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Sandflies buzz off to Italy

THE Sandflies - a beach tennis squad that trains near South Melbourne Life Saving Club - is facing international competition in Italy this week.

The 14-member squad is competing in the beach tennis world championships in Ravenna, Italy, from today to August 28.

Australian Federation of Beach Tennis president Paul Mapley said he chose the name Sandflies for tactical reasons.

"I thought it might add a bit of bite to the beach," he said.

Mapley said 12 of the 14-member squad came from Port Phillip. He himself will also be on his honeymoon with team player Kellie de Burgh - they recently married.

He said he was particularly proud of the squad's youngest member. Alex Holdsworth, 14, of Albert Park, is the first junior boy to travel in an Australian beach tennis team.

Alex Holdsworth, 14, shows his beach tennis prowess.

