Beach Volleyball Becomes Sixth NJCAA Sport

Leesburg, Fla. – A few short months after the addition of both men's and women's cross country, Lake-Sumter State College will be adding its sixth sport, beach volleyball.

Approved by the District Board of Trustees during their May meeting, beach volleyball becomes the most recent NJCAA affiliated sport for the college. It will be based out of the Leesburg campus, but will call Hickory Point Sand Volleyball Complex out of Tavares, home.

"We are excited to begin this new emerging sport and for the partnership with Hickory Point and USVA Florida Region," said Athletic Director, Mike Matulia. "Our beach players will have access to a world class facility and be one of the first state colleges in Florida to participate in this sport."

Since 2012, beach volleyball has been one of the fastest growing sports in the NCAA. In April of 2018, the NJCAA Board of Directors passed the adoption of beach volleyball to become a full-time varsity sport beginning in 2019. It is the first sport added by the NJCAA since the half marathon and women's lacrosse in 2003-04.

"I grew up playing beach, almost as long as I've played indoor," said Head Volleyball Coach, Amanda Phelps. "Beach volleyball has opened more doors for females to pursue scholarships and become collegiate student-athletes. I am so excited to see the beach game grow at the collegiate level- and that we get to be a part of it!"

Lake-Sumter joins a list of 26 other schools across the country that are looking to add beach volleyball in 2019-20. Other Florida schools making the move include: Eastern Florida State College, Florida State College – Jacksonville, Indian River State College, Polk State College, St. Johns River State College, St. Petersburg College, Florida Southwestern State College and State College of Florida.

Player Spotlight: Robbie Scott  Position: Second Base

Scott turned in one of the program's best performances in a single season. The sophomore finished the year with the second most hits (80), fourth most total bases (112) and stolen bases (24), while taking over the top spot with 62 runs scored in a single season. He was recently named to the All-District Gold Glove Team.

Coach Billings on Scott:
“It has been an amazing two years with Robbie Scott. He’s an awesome young man to coach and I thoroughly enjoyed watching him on the field. He will do great things in the future.”
Student-Athletes of the Year

Male Student-Athlete of the Year, Jarrett Backus – Sophomore, Baseball
Backus drove in 37 RBI's and scored 42 runs in 45 games this season. The Apopka native also owns the painfully earned mark of most hit by pitches in a season (20) and a career (36). Backus played in over 90 games during his two years as a Lakehawk.

Female Student-Athlete of the Year, Emma Gray – Sophomore, Volleyball
Gray was announced as an Honorable Mention All-America selection back in December. She completed her playing career at Lake-Sumter on Nov. 14 after helping her team to an 11th place finish at the NJCAA National Tournament in Charleston, WV.

Tip of the month!
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