball areas and/or designate an area for portable nets. The popularity of this sport is attracting many new participants.</p>	<p>Kitsilano Beach can be expanded to seven courts on a trial basis, and an additional court can be added to the Locarno picnic site. Designating an additional area for portable nets is not recommended due to limited beach space and maintenance/safety concerns associated with unremoved volleyball-net spikes left buried in the sand.</p>
<p>Dust abatement is a concern for some residents living adjacent to the sand volleyball courts. The creation of dust from volleyball play is caused by silt and other fine particles found in the beach sand. In the past, staff received complaints from neighbours of Kitsilano and English Bay beaches. Comments from neighbours indicate that water is effective in reducing dust. e.g. less dust after periods of rain</p>	<p>Options considered by staff to reduce the dust problem included replacing the existing beach sand and watering the playing surface.</p> <p>Given the costs involved, staff recommends installing a manual "hose" watering system to reduce the dust problem. Experimentation with limited application of water during a 1998 Kitsilano Beach tournament improved the dust problem. A similar system is successful in reducing dust on ball diamond infields.</p>

Replace permanent posts with alternate system to maintain the natural look of the beach landscape. The vertical volleyball posts are not considered to be aesthetically pleasing.	There is a trade off between the impact posts have on the landscape and the convenience and provision of service to volleyball players. The 'log' anchoring system blends in with the landscape; however, the permanent posts system makes volleyball accessible to more players (only a net and ball are required).
Maintenance of volleyball areas is a concern. Restricting play to designated areas increases the displacement of sand in the court areas.	Additional maintenance (grading) was performed on these sites during the summer. To maintain these volleyball areas, improvements will be made during the winter (replace and build up the sand base).
Signage of volleyball areas needs to be posted and clearly visible. People need to know where the designated areas are located.	Two 12"x 24" information/public comment signs will be placed at each designated site. They will be placed between the courts and walkways/parking lots to inform all beach users.

The results of the community process and the stakeholders meeting indicate that there are two primary groups who have different perspectives on the way that Vancouver beach resources should be allocated. Many citizens who reside close to the beach are concerned about the view of the landscape, excess dust and impact on passive beach users. Other citizens, who enjoy participating in this new, and expanding, sport of sand volleyball would like to see several beach areas designated for sand volleyball.

CONCLUSION

Given the high demand for sand volleyball and the limited number of beach areas, the Board should designate and restrict volleyball play to specific areas on beaches. Signs will be posted outlining the areas and conditions of play. The installation of volleyball posts and anchoring logs in designated areas will improve beach safety by avoiding the risk of anchoring stakes lying just under the surface of the sand. Stakes left in the sand have damaged the Park Board's only beach-cleaning vehicle and delayed or prevented the beach sand from being cleaned of glass and other trash.

The irrigation system at Kitsilano Beach will be evaluated in the Fall of 1999 to confirm the improvement in dust abatement. With better public awareness, educational measures and minor operational changes, the sand-volleyball management plan will reduce/ resolve the conflict of use and maintenance issues associated with sand volleyball play.

Prepared by:
Recreation Division

In 1990, the Park Board developed a Strategic Plan which represents the Board's "Vision of the Future." The goals, objectives and policies identified in this Plan apply to the management of outdoor sport opportunities:

To provide or facilitate the provision of physical, social, cultural, artistic and intellectual recreation activities that meet the needs of all segments of the population.

To develop the park system in a manner that ensures a wide and balanced range of park environments and amenities that offer both active and passive recreation opportunities.

To provide sufficient accessible facilities to meet the needs of citizens.

The Park Board's objective for outdoor sports is to provide an adequate supply of good quality outdoor sport facilities. While the provision of sand volleyball courts falls within the goals, objectives and policies of the Vancouver Park Board, it is also recognized that there is a limited supply of parkland (especially beach area) and that most parks must serve a wide variety of users. Thus, ensuring the efficient and equitable use of parkland is critical to meeting the Board's outlined objectives.

Volleyball has historically been accommodated on Vancouver's beaches. Although no beach areas have been officially designated for volleyball, play regularly occurs on beaches with permanent volleyball posts as well as open beach areas (with portable net systems). In the fall of 1997, the Park Board instructed staff to work with the BC Volleyball Association and the other relevant stakeholders to develop a management plan for volleyball.

The purpose of this report is to review and evaluate the Park Board's management of beach volleyball. The supply and demand aspects for the sport will serve as the framework of the analysis, initially focussing on the demand for beach volleyball opportunities and then investigating the Board's ability to provide them. The Board's current practices and procedures for beach volleyball will be outlined and evaluated. Through the analysis, issues with regards to volleyball on beaches will be identified. The report will conclude with a recommended course of action for volleyball on Vancouver's beaches.

DEMAND FOR VOLLEYBALL

Outdoor volleyball is a very popular sport in the city. Volleyball is currently ranked the number two participation team sport in the world. In 1980, there were very limited outdoor volleyball

opportunities in Vancouver - no designated areas and no organized play. By 1997, the BC Volleyball Association estimated that over 10,000 people regularly play outdoor volleyball in Vancouver. Women comprise 50% of the registered volleyball players. Participation surveys indicate volleyball is popular among teens.

The increased demand for beach volleyball can be linked to the sport's public profile. The development of "pro" leagues, television coverage, and the inclusion in major sport events (e.g., Canada Games, the Olympics) have increased the public's interest in the sport. The fact that beach volleyball is a "medal" sport at the Olympics should further intensify the public's participation in the sport.

The majority of city's volleyball play occurs on an unorganized basis. Courts on beaches with permanent posts operate as drop-in facilities accommodating play on a first come, first serve basis. This arrangement is similar to Park Board's operation of tennis courts, basketball and sport courts. In terms of organized play, the majority of leagues and tournaments have been organized by the BC Volleyball Association. The Park Board also issues permits to a number of smaller leagues/tournaments which operate primarily at Locarno Beach.

SUPPLY OF COURTS

Court Requirements

A "sand" volleyball court requires a level sand based playing surface measuring 30' by 60' . The size of playing area dictates the number of courts possible. Although sand court volleyball has historically occurred on Vancouver beaches, it is possible to create off beach sand pit areas to accommodate volleyball.

Current Provision of Courts

Defining the current provision of volleyball courts on Vancouver beaches is difficult to determine. The BC Volleyball Association provides the Board with permanent posts and nets for 16 courts (see chart). However, the use of portable net systems extends potential the supply of volleyball as portable nets allow groups to set up a volleyball court in almost any beach in the city. Portable net systems are available for rent or purchase from a variety of sport shops. The BCVA has over 200 portable net systems available for rent and sells over 100 systems per year.

Volleyball Areas with Permanent Posts

Location	Number of Permanent Courts	Location	Number of Permanent Courts
Kitsilano Beach	4	Sunset Beach	1
Jericho Beach	2	English Bay	2
Spanish Banks East	1	Third Beach	1
Spanish Banks West	4	Trout Lake	1

Organized Play

The potential to provide volleyball opportunities is also influenced by the ‘permitting’ of volleyball play. Currently, the Park Board issues Park Use Permits for league and tournament volleyball play. Due to the high demand for beach activities (swimming, sunbathing, casual volleyball play, other special events, etc.) and the city’s limited beach space, the Park Board has developed the following guidelines for the use of beaches by organized volleyball:

Major Volleyball Events - more than four courts.

Events are only permitted at Kitsilano, Spanish Banks West and Locarno Beaches. League play is limited to one night per week at Kitsilano and Spanish Banks West Beaches with a maximum of sixteen nets. Tournament play is limited to one weekend per month at Kitsilano, Spanish Banks West and Locarno Beaches. Organizers of the events must be a non-profit society or a nonprofit community group.

Minor Volleyball Events - four or less courts.

Events can be accommodated at Locarno Beach and Picnic Site. Small volleyball leagues can be accommodated weekday evenings and small tournaments can be accommodated on weekends.

While the guidelines are designed to ensure organized volleyball has access to beach areas, they also reflect the competing interests for the use of beaches and the impact major volleyball events have on the surrounding park and neighbourhood. The guidelines were developed in consultation with BC Volleyball Association, park neighbours and Park Board Lifeguards and Maintenance staff.

ISSUES

1. Demand Exceeds Supply

Casual Play: The high use of portable courts is partially due to the fact that permanent courts are heavily utilized. To ensure access, groups will bring their own portable posts.

Organized Play: Other (potential) organizers of volleyball have expressed concern that the Board restricts organized volleyball to primarily BC Volleyball Association programs. To accommodate additional organized play would require additional court sites; a change in allocation practices; or a reduction in allocated court time to BCVA.

2. Maintenance Concerns

The development of wear areas (pot-holes) and the "leaving behind" of stakes and post supports in the sand are the major maintenance concerns. Both of these concerns have the potential to injure players as well as damage maintenance equipment (sand cleaning machine). The "stake and post support" problem is related to the erecting of portable net systems.

3. Conflicts with Other Users

The high demand for beach activities and the city' s limited beach space has lead to conflict between beach goers. The problem has been getting worse due to the increased popularity of beach volleyball and the portable nature of the courts.

The playing of beach volleyball can be "dusty" during periods of dry weather. This has lead to complaints from other beach users as well as from neighbouring residents.

FOR CONSIDERATION

At the request of the Park Board, Park Board staff (Recreation, Lifeguards and Beach Maintenance) met with representatives of the BC Volleyball Association to determine possible solutions to the issues identified with current beach volleyball practices. Options considered included:

- **creating a sand pit volleyball facility**

Staff considered the advantages/disadvantages of constructing a sand volleyball facility vs. designating existing beach space to volleyball. In evaluating potential off-beach sites for volleyball, it became apparent that locating a major volleyball facility adjacent to an existing beach area was most favourable as:

- the sand surface of the courts would “blend in” with the landscape if located adjacent to an existing beach or waterfront area;
- maintenance costs (sand cleaning) would be lower if located next to existing beach area.

During the summer of 1997, staff proposed the installation of a 16 court sand based volleyball facility on the grass area to the west of Spanish Banks West. Upon completion of the initial community consultation process, the Park Board decided not to proceed with the facility at this location. Comments received during the consultation process included concerns regarding the loss of the green space, the appearance of the facility and lack of washrooms. It was also suggested that the facility would be better suited on an existing beach.

Staff were unable to propose an alternative location for a major volleyball facility. Although Jericho Park meets the criteria outlined, adding a major volleyball facility would require either the removal of any existing play field in a field deficient neighbourhood or developing a passive area of the park into a sports facility. Smaller facilities are possible at other waterfront parks such as John Hendry or New Brighton Parks. While these facilities would serve to better distribute play throughout the city, the number of courts possible would not be sufficient to solve the demand related problems on the westside beaches.

- designating specific volleyball areas on existing beaches

In determining possible areas for expanded beach volleyball, consideration was given to:

- creating volleyball areas on existing beach areas which have historically been used for beach volleyball;
- matching the designated areas for volleyball (supply) with the level of activity; consistently accommodated with both the permanent and portable net systems (demand);
- designating areas for volleyball which would have the least impact on other’s use of the beach;
- designing a volleyball net support system which would eliminate the need for placing spikes in the sand.

To control maintenance concerns and conflict of use, beach volleyball play would be limited to the designated areas. These areas would also establish a maximum number of courts per beach. To reduce the "stake and post support" problem staff are recommending that installation of additional permanent posts or designing a portable post anchoring system which does not require spikes in the sand. Each type of installation has its advantages and disadvantages:

Permanent Posts

Advantages	Disadvantages
- quick and easy set-up for players; only require a net to play.	- visual impact of posts on beach.

Portable Anchoring System

Advantages	Disadvantages
- less visual impact than posts as it may be possible to design system to blend in with the rest of the beach.	- requires users to have posts and nets to play; - would require time to educate public on system set-up; - logs placement required - e.g., after cleaning the beach, others may move logs, etc. - not a "proven" system.

– volleyball play and dust

The creation of dust from volleyball play is caused by silt and other fine particles found in the beach sand. During the summer months, staff have received complaints from neighbours of Kitsilano and English Bay beaches regarding dust and volleyball. Possible solutions to the dust problems include:

- watering the playing surface

For best results a semi automated irrigation system should be installed. Given the summer time watering restriction, a salt water system would be required. This would be an expensive solution.

- change the sand in the volleyball area.

This would involve replacing the existing beach sand with a coarser sand specifically used in sand volleyball courts. How successful this would be in reducing dust is difficult to determine as beach sand would continually mix with the volleyball sand through wind erosion and sand cleaning. Costs would include the initial purchase of the sand as well as annual replacement of the sand due to erosion.

Beach Volleyball Proposals

Short Term

Park Board staff are proposing that beach volleyball only be allowed in designated areas on the beach and that the designated play areas would be defined by the placement of logs. To accommodate the demand for beach volleyball, staff are proposing that the volleyball areas at Kitsilano, Locarno and Spanish Banks Beaches be expanded to include areas historically used by volleyball. To reduce the "stake and post support" problem staff are recommending the installation of additional permanent posts or designing a portable post anchoring system which does not require spikes in the sand at the designated sites.

It is important to note that designating beach volleyball areas does not represent a new use of the beach but rather officially recognizing and managing existing use of the beaches. According to Park Board field staff, these areas have historically been used for volleyball and have accommodated this level of play with portable net systems. In addition, designation does not require major alterations to the beach. Given the low cost of designating specific areas for beach volleyball and the flexibility to adjust the area based on demand or unforeseen concerns, staff are recommending that these proposals be implemented on a trial basis for the 1998 season of play.

To deal with volleyball and dust, staff are proposing to experiment with converting a limited number of courts to a different sand to see if there is a noticeable reduction in the dust. The experiment would be at either English Bay or Kitsilano Beach.

Long Term

Staff recognize that even if the popularity of volleyball continues to increase, there is limited opportunities on the existing beaches to accommodate additional play. Thus, if more play is to be accommodated, the focus will shift to the creation of sand pit areas.

Designated Beach Volleyball Areas for 1998

Beach or Park	Existing Courts	Proposed Courts	Comment
English Bay	2	2	no change
Jericho Beach	2	2	no change
Kitsilano Beach	4	8	historically nets have been accommodated between permanent courts and the beach; beach access from the playground to increase as per agreement with neighbourhood.
Locarno Beach - West of Sailing Centre	0	6	proposed experimenting with "log tie-downs" instead of posts; currently accommodates small tournaments (four nets);
Locarno Beach - North of Picnic Site	0	3	could be booked with picnic site.
Spanish East Beach	1	8	historically has accommodates six to eight portable nets on a regular basis.
Spanish West Beach	4	8	historically has accommodated additional play.
Sunset Beach	1	1	no change
Third Beach	1	1	no change
Trout Lake	1	3	requires the creation of a sand pit area - more consultation required.

Management of Beach Volleyball

Appendix B

Motion passed by the Park Board at the May 11 meeting:

THAT the Board designate volleyball areas at Kitsilano (8 courts maximum), Locarno (6 courts at the Sailing Centre and 3 courts maximum at the picnic site), Spanish Banks East (8 courts) and West (8 courts) Beaches on a trial basis for the 1998 season of play.

THAT volleyball play be restricted to designated areas unless authorized (permitted) by the Board.

THAT the Board review/evaluate the dedication of beach volleyball areas after this trial period.

THAT staff investigate and report back to the Board on methods of reducing any dust problems associated with volleyball play.

THAT beach volleyball courts shall not be placed in a manner that impedes reasonable public access to the water.

THAT beach volleyball courts shall not be placed in a manner that impedes sight lines to the beach and water from adjoining public view spaces and communities.

THAT the evaluation of the 1998 trial process shall take the form of a stakeholder forum process including but not limited to Park Board staff, BC Volleyball Association, Kits Point Residents Association and NW Point Grey Homeowners Association, Kitsilano Community Association, and the West Point Grey Community Association to advise Park Board on the trial process and make recommendations for the future.

THAT the evaluation shall consider the appropriateness of the continued alienation of public beaches to private volleyball use.

THAT the evaluation shall also consider a means by which the various impacts created by beach volleyball might be controlled.

Public Comment and Feedback

Appendix C

Comments included:

- permanent post makes play affordable;
- more courts or an over flow area to accommodate excess demand are required (2);
- better sand required;
- do not remove grass to install additional courts;
- volleyball causes dust, noise, disruption of other beach activities problems (2).

No comments were received regarding Kitsilano Beach due to the fact that the volleyball area was not increased from four to seven courts.

Stakeholders' Meeting - October 14th at West Point Grey Community Centre.

The meeting was attended by representatives of the Kitsilano Point Residents' Association, Kitsilano Community Centre, North West Point Grey Homeowners' Association, BC Volleyball Association, Kitsilano Beach Volleyball Group, Vancouver Sport and Social Club and staff from the Park Board's Operations and Recreation Divisions. Concerns raised at the meeting included:

- signage of volleyball sites
- dust from volleyball play
- dedicating of beach space for a special use
- controlling play in non designed areas
- maintenance of volleyball areas

Add letter from NW Homeowners' Association to Commissioners' package only.

Dust Abatement

Appendix D

Replacement of Sand

Estimated cost to replace sand for seven courts is \$15,000. Option may not be successful due to the mixing with native beach sand - wind erosion and beach sand cleaning.

Installation of a Watering System

Comments from neighbours indicate that water is effective in reducing dust - e.g., less dust for days after periods of rain, experiment with limited water during a tournament improved the situation.

Estimated cost to bring water supply to volleyball area - \$8,000. The volleyball area could either be manually watered with hose system or an automated irrigation system could be installed (additional \$10,000).

Watering System	Advantages	Disadvantages
Manual	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- less expensive- use can be tailored based on the need for water.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- relies on staff or user to operate.- time required to water seven courts
Automated	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- quick application of water.- does not rely on staff or users to apply.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- more expensive.- more difficult to apply when beach/walkway in use.

Given the costs involved, staff are recommending installing a manual "hose" watering system to reduce the dust problem. A similar system is successful in reducing dust on ball diamond infields. An automated irrigation system could be considered at a later date if this system is not success in reducing the dust problem.