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## **The Innsbruck BeachEvent 2020: a special tournament of the Austrian Beach Volleyball Tour PRO**

### **How to do a beach volleyball tournament in times of COVID-19**

Hosting a sports event in 2020 is certainly a challenge. Nevertheless, the young Austrian beach volleyball club My BeachEvent has given it a try and succeeded. From August 1 to 2, 2020 the **MINI UNTERBERGER DENZEL Innsbruck BeachEvent PRO 120 presented by IKB** (in short: Innsbruck BeachEvent) took place in front of the marvelous scenery of the Tyrolean Alps between the Nordkette mountains and the world-famous Bergisel ski-jumping hill. The tournament is part of the highest national series, the **Austrian Beach Volleyball Tour PRO**, and was characterized by thrilling matches, many surprises, and a safe but great atmosphere. Challenged by international top players, some of Austria's best beach volleyball teams presented their sport at the highest level.

### **Wins of the Austrian teams Frühbauer/Hörl and Friedl/Pfeffer**

Day 1 of the tournament started with bright sunshine, hot temperatures and some surprising results: None of the first seeded teams managed to reach the semifinal at the first onset. In the men's competition, the Italian star duo Ingrosso/Caminati and the Austrian team Schnetzer/Petutschnig won all their matches and qualified directly for the semifinals, just like the all-Austrian teams Dörfler/Radl and Almer/Wiesmeyr in the women's competition.

On day 2 their opponents were determined: Unfortunately, the fancied men's team Seidl/Waller had to give up due to injury, allowing their Austrian colleagues Frühbauer/Hörl to step up against the World-Tour-experienced players Ingrosso/Caminati – with success. Much to the joy of the fans, the half-Tyrolean team Murauer/Reiter also made it to the great final. Nevertheless, Frühbauer/Hörl showed a stable performance in the last match of the day and won the title in two sets. The obvious underdog Schnetzer/Petutschnig celebrated a great success against the Italians and ended the tournament in third place.

The women's finals were characterized by close matches. Dörfler/Radl, who had remained undefeated until the great final after winning the semifinal against Fink/Freiberger, were challenged by the first seeded team Friedl/Pfeffer, who made their way to the great final

through the looser pool. After losing the first set, Friedl/Pfeffer celebrated a comeback in the second set and won the title in a strong third set. Also the match for the bronze medal was characterized by a deciding third set, in which Almer/Wiesmeyr prevailed over Fink/Freiberger.

### **Beach volleyball (events) in times of COVID-19**

The livestream experts summarized the athlete's performance with the following words: "All of the matches were attractive to watch. However, the corona crisis has a noticeable impact on the teams' performances: Due to the lack of competitions and training, almost every team has difficulties to maintain the high level throughout a whole match. Whoever manages to keep up the performance will win in the end." By the way, with more than 10.000 views, the livestream was a great success. Moreover, the organizers were thrilled about the great interest in the tournament. On Sunday (August 2, 2020), the Innsbruck Tivoli outdoor pool, which had been converted into a stadium, was even sold out. Due to national COVID-19 regulations, only 200 fans were allowed, leaving enough space for about 300 imaginary baby elephants in between them. In order to guarantee the safety of the players, volunteers and fans, strict prevention measures were taken, including safety distance lines, body temperature checks, disinfectant dispensers and a ticket system with assigned seats. Moreover, face shields and masks were handed out for free. "We wanted to prove that sports events can be carried out in times of COVID-19 in an attractive manner – both for the athletes and the fans.", the organizers state. However, without the sponsors, who supported the event despite the difficult time, and the help of dozens of volunteers, the event could not have been held.

### **The results**

Rank	Women	Men
1	Franziska FRIEDL/Eva PFEFFER (AUT)	Simon FRÜHBAUER/Julian HÖRL (AUT)
2	Anja DÖRFLER/Julia RADL (AUT)	Jakob REITER/Michael MURAUER (AUT)
3	Katharina ALMER/Stephanie WIESMEYR (AUT)	Florian SCHNETZER/Lorenz PETUTSCHNIG (AUT)
4	Viktoria FINK/Eva FREIBERGER (AUT)	Paolo INGROSSO/Marco CAMINATI (ITA)

## General information

The **Innsbruck BeachEvent** is part of the **Austrian Beach Volleyball Tour PRO**, which consists of multiple tournaments in various categories. As a PRO 120 tournament, the Innsbruck BeachEvent has been attracting well-known national and international players as well as ambitious youth athletes since its beginning in 2017. Actually, the tournament was scheduled for June 5 to 7, 2020. However, due to the COVID-19 crisis, it had to be postponed and was held last weekend (August 1 to 2, 2020) as one of only four tour stops in 2020.

The event is organized by the young Tyrolean beach volleyball club My BeachEvent on a completely voluntary, but professional basis. The ambitions of the organizers are high: “One day, we will host a professional beach volleyball tournament in the Bergisel ski-jumping stadium.”, says Simon Varges, club chairman, about the vision of the event.

## Credits

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