



Organizer Hamilton: Summer Volleyball League 2023 Rates A Big Success

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ALTON - The Summer Volleyball League 2023 recently concluded its most successful season to date with a total of 154 players registered for the league, and 11 coaches assisted, League organizer Phil Hamilton said today. The motto of the league is an appropriate "keep swinging." The league ran 4 hours each session on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Saturdays in June and July.

The league logged a total of 102 hours of volleyball at three locations, MaxSports, the YWCA, and St. Mary's Suddes Hall. This is the league's seventh season which began in 2017.

"The purpose of the league is to keep players playing in the summer while they cross-train in their other sports. Older players were encouraged to help with sessions for younger players. Younger players were encouraged to play up during sessions for the older players," Hamilton said. "Although safety is first, fun is second."

The league was open to boys and girls from local schools, 4th through 12th grades. The players attend St. Mary's, West Elementary, North Elementary, Evangelical, Bethalto elementary schools, St. Ambrose, St. Elizabeth's (Granite City), Our Lady Queen of Peace, Trimpe middle school, Alton Middle School, Southwestern Middle School, Roxana middle school, Marquette, Alton High, Southwestern High School, Edwardsville High School, Calhoun High School, Jersey High School, Civic Memorial High School, and Father McGivney Catholic High School.

"Although the league was originally intended for middle school players, we had a strong turn-out for high school-aged players and elementary students," Hamilton said. "High school players received service hours for assisting with the league."

The players were divided by grade into groups of about 18-24 players per session.

"We use an open gym format where the activities are based on the grade and number of players," Hamilton said. "The emphasis is on repetitions. Studies have shown that the best way to condition for volleyball is to play volleyball."

"The schedule was flexible so that players could participate in other summer activities, sports, and vacations. A group email went out to the families to make them aware of volleyball camps sponsored by Marquette, Greenville University, SIUE, and local club teams."

The season culminated with tournaments for the combined 4th, 5th, and 6th grades, and for the combined 7th and 8th grades. High school players coached the teams, and other players served as line judges or kept score.

Hamilton explained that the league could not have been successful without the support of so many enthusiastic volunteers.

"Thanks to my right-hand persons, Jill Woodward, and Jen Cowan, who assisted with many of the sessions," Hamilton said. "Thanks also to Emily Zipprich, Stephanie King, Chris Marshall, Alyson Haegele, Michelle Pulaski, Chrissy Certa, and Megan Cranmer who assisted with several sessions.

"Thanks to Emily Pryor, Gracie Kodros, Kaylee Piar, and Marie Woodward who attended most of the sessions and assisted us, particularly with the younger players. We also got a lot of help from Claire Hill, Natalie Novak, Isla Woodward, Elaina Cowan, Zoey Zeller, Gianna Grossheim, Emily Hough, Mia Lopez, Mackenzie Cochran, Liv Certa, and Connor Cochran. They frequently assisted with other groups. Thanks to St. Mary's Athletic Director, Abbie Hough, for getting us Suddes Hall for the tournaments. Thanks to the parents, grandparents, and siblings for getting their players to the numerous sessions."

The league participants hope for another great turnout next year for Summer Volleyball League 2024.