

## State volleyball was an experiment gone well

Written by Scott Unash

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No one really knew what to expect for this year's State Volleyball Tournament. That included the coaches, fans and participants. But now, looking back on the four-day run at the Cedar Rapids Ice Arena, all went well. Very well.

As most everyone knows, the State Volleyball Tournament was moved to the Ice Arena this year because of the revamping and renovation of the US Cellular Center downtown. It is expected to be a one year temporary setting before moving back next year.

All the pertinent questions came to mind for the organizers, and everyone had much apprehension. But I can report first hand that it was a major success.

The crowds were lively and closer to the action. The media was happy as well because nothing much changed from how the tournament was conducted downtown. The coaches, when asked, said they liked the new atmosphere even more then the one downtown. And above all, everyone attending was ecstatic about the parking situation!

It was a cozy feeling to the tournament this year, and I think the teams appreciated that a lot more and felt much more a "part of the action."

The one drawback of the US Cellular Center, besides the parking, is that the fans are away from the action and at least 10 feet off the ground where the action is taking place.

This week the students attending the tournament felt a part of the action, and were well behaved as well.

Looking ahead, I would love to see another event regularly held at the Cell Center go to the Ice Arena this year, and that would be the boys substate basketball games in early March. If the

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schedule would enable it, I believe the Ice Arena would be an amazing place for basketball. It would be loud, the fans would be a part of the action, and it would be still an atmosphere that would get teams ready to playing in a big arena like the one they would see in Des Moines.

I know some preliminary talks are underway on this possibility, but like the volleyball tournament coming to the Arena for a year, many I's have to be dotted and T's crossed before the ice is covered again.

Kudos to everyone involved in making last week a success. It took a big effort and everyone should take a bow. Now, let's hope we can make it back in March for some hoops!

*(Scott Unash is the sports and program director at KGYM-AM 1600. He is a six-time winner of the Iowa Broadcast News Association play-by-play Announcer of the Year Award. Scott and Mark Dukes co-host the Gym Class weekdays from 3-4 p.m. on KGYM)*