

# World Cup volleyball a first at the Festival

BY GINA GOODMAN  
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Kicking up some sand in the volleyball tournaments at West Grand Traverse Bay has long been a tradition at the National Cherry Festival. Crowds gather each year to watch the two- and four-person teams compete for first place.

"It's a fun tournament," said Paul Livingston, who has participated in the event the past six years.

"It's usually pretty stiff competition," he said.

"There are a lot of Double A players who travel throughout the state."

Winners usually receive beach chairs, towels, bags and things normally needed at the beach.

"You go to all of these other ones, and there may be a cash prize, but here it's mostly just for bragging rights," he said.

While most participants are locals, some people come up from Flint, Grand Rapids and even as far as Wisconsin to play in this tournament.

This year, however, a brand-new volleyball event has players coming from a bit farther away, places like Italy, Mexico, Austria and France, just to name a few.

For the first time, the Cherry Festival will be hosting the American Amateur Sports Organization International World Cup Beach Volleyball Competition.

Unlike the annual Festival tournaments, the A.A.S.O World Cup competition is held every year at different locations around the globe.

"This is the first time ever that the international volleyball community has come to the United States," said Billy Gauthier, the organization's director of volleyball.

Founded in 1992, the A.A.S.O is a non-profit orga-



Record-Eagle file photo/John L. Russell

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nization. It promotes the opportunity for amateur sports players from around the USA to compete internationally in both team and individual events. A large part of the A.A.S.O is to support cultural awareness among competitors.

"It's all about the cultural exchanges between countries," said Gauthier.

The competition is normally held in large metropolitan cities, but for its first time in the United States, Gauthier and partner Miguel Osorio felt Traverse City would be a nice change for the players.

"It is a wonderful opportunity for Traverse City," Osorio said. "It's nice to bring a big event here, so the [international] players can see this part of the US."

The event will include an opening ceremony on Tuesday, July 6, with a cultural welcome.

"I want to have a swing dance demonstration," Gauthier said. "Just a couple of songs, since the United States is all about 'Rock and Roll!'"

Gauthier said he looking at one women's team and two men's teams to represent the US.

"This will be beach triples," Gauthier said. "In the US we usually play with two or four person teams, so this is a little different."

There will be a total of about ten teams competing at the West Bay courts. The event is free to the public, and fans are welcome to watch.

The event will begin Tuesday, July 6 with the final competition set for Friday, July 9.

The annual two- and four-person tournaments will take place July 3rd and 4th, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

The two-person will

include men's and women's play, with 18 teams per division. The cost is \$35 per team. The four-person event will include a co-ed Open (18 teams), a co-ed Recreational (12 teams) and a Women's (6 teams) play. Cost for that event is \$60 per team.

## PARADE CHAIR POLICY:

• Chairs may be placed along the parade route no earlier than two hours before a parade.

• Chairs must be removed from the parade route no later than two hours after a parade.

• Chairs placed along the parade route that do not conform to these hours may be placed out of the street right of way.

This policy will be enforced during all three National Cherry Festival Parades on July 6, July 8, and July 10.

## Sports with a twist

TRAVERSE CITY— Calling all skippers of Milk Carton Boats and Wheeled Beds to the 78th annual National Cherry Festival. These fun events make for friendly competition and great family entertainment on Traverse City shores and streets.

Participants will be doing anything but sleeping during the 26th running of the **Planter's Go Nuts! Bed Race**. Tuesday, July 6, will feature bed-styled vehicles racing the 100 and 200 blocks of Front Street in downtown Traverse City. Awards are presented to winners based on both speed and design. It begins at 6 p.m., just before the AAA Michigan Heritage Parade. Racers take to the streets in costume to push and ride the Festival's most creative bed-style vehicles.

The **Credit Union One Milk Carton Boat Regatta** will allow skippers and want-to-be skippers an opportunity to show their maritime skills. There is just one catch; the boats must be made only with milk cartons, wire, wood, and glue.

The most cunning captains will win in categories of speed and design. The event is an exciting way to end your stay at the National Cherry Festival. Spectators can sit shore side at the Clinch Park Beach area to witness the launch and race on Saturday, July 10, at 8 p.m., followed by the **Festival Fireworks Finale**, sponsored by ALLTEL and Traverse Bay Entertainment. The Fireworks Finale is presented in cooperation with Double Rock KLT Radio.

Applications for Festival events are available by visiting the National Cherry Festival web site at [www.cherryfestival.org](http://www.cherryfestival.org) or by calling 231-947-4230.