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Bridging gaps: UCT tournament builds cohesion between standing and sitting volleyball clubs



The inaugural Sitting Volley Tournament took place in the Sports Centre and was arranged to build cohesion between standing and sitting volleyball clubs.

Photo: Lerato Maduna/UCT

The first-ever Sitting Volleyball Tournament, hosted recently by the University of Cape Town's (UCT) ParaSports Club in partnership with UCT Volleyball and ParaVolley Western Cape, has been hailed as a success.

The tournament was held in the Sports Centre on upper campus. The triumphant champions, Thuma Mina, representing Khayelitsha, have left an indelible mark on the competition.

Sitting volleyball is a form of volleyball aimed at athletes living with disabilities. During games, players sit on the court as opposed to standing up, and a smaller-than-usual playing area is demarcated for participants to get the ball over a lower-than-usual centre net.

The ParaSports Club's Muya Koloko stated that sitting volleyball clubs signed up to participate through ParaVolley Western Cape, and the organisation's sports officials took charge of the games. "By hosting this tournament, we are hoping to promote sitting volleyball, build cohesion between standing and sitting volleyball clubs so that everyone can benefit from the opportunities available. What's extra special is that this event takes place in the same venue sitting volleyball was first launched in 2015," he said.

Koloko mentioned that organisers hope to use the event as a platform to demystify any grey areas around the sport and expose sporting enthusiasts without disabilities to the nuts and bolts of sitting volleyball. He said that the process is geared towards cultivating a tightly knit sports community, while also actively supporting and enriching the skill development of all participants.

He shared that their ultimate vision is to ensure the tournament becomes an annual event hosted by various universities in the Western Cape. "Getting the buy-in from other universities is essential to ensure its sustainability as an annual, long-term event. What we need now is for universities to be brave and to experience this magic first-hand," he said.

Koloko said ParaVolley recently hosted a special workshop to familiarise players with the rules of sitting volleyball. Other important points covered in the workshop were the dimensions of the court and guidelines for player movement and arm usage.

The event provided a great opportunity for both sitting and standing volleyball enthusiasts to come together for a day of fun and learning. ParaVolley Western Cape was available to provide information for those interested in advancing in the sport as players or sports officials. Five teams, including two from UCT Volleyball, registered to participate in the event.

He said: "If there are smiles and people have enjoyed the day, then we have won. Judging by the energy, I think we've reached our goal. Now we need people to ask when the next event will take place because that shows enthusiasm and that goes a long way when it comes to sustainability.

"These events are so important to develop a good sporting culture among our universities because it's clear that the siloed approach is not working. We need all universities to work together to benefit staff, students and our respective communities."

Story by Niémah Davids, UCT News

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