

PRESIDENT

Tony Jolly

SECRETARY

P. Edge,
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Mr. M. Mansfield,
21 Pilcher Street,
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REPLY Sent 24/4/79.

Dear Murray,

You maybe aware that volleyball in Country S.A. is making great strides forward at present. At the time I arrived in S.A. (from Warrnambool 4 years ago), Port Pirie, Mount Gambier and Broken Hill were the only centres where volleyball was played. Whyalla and Port Augusta came on the scene soon after and have rapidly become powerful Associations, but during the last 12 months the advent of Community Recreation Centres has meant the growth of volleyball in those areas indicated on the map. Mind you some of these places still operate on a semi-social bases, but the enthusiasm is pretty obvious. Three more Recreation Centres will be operating in the Riverland area before too long (Wakerie, Loxton, Berri), hence further growth is evident. I envisage that volleyball will also be played in two other major cities, Murray Bridge and Port Lincoln in due course, and when that happens we'll have volleyball being played in approximately 16 country centres.

There you have a brief history etc. With your experience in the Victorian country scene, I'd like to get your views and comments on various aspects in regard to the future in S.A.

COUNTRY TITLES At present we gather on a holiday weekend in October with the five major Associations (Port Pirie, Mount Gambier, Port Augusta, Whyalla, Broken Hill) supplying teams for a Division 1 and 2 men and women (4 teams from most Associations). These games fit neatly over a weekend using 2 court stadiums. Now, Riverland and Mannum are showing interest in competing. Soon it may be practical to eliminate the second teams from the major Association, to bring in the smaller Association. Or could we augment a 2nd division to be played at another centre at another time? I'll give you a summary of facilities now existing. Broken Hill (this years c.c venue) has 3 courts along with Whyalla and Renmark and Port Augusta. Port Pirie, Mount Gambier and Kadina has 2 courts, while the rest are one court Centres at this stage.

JUNIOR TITLES These are now held, without great representation, in Adelaide in conjunction with an inter club senior carnival. They are under 17 age group only. More Primary school aged volleyball is now being played, but no plans have been made to include them yet.

COUNTRY COUNCIL At this stage our Country Council is made up of delegates from the respective Association. For convenience, meetings are held during various events - such as the State junior titles over Easter - the Country junior titles in June, and the Country championships in October. There is a thought that as the number of Associations grow, the State could be divided up with a Country Council member being responsible for several Associations. From what I know this is the way Country Basketball in Victoria operates. Again for convenience purposes, our President and Secretary have come from the same Association. Last year Mount Gambier took this role, this year its Port Augusta's turn. I know this is not the most

desirable method, because at sometime or another we could run into some very poor organisers. From a financial view point, the Country Council do not have a single cent to bless themselves. Only last year SAVA sought affiliation fees - now after a few hassles Associations pay out \$1.50 per senior player and \$1.00 a junior (who plays in senior competitions). Any cost incurred by Tony Jolly or myself is out of our own pocket, although I understand SAVA will view kindly representation to be recompensed. Tony and I believe at least 20% of affiliation fees should go to the Country Council.

Don't get me wrong - particularly the coaches commission, is doing a great deal for volleyball in the country, especially from a coaching angle.

To participate in any country event certainly costs Associations and players a pretty penny. Like last year the Port Augusta Association paid out \$1000 to transport (its 800 km and 12 hours) our 4 teams to the Country titles in Mount Gambier - then the players paid their own motel accomadation. This year it will cost us around \$700 to go to Broken Hill. So you see because we live in far flung regions its always going to be costly to compete. Of course central venues such as Adelaide or the Riverla are desirable, but naturally all Association like the opportunity to host an important event.

Can I just make mention of game formats. Now, here in Port Augusta we play the best of five sets, and we are probably one of the very few Associations who do so. We have sampled time limits and are very adverse to it. The last Country Championship saw time limit games imposed and mostly we found it highly undersirable. We had a host of drawn games, and others decided by a result of 8 points to 6 in a 3rd set. What format do you adopt? Surely 3 set matches or the best of 3 sets without imposing dreadful time limits are more acceptable?

Incidently the 3 Associations in this area - Port Pirie, Whyalla and Port Augusta clash each year in a series which we call the Iron Triangle titles. Each field 2 mens and 2 womens teams in a one day event. That means 12 games are played and the winner is the Association which wins the most matches. Competition is understandably very intense. Last weekend it was held for 1979 and Port Pirie was first with 7½ points, Port Augusta scored 2½ and Whyalla 2. Yes, we had a draw game because of that horrible time limit.

This brings me to a final question - What would be the chance of holding a country interstate game between Victoria and South Australia? After our Country Championship we name a select 12 men and women, but they never play a game. Perhaps sometime in November the State teams could meet, say on Saturday in Warrnambool or Hamilton with a return game in Mount Gambier on the Sunday. Two games would make it worthwhile for those players who would have to travel long distances to play. By the way this is on our agenda for a C.C. meeting this coming weekend.

There's a fairly comprehensive insight to the country volleyball scene in S.A. - it certainly would be good to get your comments.

Regards

Philip Edge
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