

Scott, U.S. men's volleyball coach, says training is better than ever

By Andy Baclig
Tribune-Herald Staff Writer

Is the United States placing more emphasis today on junior athletes for top level competition? The head coach of the U.S. men's volleyball team in the 5th annual Pacific Rim Junior Volleyball Tournament thinks so.

Dick Scott, here for the second straight year as coach of the United States men's team, told the Tribune-Herald in an interview Friday that the recently held first National Sports Festival at Colorado Springs is an example of a major step in upgrading the nation's international representation.

The new event, funded by the U.S. Olympic Committee, was staged July 16-30 and featured teams from four zones in the U.S. competing in all Olympic sports.

The Festival was set up by the USOC as an alternative to an idea to establish a regional Olympic training center.

Three Hilo slammers, Elgin Calles, Ray Rowe Jr. and Michael Griffin were among 40 players chosen nationwide on the teams representing the Western, Eastern, Southern and Midwestern zones. Calles and Rowe played on the south team and Griffin was on the midwest team that finished second to the powerful west squad.

Players chosen from these four zones went through 10 days of intensive training before competing in a round-robin tournament to select the top 12 for the U.S. junior team which is here winding up five days of play in the Pac Rim tourney.

"Calles was invited to stay on for a berth on the U.S. junior team but elected to return home for personal reasons," Scott said.

He said Kainoa Downing of Honolulu, who played on the Outrigger Canoe Club team that finished second this year at the USVBA Nationals, was on the winning west team. This meant Hawaii was well represented with four out of 40

players on the men's team at the Festival, Scott added.

The 35-year-old U.S. coach said nine of the 12 players here, including Downing, played on the west team at the Festival. The other three players were members of the south, east and midwest teams, he said.

"People who were there at the Sports Festival know how great it was and how much stronger the junior team will get each year," Scott said. "This year the west dominated the tournament but the rest of the zones will improve each year. Some of the other zones did not select their best players, so this is why they weren't as strong as we were."

Scott said there is a bigger pool to choose from in the west. "There are a lot more ball players in the west and more colleges play volleyball where scholarships are offered. This is improving elsewhere so the competition will be greater."

Scott has coached at Santa Monica City College since 1972 and this fall will move over to the University of Montana to pilot the girl's slam team there.

He said the U.S. junior team will be the representative at all junior volleyball events scheduled around the country for the next year, including one in November at Mexico City.

The Montana State graduate said he feels the U.S. may not be quite ready for a shot at the top in the 1980 Olympics, but will be very strong by the '84 Olympics.

Scott said this year's U.S. Pac Rim team definitely has three prospects for the 1980 Olympic team. They include Steve Salmons, a 6-4 slammer who was chosen the MVP at the Festival and took first team All-American honors at the USVBA Nationals at El Paso, and at UCLA; Pat Powers, a 6-5 outside hitter; and Brian Ehlers, who also stands 6-5.

"Salmons could start for the team right now if the selections were made today," he said.

Scott said the USOC's decision to come up with more money in support of the junior sports program and setting up year-long training centers will greatly improve the U.S. chances in international competition.



Tribune-Herald Photo by Jim Landrum

HAPPY COACH—Dick Scott, of the U.S. Men's volleyball team, thinks younger athletes are getting better preparation than ever before for international competition, including the Olympics.

Some businessmen