

Spring 2022 Volleyball League

Everest Volleyball Club of North Carolina(EVCNC) participated in the Spring 2022 Men's Volleyball league run by the Town of Cary North Carolina. EVCNC has been participating in this league for the last several years with some mixed results.

The 2022 Summer edition of the league ran between 3/29/22-5/12/22. Every week we played against 2 opponents, best 2 of 3 sets. In the past we played in Mens A league (intermediate level) which was more suitable for our skill levels. However, because of low participation, this season only one league (Mens' Open) was offered which we decided to compete. There were a total 10 teams of varying skills and experiences.

Participation

Unlike the previous league in which we always had challenges to fill the roster week after week, this league was different. Since we had only one team, we always had several players sitting on the bench available to play. However since we played in the open league, the level of play was much higher and accommodating all waiting players was challenging. Both Captains did a good job balancing the need to win vs rotating the players. Following image is the win loss for the men's open league at the end of week 7(just before playoffs)

Standings					
Place	Team	W	L	PCT	GB
1	Hurricanes	12	2	0.857	--
2	TEAM STRIVE	12	2	0.857	--
3	Tune Squad	11	3	0.786	1
4	Spike Protein	9	5	0.643	3
5	Spike Fire	7	7	0.500	5
6	Wolfpack	6	8	0.429	6
7	Kabardhar	6	8	0.429	6
8	Cary Spikers	3	11	0.214	9
9	EVCNC	3	11	0.214	9
10	Jigarthanda	1	13	0.071	11

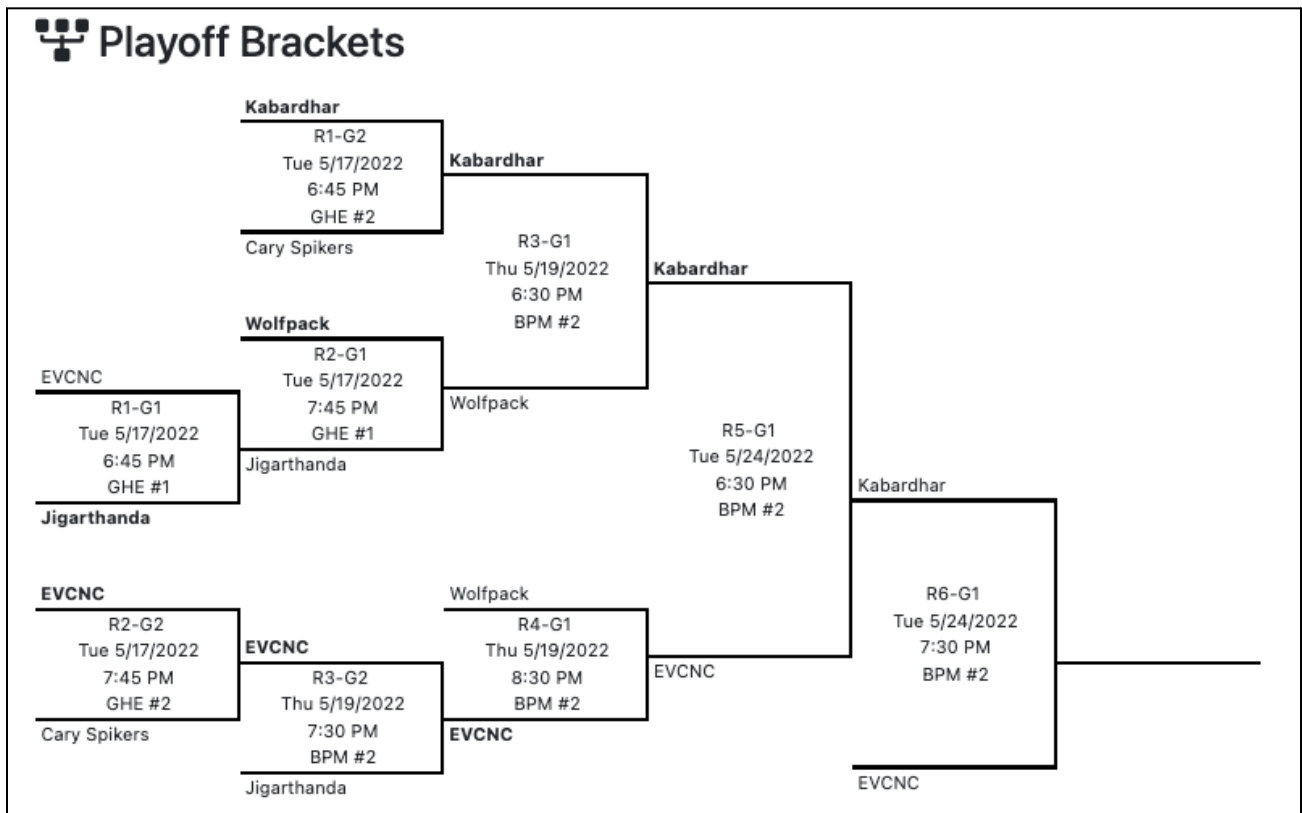
PCT = Winning Percentage, GB = Games Back.

Town of Cary 2022 Spring Mens' open league final standings

Our overall rank was 9 out of 10. Given the fact that we participated in the Men's open, this rank is much better compared to previous years. Furthermore, we lost a few sets we might have won (unable to close the games in pressure situations). This is the first time we were able to win 3 games in the men's open league which is an achievement in itself!

Playoffs

This league offered a double elimination playoffs at the end. In a double elimination playoffs a team has to lose twice to be eliminated from the playoffs. Since the teams varied in skills and experiences, the organizers created two divisions for the playoffs. Our team was placed in Div II. In the playoffs, we lost our first game so we were placed in the consolation bracket. However we won all the games afterward to qualify for a championship match against the winner of the winner' bracket. However we fell short to win the last game and had to be satisfied as the runner up (finalist). The image below shows our journey as the finalists.



Result of playoff bracket and results

Post playoffs

Below are some of the pictures post playoffs(immediately after the final game).



Immediately after the final game, From L to R: Khem, Rajan, UT, Kamal, Deependra, Laxman, Ocean, Sandip, Mahesh(S) Sharad and Sagun



Immediately after the finals game and with the finalist t shirt, From L-R, Mahesh, Robin, Rajan(s) UT, Kamal, Deependra, Sandip, Ocean, Laxman, Sharad, Jagat and the match Referee



Waiting for food/drink @BWW after the finals. From L to R Laxman, UT, Sandeep, Robin, Jagat, Rajan, Ocean, Mahesh. Out of view are Sharad, Kamal, Deependra

Observations

1. Everybody(or most everybody) observed that our level of play went down in the league and went further down in the playoffs.
2. We realized we needed some time to 'warm up'. In most of the games we performed better as the game progressed. This shows that our pre game warm ups are insufficient.
3. As we decided to run 6-2 offense, there were at least 2 substitutions per rotation(when setters transition to position 1 and 4. Sometimes we also substituted in the middle. Our performance impacted when there were more frequent substitutions.

What worked

1. Roster
2. Captains' did good job to play with best available roster
3. Strive tournament (more to do with some players not getting enough playing time) participation and experience. Youth team is engaged
4. Possibility of some ultra youth players if not a team

What did not work

1. Unable to play freely. We played better when there was nothing to lose. We need to change our mindset.
2. The level in the league/tournament goes substantially down
3. Not everybody who wanted to play got time
4. Level set—some day we played very good, others time we played poorly

What to fix and how?

1. Must practice, run drills at least once a week
2. Defense defense defense
3. Understanding more about individual responsibility to make a team better. Aristotle's observation here "**the whole is greater than the sum of its parts**", our goal should be to make individual improvement to raise the level of our team.
4. Look for a practice venue that is available on a regular basis.

Finally here are some quotes during or after the league that are notable, also some quotes provide climatic expressions:

- *"...Who the hell he is talking about me like this. I am still not able to control my anger after hearing that"*
- *"...Let's start looking ourselves through a holistic lens and collaborate more effectively to bring a positive outcomes."*
- *"we played as a club, not as a team"*

These quotes pretty much summarize the 9 weeks journey in the summer of 2022: anger/frustration, constructive suggestion and something about the team dynamics. They also provide guidance for future tournaments regarding what to do and what not.