

HISTORY OF VOLLEYBALL IN ALASKA

State Volleyball had its start as the "Western Alaska Girls Volleyball Tournament" in 1971. Only eight teams attended the first two years. In 1973, the tournament expanded to twelve teams and was hosted by Dimond. Teams were seeded at random because of the different number of games played prior to the tournament. With the advent of Title IX volleyball became an officially sanctioned State Tournament. Until 1980, the matches were best two out of three.

Starting with the 1985-86 season, ASAA created separate divisions. Schools with enrollments 100-400 now competed in the 3A Championship, while schools below 100 competed in the 1A/2A Championship. This changed again in 1988-89 when all schools below 400 competed for 1A/2A/3A championship. In 1991, both championships were held at the same site for the first time---Bartlett High School---and Lee Johnson was the tournament director.

Volleyball in Alaska increased in popularity over the next 8 years resulting in a major change. For the 1997-98 season, all 1A & 2A schools plus the 3A schools in Regions 1 were grouped into a classification known as 1A/2A/3A West. 3A & 4A schools played in the fall while the 1A/2A/3A West played in the late winter. This was more conducive to their school year and backhaul with wrestling. In addition, a number of small schools who could not field a full girls team began competing coed in a classification known as "Mixed Six". The coed division began with only four teams qualifying to the state tournament and Golovin winning the Championship. By 2002, the popularity of this new format increased to the point that eight teams qualified out of six conferences.

In 2009, all the 3A-West schools returned to the fall schedule leaving the 1A/2A and Mixed Six schools in late winter. Presently, the 3A and 4A schools season starts in early August and ends in mid-November. The 1A and 2A and Mix Six Division start in late September and finish in early December.