



History of Beach Volleyball in Greece

Beach volleyball in Greece made its first official appearance in 1988, when the Volleyball Clubs Association of Western Attica (Piraeus) organised the first 4-on-4 tournaments on 7½ sq. m. courts, at the Hellenic Tourism Organisation beach in the Athens suburb of Varkiza. The first beach volleyball rules in Greek were published by the the VCAWA, based on a pamphlet sent to it by the Association of Volleyball Professionals (AVP) in the USA. The VCAWA also organised the first ever women's tournaments in 1989.

The Hellenic Volleyball Federation organised its own tournament in 1989, with 3-a-side teams, retaining the smaller dimensions of the court.

As the VCAWA discontinued its activities on the beach, the Panhellenic Association of Volleyball Players, better known by its Greek acronym of PASAP, took over. PASAP organised men's only tournaments at the beach in Varkiza. Another prestigious tournament of that period was organised on the Saronic Gulf island of Aegina by the local club of Saronikos, aided by the Municipal authority.

As of 1991, the Hellenic Volleyball Federation completely took over beach volleyball and immediately gave organisational rights for a panhellenic tour to a company called Volleyball Progress Association, founded expressly for this purpose. The VPA organised tournaments throughout Greece for the next three years. Under the VPA the tour emerged outside of Attica for the first time, visiting such popular locations as Corfu, Chalkidiki and Kalamata. The 3-on-3 format was retained, but the court was enlarged to a standard 9 sq. m. As of 1991, the VPA developed a seeding system according to which players were assigned their positions on the Main Draw table.

The Champions of Greece 1994-2000

Year	Men	Women
1994	Michalis Triantafyllidis	Lia Mitsi Anna Xerikou
1995	Michalis Triantafyllidis Stelios Kazazis	Vasso Karadassiou Efi Sfyri
1996	Dimitris Kazazis Vangelis Economou	Anna Xerikou Fidanka Saparevska
1997	Michalis Triantafyllidis Panayotis Mavrakis	Vasso Karadassiou Efi Sfyri
1998	Vangelis Koutouleas Panos Dimitrakakos	Vasso Karadassiou Efi Sfyri
1999	Manolis Roumeliotis Thanassis Michalopoulos	Agi Babuli Ingrid Murzaku
2000	Michalis Alexandropoulos Elias Arabatzis	Agi Babuli Ingrid Murzaku
2001	Manolis Roumeliotis Thanassis Michalopoulos	Vasso Karadassiou Efi Sfyri
2002	Thanassis Michalopoulos Pavlos Beligratis	Pola Kitsou Maria Tsiartsiani

The first official 2-on-2 matches in Greece were held in 1992, at a single tournament of that year's tour. In the final of that tournament Michalis Triantafyllidis and Yorgos Spanos defeated Stelios Kazazis and Theodoros Andreadis 15-11.

Following the guidelines of the International Volleyball Federation (FIVB), the Hellenic Volleyball Federation formed its own Beach Volleyball Council as of 1994. By that time the contract with the VPA had expired and the HVBF completely took over the organisation of the sport. As of 1994, the HVBF instituted the Panhellenic Championships, enforcing the full international rules of the game.

The first Panhellenic Tour, in 1994, included eight stops and had a total prize money of 21.6 million drachmae (16 million for men and 5.6 million for women). A total of 110 men and 39 women from all over the country took part. Amongst them, for the first time in Greece, foreigners: John Eddo and Sean Fallowfield of the USA and Jackie Vukosha of Australia. As the sport grew rapidly over the next years, the tour expanded to include many other popular locations throughout the country. Since the first tournament of 1994, the Prize Money has risen to almost 33 million drachmae in total for the summer of 2000.

Michalis Triantafyllidis undisputedly reigned on the courts during the early years of the sport's development in Greece. In 1994 he also won the special King of the Beach tournament, which was never again repeated, and in total he holds the record of three career titles. But in 2001, Manolis Roumeliotis and Thanassis Michalopoulos became the first team to win the Panhellenic title twice. In women's competitions, Vasso Karadassiou and Efi Sfyri began in 1995 an amazing career that brought them international acclaim. Their success abroad, including their impressive qualification to the Sydney Olympics in 2000, a first for Greek volleyball, meant that their appearances on the domestic circuit were reduced to those times when their international schedule allowed.