

Inaugural sand volleyball season concludes

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newwave@tulane.edu

Members of the indoor volleyball team, none of whom have played competitively on sand before, blazed the trail this spring for next season's first recruits to the Green Wave sand volleyball team.



Milica Jovic, a junior from Serbia, makes a play for the Green Wave sand volleyball team. (Photo by Parker Waters)

This year's addition of [sand volleyball](#) increased the Tulane varsity sports lineup to 16, marking a return to NCAA compliance for the first time since Hurricane Katrina. Sand volleyball is new not only to Tulane but to the NCAA; this school year marked the sport's debut at the Division I level.

While the squad finished the inaugural season with a 1-10 record, acting head coach Jaye Loyd described the semester as a steep learning curve. Sand requires a much

different style of play from indoor volleyball: players have themselves and one partner to cover the entire outdoor court, compared to four teammates indoors.

“In indoor volleyball, you try to hit the ball hard and fast to ensure it gets past multiple defenders and to the floor as quickly as possible,” Loyd says. “With sand, you have to be smarter and strategize. It is important to place the ball where the opponent is not; it doesn't necessarily have to be hard or fast.”

The uneven, soft nature of sand makes running and jumping more physically demanding than indoor volleyball, but the women have risen to the challenge and improved their overall fitness and athleticism.

Sand volleyball will function separately from the indoor team as the program evolves, though Loyd predicts that there will be a few players who will compete in both seasons. For now, the rosters remain almost identical, and the Green Wave will return to the indoor courts this fall with many lessons learned from a semester in the sand.

“It took the girls awhile to realize they could be good at sand volleyball but once they did, their progression was amazing,” Loyd says. “I am looking forward to next season.”

Johanna Gretschel is a senior at Tulane, majoring in English and competing for the Green Wave in track and field.