

2008 Alberta Volleyball Hall of Fame Award

Category: Builder

Inductee: Al James

A man known by some for the green track suit he wears while supporting volleyball events, Al James is more widely known in the volleyball community as a player, coach and builder who set the stage for the growth and success of volleyball in Canada.

To think that it all started one day after a basketball practice at the University of Alberta Calgary Branch when Al tried volleyball for the first time. Al was one of the first really “tall” players to choose volleyball over basketball and thus became a leader in how the game developed in Canada. In those 5 years (one as a player coach) he played on team Alberta twice and won the Western Canadian championships in 1965. Al continued as a player founding the Calgary Volleyball Club in the process and playing Senior men’s ball from 1967-82.

In 1968 Al took over as head coach of the Mount Royal women’s team which he coached through the 1970 season when they won a provincial championship. In 1977 Al was the founding president of the Calgary Volleyball Club holding this position until 1980. Al was also quick to help out the fledging Alberta Volleyball Association that had been officially incorporated in 1974 and was run out of Bob Bratton’s kitchen. Al took on the role of President and worked to establish a real office and in the process solidified the role of the organization in those early stages when it could have easily been abandoned.

In 1983 Al took on a national role when he joined the board of the Canadian Volleyball Association as the vice president and Chairman of the National Teams Committee. He remained with the CVA until 1989. Al then took some time away from being an administrator and director of volleyball to coach his kids. It wouldn’t be for long before Al was back in volleyball working behind the scenes to ensure that kids had a place to play and develop their skills. In 2000 Al joined the Canuck Stuff Volleyball Club as a founding director and in 2002 became the President of that organization.

In 2004 Al also re-joined the Alberta Volleyball Association as a director for three years (2004-07) bringing his valuable experience to the role of Age Class representative. Throughout the years Al has always remained a part of Alberta Volleyball and Volleyball Canada taking on active roles when he was needed but more so always being there to help and support the sport he was so instrumental in developing.