

STORYLINE

800 Teams compete at The 2012 Canadian Open Volleyball Championships.

[STAND UP] 02:52 – 03:00 JACK CHENG, CNC CORRESPONDENT

“For the first time in Canadian sporting history, Volleyball Canada is hosting the single largest amateur sporting competition here in downtown Toronto's Direct Energy Centre.”

[VOICEOVER] The six-day event, spanning over an entire Victoria Day weekend, saw 800 teams, and over 10,000 athletes, compete under one roof in the 32,500 square meter downtown venue.

[VOICEOVER] Unlike previous competitions in Canada, which were held in different provinces, the 2012 Canadian Open Volleyball Championships let amateur teams square off against each other in one location. The tournament features 14 match categories based on on the players' age.

[SOUNDBITE] 00: 37 – 01:06 MEAGHAN GREEN, NATIONAL EVENTS COORDINATOR, VOLLEY BALL CANADA

“The 2012 Canadian open was an idea in 2008 and basically it's come to life now we usually have our championships spread out east to west, we do six championships beginning at 14 all the way to 18 and our senior division. Basically, the 2012 Open we want to bring all that together in one place so we found this venue in Toronto, the Direct Energy Centre, and we were able to do that and start a little bit of a legacy. We plan to do this in rotation every four to five years, the next year being 2015.”

[VOICEOVER] The massive event required three days to prepare. Volleyball Canada says an estimated 45,000 athletes, coaches, officials, organizers, volunteers, and spectators are expected to attend over the course of the six-day period.

[SOUNDBITE] 02:06 -2:16 MEAGHAN GREEN, NATIONAL EVENTS COORDINATOR, VOLLEY BALL CANADA

“Right now we have 350 volunteers. We have approximately 100 to 150 here a day, Saturday we'll have about 200. So it takes a lot of manpower.”

[VOICEOVER] Over 150 games were played on Thursday alone, with players' ranging from 12 to 65 years old spiking the balls over the nets of 54 courts.

[VOICEOVER] The girls' volleyball team from Sherbrooke, Quebec, enjoyed an afternoon of easy victories, winning two matches against their opponents.

[SOUNDBITE] 06:33 – 06:55 NORMAND BOUCHARD, COACH, SHERBROOKE GIRLS VOLLEYBALL TEAM

“It’s big, and we see a lot of players, good volleyball from every court. It’s fun to see teams from Alberta, from Sherbrooke, from New Brunswick, so having a real Canadian volleyball championship, which in the past was just east or west, so it’s really fun.”

[SOUNDBITE] 03:23 – 03:28 SOPHIE LARIVÉE, FORWARD, SHERBROOKE GIRLS VOLLEYBALL TEAM

“It’s good. We won two of our games.”

[SOUNDBITE] 04:44 – 04:53 ANNE SOPHIE, PASSER, SHERBROOKE GIRLS VOLLEYBALL TEAM

“It’s really a very big organization. It’s super.”

[VOICEOVER] In Canada, volleyball is a sport with growing popularity. Although it doesn’t receive the same exposure as basketball or baseball, the 2012 Canadian Open Championships show that participation in the sport is strong across the country.

[SOUNDBITE] 02:40 – 02:50 MEAGHAN GREEN, NATIONAL EVENTS COORDINATOR, VOLLEY BALL CANADA

“I think it’s going great. When the first whistle blew this morning, my heart kind of start beating so fast, cause I saw everything was underway and I think the athletes are having fun and that’s really what matters to us.”