



Tuks seeking to go one up in beach volleyball

The Tuks women's beach volleyball team already ticked off one major goal on their bucket list this year by winning the USSA Tournament.

The USSA-final was, in fact, an all Tuks affair. Vanessa Sardina-da Silva and Jaime-Lee Wentzel beat Shannon de Vries and Dominique Gachet to take the gold medal.

To go one better in this week's Varsity Beach Volleyball Tournament in Durban, is the next challenge the team set itself.

Last year, UP-Tuks lost to UWC in the final. The year before, they also stumbled at the last hurdle. So it is a scenario of hopefully it being third time lucky.

The players were under no illusion as to what this would take, said Vanessa Sardina-da Silva.

They realised they were in for a tough challenge, but would not want it any other way.

"To play beach volleyball is not difficult. Anyone can do it. However to be competitive means that you got to be able to push yourself deep 'into the red' and I don't mean only physically," she said.

"You got to think all the time while playing. That is the tricky part. Everything happens so quickly. So at times, you got less than a second to decide where you are going to play the ball."

The secret to being competitive in beach volleyball boiled down to finding the gap and playing the gap, explained Sardina-da Silva.

Good communication between teammates was also of the utmost importance.

"When your eyes are on the ball, it is

difficult to see what is happening on the other side of the net, but your teammate can," said Sardina-da Silva.

"So your teammate has got to call where the ball should go to catch the opposition off-guard. One of the setbacks we have at Tuks is that none of us are very tall. On average, female beach volleyball players are 1.80m and taller. So our challenge is to make up for what we lack in length with smart play."

Wentzel, who was on the bench for the last year's final, said fitness was also essential because being just two players chasing a ball on eight by eight metres court on loose sand tends to take its toll as did playing in the heat.

Their coach, Dina Kladis, ascribed the team's success to long-term planning.

"What is happening now is part of a four-year plan. We have put an adequately-structured programme in place to identify talented players, and through a group system, we systematically help players to improve," said Kladis.

"I used to be more involved with indoor volleyball which is an entirely different ball game. That is why I got Vita Nel, a former Olympian, to help with finer intricacies. Her contribution to our success is invaluable."

The UP-Tuks team in Durban is Vanessa Sardina-da Silva, Jaime-Lee Wentzel, Shannon de Vries and Khutso Letsoalo.



Shannon de Vries, one of the Tuks team's stalwarts, in action.



Vanessa Sardinha-da Silva, Jaime-Lee Wentzel are the current University Sport South Africa (USSA) champions in beach volleyball. Photo's: Reg Caldecott

SPECIALS

on
Tyres, Shocks & Brakes

Follow us on Twitter for regular local news updates:

@RekordNewspaper

"The best car safety device is a rear-view mirror with a cop in it!"

-Dudley Moore

autodealer
ALL THINGS CAR

NEW CARS | PRE-OWNED CARS | CAR NEWS

BUY FROM AVIS. GET FAST ACCESS TO OVER 1000 ONE-YEAR-OLD MODELS.

