

Women's-only event biggest in South West

THE first ever Exeter Ladies' Volleyball Challenge takes place at the Riverside Leisure Centre in tomorrow and will be the largest event of its kind in the South West.

Volleyball is the world's No. 1 team sport for women, but it has a bit of catching up to do in the UK.

In Exeter, women's volleyball continues to grow and the Exeter League say they need events like this to gain experience.

To date there has not been a suitable local venue, but the Riverside management have made over £7,500 worth of improvements to their volleyball facilities this year with a dividing net and a second court.

Competing for the main title will be the Exeter-based teams of Torexe and Wanderers and the Plymouth teams of Lipson and Marjon.

However, the real winners of the day will be teams like Paignton School, Totnes and the area's under-15 team who will be competing for the first time this year.

Spectators are welcome, entry is free and the action starts at 10am, with more than 75 20-minute matches and the finals at 5.30pm.

The Exeter Ladies Challenge is sponsored by the Exeter & District Volleyball Association, Torexe VC and the Volleyball Newsletter.

Other tournaments coming up include the Corporate Games on June 10 (6pm Coaver Club Lawn), Exeter Festival of Volleyball on June 7-8 and the Exmouth

Beach Volleyball Championships on July 13. The latter is the biggest event of its kind in the UK with more than 100 teams competing.

University dominate the honours board

DIVISION 1 — With Exeter University crowned champions and Exeter Wanderers taking the runners-up spot, there was nothing much to play for when Wonford Betablockers faced Burnham Disciples in their final match.

Blockers were already assured of third place and their 5-0 win merely consolidated their position, pulling them well clear of the teams behind them.

Burnham struggled to field a side despite having the potential to challenge even the strongest teams.

Michel Marchionni (Exeter University) was divisional player of the year, making this a good season for the students who took men's and ladies' player of the year awards, the Men's Division 1 title and finished runners-up in the Ladies' Division despite a slow start to the season.

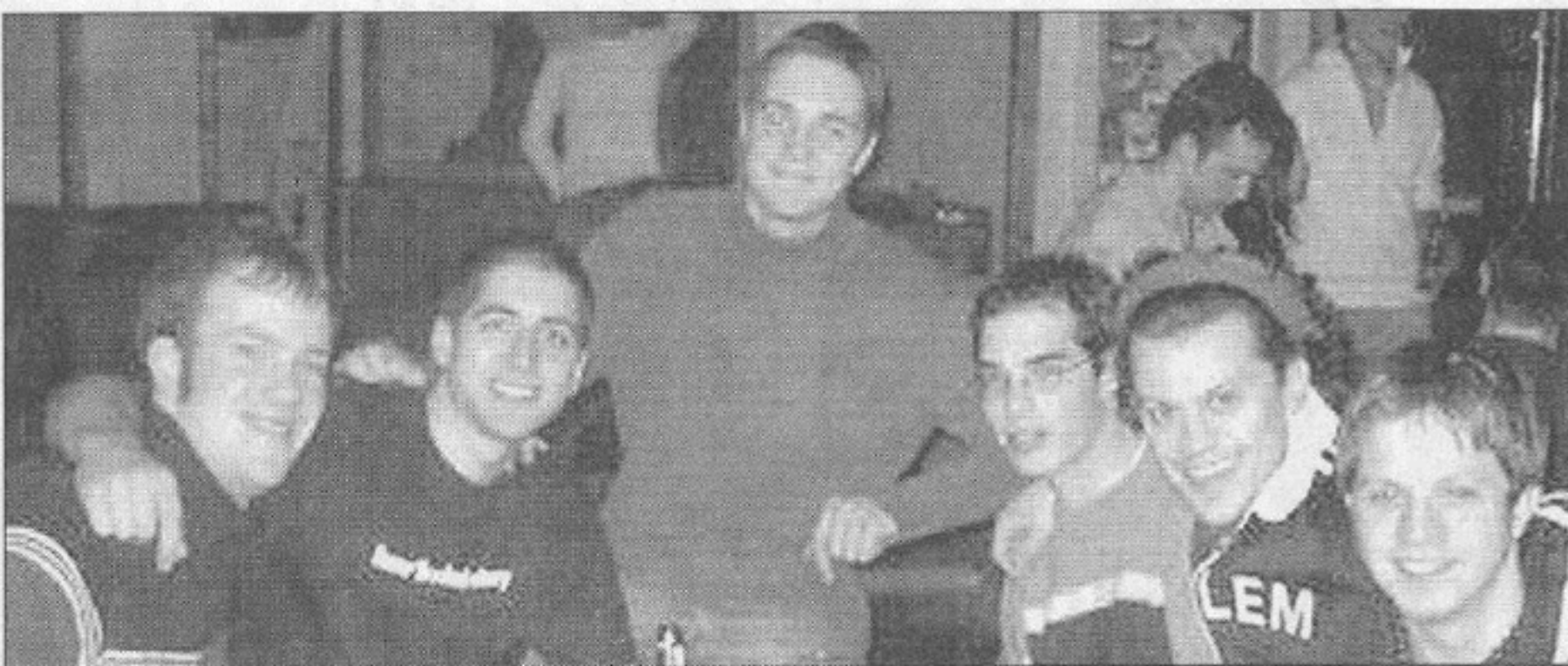
Strong serving sees off Wanderwomen

LADIES' & JUNIORS' DIVISION — Matt Roules took player of the match for Torexe Lightning as his side beat third placed Exeter Wanderwomen 3-2.

Lightning missed out on the first set to a switched on Wanderwomen side. But they got it together to win the next three sets to clinch the match through strong serving from Wu Yu and Roules.

Wanderwomen fought hard to take the final set as both teams used the opportunity to encourage and provide match experience for their new players.

Ladies' player of the year awards went to Liz Raji (Exeter University) and May Ho (Torexe Thunder).



CHAMPIONS: Exeter University men's volleyball team who won Division 1 — from the left: Andy Hillier, Mike Figg, Ben Jones, Ben Baruch (captain), Michel Marchionni, Graham Edwards

One-sided match gives Otters title

VOLLEYBALL

BY MARTIN ORAM

DIVISION 3 — King's Otters clinched the title with a 5-0 win over Spacehoppers Too.

Spacehoppers started well and held their own for much of the opening set, but Otters were able to seal it 25-21. From there on in it was a rather one-sided match with Otters going from strength to strength and taking the remaining sets 25-11, 25-18, 25-9 and 15-0.

Mark Davies was Otters' player of the year award for the Division 3 victory in the early sets.

However, Sadie Moran pushed him close with a run of 15 straight service points to clinch the match and edge her team clear of long-term leaders ADDS Evolution in the title race.

The Hoppers bounced back in their next match to see off King's Juniors 5-0, a result that sees them leapfrog the Juniors in the table.

King's Nick Baxter took the player of the year award for the Division while Junior player of the year went to Natalie Smith (Torexe Typhoons), Beck Kenshole (PCC) and Nick Kirby (PCC).

DIVISION 2 — Kirton Rings took the title without playing a match. Taunton Blackbrook were the only team able to catch them and to do so they needed a 5-0 win over Torexe Tornadoes in their final match.

This was a match Tornadoes did not expect to win with many players missing from the squad through injury. However, Taunton were not as strong as earlier in the season and steady consistent play from Tornadoes ate away at Taunton's defence.

May Ho, Charlie Boodhram and Rachel Swindel played up for the Torexe side and all played a part in Taunton's demise, particularly May Ho with her strong service action.

Tornadoes took the first two sets 25-15 and 25-22, before Taunton were able to spark a revival with a 29-27 result in a long-fought third set. But Tornadoes struck back again to take the remaining sets and match 25-15 and 15-12.

Claire Pinney was player of the match for Taunton who end the season in second place, ahead of Exeter Birdmen by virtue of the number of sets won.

Spacehoppers A team were matched against Exeter Vikings in their last two matches of the season. In the home match they faced a depleted Vikings team and took full advantage with a 25-18, 26-24 and 25-19 result to clinch the match.

Vikings fought back to take the fourth set 25-23, but Spacehoppers piled on the pressure in the final set



TOREXE TYPHOONS: Back row, from the left: Natalie Smith, Sophie Batho, Jessica Webber. Front: Tom Fairchild, Tiberius Negulesca, Mark Fairchild

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to win it 15-8. Burnett was player of the match for Vikings despite strong attacking play from Viv Kulkhani and Dave Shaw.

In the return, Vikings were determined to get revenge, having already proved their worth by beating each of the top teams in the division during the course of the season.

They were able to field their starting setter, Justine Sutton, and with Neil Williams, Paul Sutton and Marion Williams returning to the fray, they were back to full strength.

With Steve Popham leading the attack through the middle, they soon brushed aside the Hoppers' defence to take the opening three sets and clinch the match.

Strong attacking play from Shaun

Coate kept them on the hop and Vikings were able to finish off the closing sets for a 5-0 win which leaves them five points behind the second placed team.

They have cause to regret the lack of consistency that has prevented them from mounting a serious challenge this season.

Sutton took player of the match as she guided her team to victory, despite the challenge of divisional players of the year Kulkhani and Williams.

In a season in which the standard of play has increased tremendously, the division's top award was shared by Pinney and Gary Wootton (Taunton), Olly Boundy (Churston) and Kenny and Cohen (Exeter Birdmen).

HOW THEY FINISHED IN THE EXETER & DISTRICT VOLLEYBALL LEAGUE

MEN'S DIVISION 1								MEN'S DIVISION 3							
	P	W	L	F	A	St	Pt		P	W	L	F	A	St	Pt
Exeter University ...	10	8	2	950	746	34	42	Kings Otters	14	12	2	1554	1111	57	69
Exe Wanderers	10	7	3	961	762	32	39	ADDS Evolution ...	14	12	2	1520	1097	55	67
Betablockers	10	6	4	1034	687	32	38	PCC	14	11	3	1406	1085	43	54
Tor Breezers	10	5	5	988	1024	26	31	Torexe Storms	14	5	9	1352	2331	35	40
J&D	10	2	8	519	1058	14	16	S Hoppers Too* ...	14	7	7	1368	161	32	38
Denbury Eagles	10	2	8	806	981	12	14	Kings Juniors* ..	14	6	8	1122	287	31	34
								Cool Runnings	14	3	11	1041	1302	21	24
								Tor Typhoons*	14	0	14	629	1616	6	3
MEN'S DIVISION 2								LADIES-JUNIORS DIVISION							
	P	W	L	F	A	St	Pt		P	W	L	F	A	St	Pt
Kirton Rings	16	12	4	1739	1246	57	69	Torexe Thunder ...	10	8	2	1103	836	39	47
Taunton*	16	11	5	1556	1440	54	64	University Ladies ..	10	8	2	1084	853	35	43
Birdmen	16	11	5	1714	1410	53	64	Wanderwomen	10	6	4	998	918	25	31
Exeter Vikings	16	10	6	1697	1430	49	59	Tor Lightning	10	3	7	941	1012	21	24
Space Hoppers* ..	16	9	7	1670	1502	44	52	Exeter Queens	10	3	7	842	882	18	21
Tor Tornadoes	16	7	9	1528	1572	36	43	Ex Coll Ladies*	10	2	8	610	1077	12	13
Exeter Jacks	16	6	10	1388	1524	33	39								
Tor Hurricanes	16	3	13	1388	1737	19	22								
Churston*	16	3	13	971	11782	15	17								

*Points deducted