

swimming and volleyball

final
Whistle

British Olympic hopes win beach tournament

BRITISH Olympic hopefuls Debbie Spokes and Hedda Meijer won their first beach volleyball tournament at the weekend, beating top Californian women's teams.

The one-day event saw them on the beach at 8.30am in a pool of four.

They won all three pool matches then powered their way through a 16-team single elimination knock-out to the quarter-finals.

Said Debbie, a PE teacher at Castle Court School in Corfe Mullen, Dorset: 'We won the quarter final 2-0 and went straight back on court for the semi-finals.

'It was a tough round. We won the first set, lost the second and were playing even in the third but not able to take the lead.

'With a quick change of tactics, we picked on the other player, took the lead and won the match.'

The pair went into the finals exhausted but to-

tally focused winning the first in an almost unheard of 21-2.

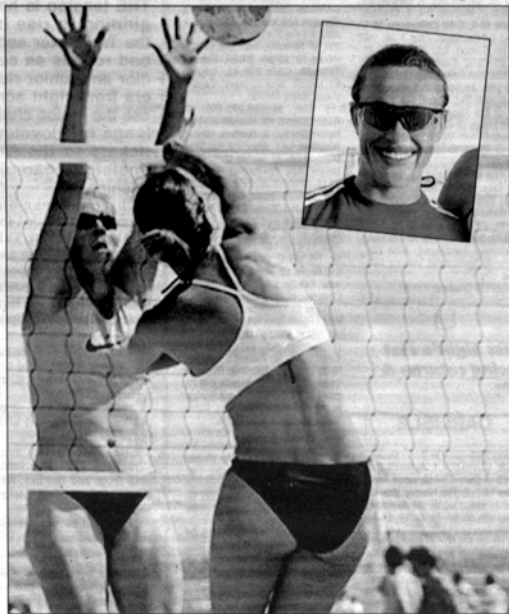
Debbie added: 'It was amazing. Our coach said it was the best result she had ever seen. The best she had seen before was 21-3.'

As overall winners, and after just six weeks in California, Debbie and Heddahave achieved AAA, the top ranking for the Californian Beach Volleyball Association putting them on the same level as the top Californian players.

The weekend's event was the Aloha Ball Club, Dockweiler CBVA Vollydolly Women's AA at Dockweiler beach near Venice, Los Angeles.

Their next event will be the Women's Open at Ocean Beach on May 21 and 22.

Debbie and Hedda aim to represent the UK at the Beijing Olympics and are in California for six months training with leading coaches and to improve their skill playing some of the world's top beach volleyball players.



BEIJING HOPEFULS: Debbie Spokes, (inset), and Hedda Meijer, have their sights set on the Beijing Olympics