



Fall 2009

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Commissioner's Welcome

Patty Blacklock

Welcome to the start of the IREVA/USAV 2009-2010 volleyball season.

The IREVA web site is receiving continual updates as information changes, so please log on often to stay informed (www.ireva.org).

The on-line registration system continues to improve with electronic signatures for all forms. The driver's I.D. number will need to be entered, but this eliminates the need for the signed waivers to be sent and kept in the region office (as long as you register on-line). The registration data base is on-line and you should update your information via your Club Administrator throughout the season with any address, telephone, and/or e-mail address changes. And please, keep your username and password for this system in a safe place for easy retrieval when needed.

Congratulations to all athletes and clubs who participated in post season events (Nationals and High Performance Championships and camps) representing IREVA this past year. We were represented well in numerous age groups and it is my hope that those who took part are sharing their positive experiences with others so that the numbers being exposed to these phenomenal opportunities continue to increase from our region.

Congratulations also go out to the officials who were successful in upgrading their national ratings this year for officiating as well as scorekeeping.

IREVA OFFICERS 2009

Commissioner
Patty Blacklock

Vice President
Mike McNeil

Treasurer
Jim Bishop

Secretary
TBD

Registrar
Lori Muollo

Tournament and Insurance Coordinator
Ben Rosenthal

Referee Director
Hansen Leong

Referee Assignor
Howard Veater

Scorekeeper Director
Mike McNeil

Adults/Eligibility Director
Chris Trombley

Juniors Director
Hazel Goldstein

Coach Development Director
Mike Wingard

Executive Director
Jim Bishop

Communications Director
Karen Bauer

Regional Office Manager
Anna Turner

Assistant Registrar
Susanna Ashline

Fellowships Coordinator
Paul Putman

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I'd like to thank all of our club directors, team reps, and coaches for providing the opportunity that they do for participation in our wonderful sport. Volleyball is one of the very few sports that can be participated in for well into the senior years. Therefore, I would encourage everyone to keep striving to increase the number of people we get involved at all points of the age continuum.

The Board of Directors is continually attempting to include members in their committee based approach to get things done for our region, so please contact the Director who has been appointed to

the area/population you are interested in/ have the credentials for becoming involved with as a committee member and help us to make the positive changes we all want for our region this year and beyond.

As I have said before and will continue to say, the volleyball community is one of the few that consistently demonstrates (on and off the court) the values and importance of teamwork, commitment, dedication, camaraderie, appreciation of others, and the willingness to help others when in need. So, let's continue to expand that trend beyond our individual teams and clubs to work together as a region sharing resources, talents, ideas, facilities, etc. to ultimately grow the life-long sport of

volleyball for participants at all levels (recreation to AA), genders, and age divisions (youth to golden masters), as well as, implement programs to develop players to their maximum potential thereby improving the national representation of the Iroquois Empire region at all levels of competition.

In closing, I will ask you again, to please, join me, and the dedicated board members that I will be working with, to make our region grow with increased numbers of tournaments, teams, officials, and exposure of novices to the various levels of the wonderful and fun sport of volleyball!!

Have a great season!!

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AWARDS

The Region owes its success to contributions made by its many volunteers. Accordingly, the Region will recognize extraordinary contributions of individuals and teams. These awards are presented at the Annual Meeting, which is held in May of each year. Recipients are selected by the nine elected Directors, chaired by the Director-At-Large whose term expires at the end of the current season.

FATHER CHARLES K. DWYER AWARD

One award is presented annually to an individual in recognition of continued and distinguished service and leadership in the Region.

2008-2009 Sue Medley

Previous Recipients

2007-2008 Robin Sparks
2006-2007 Patrick Dwyer
2005-2006 Jim Bishop
2004-2005 Jim Bishop
2003-2004 David Hersh
2002-2003 Jim Bishop
2001-2002 Donna Lynch
2000-2001 Anna Turner
1998-1999 Jim Webber
1997-1998 Jerry Dussault

SILVER AWARD

One award will be given annually to an individual who has earned distinction as a referee or scorekeeper, or who has made a substantial contribution to the training of officials and development of officiating in the Region.

2008-2009 Aaron Baum

Previous Recipients

2007-2008 Paul Vink-Lainas, Ben Rosenthal
2006-2007 Michael McNeil
2005-2006 Michael McNeil
2004-2005 Michael McNeil
2003-2004 none
2001-2002 Gary Adler
2000-2001 Pat Hanlon
1998-1999 Mike Sardella
1997-1998 Thom Carrier

BRONZE AWARD

Up to three Bronze Awards will be given annually to individuals for activities of special merit in a season, such as tournament organization, team administration, special projects of benefit to volleyball, youth development, or other notable achievements.

2008-2009 Gary Richards, Loretta Nerney, Skip Nerney

Previous Recipients

2007-2008 Gary Bynon, Loretta Nerney, Sandy Misiewicz, Steve Pike, Johan Dulfer
2006-2007 Ben Rosenthal, Sue Medley, Don Perkins, Dawn Sculley
2005-2006 Cameron Erickson, Sue Medley, Don Perkins
2004-2005 Jeff Selditz, Sandy Collins
2003-2004 Michael McNeil, Hazel Goldstein, Andrew Killian
2001-2002 Hazel Goldstein, Robin Sparks, Hana Panek
2000-2001 Keith Hitlin, Hazel Goldstein, Thom Carrier
1998-1999 Jim Gabler, Patty Blacklock, Chris Blais
1997-1998 Carla DeShaw, Troy Dollar, David Jack

PLATINUM AWARDS

Two awards will be given annually, one to a men's and one to a women's club exemplified by its sportsmanship and by its contribution to the success of volleyball in the Region through its members' participation in the Regional administration, tournament sponsorship, officiating and the development, extension, and promotion of the sport.

2008-2009 Northstars VBC, CNY VBC

Previous Recipients

Men's Women's
2007-2008 Legion VBC, North Country Albany Juniors VBC
2006-2007 Whoosh VBC
2005-2006 Zero Gravity VBC, Vestal VBC
2004-2005 none
2003-2004 RPI Men VBC, Binghamton Women VBC
2001-2002 Schenectady YMCA VBC, SAMO VBC

2000-2001 Boomers VBC, North

Country Juniors VBC

1998-1999 Limerick Pub VBC, Caroga Lake VBC

1997-1998 Schenectady YMCA VBC

Boomers Bangers

Mike Shorkey

For the 10th year in a row we participated in the USAV Volleyball Championships. Boomers were able to post our 9th successive BB regional championship against our new nemesis Arsenal.

We arrived in Minneapolis to play in the 52 team Men's A Division. With this years team I had put together I decided that it was time we try A after 9 years of playing BB. In BB we had never finished better than 3rd (twice) & a bunch of top 8 finishes. This years roster would be basically a juggernaut of middles. I took 7 middles and myself: Dave Burgstahler, Mike D'Agnese, Nick D'Angelo, Josh Kohout, Jason Olson, Ben Rutt, Jim Sculley & myself (Shorkey). Since never playing A at nationals I wasn't sure what to expect & what our expectations would be. My back had locked up 2 weeks before with a pinched nerve that had me out of work & basically curled up in a ball for days. We tried numerous options but after exhausting all options we had no back up plans. I went to physical therapy & chiropractor and prayed for the best.

The first two days of the tournament were used for our 6 team pool. We finished 5-0 & defeated a team that finished 3rd in last years' A tourney. At that point I felt like we had a shot to get into the Gold bracket. Since we went 5-0 in pool, we only had 1 play-in match

to get to Gold. With rankings this just happened to be a team from our own pool that took us to 3. We beat them in 2 to get into the top 8 Gold bracket. We then beat Chicago Coast North, Big Dig & Shinkara Doom & advanced to finals. Shinkara came back out of the loser bracket to beat us in 3 in that final & then 25-23 in a 1 game double final. Great cheer section that came out for the finals from our supporters. I would say well over 200 were in attendance with a good chunk of those supporting Boomers. We ended up 2nd of 52 teams and had 3 players on the All-tournament team: Jason, Nick & Dave.

Highlights & Lowlights of other activities we engaged in (in no particular order & others I forgot):

- Weather was good. City & convention center was best yet.
- 6'7" OH joust just a few plays into the tourney - Ouch!!! (But won it ☺)
- Hotel room balcony that had overlook
- Mall of America=sensory overload
- Our 2 fans (Carla & Shara)
- The spoon charging incident, case of water trash talk & target baby clothes
- Trick elbows & fingers trick
- The "Sir" lady at Brueggers Bagels
- Artichoke Dip fest
- Bens numerous extra floor trips up to the 24th floor of hotel



- Best quote during play "That set was as high as my rooster"
- Best quote used all tournament "Ooooooooo Billyyyyyyyy"
- A certain asst coach crossing the joke(s) line
- Team dinners out every night with tons of laughing
- 'Rotten eggs', Jameson (never again Josh), chicken shots in The Local
- D'Agnese random cell phone picture that magically appeared
- Due to pm wave didn't get to see the Twins play

Thanks to Seager for coming out early & helping the team & for being Olson's permanent pepper partner. Everyone do the 'Seager'!

Thanks to Boomer's Bangers for a very successful season and fun year. I am very proud of our accomplishments, maturity and the hilarity that accompanied us off the court. We look forward to doing it again next year in Phoenix.

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Final Approach

Ben Rosenthal

This was the fourth National Tournament for me with, for a pleasant change, a mostly returning team. Four returning members from last year's team made the trip to Minneapolis. Most of the team played together all season this year and with a key player from last year and a couple "ringers" we were anticipating greatness.

The members of Final Approach were Ben Rosenthal L/OPP – Captain, Caleb White OH, Jake Bluhm OH, Josh Hagel MB, Pat Conway MB, John Leighton S/L, Eric Davenport L/DS, Steve Strollo OPP/S.

We were playing afternoon sessions this year, which fit right in our nighttime plans. As expected the booze was flowing; in fact one of the first things purchased was a cooler so there would always be cold beer in the hotel room for us. Some of the team went out to the Red Sox – Twins game Tuesday night while the rest of us had a delicious dinner at one of the local restaurant/bar's ironically called The Local. Most of us eventually ended up at the unofficial players party at Bootleggers. The bar was packed, the band was loud and, as expected, T and Crackers was out showing off this years "uniform" with stickers in hand.

Day 1 started with a match against Team Elevate. We took them to three sets but ultimately lost the match (21-25, 25-22, 9-15). Our second match

was a little easier against In-Side-Out who we handily beat in two sets (25-23, 25-22). Our final match of the first day was against Shinkara White who beat us in two sets (18-25, 21-25). Not a horrible start to the tournament but we would have liked to have done a little better on day one since day two had us facing two teams from New England region.

Day 2 was surprisingly much better for us. We made a couple line up changes including changing the setter, opposite and libero. Our first match was against Nacho Libero, again going to three sets (25-23, 26-28, 15-11) but this time we were able to hang on for the win. Our next match was against Bulletproof and, with the momentum from our new lineup, and big win earlier in the day, we won in two sets (25-17, 25-18).

With a 3-2 record in pool play we found ourselves in a new position for our team. We were to play in a gold challenge match first thing Friday morning.

Day 3 started with our gold challenge match in the morning against Hit List. We had a rough first set losing it without much of a challenge for them. In the second set we were much more competitive but they were able to take the match in two (20-25, 27-29). With this loss we found ourselves in the Silver division with our next match at 6 pm. To pass the time and take advantage of the beautiful city of Minneapolis a few of us took the "T" over to the Mall of America to check it out. After a hearty lunch of wings and

beer from Hooters we went on a couple roller coasters and headed back to the hotel to get ready for our first round in the Silver bracket. This match faced us against Viper Hits, another New England team with several players familiar to us. This would be a tough match. The fans filled the stands for both of our teams during warm-ups. The fans were loud and pushed both teams to a higher level. The first set went to Viper Hits leaving us a little down. We wanted to continue our tournament so we dug deep and were able to take the second set, again forcing a third. The lead went back and forth but we were able to hold on and win (21-25, 25-22, 15-13), advancing us to the quarterfinals and my first day 4 at nationals.

Day 4

The quarterfinal match again had us playing in the morning against Scrubz Swagga, a seemingly scrawny team that we felt we could roll over after our great match the night before. Unfortunately our over confidence was to their advantage as they took the match (22-25, 20-25) and ended our run at a medal.

I had high hopes for the team this year and was not disappointed. Of course a medal would have been the best outcome but tied for 5th in silver (out of 12), tied for 17th overall (out of 48) is a huge improvement over years past. The bar has been set high for next year and we are looking forward to the challenge.

H N' B

Danielle Hunt

H N' B Roster

- 2 Danielle Hunt
- 4 Megan Risko
- 5 Tricia Best
- 10 Stacy Kowal
- 12 Jen Dryer
- 18 Shannon Combs
- 40 Jennifer Dufore

Nationals 2009 in Minneapolis, MN was incredible, to say the least. No one on our team knew what to expect, because this was the first time any of us had participated in the tournament. We left Minneapolis proud of what we accomplished and with great memories to share with everyone back home.

The first couple of days were rough, as expected. Only four of us played together throughout the season, and some players were playing in new positions. We worked hard, and although we lost most matches, we played well against the other teams in our pool. On the last day of pool play we decided to switch some players' positions to try a new lineup, because things had not worked the way we played our first few games. This also gave everyone a chance to experience

new things while we were at Nationals. Despite our initial challenges in our new positions, we pulled out our first win! We won the first game, lost the second game, and then came back to win the third. Finally winning was the best feeling! It was a great experience winning with my girls, and I was happy everyone was open to trying new things and working together as a team, because it was worth it.

We were re-ranked into the bronze division the next morning. In typical H N' B fashion, we lost the first match that morning. We were then lucky enough to have the opportunity to play again in the afternoon, where we ended up giving the other team the first game by making stupid mistakes. We persevered and crushed them to win the second game and then went on to win the third – again typical H N' B winning in three. We were happy because we played well as a team and earned it. During the third game there was a collision which ended in a concussion and torn ligaments between two of our players. Once again we adjusted our lineup but did not let it deter us from playing our best in the next match. Saying how well we did and how proud I was of my team during this match just doesn't do it justice. The team we played went on to win the bronze



division, but we played so competitively against them, we still came away with a positive feeling. We went balls to the wall and left it all on the court and that's all I can ask of my team.

Overall Nationals was one of the best experiences we have had. Personal and team goals were accomplished along with experiencing a new level of volleyball competition. Some other highlights from our trip include lawn bowling at Brit's Pub, hanging out at The Local, discovering Big Gingers, going to the Twin's game, clubbing and getting into VIP, the all you can eat sushi buffet, traveling on the Light Rail to the Mall of America and the Aquarium and hanging out with our teammates and other regional teams.

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T and Crackers

Dmitri Gardner

Those of us who attended the 2003 USA Adult Open in Minneapolis (home of the Tiger Claw) know exactly how much fun that city can be, so we arrived again this year with high expectations. We were not disappointed.

Minneapolis offers everything one could ask for in a tournament city. Everything is centrally located within easy walking distance: hotels, pubs, restaurants, shopping, oh, and the convention center where some tournament was going on. (In contrast, our hotel in Atlanta last year, which was advertised as being 3 blocks from the convention center, required a 45 minute walk to get to our court. Atlanta sucks.) And the people in Minneapolis just couldn't be happier to see us (well, I think they were only just slightly happier to see us leave).

One notable exception to Minneapolis' preparedness as a tournament city is the local restaurants' failure to stock an adequate supply of beer. On more than one occasion we were reduced to ordering juice with lunch. Crazy. One would have thought the 6 years of preparation to restock since the last event in Minneapolis would have been enough time. "Boo" to the local restaurants' beer supply.

But a big "atta-boy" to USA Volleyball

for holding the tournament in a location that truly caters to an event like this. While we've been to (one or two) cities that were (only slightly) more fun, we've never been to a city better setup for a volleyball tournament (with the possible notable exception of Austin). By contrast, if nationals are held in Atlanta ever again, we're going to quit. Seriously. Atlanta sucks.

Noteworthy establishments in downtown Minneapolis were the Brit Pub and The Local, both fantastic pubs in the typical English/Irish tradition. The Brit Pub featured a terrific selection of English ales and lagers normally found only in the UK, and some of them hard to find even over there, and boasted a proper English lawn bowling field on the roof. In an uncanny reenactment of Ethan Allen's Green Mountain Boys, Team Vermont handed a serious smack-down to Team New York in the first round, only to be nickled and dimed in the second round mostly due to the afore-mentioned draft beer selection. The rubber match will have to wait until the next time we're lucky enough to be in this great city. The Local was another fantastic Irish-style pub, claiming the largest sales of Jameson's of any pub or restaurant in the world. Pretty impressive, if you've ever been to Ireland. Which we have. We contributed our own consumption to The Local's sales, purely to keep them on top you understand.

As far as the usual antics, there were ridiculous warmups and stickers, which

garnered us much attention and other things we can't really talk about.

Oh, there was volleyball as well. T and Crackers is not known for our impressive nationals performances, and while our finish this year suggests the same, our play on the court was actually the best of any nationals tournament so far. For the first time in our team's history, we were an all-T and Crackers team without having to beg, borrow or steal middles from anyone else. This provided for stronger team bonding and better connection on the court. That didn't stop us from being awarded a yellow card (it's 2009!). Everyone played very well, and we had very strong matches all but one or two games. We finished pool play 2-4, and while we played very well, most of the competition simply played better. We lost our play-in match to land in the copper bracket (also known as tin-foil). In the playoffs, we won our first match handily against a Boston team, which brought us to the semis. We lost the semis to finish third in copper, 3-6 for the tournament. Of particular note, we played as well or better than we ever have at nationals, but the B competition was the strongest ever. IREVA teams fared very well overall, including a respectable performance in Men's Open by Legion, a 2nd place finish in Men's A Gold by Boomers (nice job boys), and a 5th overall finish in Women's B Gold by Pink Karma, so any suggestion that IREVA is weak by nationals standards would need to come under significant scrutiny to attain any credibility.

To recap, Minneapolis rocks. Folks are friendly (yah, you betcha), the pubs kick butt, and the volleyball was pretty darn good. We can't over-emphasize how important the nationals experience is for club players looking to get the most fun possible out of the game. Nationals is not about volleyball, it's about the experience. Looking forward to next year.



Legion

Chris Hosley

2009 Legion Volleyball Club

- 1 Chris Hosley
- 2 Dave Egan
- 3 Art Kulans
- 5 Brad Kniewel
- 9 Chuck Haer
- 11 William Foley
- 12 Stuart Katz
- 13 Eric Lanham
- 14 Jon Keller
- 16 Pono Kahale

Legion volleyball would first like to thank IREVA and all of its members for the continued support throughout the years and again in Minneapolis in 2009. Our most important attribute is the growing numbers of participants in our region. I felt like I could walk around to any court and find someone I knew. So again, thanks to all.

Upon arrival in Minneapolis, and after taking care of all our managerial business we received our schedule and were prepared for a long first day with 3 teams on the agenda: Balboa BSF,

FVVC, and Elitevolleyballplayers.com. For those of you who do not know, the Open level teams play best of five matches. This makes it imperative to have a large number of adequate players on the roster to be successful throughout the tournament.

Our first match was a tough 4 game loss to Balboa BSF, a team from California (18-25, 25-20, 26-24, 26-24). Next on the schedule was FVVC Men from Canada. After being up 2-0, Legion Blue lost in five games after a improbable comeback by the FVVC Men (22-25, 17-25, 25-20, 25-10, 15-10). Later on that night we played our final match versus Elitvolleyballplayers.com, a team composed of overseas American professional volleyball players. In this match Legion pulled through with a 3-0 victory (22-22, 25-23, 25-17) over Elitevolleyballplayers.com on center court.

Sunday began with a 10AM match versus defending champion Team Paul Mitchell (whom we beat last year in playoffs). The match went to five games



eventually with the Mitchell team winning (21-25, 25-15, 25-17, 23-25, 15-10). Later on that night Legion faced off against Team Pineapple, an IPFW all-star team. This match lasted about two hours, eventually with the Legion squad winning (25-17, 23-25, 25-23, 20-25, 15-8). Legion finished pool play at 2 and 3 and was ranked 4th overall, which pushed us down into the silver bracket. Monday morning brought about another tough four game loss to a team we defeated two days prior Elitevolleyballplayers.com (25-20, 20-25, 25-19, 25-18).

With everything wrapped up, Legion placed 9th overall in the 2009 US Open Championships.



Legion Black

James Hosley

This was the inaugural season for Legion Black representing the IREVA region. We played in the A division, from May 23rd-26th. Once we arrived in Minneapolis and received our schedule, we knew we had a long tournament ahead of us. We had three matches scheduled for Saturday, and three matches scheduled for Sunday.

Our first match of the tournament was against Team Crank early in the morning. Legion Black played well and went on to win 2-0 (25-22, 25-20). Our second match was against BCV Set2Kill and we came out very sloppy. We were defeated very quickly in two (25-7, 25-19), never really playing up to our potential. We later found our form in the third match of the day against Ozark. It was a match that went to three games (25-21, 24-26, 15-13), ending our first day with a record of 2-1.

Our second day started off promising but ended in disaster. We woke up early again to play MVA Alcoholigans, who eventually went on to take 3rd in the silver bracket in the A division. After nearly beating them in two straight games, we never found our form in game three, losing by eight points (25-22, 24-26, 7-15). This would be the story for us the rest of our second day. We went on to lose to Shinkara Doom (Men's A champions) and Six Packers 2-0 to finish pool play with a disappointing 2-4 record. We also lost our right-side hitter to a sprained ankle during the last match. After checking our pool, we found out we were in a 3-way tie for 4th place, but came out 6th due to the lowest point ratio.

We were scheduled to play Fine Cut Interiors, a team from Pennsylvania, in the Bronze Challenge playoff match. The winner would receive a spot in the bronze bracket, and the loser would receive a spot in the copper bracket. Even though we were disappointed from our struggles the day before, we were

determined to qualify for the Bronze bracket. Again we started off slow losing game one (22-25), but we quickly found our stride to win the next two games (25-23, 15-12).

After a few hours off we began to warm-up for our Bronze playoff match against Stogeez MVA. This match proved to be even more difficult than any of the previous matches as we lost our setter (and team captain) to a shoulder injury, and our swing one outside hitter to a foot injury. We eventually lost 2-0 (25-17, 25-17), but it was apparently time to finish our tournament anyway. Had we won, we would not have had 6 healthy guys to put on the court to play, as three of us had now gone down with injuries.

At the end of the tournament, the young Legion Black team finished 3-5 overall in the 2009 US Open Championships. We look to build on the success of our first season as a team, and look forward to next year's indoor season.

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Legion Red

Ashley DeNeal

2009 Legion Red Volleyball Club

- Blair Buchanan
- Ashley DeNeal
- Emmy Blouin
- Caity Dupont
- Carol Lamarche
- Audra Jeffers
- Angela Culatti
- Mary Orchmanek
- Jessica Hohl
- Jennifer Leone
- Ashlee Reed

Legion Red would like to say thank you to all of the IREVA staff for their hard work in making this 2009 season possible. Very few if any of us probably understand or realize the amount of time and effort it takes you guys to pull everything together. So again, thank you! We would also like to say thank you to all of the IREVA participants for their support in Minneapolis this year. It's awesome to walk around the gym and feel like you're at home with all of the familiar faces. Thanks again to everyone and way to represent IREVA again this year!

Competition in the Women's Open Division proved to be just as strong as ever. In our first day we went up against Huskies VBC, USA RED, and The Exterminators. Although we



dropped all three of these matches, our team felt that we really competed against some of the most talented players in our nation. It's not every day that we get to stare through the net at two former All-Americans and a runner up for the NCAA Player of the Year.

Heading into the second day of play, we were a little more hopeful of a victory, knowing that we only had the single match to play for the day. In a tough match, we ended up securing a win over Avril's Team. We all felt we were playing much better as the tournament advanced.

We opened up the double elimination tournament play with a team out of

Canada. We were able to pull out the first two games, but couldn't keep it up to finish out the set. We ended up losing the match 2-3. Our next match was against Smack Trim later that evening, in which we again grabbed the first two games, and dropped the last three to lose the match 2-3.

While we finished the tournament in 9th place out of 10 teams with a match record of 1-5 and a set record of 8-15, we were all very proud of our effort and our ability to compete with teams at the most elite level in the tournament.

Is it almost time for the 2010 nationals? We can't wait!



Pink Karma

Erin Erickson

Who ever would have thought that MinneSOTA would be so fun? But it was not without a few “bumps” along the way. The day after we paid our entry fee, not one, but both of our middles found out they would be unable to go. We still had 6 going, but the lack of a middle hitter put a damper on our excitement. In true PK fashion, we scrambled (and begged) and eventually landed 2 awesome all around players, Carolyn and Tressa. Still had no “true” middle, oh and Heidi was fresh off of shoulder surgery, but hey, we were determined to have fun and do well. After all, that is what PK is all about.

Pool play started Wednesday morning. We won our first match- phew- now our nerves were gone. Second match was a little tougher and we lost. Third match was a close one but we lost in 3. Not the start we had hoped for. And remember those “bumps” I mentioned? Well, Sarah lost her black jersey (OK, we had 3 so she was going to be fine), Krista hurt her back (she’s only our best hitter) and despite doing great at middle, Heidi’s shoulder was starting to get sore. What’s a team to do?

Go eat, drink, cheer on the boys, and forget about all of the mistakes and start fresh. We weren’t playing bad, we just weren’t playing as consistently as we would have liked. After seeing the boys play, we were ready to kick some booty on Thursday.

Thursday morning went very similar to Wednesday. We won some, we lost some. The entire team was a little shocked when Katie told us we had a gold challenge match the next morning because we were 3rd on our net! Apparently so many of the teams on our net split, it helped that our losses went to 3 games. We ended up having better records than 3 other teams on our net. We were so excited. After all the drama getting PK here- no middles, grabbing players we never played with before, injuries- **A GOLD CHALLENGE MATCH!!!**

Friday. Friday, Friday, Friday. I think we started at 9:00. I honestly can’t remember because it was such a blur. We played. We won. We thought we had a break- nope, had to work due to a technical error. Then we played again. And won. And worked again- WHAT???. Then we played- and lost. And worked again. Jazz put it best when he reminded me (all bruised and busted) that we were playing/ fighting to stay in it. Gold is double elimination and we got one loss earlier in the day already. Somehow, that thought got the team motivated to win one more time. And to our surprise, **WE DIDN’T HAVE TO WORK!!!**

We had one day left to play. We were one of 6 teams left in gold. All we had to do was win at 8:00 am to stay in it. We were so determined regardless of our pain. Up to this point, we all had made mistakes, but we all had spectacular plays that kept us alive and winning. I remember one dig that Sarah had that Carolyn chased down and somehow got over the net. I remember key blocks that both Tressa and Heidi made. I remember Katie getting a kill (or two). I remember Krista hitting shot after shot and putting the ball away. Regardless of the outcome of our 8:00 am match, we had played beyond our expectations and were thrilled to be where we were, and with the people we were playing with. Awe.

But we lost. First game was (to say the least) not our best. Second game we lost 24-26. I wish it had ended differently, but I was so proud of my team. Pink Karma is so much more than a team. It is a group of friends sharing laughs and supporting one another while we play this little sport called volleyball. We bicker and argue, but at the end of the day, these are my girls and I love them. Thanks for great memories that will last much longer than the Friday that we never thought would end. Katie, Krista, Sarah, Jamie, Heidi, Carolyn, and Tressa- I am so proud of what we accomplished and can’t wait to do it again.

Schenectady 50's

Bob LeCerais

The Schenectady 50s had another successful encounter at the US Open Championships. Maybe you wouldn't think so if you looked at our overall match record (2-5) or games record (5-12) or if you saw that we got bounced out of the semi-finals of the Silver division. But there are other ways to measure success, and I think we nailed a lot of them!

It's always a challenge when you go to Nationals with a team that has never played together before. Heck, we had teammates that didn't even meet each other until just before our first match! We were truly a composite team, blending 8 players from 6 teams across 4 clubs: Rich Chapin (CD Select B), Skip Nerney (CD Select BB), Jack Anderton and Ben Cottrell (Schenectady 50), Bob LaCerais (Schenectady 55), Mike McNeil (Binghamton), and Bernie Goldfine and Stan VanSant (Atlanta).

It was really gratifying to see the team come together over the course of the tournament and find ways to maximize the contributions of each team member. We lost our first four matches in pool play (and only won one game in the process), but four of our game losses were two-point losses. A lot of

'woulda, coulda, shoulda' moments in all those games gave some reason for cautious optimism as we approached our last pool match. A few things came together during that match as we eked out a 16-25, 25-20, 16-14 match win and avoided the dreaded play-in game for the 8th (and final) spot in Silver.

As it was we qualified 6th in Silver, setting up a first-round match with the 3rd seed, Eventpro - a team we lost to in pool play 18-25, 27-25, 15-9. We turned the tables on them this time, but did it the hard way - losing the first game 25-17 and then falling behind in the second game 14-7. We called our second time out at that point and found another gear (or two), pulling out a 25-17 win and then taking game three 15-6. That 33-9 run over the last two games was some of the most exciting volleyball I've ever been a part of! And that win got us to day four of the tournament, always a major goal when we go to Nationals.

Despite our best effort we lost our semi-final match to E's Club 50 (the eventual Silver winner) 19-25, 11-25. The final standing shows us as tied for 3rd in Silver - a decent showing, considering we came in seeded 15th out of 18 teams. Who knows, maybe if we were in the other semi-final we make the finals... Anyway, we were all happy with our play, both individually and as a team - and can't wait to see how we do next year!!

Beyond playing in the tournament the whole Nationals experience was outstanding! The opportunity to play teams from different regions (Great Lakes, Puget Sound, North Country, Southern California) and from other countries (Canada, Venezuela) is always rewarding. Running into old friends (and foes) from previous Nationals makes the experience even more enjoyable. And rooting for our fellow IREVA teams (and there were a lot of them!!) is always a blast.

Minneapolis was a great host city. The facility was well suited for the event, there were lots of restaurants and pubs (I'm a big Summit EPA fan now!), the local food was engaging (is there a menu in Minneapolis that doesn't have walleye on it?!?), and the local attractions (like the Skyway, the Metrodome, the Mississippi River, the Mill Museum) provided an opportunity to step away from volleyball for a few minutes and recharge your batteries.

The best part of the tournament, though, was being able to spend it with a great bunch of teammates - friendships established, friendships renewed, and friendships strengthened was the theme of the week. Thanks, guys, for contributing to all of our successes at the 2009 US Open Championships.



Schenectady 60's

Jim Bishop

Let me tell you a story about how way back in May of '09 IREVA's senior citizens of mens volleyball uprooted themselves from their couches and rockers, loaded up the Conestoga wagons, and headed west to see the sights – and to possibly find a little volleyball action. [See related stories for the adventures of the Schenectady VBC's intrepid 55s and 50s.]

Our little band of pilgrims included the usual suspects – Mike, Larry, Dick, Jim, and his brother Jim. Along the way, we picked up refugees from Rochester – Jim, Larry and Bruce. We also collected a totally lost person from Florida – Ron. With this kind of talent and experience, the omens looked good.

Once we arrived lovely, under-construction, downtown Minneapolis, all found various ways to be entertained – there was beer; participation in 55s; beer; spectating lots of volleyball; beer; baseball; beer; tall young women; beer; good food; beer

Our playing experience was “interesting”, shall we say. In the other 2 pools, results matched seedings, but in our pool, not so much. We beat the #2 team, and lost to the bottom team. “Erratic” doesn't really do justice to what we did to ourselves - so close and yet so far - for want of a pass, a set [or 2 or 3] was lost. We were 2-and-3 in pool, then lost the silver / gold challenge match, then lost and were done.

Bummer - so much for aspirations and expectations. However, as a result of our early exit, we had many more

opportunities to watch our friends from other IREVA teams play – yeah, IREVA! [And even under construction, Minneapolis is better than Atlanta after a tornado!]

Well, perhaps there will be another year. We'll see where USAV takes us next. Call us at the home when you find out!

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Serves U Right

Prineet Amin

As always the National tournament was a blast. Minneapolis is a fantastic city. The accommodations and the convention center were great. Location couldn't have been any better. Unlike last year, we didn't have to walk 3 miles to the closest grocery store or 2 miles to the convention center (maybe a little bit of exaggeration on the mileage).

Introductions to the team. Prineet Amin – OH, Chris Kilmer – S, Joe Wager – MB, James Brown – MB, Colin Rose – DS, Bob Burbank – RS, Pete Mutolo – OH, Holly McLane – Team Co-Mom, Anna Kilmer – Team Co-Mom. After a rough regular season of trying to consistently put our starting squad at every tournament, we found ourselves going to Nationals with 7 players. One of which, James Brown, was a lucky last minute addition from IREVA.

So back to the volleyball. Maybe our team name should have been Serves Us Right instead of Serves U Right. At least that's what it seemed like was the theme for our team this year. Our bad

luck streak started the day before tournament play. During our practice session the night before, we decided to play a friendly scrimmage with our friends from Arsenal. Well, 2 points in to the game we had a close play at the net and Bob, our right side hitter, ends up severely spraining his ankle. That was the end of that scrimmage! The great trainers available to us did a great job of wrapping Bob up and making him available to play for the rest of the tournament. But the injuries don't end there!

This year's performance had an eerie resemblance to Austin Nationals two years ago where we didn't end up winning a game until the Copper division and then preceded to win the darn thing! This year was similar but not the same outcome. We won our very first game and then proceeded to lose every game in pool play after that. During our 2nd match I ended up straining my calf and was barely able to walk off the court. Good thing that was the last game of the day for us. Once again, thank god for those trainers. They pretty much had me in tears massaging my calf. Without them, I don't think I would have been able to play another game.

After a disappointing round of pool play and losing the Bronze challenge round, we found ourselves in the Copper division without a win. I must say, we didn't hang our heads low. We were determined to play hard and gain our first win. And we did just that. Two games that match, our first win! We were now in the quarter finals playing against Shinkara from Colorado. This was a team we knew we could beat. Winning the first game, we thought we were making our push and finally playing our game. Unfortunately, Shinkara had plans of winning. They took a close game 2 from us. Game 3 battled back and forth and points were hard fought. But, we conceded to Shinkara in a great battle. We only had a couple of things to look forward to now. Beer, hot tub and Mall of America!

Overall we had a great time and wonderful experience. Can't wait for next year!

Thanks to IREVA for helping us get our team together and registered in such a short amount of time. Jim Bishop, couldn't have done it without you!

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Team Venom

Chris Seager

Being that 2009 was the first chance our team had to attend a USAV National Tournament I was unsure of exactly what to expect. Going in, there were only 3 things that I was absolutely sure of: First was the fact that I am obsessed with the game of volleyball and would embrace any chance to play against some new competition. Next was that the team we were taking was a solid group of volleyball players but more than that they were a great group of guys that would undoubtedly be a blast to play, drink, and laugh with. And finally I really needed a vacation!!

The tournament seemed to go very smoothly and was run very well. There were a few bumps here and there but all in all, it was everything I had hoped it would be. While, as a team we struggled a little and didn't quite meet the lofty expectations we had hoped for, we had a lot of fun and met some terrific people. We laughed with each other, with opponents, with officials, and even with the occasional EMT. I learned so many things about the members of our region, my friends, and even myself and I would like to take

this opportunity to share just a few of them with you...

- The people you see on the volleyball court week in and week out during our season are definitely not the people you see at the bar afterwards.
- No matter how old I get, putting things on peoples back that they don't actually know is there will always be funny. Isn't that right 'American Cutie'?
- A sticker here and a sticker there is mildly amusing but a sticker on every thing you see is absolutely hilarious (only because I don't have to scrape them off).
- The more you pay for a hotel the better it feels to hang your underwear out the window.
- Carrying a bottle of liquor around the hotel at 8:00 am will really confuse the "nice respectable" guests you meet in the elevator.
- Volleyball players are truly genetic freaks. From the

ability to turn your pinky all the way around the wrong direction to one outside hitters' ability to bend his elbows backwards we are seriously troubled people who should probably see a doctor.

- Take the biggest, most intimidating middle and put him on a roller coaster and even he will scream like a 6-year-old girl running through a sprinkler.
- And finally other regions may be able to beat us at volleyball but I would like them to see how they hold up with good old IREVA in a drinking contest. I was truly impressed to see how well some of our members played with a hangover!!

I was lucky enough to spend a week in Minneapolis meeting new people, getting to know acquaintances much better, and playing volleyball with my friends, all while punishing my liver. I can't imagine a more enjoyable vacation and I can't wait to do it again next year.

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Zero Gravity

Nathan Rose

Cheers to all who came and supported Zero Gravity in their effort to win the national championships in Minneapolis this year. With all of your support we accomplished our goal and look forward to repeating as national champs again next year!

Okay, so we didn't win the gold medal in the gold bracket, but we did succeed in giving the overall BB Gold Bracket Champion (Chicago Club South) their only game loss. A small but worthy nugget. We'll just have to build on that in the coming year.

Our championships started with getting to know to the city, and the drinking and dining possibilities around the city center. The Skyway and the Light Rail proved popular ways to travel in and around Minneapolis, getting us all over the city from our downtown hotel to the Metrodome all the way out to the Mall of America.

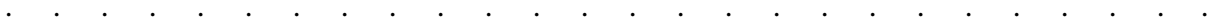
A few of us got in early to watch and support our friends / adversaries playing in the A/AA/Open levels; we got to enjoy a party thrown for all at O'Donovans pub -- I think the average height that night eclipsed 6'5", including

the women. The next day, we got to watch and support IREVA's "Boomer's Bangers" in the gold bracket of the A division. Boomers put up a valiant effort and were rewarded with silver medals; we walked away with plenty of pride for IREVA that day.

The boys of Zero Gravity played tough in the initial pool assignment but sadly walked away with one win. This was a tough pill to swallow, as we had high hopes for our performance this year. But we forged ahead towards playoffs with a new energy. After a great team dinner at the Mall of America with the ladies from team Rockstar we went on to explore the largest mall in America. Four stories of shops and food, even an aquarium in the basement! It lived up to the hype -- we got lost in this place for several hours. Some of us even rode the roller coasters inside the mall itself. In bracket play we lost a heart breaker in the third game to drop us to the Copper Division. After a little regrouping, we won our next match and looked to build on this success to possibly still pull out a medal. In another hard fought duel we lost again to finish our time at the open. It never feels good to lose, but I honestly think that we made up for the losses with some good times in a fun, clean, and seemingly safe city (watch out for construction signs, though).

Some of the things we will look back on with fond memories -- the team dinners at the Mall of America, lunch at Hells Kitchen, Ichiban, the old Spaghetti Factory, Staccato, and the Newsroom. The wonderful libations served to us at Brits pub. The delicious Jameson cocktails served up at The Local. Dan Kelly's. And of course the convention center food court. We will remember the great time we had at the baseball game between the Red Sox and the local Minnesota Twins, watching the underdogs pull out a victory. We'll still laugh about the Red Sox fans who would not give up on their team until the very last inning. The same fans who then disappeared into the crowd before paying up any of their lofty wagers.

We also want to take time to thank the people who made it possible for us to attend the championships this year. Some of our sponsors include Time Warner Cable and Mugshotz Pub in Syracuse. We would also like to thank IREVA and the fans of Zero Gravity volleyball club for cheering and celebrating with us this year. We look forward to seeing all of you again next season both locally and at nationals!



North Country Albany Junior's 16 "Dynamite"

"It was great!" This comment came from a player on the NCAJ Dynamite team and sums up their experience at the 2009 Junior Olympics.

To play at nationals is exceptional, and this team has had the remarkable experience of participating three times-- first as 14s, again as 15s, and then as 16s. They played some of their best volleyball ever in Miami this year against the most experienced teams in the country -- finishing 43 out of 48. As another player said at the end: "We did awesome"! That is the kind of attitude that drives these girls as they train and play throughout the year and it makes them proud to be representatives of the Iroquois Empire Region.

Since most of the players on the 16s National team had been together for three years, they have a certain comfort level with each other, which shows on the court. Two new additions to the team had no trouble finding their spots, and this made for a smooth, successful season. "These girls worked hard."

"Their perseverance and dedication definitely paid off," says Coach Cathy Wysin. The team was strong, confident, and ready to take on the best...which they did when they played teams from southern California, Colorado, and Chicago, among others.

The season began by winning the gold division in a tournament within our region. They then traveled beyond the Northeast to tournaments in Washington, DC, and Indianapolis, experiences which tested the team and strengthened their resolve. They then won their age division at Regionals and came in 5th overall in their age group at the East Coast Championships in Pittsburgh.

"What I appreciate about this team is the girls' commitment to work hard and to seek the challenges of playing top teams within and outside of IREVA. They accomplished a lot this year and learned a lot, too — about themselves, each other, the team as a whole, and the lifetime sport of volleyball. Beyond the many impressive accomplishments, the experience of high-level competition against teams and in tournaments near and far, this team represented the best of what USA Volleyball and IREVA seek to develop: a commitment to self-improvement, the importance and value

of the team, and a love of the sport. I am very proud of the Dynamite team 2009," said Patty Blacklock, the Club's Director and Commissioner of the Iroquois Empire Regional Volleyball Association. "They put it all together— everything they learned, individual talents, team work, their love for the game, and their drive to fight for every point. It made for some great volleyball."

Members of this year's 16 National team were Amber Gass, Emily Gillich, Alexis Hargrave, Sarah Malsch, Rachel Martin, Mandy Schott, Sylvia Sorriento, Nancy Vickerson, and Ellie Wagner.

Participating in Nationals is definitely an incredible experience and one we hope will continue to be available to our athletes. All in all, Miami 2009 was definitely a great time...even with some "unusual" hotel accommodations this year.



Long Beach State HP Training Camp

Carter Roche

My name is Carter Roche and I play for Lakeside Volleyball Club. I attended Long Beach State's High Performance Boys Training Camp over the summer. I was there for one week (July 13-17). I had a great experience there. Leading up to the camp I did not know what to expect because this was my first time going to a camp like this. It was the first time that I flew on a plane by myself. I was nervous but in the end it was good

for me to do that on my own. When I got off the plane I thought it would be a difficult process to find the camp coach but it was very easy to find them. The volleyball part of it was great. I got to play around 8 hours of volleyball everyday under great instruction. I learned many new things. I learned how to get your body warmed up properly to prevent injuries, I learned new simple skill related warmups, and I was taught many new skills and how to use some basic skills correctly (getting rid of bad habits). I also brought some advanced drills back home to help out my school team. I met new kids from all over the country and ended up meeting

two kids from New York (one from Syracuse and one from Long Island). If I get a chance to go to another one of those camps, I probably would take the opportunity. It was a great experience.

