

## Lauren to spark up beach series

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LAUREN Spark's grade five class will be 'googling' her performance this weekend after she travels to Bendigo to compete in the VicBeach Regional Volleyball Series.

The Caroline Springs Primary School teacher will join forces with Sarah Battaglione in the event which will attract Olympians, world champions and national champions to the heart of Bendigo.

The pair will go into this weekend's tournament as the number one seed in the women's draw and will play their first match on Friday evening.

Spark, who grew up in Melbourne's northern suburbs, says it is a great idea to move beach volleyball off the beach and into regional centres.

"I've always thought the game should be played closer to the city," Spark said.

"And it's great to play in a regional town that is as populated as Bendigo.

"To bring the beach to them will get some of the Bendigo's indoor volleyball kids interested in the game."

Spark is also looking forward to playing in the centre of Bendigo, which she acknowledged is a very volleyball-orientated town.

"I'm pretty excited and can't wait to get up there," she said.

"I'm really excited for the Bendigo event the most because it is such a great volleyball community."

The grade five teacher is passionate about volleyball and has been promoting it with her students, inviting professional players including Tamsin Barnett, Rhiannon Watt and Caitlin Thwaites to her school to teach the game.

"They all know what I do and that I'm a volleyball player," she said.

"I'm definitely trying to get the kids more involved in volleyball."

The VicBeach Regional Series will hit Bendigo this weekend and will be played in the Williamson Street car park near Rosalind Park.



**NUMBER ONE:** Lauren Spark headlines the women's field for this weekend's VicBeach Regional Volleyball Series in Bendigo.