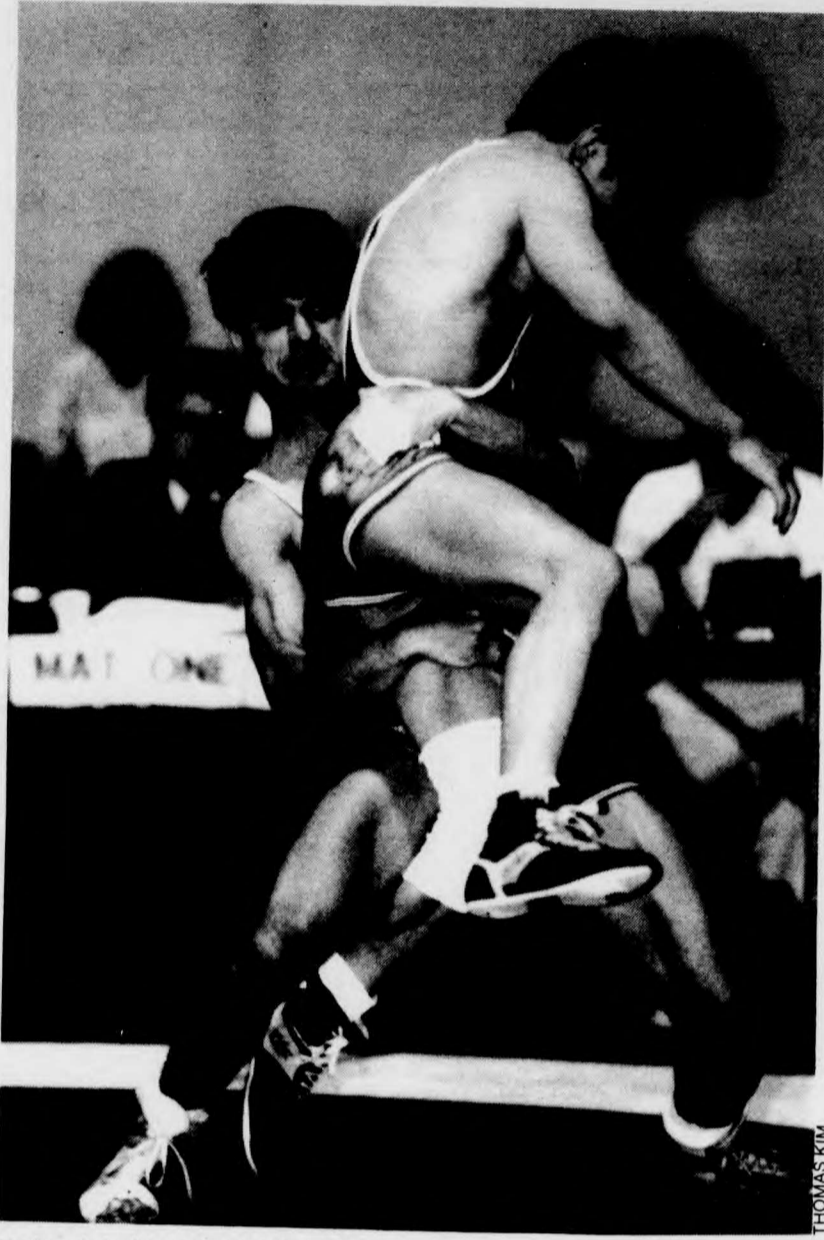


York wrestler wins silver medal



Bulgaria's Marian Nedkov demonstrates his gold medal winning form

10th annual Canada Cup of International Wrestling

by THOMAS KIM

In what organizers called the biggest competition to date, the Canadian national wrestling team finished a respectable third at the 10th annual Canada Cup of International Wrestling held at Humber College and Ontario Place July 1-3.

Among the medal winners was York's Paul Hughes, who won a silver medal in the 62 kg class. Overall, the USSR won the team title with 35 points, followed by Bulgaria with 29 points and Canada with 26 points. A total of 11 different countries participated in preparation for the World Championships to be held this September.

Featuring competitors of varying calibre, participants included former world champions such as Raoul Cascaret of Cuba and Dave Schultz of the United States.

In addition to Hughes, several other members of this year's CIAU champion Yeomen team also took part, including Rick Jenry and John Matile. An alternate on last year's Olympic team and gold medal winner at the 1986 Commonwealth Games, Hughes is a one of a number of young, talented wrestlers developed by York coach John Park. In addition to the Yeomen, Park is also head coach of the Twist 'N Shout Wrestling Club, a national training centre based in North York, and one of Canada's top three amateur wrestling clubs.



Yeoman Paul Hughes at the Canada Cup

THE REAL BOYS OF SUMMER

Professional volleyball has arrived in Canada

by PAM SERKOWNEY

They're the real boys of summer. Riding the wave of popularity (and creative marketing) out of the west coast of the USA, professional beach volleyball has arrived on Canadian shores with the force of a small hurricane. At the forefront of the movement, particularly in Ontario, is York volleyball alumnus and beach guru John May.

After cutting his business teeth on computer sales and marketing, May recently formed AMOTION, a sports marketing firm with the purpose of promoting the pro beach game in Canada. For May, it's a chance to run a business while continuing his involvement with the sport he loves.

"We're trying to create a professional sport for Canadian athletes... and making a business out of it," said May. At 6'3", 190 lbs, wearing ultra-cool Oakley Razorblade shades, funky neon jams, and a tan, May is beach volleyball.

His volleyball roots lie with the Scarborough Solars Club, where he played and coached for a number of years. He was a walk-on during a one-year stint at Brigham-Young University, and then played for four years at York under head coach Wally Dyba.

His first partner was Ed Drakich. The two met while playing at the Balmy Beach Club. Drakich, a product of Malvern Secondary School, had four successful varsity years at U of T before heading to the national team.

The pair failed to win their first tournament together, but were undefeated in Ontario for the next two years. The partnership ended when Drakich turned national.

May is now enjoying success with Andrew Kohl, another Malvern graduate who has played volleyball in Switzerland. However, it was Drakich and his partner John Canjar from U of T who won the first leg of the Ontario tour earlier this summer.

Last year a money event sponsored by Carling O'Keefe was held at Balmy Beach, the centre of beach ball in Toronto. This year May is responsible for the organization of the Foster's Light Ontario Pro Beach Volleyball Tour. The four stop tour has a total of eight corporate sponsors.

In addition, the Canadian Volleyball Association will have a Canadian beach

championship this summer, which has been tied into the pro tour. Reebok is the official sponsor of the national championship, while Foster's Light is the title sponsor of the Ontario tour.

May's next step is to promote and run a Canadian pro beach tour, along with an expanded provincial tour.

"We had 224 participants in the first tourney. About 1,000 people watched the final and we got a lot of media coverage."

He admits the market is smaller in Canada because of the shorter season and the novelty of the pro game.

"In the US, there's over \$2,000,000 prize money. Last year, six players made over \$100,000," lamented May.

Drakich, who played semi-pro ball in Germany last year, agreed. "The Canadian tour is in a much more infantile stage. The prize money isn't really enough yet... but there's definitely a market developing."

Drakich added that the season length is a major restriction.

"The Californians are good because they get to play against each other all the time. It's just not as competitive up here. It would be nice if our game got to that level."

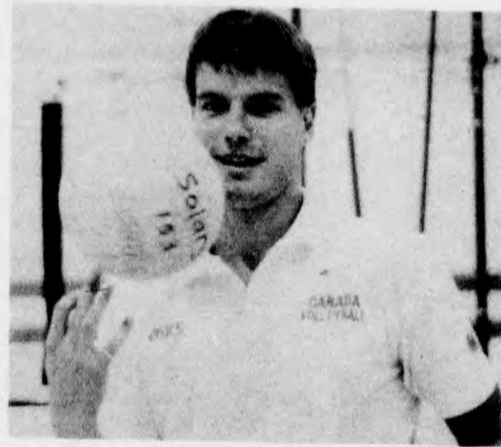
May also admitted that the Californians are virtually unbeatable in the beach game because its more of a way of life there. "Their physical level is very strong and they have so much more game experience. They're mentally tough and consistent. And they really benefit from the extended season."

He stressed that the competitive game requires a lot of practice. "People don't realize that only top notch athletes can compete at the elite level. In California, the guys have long been recognized only as beach bums."

Most of the players on the Ontario tour are university graduates, pro European players or national team members. May is hoping to see even more university players.

"It's a perfect vehicle for them to earn money in the summer while improving their skills."

The two-man beach game is very different from the indoor team sport. "There's more pressure in beach because you're forced into many more contacts. You're in every rally and have to perform all skills. You



Boy of summer pro beach volleyballer Ed Drakich

have to become versatile and well-rounded and the improvement of skill really enhances the indoor game," said May.

Drakich appreciates the defensive gains. "You learn to read and react because you're covering the whole court. You have to hit extended and need to be really fit to jump out of the sand continuously."

There are no excuses in the beach game. "If you have a weakness, it's exploited in two men," said May. "On an indoor team, you can hide behind others and rationalize your mistakes. On the beach you either do it or you don't."

Contrary to popular belief, the game has been around the Toronto area beaches for some time. Beach ball has been played casually since the 60s and later, more competitively at Balmy Beach where May and Drakich first met.

The American pro influence began to affect the game in the early 80s when Canadians participated in tournaments such as one at Rochester. Presently, there are no Canadians on the pro US tour. Likewise, Canadian events are mostly closed.

"We can't compete right now in the US," May admitted. "Once we focus our top athletes we might win. Up until now we've had no vehicle."

The wholesome, laid-back lifestyle associated with the beach game is a magnet for players and spectators alike. This opens up a huge potential consumer market. Related

products such as trendy clothes, sunglasses, and refreshments have flooded the summer market.

"It's a sexy atmosphere," said May, who, along with his partner, is sponsored by West Beach Surf Co. and Freestyle Watches. Drakich and Canjar are sponsored by Ocean Pacific. "It's strong, healthy people playing an intense, physical outdoor sport. They're sweating... I'd say it's really relaxing to watch."

May also sees the national tour as a means to create Canadian revenue. "I'm confident (in) the beach game and the lifestyle being a perfect avenue for different sponsors to advertise their products."

To keep any exploitive wolves at bay, May hopes "to develop a players' association to protect their interests."

Because of its "beer ad" appeal, May doesn't want to see, in particular, the women's game disintegrate into what he terms "jiggle ball".

"The interest for the women's game is there, though not as strong as in the US. It's tough for the females to earn credibility," May feels that the men's game has more power and energy. "The women's game doesn't have the impact of the men's. The money isn't as good either, but if the interest grows, so will the money."

The women usually play triples but will play doubles in the Canadian championships. Thirty-two men's and women's doubles will take part. As well, the women will compete for an equal purse. The CVA sanctioned event will serve as the finale of the Ontario tour, with full coverage on TSN.

On August 5 and 6, there will be a tournament at Grand Bend with total prize money of \$5,000. The Canadian championship at Balmy Beach will take place August 18 to 20. The total prize money is \$10,000, while first prize, split between two, is \$2,000.

May has big expectations for the future of beach volleyball in Canada. He plans to continue developing and promoting the sport and remains optimistic. "If we get a proper tour together cross-country, it'll definitely be an attractive package for sponsorship."

It's a tough job, being one of the boys (or girls) of summer...