

## New-look pairs duel on the sand

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THE beach is coming to Bendigo today, as the nation's best beach volleyball players compete in the Virgin Blue Regional Series.

The series, which runs from today until Sunday evening, will feature three-time Olympian Josh Slack and dual Olympian Tamsin Barnett-Hinchley as well as several world and junior champions.

The tournament will be the first professional hit-out for several partnerships, including second-seed Damien Schumann and Owen Boland, who will use the regional series as a pathway to the World Tour and the 2012 London Olympic Games.

Top seeds Josh Slack and Brett Richardson are also a new partnership hoping to gain experience at the tournament, with Slack hoping to be granted a place in his fourth consecutive Olympic games. The Bendigo tournament will mark the return of Athens and Beijing Olympian Barnett-Hinchley, who only months ago gave birth to her first child, Arli.

Also on show will be some of the best up-and-coming young players, including Bendigo's own Karly Hynes and 16-year-old Sydney sensation Maria-fe Artacho, who both reached the finals at this year's Youth Olympic Games in Sydney.

The event will be competed in pairs, with qualifying matches taking place this afternoon before the main draw hits off tomorrow morning.

Play-offs in the Bendigo leg of the Virgin Blue Regional Series will be contested on Sunday afternoon.

The women's final will start at 2.30pm, and the men's final at 3.30pm. Grandstand seating will be available for spectators at the Williamson Street car park, where the event will be run.

The Bendigo tournament will be held adjacent to Lansell Gardens and near Rosalind Park, opposite The Hotel Shamrock on Pall Mall.