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## SPORTS

## 'Setting' A Precedent

VBLI unites Long Island's volleyball community

BY NICOLE ROSENTHAL

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Team sports such as football and volleyball are fun and competitive, but what is the use without other members to play? Northport resident Glenn Yankow recognized this obstacle that many players on Long Island faced in order to establish a close network of players who desired an inexpensive, yet driven team of members, and thus VBLI was born.

Opening its doors in early 2005, VBLI made a promise to the online volleyball community to provide accurate, up-to-date volleyball information with no advertising, in a clear and easy-to-follow format free of charge. During its creation, founder Yankow realized that, although there are thousands of players in New York, the locations and options for players were just too expensive or

limited. Therefore, Volleyball In The Park was conceived in 2006 and since then VBLI has grown to include grass, beach and indoor tournaments.

Teams of four may register online for a wide variety of events and tournaments, which can host teams consisting of club as well as non-club players. From beginners just learning how to bump, spike and set to semi-professional athletes, VBLI accommodates matches for virtually all levels of the sport and accommodates groups ranging from the ages of 14 to 64.

Since its conception, the membership-based club has attracted 7,000 members over the last decade and has scheduled countless tournaments, with a variety of teams practicing at different locations throughout the region.

"We have been successfully coordinating...tournaments for the past 11



VBLI has tournaments at Eisenhower Park and Lido Beach. (Photo courtesy of VBLI)

years and planning over 150 tournaments [for] this year," said Yankow. "In the 2015-16 season, VBLI was able to fundraise over \$87,250 for college volleyball programs in and around the tri-state area. Our contribution plans for this year are even greater... we expect the amount [for this current season] to be in the area of \$100,000."

The club also holds frequent tournaments on several terrains and with cash prizes, with primary locations being Eisenhower Park and Lido Beach. Tournament cups are awarded at these events, in which top players and teams are recognized by the club. However, the

Long Island-based business is not only looking to play regionally, but to expand its influence of players around the globe.

"The future looks good as we're in our summer season," said Yankow. "We've just wrapped up our indoor season on May 31 at Nationals in Minneapolis MN, where 11 Long Island teams competed with 480 others from all over the world."

Providing a sense of community for volleyball players of all levels for more than a decade, VBLI continues to serve as a premier spot for those seeking friendly competition. For more information and to reserve a spot for your team, visit [www.vbli.com](http://www.vbli.com).

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