

Beach volleyball

The Oregonian

FRIDAY, AUG. 22, 2008 | 15TH OF 17

TODAY'S TV HIGHLIGHTS

12:30 a.m.: Men's volleyball semifinals;

men's beach volleyball bronze-medal match

(live), NBC

2 a.m.: Women's platform diving;

men's beach volleyball finals;

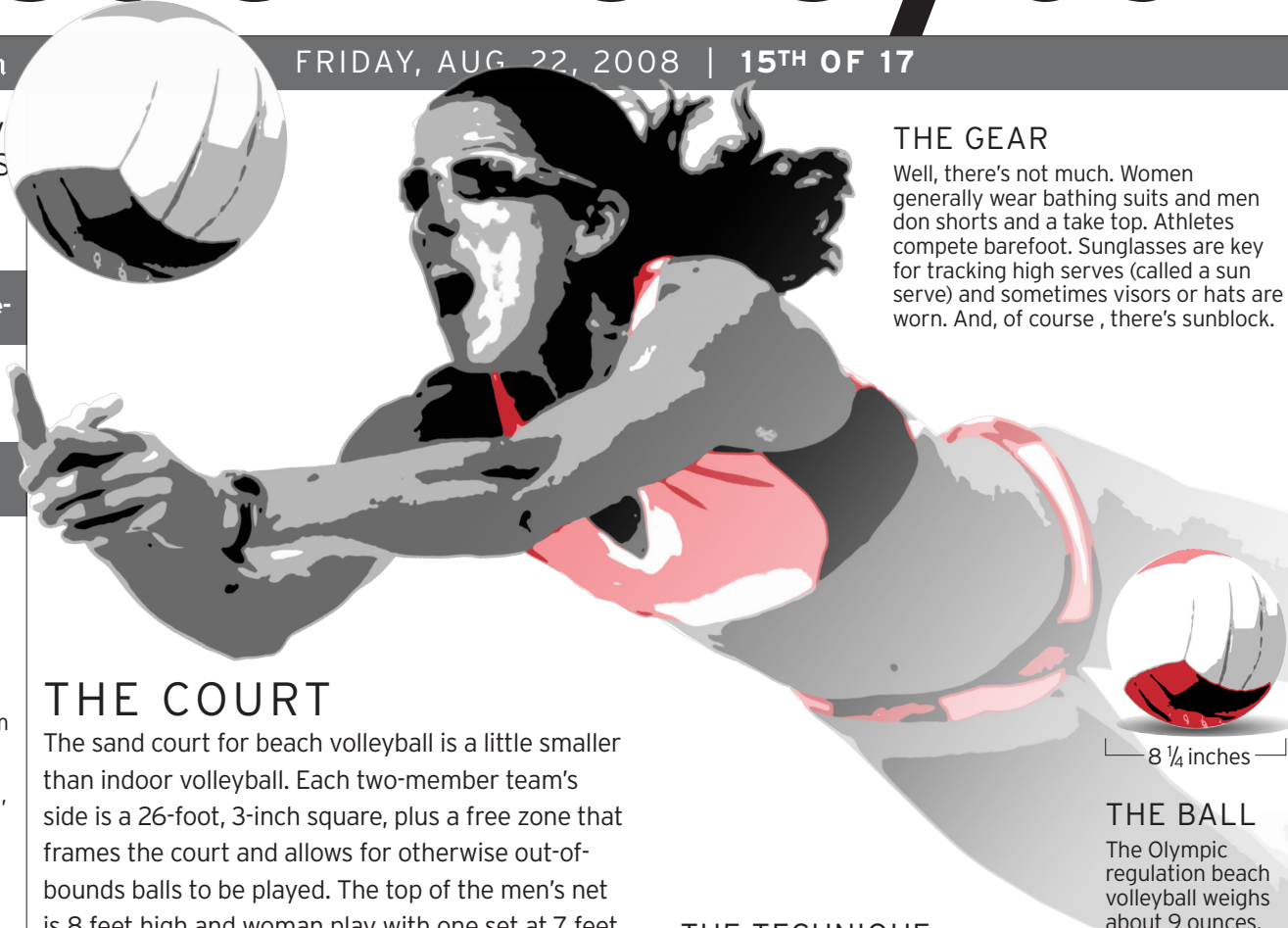
track & field (taped), Telemundo

6 p.m.: Women's field hockey gold-medal game (taped), Oxygen

8 p.m.: Men's 10m diving semifinal; track & field: men's 4x100 final, men's pole vault final, decathlon final; rhythmic gymnastics (live), NBC

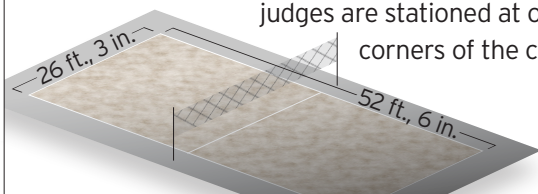
9 p.m.: Men's soccer gold-medal match (live), CNBC

11 p.m.: Baseball gold-medal game; women's team handball gold-medal game; men's field hockey gold-medal game (live), USA Network



THE COURT

The sand court for beach volleyball is a little smaller than indoor volleyball. Each two-member team's side is a 26-foot, 3-inch square, plus a free zone that frames the court and allows for otherwise out-of-bounds balls to be played. The top of the men's net is 8 feet high and woman play with one set at 7 feet, 4 inches. Referees watch from the net posts and line judges are stationed at opposite corners of the court.



ONES TO WATCH

Brazil's **Ricardo Santos** and **Emanuel Rego**, men's gold medalists in Athens

U.S. HOPEFULS

Misty May-Treanor and **Kerri Walsh**, women's gold winners at 2004 games

THE GEAR

Well, there's not much. Women generally wear bathing suits and men don shorts and a take top. Athletes compete barefoot. Sunglasses are key for tracking high serves (called a sun serve) and sometimes visors or hats are worn. And, of course , there's sunblock.

THE BALL

The Olympic regulation beach volleyball weighs about 9 ounces, is about an inch smaller in diameter than a basketball and has a softer shell. Its panels are usually white and another bright color like pink or yellow.

THE TECHNIQUE

Generally, teams consist of a blocker and a setter. The blocker is bigger and more physical and plays near the net. She blocks opponents' attacks and tries to spike the ball when on offense. The setter generally tries to pass the ball to a position from which the blocker can spike it.

ALL-TIME EVENT MEDALS

BRAZIL	2	4	1	7
USA	3	1	1	5
AUSTRALIA	1	0	1	2
SPAIN	0	1	0	1



THE OBJECT

Beach volleyball is a two-person variation of its more traditional older cousin. It's played in sand on a court that's about three-quarters the size of one used for indoor volleyball. Men and women each compete in a 24-team tournament. Each match is best-of-three rally-scoring sets. The first two sets are to 21, the third, if necessary, is to 15.

GLOSSARY

Rally scoring: Following a trend in volleyball that speeds up matches, beach volleyball started rally scoring in Athens. Points are scored on every serve instead of only on successful attacks from the serving team.

Credit card defense: When both defensive players charge the net.

Husband-and-wife: When a playable ball falls between two defenders because they didn't communicate.

Jump serve: When a server lobbs the ball high into the air and strikes the ball as if attacking. The high angle and topspin make it difficult to defend.

OLYMPIC DEBUT: 1996

Brazil, the U.S. and Australia have dominated since the Atlanta Olympics introduced beach volleyball. The sport has its origins as a Santa Monica, Calif., pastime.