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Upset special at MotherLode

Aspen Times writer

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With the deepest field in history, upsets were common Friday in the men's masters division at the annual MotherLode Volleyball Classic.

There was none bigger than eighth-seeded Jeff Pheffer (Kansas City, Kan.) and Denver's Matt Akromis upsetting the No. 1 seeds, Randy Meador and Jim Nichols, during quarterfinal action. Pheffer and Akromis kept their momentum going in the semifinals, upsetting fifth-seeded Vince Vandermeay and Mike Vernon of New Mexico.

"We played Meador and Nichols straight up," Akromis said in a news release. "Meador and Nichols are a great team; they dig everything. However, we had a height advantage, so we just played tall."

Steve Salmon and Kenny Lentin, the sixth-seeded team from San Diego, were also standing tall after a semifinal victory second-seeded Tom Witt and Dan LaFontaine of Arizona. It was the 11th match for Salmon and Lentin in two days; they won the men's senior 45 title Thursday.

The men's masters final will begin at noon today at Koch Lumber Park. So, too will the playoffs in all coed divisions, beginning at 8:30 a.m. at Wagner Park. Play was suspended Friday because of weather.

Salmon and Lentin were one of three duos to take home titles Thursday. Packy Jones and Eric Anderson defeated fellow Californians Jon Lee and Jon Hastings in the men's senior division. The win is Anderson's sixth Mother Lode championship.

Californians Jackie Campbell and Ilga Celmins won the final title of the day. Because they came out of the losers bracket in the women's senior 45-year-old division, they had the difficult task of beating Kathy Lawless of Parker and Kris Bredehoft of Englewood twice. They pulled off 21-14 and 21-10 wins in the first match, then 25-12 in the final.

Jordan Curet/The Aspen Times Tanya Mulder of Nebraska leaps up to spike the ball Friday during a co-ed match at Wagner Park, the second day of action at this year's MotherLode Volleyball Classic.


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"We had to play seven matches today, it was quite a workout," Campbell said. "Last week, I took second place in a seven-mile paddle boat race at Lake Tahoe, so I'm in decent shape. The paddle boat race only took me two hours; today I started at 11 [a.m.] and didn't finish the final match until 6:30 [p.m.]

Last year's winners, Sammatha Meador and Julie McGarr of Houston, took third.

In the middle of the day's action at Koch Lumber Park, organizers, specators and players paid tribute to former MotherLode director, Tim Weiland. Weiland passed away in April after 24 years - 1982-2005 - running the nation's largest pro-am event. A plaque with Weiland's name was placed at center court with sand from various courts around the state where Weiland directed tournaments.

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