

FIVB World Tour finishes in China

After a long season, the 2008 FIVB Beach Volleyball World Tour finished at the weekend in Sanya, China for both men and women. The GB squad entered 3 teams:

Men: Steve Grotowski/Gregg Weaver and Jody Gooding/Tom Lord

Women: Denise Johns/Shauga Mullin

Gooding and Lord had to try to qualify on Tuesday 11th November, succeeding by beating a team from Angola 21-14, 21-19, which put them into the main draw alongside Gregg and Steve.

Wednesday was going to be a tougher challenge, with Gooding and Lord (seeded 25th) taking on the top Norwegian pair of Hoidalen and Kjemperud (seeded 8th). However, they rose to that challenge and took a huge scalp by beating the experienced Norwegians 21-14, 24-22.

Grotowski and Weaver (seeded 22nd) also rose above their seeding to beat the Polish team of Fijalek-Prudel (seeded 11th) in 3 sets (16-21, 21-18, 15-9).

In round 2, Grotowski and Weaver took on the very experienced and successful Argentinians Baracetti and Salema, eventually losing in a close match 21-18, 21-19. Gooding and Lord also lost in 2 sets to the 24th seeded Swedes, 21-15, 21-10.

Thursday saw both men's teams fighting to stay in the competition. Gooding and Lord went down to a very good Swiss team (finalists in Estonia 2008) - 21-15, 21-8. Weaver and Grotowski narrowly lost to a Venezuelan team after taking the first set - 21-16, 16-21, 12-15. This placed both men's teams 17th in the competition, which is the most successful FIVB World Tour event ever for GB Men - well done boys!

GB women also started their main draw campaign on Thursday 13th November with Shauna Mullin and Denise Johns (seeded 22nd) taking on Olympians Saka and Rtvlo from Georgia (Seeded 11th). After losing the first set to 17, they battled back to take the second 23-21 before losing narrowly 15-13 in the decider.



Mullin and Johns had a comfortable next round, beating the 27th seeded Swedish team 21-13, 21-9. They then faced the number 12 seeds of Gioria and Momoli from Italy, losing 21-18, 21-10. This placed Johns and Mullin 17th overall.

Well done to all the GB squad this season and good luck for 2009!