

VOLLEYBALLERS HEAT UP MOAMA

Monday, March 01, 2010 | By Monique Preston

Isaac Kappa showed why he is number one in Australian beach volleyball when he teamed up with three-time Olympian Josh Slack to win the final of the Vic Beach Virgin Blue Regional Beach Volleyball Series men's competition in Moama yesterday.

A new team, Kappa and Slack showed their skills throughout the three-day competition as they won their way to a place in the final. Until a week ago, Kappa had been volleyball partners with Dan Carey. Yesterday, they faced off against each other as opponents in the final.

The shortest men's player in the competition _ at 179cm _ Carey teamed up with Bendigo's Peter `Chico' Jones for the competition. Kappa and Slack showed their supremacy on the court in the final, defeating Carey and Jones in two sets, 21-15, 21-13.

Earlier, Australia's number two Australian women's pair, Lauren Stark and Sarah Battaglione, won the women's final in a hard fought-match which went to three sets. Against Rhi Watts and Christy Mace, Stark and Battaglione had a fight on their hands as they won one set and lost the other, before going into the deciding set which they took out 16-14.

Yesterday's finals were the last of 35 matches in the tournament. With 32 players taking part, there was non-stop volleyball from Friday night until late Sunday afternoon.

Vic Beach director Greg Jury said the aim of the series was to take the sport to regional centres in the hope of creating more beach volleyball ``hubs". It was the first time the series has been played in Moama, giving district residents a chance to see some of the country's best players in action. ``The men's (competition), in particular, is world class," Jury said.

As well as the three-day competition, there was also a corporate challenge and a club challenge on Friday afternoon to give district residents a chance to give the sport a try. Jury said he was a little disappointed with crowd numbers in Moama, but said those who had turned out to watch had enjoyed it.

With the regional series being trialled in Victoria and border towns like Moama, he said it would take a bit of time to make people aware of the sport and encourage them to go and watch it.

``It's a new product. It will take time," Jury said. However, he believes the competition will come back to Moama again in the future. ``We'll have a de-brief and come up with solutions to get more people along."

