



San Francisco Open Storylines - July 5-8, 2018

- **History / Significance of location:** The AVP Pro Tour, the longest running professional beach volleyball tour in the world, will make its return to Pier 30/32, The Embarcadero, for the San Francisco Open from July 5-8. The stunning Bay Bridge backdrop makes this AVP Pro Tour stop especially unique and fun for fans, viewers, and players alike. The tournament will be made up of 16 Main Draw teams for men and women - 10 auto entries, two wild cards, and four qualifier teams.
- **New Partnership with Amazon Prime video**
To enhance the AVP Pro Tour viewer experience, AVP has teamed up with Amazon Prime Video to livestream all of the Main Draw matches at each tour stop through the year 2020. Viewers in more than 200 countries and territories will be able to watch live and on-demand AVP content including all of the Main Draw matches from the San Francisco Open. Fans in the U.S. will be able to watch one final on Sunday, July 8 and then catch the other final on NBCSN on Tuesday, July 10 at 3 p.m. PT. Viewers outside the U.S. will be able to watch both men's and women's finals live on Amazon Prime Video.
- The four-day competition will feature the top, professional beach volleyball athletes including **Stanford Alum Alix Klineman and her partner and two-time Olympic medalist April Ross; Olympian and Stanford coach Lauren Fendrick, two-time Olympian Sean Rosenthal and partner former NBA player Chase Budinger,** returning male champion Maddison McKibbin (who will be partnering with brother Riley McKibbin), and returning female champions Kelley Larsen and Betsi Flint (both with new partners.) Other Northern California natives including Ali Daley McColloch (Grass Valley, Calif.) and Karissa Cook (Santa Cruz, Calif.) will also return to battle for the title and prize purse.

Local Players / Talent

- **Alix Klineman (Stanford alumni / Manhattan Beach, Calif.)** - At 6' 5", Alix is an extremely talented volleyball athlete who quickly became a standout in a highly competitive volleyball environment at Mira Costa High School in Manhattan Beach. She became a four-time All American at Stanford University, recognized as Player of the Year by Volleyball Magazine and the Pac-10 Conference, a Pan American Games gold medalist - to name a few. Klineman played indoor internationally for many years in Italy and Brazil at an extremely high level. She moved back from overseas to the U.S., started playing on the AVP Tour, was awarded the 2017 Rookie of the Year, and is now partnered with two-time Olympian, April Ross. Klineman and Ross took home first place in the recent 2018 Austin Open.
- **April Ross (Costa Mesa, Calif.)** - Ross leads the female pack in titles with 30 AVP titles and will be playing with Stanford Alumni Alix Klineman. The pair won their first AVP title as a team at the 2018 Austin Open on May 20. A two-time Olympian, Ross won the San Francisco Open title in 2016 and holds an Olympic bronze medal from the 2016 Olympic Games and a silver from the 2012 Olympic Games. The duo already has an Austin Open title together and won their very first tournament overseas at the FIVB four-star tournament in The Hague, Netherlands in January.
- **Lauren Fendrick (Los Altos, Calif.)** - Four-time AVP champion Fendrick is a 2016 Rio Olympian and volunteer assistant coach at Stanford. She is married to Stanford Beach Volleyball Head Coach, Andrew Fuller and she graduated from USC's Law School in 2010 plus passed the bar. Fendrick is partnering with Sarah Sponcil and will be playing in the Main Draw.

- **Karissa Cook (Saratoga, Calif.)** - Cook is a Stanford alumni and has been a beach volleyball assistant coach at Stanford since 2015. Cook played as a setter for Stanford helping the team to the NCAA Regional finals twice. An engineering major, she left the school ranked seventh all-time in assists. Cook then transferred to Hawai'i where she played beach volleyball and received a Master's degree in Civil and Environmental Engineering. Cook is one of four kids and her younger brother Brian played volleyball at Stanford too. Cook will be playing with partner Katie Spieler.
- **Brittany Howard (Los Altos, Calif.)** - Standing at 6' 3", Howard is a 2012 graduate of Mountain View High and a Stanford Alum with a degree in Science, Technology and Society. She played for Pepperdine for one season as a graduate student in her fifth year of eligibility. Howard will be playing with partner Kelly Reeves in the Main Draw.
- **Myles Muagututia (Oceanside, Calif.)** - Myles is a gifted athlete who played football and volleyball at Stanford, and also played basketball in addition to the two sports in high school. In High School, Myles was named to *Volleyball Magazine's* Fab 50 as one of the best high school seniors from the class of 2009 and led Francis Parker School in San Diego to four consecutive CIF San Diego Section Division IV volleyball titles. Myles will play with partner Kyle Friend in the qualifiers.
- **Allie Wheeler (Saratoga, Calif.)** - Wheeler, from Saratoga, is now the Director of Operations for Cal Poly beach volleyball program and pursuing her MBA at Cal Poly. She is playing in the qualifiers with beach volleyball partner, Nicolette Martin.
- **Ali Daley McColloch (Grass Valley, Calif.)** - McCulloch was recently named as the head beach volleyball coach for UC Davis starting July 2, 2018. She is a former Big West Conference Freshman of the Year and has been a professional player for the past decade. Her favorite AVP Pro Tour stop is San Francisco because she loves the city and her family is close by. McColloch and partner Kendra VanZweiten will compete in the Main Draw.
- **Cole Fiers (Palos Verdes Estates, Calif.)** - Fiers played at Stanford and was considered a Top Setting Recruit in the nation. Fiers studied Psychology and Sustainability at Stanford and is playing in the qualifiers with partner Andy Benesh.

Former NBA Player Turns Volleyball

- **Chase Budinger (Encinitas, Calif.)** - Former NBA star turned pro beach volleyball player Chase Budinger makes his debut this year on the AVP. The 30-year-old stands at 6' 7" and is partnering with two-time Olympian Sean Rosenthal. While in the NBA for seven seasons, Budinger played for the Rockets, Pacers, Timberwolves and Suns. He played with All-Star Kevin Love in Minnesota, almost won the Slam Dunk contest in 2006 and took a charge from LeBron James that he says felt for the next week. During his basketball career, Budinger loved to play volleyball during the offseason in Hermosa Beach as a way to work on his lower body strength and improve his athleticism. He often played with the likes of current Los Angeles Lakers head coach Luke Walton and NBA champion Richard Jefferson, both graduates of Budinger's alma mater the University of Arizona. The McKibbin brothers who also play on the AVP posted a recent [video](#) recently of them playing together.

Defending San Francisco Open Champions

- **Maddison McKibbin (Honolulu, Hawaii)** – M. McKibbin is the defending San Francisco Open champion, looking for his second title in the City by the Bay. His only AVP victory thus far has been from the 2017 San Francisco Open. The 6' 4" McKibbin was a three-time state champion at Punahou High in Honolulu for indoor volleyball. He was the MVP of both the 2009 Volleyball Magazine Fab 50 list as well as the Mizuno/Volleyball Magazine All-American Team. After graduating high school, Maddison continued his indoor career as opposite/outside hitter at the University of Southern California. His brother, Riley McKibbin, also attended USC and was the setter (twice advancing to the Final Four). After graduating from USC, the brothers played professionally over in Europe and then transitioned to beach volleyball on the AVP Pro Tour, where they play together and are known by fans as the 'Bearded Brothers.'

- **Betsi Flint (Phoenix, Ariz.)** - Flint and new partner, Emily Day, are walking into the San Francisco Open with a fresh first place finish from the 2018 Seattle Open on June 24. Flint placed first at the San Francisco Open in 2017 with former partner, Kelly Larsen. Flint started her volleyball career indoor at Loyola Marymount University, where she competed for four years and left the program as the school's all-time leader in both digs and aces. She then joined LMU's beach team for two seasons and was selected as an All-American both seasons. She became the youngest team to win an AVP tournament in September 2015 when she and Kelley Larsen won all five matches in Cincinnati. The duo was a combined 46 years, 4 months, 27 days. En route to the title Larsen and Metter Flint upset the tournament's teams seeded second, third, fourth and sixth.
- **Kelly Larsen (San Diego, Calif.)** - At 6' 2", Larsen left Pepperdine as the sand program's all-time winningest player with 101 victories. She was a two-time AVCA Sand Volleyball All-American and won the AVCA Collegiate Sand Volleyball National Team Championship in 2014 with Kellie Woolever. Larsen also played three seasons indoors for Pepperdine. She'll be playing in the Main Draw with new partner, Emily Stockman.

Overall Event Info

- This year marks **AVP's 35th season** with an eight-stop tour that started out in Austin, Texas (May 17-20) followed by stops in New York (June 7-10), Seattle (June 21-24), **San Francisco (July 5-8)**, Hermosa Beach (July 26-29), Manhattan Beach (August 16-19), Chicago (August 30-Sept. 2), and new to 2018, Hawaii (Sept. 14-16.) Full tour schedule AVP.com/events.
- **Festival Village** – This robust interactive festival village area is complete with activations, giveaways, experiences, food, and a beer and wine garden. Fans jump from from the JumpMan Zone into a giant airbag, zip on the zip line, hangout in the kids' area, get henna or face painting, and more.
- **AVPFirst** – AVP's signature 501(c)3 nonprofit organization was founded to create a national pipeline for youth volleyball development designed specifically to create access for all children and their families, regardless of the neighborhood in which they reside or their economic status. Throughout the 2018 season, AVPFirst will invite youth for free clinics with AVP pros and AVPFirst coaches and host top local teams in an invitational match play style event that concludes with AVPFirst National Championship finals being played on Stadium Court in front of a packed house.

AVP Brand

- The Association of Volleyball Professionals is the United States' premier beach volleyball tour, headquartered in Newport Beach, Calif. under current Managing Partner, Donald Sun.
- AVP has a 35+ year legacy, and has become a household brand famous for their signature yellow and white Wilson volleyball. It is responsible for providing a stage and developing the careers for the biggest names in beach volleyball.
- In addition to the Pro Tour, AVP has several branches including a non-profit called **AVPFirst** dedicated to giving back to the community and providing scholarships and equal opportunities to underserved communities. It also has programs that are dedicated planting seeds early with the youth to invest in future beach volleyball stars and to increase chances for diversity in the sport. **AVPNext** is the official developmental program of the AVP Professional Beach Volleyball Tour and serves as the exclusive qualification circuit for elite amateur athletes to earn AVP points, a national ranking, and entry into the AVP Main Draws. **AVP Academy** offers a complete level of support services that compliment the entire athlete. Academy strives to provide athletes with the highest level of development possible.
- AVP played a key role in getting beach volleyball recognized as an **NCAA sanctioned sport** as the organizer and producer of the very first college event in 2006.