

AUSSIE VOLLEY NEWS

Newsletter of Australian Volleyball Federation



NATIONAL SCHOLARSHIPS LAUNCHED

Eight men and eight women were awarded National team scholarships under a scheme announced by the AVF in Canberra on 12 March at a function to launch the project.

The Federation has created the scholarships to promote, provide, encourage, and develop athletes to pursue and achieve excellence and make a contribution towards qualifying for the 1988 Olympics. It is designed to lift Australia's world ranking and the scheme is being supported by the AIS, AOF, Australian Sports Commission, Ansett, Asics Tiger, and Molten.

It is expected that the athletes receiving a scholarship will be successful in improving performance in a structured program. The scheme is a direct result of our evaluation of the past few years' program and is the most challenging project undertaken by volleyball.

Coaches Jacek Sanka's (men) and Hisato Shirai's positions are being funded by the Australian Sports Commission. Sanka represented Poland at senior and junior level and has a masters degree in physical education while Shirai has coached women's team Kanebo in the highly competitive Japanese National League.

The AIS has provided access to facilities for training and the AOF funding under a forward planning grant. Asics Tiger supply uniforms while Ansett and Molten supply travel and equipment. The AVF will provide accommodation and the players will cover living expenses.

Women scholarship holders are from Western Australia, South Australia, NSW and the ACT, with preference given to the junior national team that has qualified for the world junior championships in Italy in September. They are Gillian Allen, Julia Cox, Avril Wentworth, Laurel Wentworth (ACT), Mandy Combes (WA), Michelle Rollinson, Delma Smith (NSW) and Kaye Dowley (SA).

The main commitments for the men is the Asian qualifying tournament for the World Championships. They are Craig Hoy, Jeff Hart (NSW), Matthew Perry, Greg Doyle, Gabriel Mauerhofer (Vic), Steve Power (ACT); Rowan Turner (ACT) Special Development scholarship.

All scholarships have been after consultation with athletes to ensure that study or work can be transferred to Canberra. Players will train up to 26 hours (six sessions of three hours and four of two) a week with a balanced program of technical, physical and mental components. The AVF scholarships have been granted under the same guidelines as those of the Institute to facilitate the transfer of players to full-time Institute scholarships as soon as volleyball is included.

The executive director of the Institute, John Cheffers, warmly welcomed volleyball's involvement with the Institute even if "tangentially" at this stage and hinted at the possibility of it soon joining the Institute sports. He was supported by the general manager of the ASC, Greg Hartung.

The AVF president, Gordon Duffus, said his sport had in the past 12 to 18 months become even more conscious of the challenges offered by the Government and the International Volleyball Federation. These involved achieving the status of leader in Oceania volleyball, becoming an even more competitive Asian and world force and, domestically, volleyball becoming a major spectator sport able to rival those which currently dominate media and public interest.

"The AVF naturally hopes to be involved at the AIS here in Canberra on a permanent basis soon," he said. "The scholarships have been offered to eight men and women identified as having the potential to improve sufficiently to make very significant contributions up to and including the Seoul Olympics."