

Progress of Qatari players delights beach volleyball coach Baracetti

Qatar beach volleyball new coach Mariano Baracetti is happy with the progress of his trainees. Jefferson Santos Pereira and Cherif Younousse just bagged the AVC Beach Tour Aspire Qatar Master, their second title on the Asian tour in one month.

At the Aspire Park, the Qatari lead pair overcame a stubborn resistance from Australians Chris McHugh and Damien Schumann before emerging the champions in three sets. With the title, Qatar were among four nations who qualified for the upcoming FIVB Beach Volleyball World Championships, to be staged by Vienna in July and August.

The Argentine coach, while talking about the performance of his players, said, "Yeah, I'm very happy with the way my players are playing. Also I'm delighted with the manner in which they are responding in different situations. The final of the AVC Beach Tour Aspire Qatar Master was quite difficult. But they came through."

"This was the second title for Jefferson and Cherif in three tournaments. So I feel they are progressing well."

Talking about the preparations for the worlds, he said, "We'll leave here on May 20 for Europe. There we will play matches every weekend and prepare for the world championship in Vienna. It's important to be in good shape for a fine performance during the worlds."

He also added, "Now we've three teams working every day. Also I saw many other young guys playing under coaches in clubs. They are also doing a good job with the Olympic players. I hope the new players will shape well and push hard to play in the senior national team."

Pereira said, "We're really delighted to win the title at the home event. Our aim was to qualify for the worlds. We managed to do it and won the title as well."

"We played the first set well. We should have won 2-0 against the Australians in the final. We made some critical errors in the second set and almost our minds blew off."

"It is always tough to come back in such situations. We succeeded in slowing down the pace and came back much stronger in the third before claiming the title. For us, it was important to be back with tougher mind-set and we did it well."

"But now if we go to the worlds and we've to get good results, we'll have to work ten times harder. In the last championships, we played well to reach the quarter-finals. This time also, our target would be high and we'd aim to finish among top 10 or something like that," added Pereira.

Australian Chris McHugh, the former Asia champion, said, "Damien and I have played consistently well on the Asian Tour. This week, we could not crack the final and unfortunately could not get over the line. Qatar played really well at home. It was a great final for everybody, I think."

"The beach volleyball level in Asia has improved dramatically in the last four years. We've such a strong tour now, with Qatar, Iran, Indonesia, Kazakhstan, Oman, Thailand and New Zealand all are

playing tough. It is really so much hard to reach the final now. It is amazing and good for the Asian beach volleyball," said the Aussie.