Krieg made big impact in short time
Coach’s death scars local community

The gloomy weather that hung over a CBVA beach volleyball tournament being held at Main Beach on Saturday couldn’t have been more fitting.
Early that morning, Santa Cruz County had lost one of its warmest and brightest young coaches. Trevor Krieg died at 4:10 a.m. at Mercy Medical Hospital in Redding after he hit his head and fell into the water while jumping between houseboats at Lake Shasta on Friday night.

At the tournament five hours later, the news spread from court to court — and so did the tears. Young girls and seasoned women huddled together under the gray skies, their puffy eyes lowered while their sobs rose above the sounds of the surf. Gangly boys and strapping men retreated to the wall below the sidewalk or far regions of the beach to process.

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Continued from D1

the information on their own. All ages, all abilities, lifelong beach rats and indoor players wobbled in their sand tournament debuts mounded the loss. Krieg was just 22 years old and had only been living in Santa Cruz since 2008, yet his legacy in the county ran deeper than the sand on which they stood.

The local volleyball community won’t be the same without Krieg. But it will be better thanks to him.

Simply put, Krieg was Santa Cruz County volleyball. Every spare moment he had he spent playing or coaching or attending matches.

In the fall, he split his time between working as the head coach of the Mount Madonna School girls program and the assistant coach to Gabby Houston at Cabrillo College. With both, he found success — he helped the Hawks extend their winning tradition by guiding them to the Central Coast Section Division V semifinals in 2010 and 2011, while the Seahawks reached the state championship both seasons.

Last spring, Krieg took over the varsity boys program at Scotts Valley. The Falcons’ team had never really gotten off the ground, but Krieg was sure he could help.

“We don’t want to wait until next season to be good. I think that’s an important factor. Why not start now and try to get good this year rather than waiting for next year and the year afterward?” he told me in an interview for the Sentinel’s boys volleyball preview this spring. In the next breath, he noted he’d never worked with a team so young and so raw.

But that was Krieg, ever the optimist. Even on the rare occurrence that one of his teams lost, he would greet me for a post-game interview with a smile and a we’ll-get-em-next-time attitude. That carried over to the sand at Main Beach. Krieg played there several days a week, sometimes joining organized groups, but more often jumping in wherever he could find a game. He wasn’t the tallest player on the court by a mile, but he showed he could play with the best and the worst and keep a smile on his face the entire time.

Krieg perhaps affected the most lives through the Main Beach Volleyball Club, where he coached for the past three years. There, he shared his knowledge, strategy and joy for the game with hundreds of young girls and boys.

Many of them were among those inconsolable figures huddled together at Main Beach on Saturday. After they’d gotten out the first wave of grief, most pulled themselves together, bundled up against the grey and the cold and did what would have made Krieg the happiest.

They played.

Julie Jag is the Sentinel’s Sports Editor. Contact her at jag@santacruzsentinel.com or follow her on Twitter @julie_jag.