

Jorgy's dig in for title

By STEVE THOMAS

The Bismarck Tribune 7/16/2006

The sweat trickling down John Schock's face bore mute testimony to the ordeal of sand volleyball. Competing in heat that peaked out at 106 degrees, Schock and his Jorgy's Sports Bar teammates won the Prairie Rose State Games Class D coed title. The tournament was played Sunday at the Sertoma Park courts.

Schock said he and his partially cooked teammates never lost sight of the goal, no matter what the thermometer read. "We wanted to do well. League is for fun. In this tournament we wanted to do well," Schock said. "... Winning was definitely a lot of fun."

Jorgy's, a Bismarck team, downed Sidelines of Bismarck 2-0 in the championship match. Following five pool play matches, Jorgy's needed to win a semifinal and championship match to capture the title.

"We played seven matches starting at 8 in the morning," Schock said. "We got in about three matches before it started getting nasty."

The temperature had easily cleared the century mark by the time Jorgy's won its final match at about 2:30 p.m.

Persevering along with Schock, the team captain, were teammates Tanya Kessel, Melissa Yackley, Wendy Hoiby, Dion Rahn and Tom Todd.

"We probably drank gallons of water," Schock said of the volleyball players' fight with the elements. "The canopy and trees were good (for shade during breaks) and parks and rec had fruit and water for us, which was a life saver."

Jorgy's competes in a Tuesday evening league at the Sertoma courts and is currently in first place. Bismarck sand volleyball leagues boast 281 teams. The State Games drew 52 adult sand volleyball teams.

Schock, who plays in an indoor league in the winter, said the skills essential to both styles of volleyball are almost identical. The game itself varies, though.

"It's tougher to jump in the sand so rallies last a lot longer," he said. "... But it's a lot softer to dive in, too."

It was a long weekend for Schock and Todd. They played in the four-man men's tournament for Northwest Contracting on Saturday. They played five matches but failed to place.

Schock said it's nice having the State Games in Bismarck-Mandan because it makes it a easy to compete. His team missed the 2005 Games in Minot due to personal schedule conflicts. He said the same problem may rear its head next year with the Games in Fargo.

"We definitely would like to (shoot for two in a row) - if everyone is available," he said.

Sunday's gold medal was a first for Schock. He garnered a silver in 2003, the last time the Games were in Bismarck-Mandan, but he was hitting over a lower net that year. He teamed up with Jon Benz to take second in doubles in tennis.