

Tuks volleyball triumphs

The coach was hesitant to single out a single player, but said she felt Wentzel deserved a special mention.

The Tuks women's beach volleyball team capped a brilliant season at the weekend when they won the Varsity Beach Volleyball Tournament in Durban.

It means that the University of Pretoria has won an unprecedented seven of the Varsity Competitions and for the first time three of the four women's tournaments.

Vanessa Sardinha-da Silva and Jaime-Lee Wentzel, who played in the final against the University of Johannesburg (UJ), also made local history in becoming only the second team

to win the Varsity as well as the USSA beach volleyball-titles in the same year.

Tuks beat UJ 52-20 in the final. With this victory, the team proved that perseverance does pay off. In the past five years, Tuks contested the Varsity-final on two previous occasions but got unstuck against the University of the Western Cape.

Sardinha-da Silva ascribed their success to hard work and a change of mentality.

"We realised that if you think you are going to lose you will lose.

"So we backed ourselves each time we took to the court.

"Shannon de Vries and Khutso Letsoalo played a major part in ensuring that we do reach the final," she said after the tournament.

The Tuks coach, Dina Kladis, said the Thursday morning just before the team left for Durban, she got a gut feeling that everything would go well.

"I could feel the positive energy in the team. I thought in a way that the other teams and players looked at us with awe and respect throughout the tournament," said an elated Kladis.

"It has been a while since that has happened. There are no words to describe the utter joy, excitement and deep satisfaction for achieving our goals."

The coach was hesitant to single out a single player, but said she felt Wentzel deserved a special mention.

"Jaime-Lee has always been overlooked as a player, but she undoubtedly has been the stabilising factor in our team," said the coach.

"She is the reason why we qualified for the final last year."



The successful Tuks women's beach volleyball team, from left, are Vanessa Sardinha-da Silva, Jaime-Lee Wentzel, Dina Kladis (coach), Khutso Letsoalo and Shannon de Vries. **Photo: Reg Caldecott**