



Fall 2007

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Commissioner's Welcome

Patty Blacklock

I'd like to welcome all of the returning and new Iroquois Empire Volleyball Association members to the 2007-2008 volleyball season and urge that each and everyone of us do whatever we can to contribute in making this one of the best seasons ever!

While I am still a relatively new Commissioner, our Board is full of exceptional volunteers who, like myself, have been part of the Iroquois Empire region for many years and have the best interest of the membership and the sport of volleyball at heart with each and every issue that is brought to their attention. So please, come to us with your ideas and become aware of/involved with the committees that we have available to promote policies and progress in the sport of volleyball within our region and beyond!

In looking at the initials of our region's name (IEVA), I see a message to

Involve Everyone in Volleyball Activities

and I believe it is up to all of us to make those invites to everyone that we know so that more people are getting involved with the sport and increasing their level of involvement with each and every invite that they accept.

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

IREVA OFFICERS 2007

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(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!

The 518 Junior Nationals

Chris Aiello

The 518 Volleyball Club embarked on its 2nd Junior Olympic Boys' Nationals appearance. We traveled to Atlanta, Georgia to compete against some of the top teams in the nation. The 518 18's team had had some great showings at various tournaments all season, as well as retaining the regional championship and everyone looked forward to the tough competition to come.

Coming into the first day of games, mixed feelings arose. Some players were there for the first time, others their second, and three for their third. The excitement was there, but not apparent until we reached the convention center. Many of the first timers had stunned looks upon their faces as they caught the first glimpse of the vast amount of volleyball underway. It was nice to finally have a tournament where we got to play in the second wave and the players got to sleep in a bit.

The pool the first day included some stiff competition from SOVA 18 Gold, High Line 18 Red, and Quicksets 18B Black. Playing against these teams from areas where volleyball is a much

larger sport, The Great Lakes, Southern California, and Hawaii is always interesting. Unfortunately day one results were not so good. We started off against SOVA providing a challenge but came up short 21-25 and 19-25. The first set was a heartbreaker with SOVA regaining momentum from a big run in the first set. We were up 17-14 and finally sided back out for 18-21. Getting ready to play High Line the coaches were pretty confident that our team could pull out a win. They were very competitive in the last match against a much better team. During this match, we regressed to a team that could not serve the ball consistently. Very sloppy play left us with another loss, 19-25, 20-25. This second loss left us in a precarious situation; if we were to lose the third match as well, we would be relegated to the bottom half of the tournament. The first set against Quicksets was a nail biter that we lost 23-25, the second set offered hope as we dominated the entire time to win 25-20, but in the third we seemed to have nothing left and lost 8-15.

Day two dawned with fresh hope. We came out fighting and lost the first match: 20-25, 25-23, 11-15 to Diablo Fujinaga. This team went on to win our pool, which is severely disappointing when you play them that close. We played the second match of the day as if it was already lost from point one and this resulted in a massive loss 18-25, and 17-25, almost completely due to unforced errors. We remembered how to play with some heart in match three and took it 25-15, 22-25, and 15-11. This late day win picked up everyone's spirits tremendously and the team seemed to remember how to close out a match.

The schedule on day three was brutal. We were seeded in a five team pool on two courts and we had pulled a short straw: we worked first and then played four matches straight with a one hour break in the middle, no matches off. Our first match was against Shoten and we continued from the previous night's

success, beating them with set scores of 25-18, 25-27, and 15-10. The boys took their momentum and rolled it right into the match against Capital City Volleyball beating them in two sets, 25-17, and 25-21. Due to a schedule misprint our court had gotten started late so our hour break scheduled for this point had completely disappeared. Fortunately we were able to negotiate a minimum of thirty minutes to eat before our third match in a row but this proved to be inadequate for the match against the top team in the pool, Tool City 18-2s, and we went 16-25, 25-22 and the third set was lost with a very tense 13-15. There was no time to recuperate from this before the fourth match. It became immediately apparent that the boys had nothing left to throw at our forth opponent Panther City 18s so we used this opportunity to rest up some of our starters. The sets went 21-25, and 20-25.

Day four was the highlight of our trip; the day before the team had begun to play cohesively and figured many of our issues out, but lack of depth in a few positions meant that we did not have the endurance to cope with the schedule. Starting off the day in Flight 4, we beat Missouri Thunder 25-19, 22-25, and 15-10. In the next match against BOOMERS the team repeats the performance, taking set one easily 25-16, playing set two too close and losing 24-26, but pushing on in set three to win 15-11. This places us in the final match of our bracket poised to be the first 518 team to leave nationals with a win in their last match. The 518 Volleyball Club delivers another close match for the crowd, barely beating SHOTEN 24-26, 25-17, and 15-10. Thus we finished out the day 3-0, winning Flight 4, and finishing 45th overall.

The 2007 Boy's Nationals was a great experience for the entire 518 team. Our seniors finished out their junior careers with an impressive finish and our younger players gained some great experience for the coming years.

NCAJ Explosion

Linda Wagner

The North Country Albany Juniors 14s team, Explosion, earned a bid to participate in the 2007 USA Junior Olympic Girls' National Volleyball Championships in Minneapolis from June 28th-July 2nd. They were the first NCAJ 14s team to participate in the National Championships and were proud to represent their Iroquois Empire Region at the event.

Playing at the National Championship was an exciting and challenging experience for the ten girls and two coaches who traveled to Minnesota, as well as for the numerous parents who supported them by being there. "It was a great experience for all of us and showed the players what incredible volleyball skills they could achieve if they put the time and energy into it that some of the top notch players, within their age division, do. I saw the fire in

all of our players' eyes when they tried to emulate some of the players they saw while they competed in the games, so I know they have the fever and they now believe that it is possible for them to work hard and reach great heights with this wonderful life-long sport of volleyball. I just hope they remember their individual shining moments, because each of them had them throughout the event and I want to thank them and Desiree Farley, who stepped in as my Assistant Coach for the Championships, for all of their hard work, dedication, and unconditional support that they gave me as the Head Coach", says Patty Blacklock who also serves as the Club's Co-Director and Commissioner of the Iroquois Empire Regional Volleyball Association.

The Explosion team worked hard to earn their place at the Nationals. For most on the team, this season was their first time playing together and for others their first time playing club volleyball. Yet, everything just seemed to come together. They began the season by

winning the gold medal at their first tournament and ended by winning the gold division at the Iroquois Empire Regional Volleyball Championships in Syracuse, NY.

Members of the Explosion team who attended Nationals were Libby Bjork, Sarah Bjork, Hattie Burgher, Brigit Diamond, Emily Gillich, Brigit Haggerty, Victoria Nixon, Mandy Schott, Sylvia Sorriento, and Ellie Wagner.

Based in the Capital Region of New York, the North Country Albany Juniors Club currently has six teams: 12s, 14s, two 16s and two 18s. Co-Directors, Patty Blacklock and Robin Sparks, are expecting those numbers to increase based on the excitement that these Explosion players are demonstrating and talking about from their experience at Nationals this year.



USA Junior Olympic Championship

Ron Sparks

What an experience! We went out expecting to play the best teams we had ever seen, and we were not disappointed. I spoke with several college coaches in attendance and they confirmed what I believed was the best, talent wise, tournament ever. I have been to more than a half dozen NCAA Championships and the finals rivaled some of those matches. Although we finished with a record of one and nine, none of the young women on the team wished that they had passed up the experience. The opportunity to play at that level is rare, and possibly a once in a lifetime chance for most. We finished 46th out of 48 teams. I remember someone saying, "That still means we

are the 46th best team in the country." I think she had the right attitude.

One thing we might have done differently was stay a little closer to the venue. We ended up at a hotel across the street from the Mall of America, about an hour, by train and foot, to the convention center. The proximity to one of the largest shopping centers in the world was a slight distraction for some of our group. I have to admit I was in awe of the indoor roller coasters.

Even though our record did not show it, we had many highlights. We lost games by scores of 27-25, 29-27, and even 31-29. Some of the games that we lost by large margins were great games. Exceptional rallies, amazing defensive plays, and trying to run a deceptive offense, we just could not score points. In the semi-finals of our flight, we ended up playing Long Island Big Apple (LIBA). One of the parents from LI commented that this was for the championship of New York. And that's

how we played! We won in three games, and used everything we had learned during the tournament.

Casey Wright was a shining star offensively, and led the team with kills. Angie Mifsud made some of the most amazing defensive plays I have ever seen. Christianne Ludwick carried us, offensively, in our sole win. Kathleen Hoyt served teams off the court, and was the funniest player in the gym. Lauren Passerelli was limited by a chest cold, but contributed when we needed a pass, and was the most supportive teammate ever. Brittany Conroy had to fill in for our injured setter, Allie Mentor, and led the team proudly. Lindsay Frasier made huge leaps as a middle blocker, and was an overall balanced player. Jamie Belmonte, the most inexperienced player on our team, played well above any of our expectations. Overall, we represented our region well.

One thing that we learned from our experience was how hard that you had to work to be competitive at that level. We spoke with many teams that practiced 5 nights a week, and one club that had two a days for the month prior to the tourney. Most of the players at

the event were concentrating their efforts on volleyball rather than trying to play multiple sports. Volleyball still seems to be a secondary sport in our region. We have the athletes to compete at a national caliber tournament. The next step is making a

commitment to our sport (athletes, parents, and coaches) and competing in these types of tournaments so that we can bring back the knowledge to others in our schools and clubs who have a love for volleyball.

Lakeside "Beachbums" Rock Junior Nationals

At this weeks Jr. Olympic National tournament held in Atlanta Georgia July 4-7th, the "Beachbum's" shocked the competition by coming from behind and winning "1st place" in the Bronze Division. Initially ranked 13th at the start of the competition, their hard work and success has now ranked them "9th in the Country" in the 15u Open boy's division. This win has also made them the top ranked 15u boys team on the east coast, and chances are good, that they may end up with the highest ranking of all east coast teams (regardless of age) playing at the Jr Olympic tournament.

Pool Play (DAY1)

Lakeside vs OCVC (Orange County v/B Club, California)
OCVC entered the tournament ranked #1:

Lakeside 14-OCVC 25.....Lakeside 26-OCVC 26

Lakeside vs High Performance (ST. Louis)
High Performance entered the tournament ranked #12

Lakeside 25-HP 22.....Lakeside 15-HP 25.....Lakeside 15-HP 10

Lakeside vs Skyhigh (Great Lakes,Chicago)

Sky High entered the tournament ranked #24

Pool Play (DAY 2)

Lakeside vs Bay to Bay (Northern California)
Bay to Bay entered the tournament ranked 4th

Lakeside 20-Bay to Bay 25....Lakeside 14...Bay to Bay 25

Lakeside vs Vaqueros (Puerto Rico)
Vaqueros entered the tournament ranked 8th

Lakeside 16-Vaqueros 25...Lakeside 17-Vaqueros 25

Lakeside vs Ultimate (Great Lakes, Chicago)
Ultimate entered the tournament ranked 14th

Lakeside 25-Ultimate 21...Lakeside 25-Ultimate 16

Lakeside 25-Skyhigh 18....Lakeside 25-Skyhigh 14

Pool Play (DAY 3)

Lakeside vs Northshore (Milwaukee)
Northshore entered the tournament ranked #19

Lakeside 21- NorthShore 25....Lakeside 25-Northshore 16.....Lakeside 15-Northshore 13

Lakeside vs Lake Country Boys V/B Club (Wisconsin)
Lake Country entered the tournament

#21

Lakeside 25-Lake Country 14....Lakeside 26-Lake Country 24

Lakeside vs Riptide (Orange County, California)
Riptide entered the tournament ranked #9

Lakeside 19-Riptide 25...Lakeside 25-Riptide 22...Lakeside 24-Riptide 22

DAY 4 (Bronze Division Championships)

Lakeside vs High Performance (St. Louis)

Lakeside 15-HP 25....Lakeside 25-HP 21....Lakeside 16-HP 14 (Semi-Finals)

Lakeside vs Epic (San Diego California)
Epic Entered the tournament ranked 7th

Lakeside 20 - Epic 25...Lakeside 25-Epic 23....Lakeside 15- Epic 10 (Final)

LAKESIDE BRONZE CHAMPIONS

Freedom Junior Olympics

Terry-Roxann DeGraw

Sunday, July 1st: Today was the “jumping off” point of our excursion. For Kiersten, Jasmine, and Felicia (Jasmine’s mother), the day began at 3am. It was very rough for Jasmine and Felicia, who had been awake since the night before and traveling home from NYC at 1am. They arrived at the airport at 4:30 am and their chief concern was the weight of their baggage (Felicia’s was exactly 50.0 pounds!). The plane was very small and tight, and Jasmine felt very claustrophobic. For the rest of the gang (team members and family), the morning began between 4am and 5am. After a few mishaps with security (Kelly and Jill were thought to be dangerous!), breakfast breaks and bathroom trips, the team boarded what could be the smallest plane to ever take off. Mr. DeFosse couldn’t even stand up straight! Despite the extremely bumpy landing, everybody had a decent flight. In Chicago, meeting up with Kiersten, Jasmine, and Felicia was rather funny. All three women looked as if they might just fall asleep while standing up! Actually, Kiersten had eaten so much candy and drank so much Starbucks she couldn’t stop talking! Thankfully, the flight to Minnesota was more spacious and less lengthy than the flight to Chicago. Most of the girls noticed the odd patterning of the land below. Who ploughed the ground into PERFECT squares? The great number of baseball fields lain across the Minnesota ground was also unbelievable. Finally, after landing, baggage claim and catching the shuttle, the team and family entered the cutest Country Inn and Suites in America. Even the elevators were painted with homey landscape décor. Most of the team hung around the hotel; swimming, playing Mario Tennis, or hanging out in the hot tub. Kiersten, Jasmine, and Felicia, however, lived up to the old adage “Shop ‘til you drop.” Hitting up the Mall of America as quickly as possible, the rest of the day included bargain shopping and eating

Bubba Gump Shrimp Co. The day came to a close as everyone dropped like flies on their beds, completely worn out and exhausted from waking up early.

Monday, July 2nd: Our first morning in Minnesota began early; we all ventured off to the Mall of America for some roller coaster adventures. Before hitting up the rides however, we girls stood for a photo op underneath the Mall of America signs, posing for approximately fifty pictures. If you look carefully, the pictures should be posted in the September issues of Vogue, Teen People, and most importantly, USA Volleyball. Once inside, after “oooh-ing” and “aah-ing”, we bought wrist bands and rode many rides, including an interesting version of the Crazy Mouse, the team favorite. Considering the personalities of those on the team, you can bet we screamed obnoxiously at all inappropriate times. We also considered jumping in the blow up tree house, but as you can imagine, we were all unfortunately taller than 43 inches. After completing the indoor amusement park (and yes, Coach Kwinn dominated the rides with us), the group split up to shop according to style interests, occasionally meeting up with each other while eating lunch or shopping in one of the gazillion stores. By 10:00 pm the entire team had returned from their shopping expedition. Some girls had shopped for seven hours! Totally spent, much like their money, the girls played some cards and fell asleep almost instantly.

Tuesday, July 3rd: Tuesday began with some of us oversleeping (*cough, cough* to Dakota, Kelly, and Jasmine) and eventually breakfast. Then, some of us moved on to relaxing in the pool and hot tub. Mid-morning was characterized by some shopping, some hanging out, and a whole lot of rain. Dakota, Kiersten, Kelly, Stephanie, and Jasmine all visited one of the Mall of America’s quintessential tourist attractions, the Largest Underground Aquarium. The aquarium contained many species of fish, sharks, and sea turtles. The girls enjoyed taking many pictures with the fish and varieties of statues within the complex of the aquarium. After

meeting up with Jill, Brittany, Kayla and Coach Kwinn, the entire team set out on a bus for the Tour of the Twin Cities. The first stop on the tour was located at Minnehaha Park, which possessed a beautiful waterfall and a statue of Hiawatha carrying Minnehaha across the river. Following the many poses of the team next to the waterfall, the group journeyed back to the bus to head into the heart of the Twin Cities. The tour guide led the group through Saint Paul and Minneapolis, visiting a cathedral and the capitol. More sites seen were the broadcasting headquarters for Prairie Home Companion, the house in the television show Mary Tyler Moore and a speak-easy during the days of prohibition. The tour ended with the group back at the Mall of America to eat dinner together at Famous Dave’s then off the see fireworks over a nearby lake. Yes! Fireworks on the THIRD of July!! The firework display was beautiful and the scenery of the lake completed the show. Over excited, the girls fell asleep and ready for the first day of play.

Wednesday, July 4th: The girls woke up and decided to split ways again on Wednesday. After showering and cleaning, the girls of hotel room 421 (Jasmine, Dakota, Kiersten and Kelly,) were shocked to see Stephanie knock on their door saying how Jill, Kayla and Brittany were all ready off to start their day. After breakfast Jill and Brittany headed off to Lake Calhoun. Jasmine, Kelly, Dakota, Stephanie and Kiersten spent their time in the pool and hot tub. Later the whole team and the coach went to the mall again to eat food but, after some discussion, skipped the food and headed straight for the train. Rather ironically, the team was prompt in boarding the train to Nicollet Station (where the Convention Center was located), but the coach was so busy “buying tickets” (yeah right) that she MISSED the train! (The truth: Coach Kwinn was nice enough to buy everyone’s ticket and was waiting for her credit card to be released – it took so long she missed the train.) Once the girls realized Coach Kwinn was not to be found, frantic phone calls were made and Kelly, queen of the subways and

trains, jumped to figure out what station we were expected to get off at. Oddly enough, during a discussion about what should be done in a worst-case scenario, Jillian spotted something very unusual. It appeared that Coach was walking towards our train car! Well, it turned out our military woman of a coach had taken a cab to the next train station and boarded. When the team first walked into the Convention Center, the thought at the tip of every girl's tongue was "Oh my God. These girls are so tall. These parents are so tall." Also, in the words of Steph, "They must breed them somewhere. The parents, I mean, which go on to breed more tall people." Not only were the girls tall, they were strong. A girl from Deadfrog, a team from Michigan, hit Dakota hard enough in the head to give her what was possibly a mild concussion! Although she played through the day, a trip to the trainer called for a series of obstacles including running laps, taking it easy and sleeping in coach's room! A second trip the next morning was necessary. After a hard day of playing, maybe not to full potential, but intensely all the same, the girls trooped back to the hotel. Along the way, firework displays could be seen in every direction. Jasmine, Kiersten, Stephanie, and Dakota personally witnessed over ten different firework displays on the highway.

Thursday, July 5th: After Dakota's ten o'clock trainer's appointment, Thursday proved to be a beautiful day in Minneapolis. The entire team spent the day at Lake Calhoun swimming, posing for pictures, and boating! Jasmine, Kiersten, Stephanie, and Dakota shared a boat so Dakota could leave at 12:30 to see the trainer, once again. Their excursion including attempting to peddle to the middle of the lake, discovering that they moved faster peddling backwards, and eventually, passing through the bridge, seeing a turtle and a flock of ducks. Meanwhile, Brittany, Jill, Kayla, and Kelly used their leg muscles to peddle under the bridge and about, until Jill reminded the team of the impending time restraint and everyone trooped back to shore. After eating lunch, the girls readied and left for their second day of Junior

Olympic volleyball. Only two games were played that day one against California, the other against Pennsylvania. Even though both were lost, it seemed as if the girls were improving their attitudes and adjusting to the higher level of play. A highlight happened when the referee told us that one of Jill's saves was the best he had seen all week and she had floor burn to prove it.

Friday, July 6th: It was an early start. Despite some unhappy times the night before, we were hoping to have a more successful day on the court. Unfortunately, that didn't happen. We lost the two games. Coach spoke to the parents and decided we should stay together as a team, without parents, for the rest of the day. After we worked, she treated us to lunch at the Bistro and we returned to the hotel to enjoy some down time at the swimming pool. The Dye's returned with bags of cotton candy for each of us, repeating our old mantra, "Cotton Candy Is For Winners." We were winners that day, even though we hadn't won on the court. We returned to the venue and, again, we lost. Most of the girls returned to the hotel to go swimming. Jillian and Britt and their parents had planned to see dinner theatre on the Mississippi. They dashed off in time, but, alas, it was coupon night and all the seats were sold out. They had to "make do" with a dinner on a riverboat. They played "headlines" while waiting for dinner and enjoyed walking along the dock together. It was a very enjoyable memory which was completed with a photograph taken by Jill with a timed camera.

Saturday, July 7th: Oh well, we were consistent. We didn't win on Saturday, either. But, we did score 17 points in one game. That was our all time high for the week. We wrote some essays for coach about our experience. Kiersten and Jasmine left early for their flight to Syracuse and the rest of the girls split up to do some last minute shopping for friends and family at home. Kayla went to the Aquarium at the Mall of America, because she missed the opportunity earlier in the week. In the evening, some

of the girls, who were finished packing, spent time in the swimming pool where they met up with a group of soccer players (male.) They challenged them to a game of volleyball (sort of) and, alas, the girls finally won a volleyball game that week. Not to worry, Mrs. Dye was there to chaperone.

Sunday, July 8th. We were up and out bright and early. Everyone was dragging, but glad to be heading home. There were no mishaps and everyone arrived on time with all their stuff. The flight was uneventful. Everyone said their last goodbyes to Coach Kwinn and her adorable kids (who met her at the airport.) After exchanges of hugs and kisses, everyone departed to their own cars with some making plans to meet over the summer or at Whoosh Camp in August.

Junior Long Beach Development Camp

Michael Pellitier

This year attending the Long Beach developmental camp was one of the best experiences of my life. Not only did I get to play competitive volleyball all week long but I met some great guys and have become friends with them. This has been some of the best volleyball I've played in my entire life. Being from the east coast our team doesn't get to play really good teams outside of East Coast Championships and Nationals. I learned so much from this camp and the only bad part about it was it didn't last longer. The coaches I had were very encouraging and inspired me to work harder in hopes of being on the national team. I hope next year I can achieve a higher camp and work my way up. Thank you for this great experience.

Junior High Performance Camp

Ryan Earl

It all started when my volleyball team, The 518, was going to a tournament in Chicago and my coaches Paul Vink-Lainas and Hansen Leong, told me I should go to this “High Performance” try-out. I never really heard about this before but I figured since four other of my teammates were trying out I would too. I started asking my coaches’ question like “what is the tryout for?” and “why should I tryout?” I never really got a straight answer from them besides “just do it.”

When I first walked into the gym where the tryouts were being held I wasn’t to sure what was going to happen. I got my t-shirt with the number 17 on it and when one of my teammate got his t-shirt with the number 319 I was a little scared as to how many guys were actually trying out. I still wasn’t too nervous until everyone started warming up. Being a setter, I was watching all the other setters seeing how I compared to them. The level of play varied among the players but there was some that intimidated me. I stopped thinking about everyone else and just focused on me, so I jumped in and started playing.

After awhile I got more comfortable and confident. The instructors broke everyone up into even teams and they told us that if we got to the first of the four courts that we were “in.” After a long period of playing and very little breaks and me pushing myself into doing things that I didn’t even know I could do, my number was called. When one of the instructors yelled out “17”, I wasn’t quite sure what they were going to do with me. The instructor that called my number told me that it was my lucky day and to go on the first court. After standing there watching the other guys play on the first court my stomach went higher and higher into my throat. Once again I had to tell myself to not worry and just play the game, so I did. I played to my best potential and after the tryouts were over I couldn’t get rid of the smile on my face.

A few months later, anxiously waiting to hear what my results were from the tryouts, I got a phone call from one of my coaches telling me that me and two of my teammates have been selected to attend the USA High Performance Development Camp. I was very excited and couldn’t wait to tell my family. I was looking forward to going to a camp with two of my teammates but later I found out that I would be the only one going to camp. After talking with my parents and my coaches, I was more excited to go.

The last week in July came very fast and I was looking forward to the High Performance Camp. I picked the camp in Virginia at George Mason University because it was the closest to New York. After many hours in the car with my family I finally arrived to the camp. The university’s campus was huge and beautiful. I met my roommate for the week and got three camp shirts and received all the information for the week. We had three sessions each day with about an hour to an hour and a half breaks in between each session to get food and relax. During each session they would teach us different techniques to become better volleyball players. I enjoyed playing volleyball but I was also happy to go to bed at night to get my energy back. I learned something new at each session. I enjoyed playing with other volleyball players who had the same passion for the sport. I had a great time at camp and was disappointed to leave. Five years ago I would have never thought I would be selected to go to a High Performance camp. And now I feel privileged to have been able to be a part of it. The tryouts and camp taught me so much about volleyball, teamwork and my own potential and it was a great experience.

Junior National Camp, Colorado Springs

Dakota Pruiss

First of all, I would like to say thanks to everyone who helped give me this opportunity to go to the Olympic Training Center in Colorado Springs. It was a great honor to represent IREVA at the national level and I was happy to be chosen for this experience. I was very grateful for given the opportunity to play with some of the best volleyball

players my age around the United States.

During the week of camp I was somewhat disappointed with the way the program was run. The head coach of the program would begin each drill with a demonstration on how to properly perform a skill. This of course would make sense seeing that players need to watch a technique before trying it. Unfortunately, once we began the drill if a player didn’t understand how to do the skill, the coaches would usually yell at or humiliate the player. I can remember on one occasion where a coach said to a girl, “Just give up until

the next drill.” All but two coaches had this attitude for coaching the players.

Another problem was the lack of effort given by the head coach toward all of the players. He had a certain few that he would work with but besides that he wouldn’t even bother trying to help out the other thirty girls. During the third day of training we were working on a shin collapse technique for passing where he had one of the players demonstrate the skill before the drill. During the demonstration she had no idea what he wanted and in result I had no idea of what I was doing. So, trying to learn the skill I asked the coach to help me out. Apparently his idea of

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helping me was throwing a couple of balls towards me, and then walking away without any feedback. My partner for the drill just looked at me puzzled and had no idea what he wanted either.

Looking over the actual coaching, the skills that I learned at the camp are somewhat affective, even if I am not doing them correctly. We were taught two different kinds of arm swings at the camp called D1 and D2 arm swing for hitting cross court and line. I also reviewed some ideas on passing that I was taught by Sue Medley at the Regional High Performance Camp last year. The one thing that annoyed me when going over passing was that we spent about two hours shuffling towards balls and letting them run through our legs, trying to learn how to pass with our body behind the ball. Many drills that we did were similar to this where we went over movement and rarely got to perform an actual pass or an actual hit. It took the coaches five days to let

us run a complete play where there were 3 touches to a ball. I can understand that fundamentals are very important in all sports especially volleyball, but if I am training with some of the best players around the nation it would have been nice to actually play with them rather than shuffle in a line next to them.

The attitude of the head coach was probably the most unbearable thing about camp. I have had a lot of coaches in volleyball and I have always tried to listen to them and I have always tried to do what was asked of me. I can honestly say that this coach did not trust anyone of the players, and made it seem like we had to be stone cold and serious to play volleyball. I began volleyball because I watched college players who had a huge amount of energy while playing and they made it seem fun. This coach drilled it into our head that our only goal in life was to move up the Pipeline and if we didn't then we were mediocre volleyball players. During the week he punished the entire camp for three girls

breaking curfew. I could understand his anger until all of us found out that no girl from the volleyball camp broke curfew and the head coach knew that. It turned out to be wrestlers (from another camp) sneaking local Colorado Spring girls into the center under the pretense that they were volleyball players.

The national camp was an experience if anything. The other girls attending the camp were some of the most amazing people I have met in my life. It was great to train with other people as dedicated to the sport as I am and I am glad that I went. The camp in itself wasn't the best camp I have attended but it certainly wasn't the worst. I did learn a lot and it was worth it. I just believe that the IREVA camp was run much smoother and I learned a lot more at the IREVA camp compared to the national camp. I am still impressed with the USA Pipeline and I will be at tryouts next year. The opportunity to play and train at such a high level is just too much to give up.

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Junior Long Beach Development Camp

Matthew Bynon.

I just returned from a high performance camp in Long Beach. The camp was held at Long Beach State a beautiful

campus with great facilities. Our coaches were from Long Beach, BYU and Orange County City College. It was great to go to the camp with my two teammates Mike Pellitier and Jordan Armstrong and meet new people from across the country. We had three sessions a day and 2hours in between each session. As libero I did alot of

libero training drills. Drills that will make me a better player and help to make my team better. We practiced all week that led up to a tournament on the last day, which my team won. I thank the IREVA region for their help in going and I was very proud to represent IREVA, Lakeside, and Burnt Hills at this camp.

.....

Junior Long Beach Development Camp

Jordan Armstrong

From July 16th to July 20th I was fortunate to have been selected to partake in the USA Boys Volleyball Developmental Camp in Long Beach, California. This was my second year taking part in the High Performance Pipeline. Last year I went to The

Olympic Training Center in Colorado Springs.

The camp proved to be filled with knowledgeable coaches from Hawaii, Utah, and California. These coaches are former players of the game who now coaches at BYU, Long Beach State, Outrigger Canoe Volleyball Club, and other coaches from Community Colleges in Southern California, not to mention three players from the current Long Beach State 49ers Men's Volleyball Team. It was amazing all the tricks and specifics to the game that

these coaches knew and were willing to teach us.

I personally found the intensive setting parts of the camp most valuable. Between constant positioning, footwork, serving, blocking, and defense, I would say that my skills all around improved. I personally enjoyed the positioning and blocking parts of the camp. It gave skills that I have already developed a chance to be critiqued so that proper habits can be formed to help me reach the next level of volleyball even though

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I am only entering my freshmen year of high school.

One of the most important parts of the camp was a session about what we need to do to reach the college level in volleyball. The tips and suggestions that

all these coaches gave were very helpful. I really appreciated how completely honest the coaches were with us, telling us straight forward what coaches look for and what you can control in your pursuit to play volleyball in college.

I am happy that I was again given this opportunity to increase my volleyball knowledge. I hope to continue my volleyball education through the coming years. I am glad to be able to proudly represent the Iroquois Empire Region on a National Volleyball Level

Dig Into It

Therese Hans

Late night in the Austin Airport brought together the members of “Dig Into It,” and our “Setsational” setter, Sarah Besemer. This would be our last tournament with Jessa Canfield and Erica Golub (Nissen), both leaving us to pursue lives of wedded Wisconsin and Swedish bliss. But while in Austin, it was just the girls.

We were assigned to the PM wave, which meant breakfast would be our first adventure in Austin. We discovered the elegant 1866 Café as well as authentic Austin cuisine. As it turned out, breakfast tacos were no match against an upstate NY belly. Luckily, there was plenty of recovery time before our first match.

The atmosphere in the convention center was invigorating. We found our chemistry early and, though we lost our first match to those “Bad Betties,” we swept the rest of the teams in round one

which brought us to a 4-1 finish in our first pool.

Our next assignment, a 9:05 start time on Monday morning, made for a rocky beginning to what would be our last day of play. We battled through our early matches, but remained optimistic that the silver would be ours.

Our last match proved to be a bit disappointing. We couldn’t catch a break and it was a whirlwind finish. Later that evening, as we enjoyed IREVA camaraderie at the Paradise, it was clear that Nationals wasn’t merely about the medal. Sixth Street reminded us of that.

On Tuesday morning, we dined one last time at the 1866. As we departed the Courtyard, we had no idea how determined Austin was to keep us. Dawn and Jim returned to the hotel after learning their plane had been punctured after a collision with another plane. Others managed to rearrange their flight plans when faced with delays.

“Dig Into It” will inevitably look different next year, but our memory of Austin 2007 will remain. Congrats on a great season and best wishes to Erica and Jessa!



Dig Into It 2007
 Dawn Kenyon – L
 Sarah Besemer – S
 Katrina Fox – OH
 Stacey Flanagan – OH
 Danielle Oulliette – OH
 Danielle Heath – OH / OPP
 Jessa Canfield – M
 Erica Nissen – M
 Therese Hans – M

Schenectady 50’s

Bob LaCerais

Starting with a core of Schenectady YMCA players Bob LaCerais, Steve Davies, and Jack Anderton, the

Schenectady 50s team added fellow IREVA players Rich Chapin, Pete Peer, and Mike McNeil along with setter Bernie Goldfine from Georgia to compete in the 50+ age group at Austin this year. Arriving in Austin on Friday, we had our first collective team practice

the night before competition started, meeting everyone and getting used to two new setters. Checking in at the Radisson hotel that night, we wondered what the hundred or so people were doing on the bridge beside the hotel. We later learned that this was the

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famous “bat bridge”, where tens of thousands of bats emerge each night around dusk.

Several of us on the Schenectady 50s team have played in previous Nationals, and we knew many of the teams from those competitions. Once again, the level of 50s competition at Austin was fairly stiff. On Saturday, we started slowly, going 0-3 against Volley & Cia - Kappa (10-25, 11-25), RobertBruceRealtor.com (15-25, 8-25), and Greenfield 50's (25-21, 22-25, 10-15). That win against Greenfield got a huge monkey off our backs since the Schenectady Y 50s team finished with an 0-16 games record in New Orleans!

We completed pool play on Sunday, dropping all three matches against Spike Force 50 (14-25, 8-25), DALE - 50 (25-21, 15-25, 9-15), and RVC50 (9-25, 12-15) (but picked up another win in the process!). Although disappointed with our pool play results, it turned out that we played in the strongest pool, with teams from our pool ultimately placing 1st and 4th in the Gold Flight, 1st and 3rd in the Silver Flight.

Starting double elimination on Monday, we lost our first match in a tough contest against The Ref Shop 50's (25-27, 14-25), which put us in the Silver pool. Facing elimination from the tournament, we played our second match against Greenfield 50's and exacted our revenge, ousting them from

the tournament 25-15, 25-18. This was a good barometer of how much we improved as a team over the course of the tournament, and a testament to all the contributions we got from a group of 7 players from 5 different teams who banded together in Austin. That match win extended our play to Tuesday, one of the goals our team had entering the tournament. On the final day, we played another close match, but lost to Wicked Olde Guys (13-25, 25-21, 11-15) to bow out of the tournament tied at 13th. Next up – Huntsman Senior World Games in October!

Blue Karma

Erin Erickson

Austin, Texas, 2007...what a blast! Blue Karma had 5 original team members who were ready to go, but we had trouble finding a 6th. So we picked up a pregnant girl and a former college player (thanks Darcy and Jill!). We planned on practicing 3 or 4 times before we went, but our gym was suddenly MIA. We went to Texas having not played together since Regionals.

We started Saturday morning at 8:00 am and WON (Blue Karma never wins early morning matches). After we were “spoken to” about our uniforms, our captain choices, and Darcy’s serve, we took a deep breath and went on with the day. We were also told we had to get new uniforms or not play on Sunday, Monday, or Tuesday. After all the drama, we needed to play well. Our day ended on a sweet note after we won the 3rd game against a team that wasn’t too friendly. We were actually nervous that we might end up in Gold because we finished 3-1 for the day!

Sunday we had a tougher time against the 2 teams we had to play, and we

finished 3-3 in our pool, overall. As we eagerly awaited our outcome, we supported other teams, like Jackass, Pac-Men, Hack Fu, Kilgore, and Slaughterhouse. It was great to see all of the teams from our region do well.

Late Sunday night we found out we would be playing Serve-ivors to get into the Bronze bracket. We had to travel to Texas to play a team from our own region? We kicked some booty and won the match in 2.

But our last match proved to be the most challenging. After we easily won the first, we lost the 2nd game 23- 25. It all came down to a 3rd game and it wasn’t looking good for Blue Karma when we allowed the other team, the “ladies,” to get off to a 7- 1 lead. But after some tough serving by Jill, some great sets by Katie, and some spectacular hitting by Krista, Sarah and Lori, we came back and switched sides 8-7 us! The lead kept changing and we ended up losing 13- 15.

Despite our last match (knowing we should have and could have won), Austin proved to be a great bonding experience for Blue Karma. We did awesome in our pool, and did well in our 2 post- pool matches. We had a ball hanging out by the pool, eating lunch,

cheering on our men (Jackass and Pac-Men), and going out drinking and dancing. After playing hard for 3 straight days, we needed some relaxation! Austin made Blue Karma even stronger, but we all came to the same conclusion- we need a new name. So when you look for us next season, we won’t be under “Blue Karma.” But we will all be back ready to kick butt! And remember, karma is a bitch!!!

Jackass

Dimitri Garder

The 2007 Volleyball US Open, held in Austin, TX, proved to be yet another fantastic Nationals experience. The team's annual tradition of sporting a ridiculous warm-up and new team stickers (we didn't stick them anywhere, I swear - we just handed them out) did not disappoint. From the moment we left the hotel to head to our first Saturday afternoon match, we knew that the new team warm-up concept would be a huge success, since almost immediately drivers and passers-by stopped to laugh and take photos. The team sported Space Ghost™ outfits with masks, capes, and bulging muscles (real, of course), which got lots of laughs and attention, including a shout-out and standing O during the men's open finals.

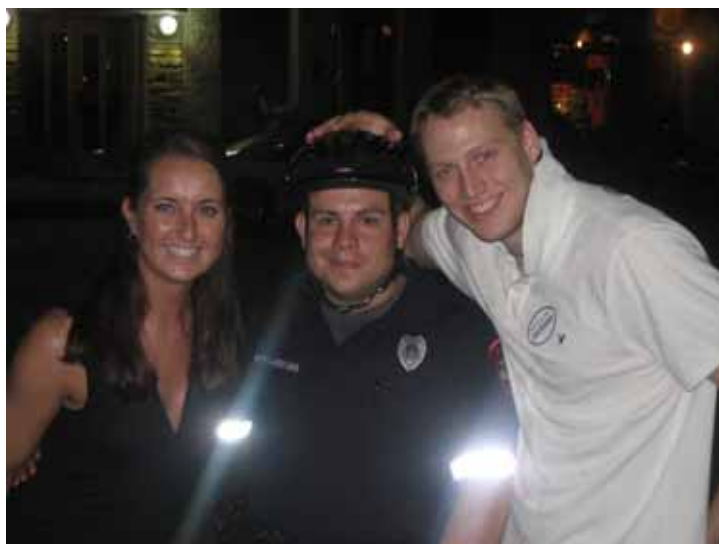
Unfortunately our play on the court did not live up to the high caliber of our antics off the court. We played in the B division, which should have allowed us to be very competitive. We faced only one tough team, and a number of weaker teams during pool play, yet we managed to finish with a disappointing 1-4 record. After pool play we won two straight challenge matches earning a seed to the bronze bracket (a.k.a. tin foil, just one step up from papier-mâché). During most past tournaments this is when we really begin to play; unfortunately this year we lost our first bracket match right away and were eliminated from the tournament in record time, early in the third day of the tournament. It was a very disappointing finish for the team. Our expectations had been high, since we seemingly had everything going for us: a strong lineup, afternoon matches, a pool that should have allowed us to be very competitive, and the obligatory hotties cheering us on from the sidelines. But fate would have none of it, hotties notwithstanding. We were destined to impress with our warm-ups, but not our play.

Austin, on the other hand, did not disappoint. This was arguably the best

Nationals location in the past ten years, with the possible exception of Minneapolis.

Austin scored high on all of the factors that make a superior tournament location: great food, a fantastic night-life, warm climate, and a centrally-located convention center allowing easy access within a

few short blocks to the most lively part of the city. The Tex-Mex and BBQ were some of the best in the country (third-best burrito I've ever had, second-best BBQ). Austin is known for its live music scene, and walking down 6th Street on Saturday night it was hard to distinguish Austin from the way New Orleans used to be in its heyday (though Austin smelled considerably better). Perhaps the only negatives to Austin were a tough week for weather, caused by a low pressure system that stalled over central Texas for over a month causing record rains and flooding, persisting incredibly for more than a month after the tournament ended; flight cancellations that resulted in a number of players needing to re-route flights through Houston and driving 3 hours to Austin (one player took three days to get home due to similar flight delays); and an over-zealous police force who took jay-walking entirely too seriously (and were quite clear about the fact that no, they had absolutely no intention of producing a copy of the city ordinance prohibiting crossing between corners, and if we didn't get the hell off the street right now we'd be hauled off to jail in handcuffs pronto, and they weren't kidding). To express our gratitude for the fantastic job that the local police force were doing, we happily obliged with a 2007 issue team sticker on the top of the old bike helmet (see photo, thanks to BJ for having so much game).



As a side note, the men's open finals demonstrated, in the opinion of this writer, that the rally point scoring system is killing the game of volleyball from the spectator's point of view. Team Paul Mitchell put a pretty serious beat-down on every team they played, not the least of which was the loser's bracket finalist Riptide, who lost 0-3 in the final match. The point is not that Paul Mitchell won so decisively; they are a very talented team and extremely difficult to beat. The issue is that the matches are not interesting to watch after the first 15 points. After the initial impressiveness of early open-level pool play matches with impossible digs and straight down hits starts to wear thin, spectators start to look for a bit more excitement and often begin to root for the underdogs. In past years, side-out scoring permitted multiple momentum swings within a game, which made for extremely exciting semi-final and final matches. With rally point scoring, the momentum of the score allows for one or two momentum swings at most, which is usually not enough to allow a lagging team to come back from any significant point deficit. The result is a match that can be predictable and downright boring, especially when one team is particularly strong, as in the case of Paul Mitchell. Finals matches in past years were exciting and well-attended; increasingly they're becoming less well attended and not nearly as fun to watch.

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As a final comment, it was disappointing to hear that the 2008 US Open will be held yet again in Atlanta, which is a particularly poor tournament city due partly to the location of the convention center in the business

district of town, rather than in the social center of the city. Also, part of the fun of going to Nationals is seeing a new city each year. The choice of Atlanta so soon after recently playing in that location, suggests that financial interests may have taken precedence over player interests, which is unfortunate.

In any event, Austin proved to be an extremely worthy Nationals venue, and would be strongly recommended for anyone looking for a city that can rival the former spirit, style, music, and cuisine of New Orleans.

Schenectady 55's Adventures in Austin

Jim Bishop

Actually, getting there is part of the adventure. For some people, it was the trip; for others, it was organizational issues.

For the geezers of Schenectady, organization is definitely an issue! Last year, we had 38 players, and entered 25 teams in tournaments. This year, we had 10 people out for injuries for most of the year, registered 23 players, and entered 13 teams in tournaments. Ouch – not the direction we wanted to go. I guess old age, bad habits, and bad luck are catching up with a few of us. Well, as they say, the alternative to old age is definitely not acceptable, so a few infirmities may be the price to pay for a lifetime of fun and frolic. Here's hoping next year will be an improvement.

Compounding all of these issues was a decision to focus energy, budget and vacation time (for most of the 55s) on the National Senior Games in Louisville, KY in July. As a result, our club needed to do some recruiting to fill out teams for 60s and 50s to go to Austin. (See related story on the 50s.)

For better or for worse, the Schenectady 60s ended up picking up players from all over, and registering a bunch of new people with IREVA just for this event. Thank goodness for the flexibility of the conglomerate team rule for seniors / masters. If not for that, a lot of people would sit at home pouting.

The first order of business in Austin was putting names with faces; then confirming positions for each; then organizing a tactical plan. Unfortunately, we were a relatively short team, and didn't necessarily make up for that problem with other positive attributes. Personally, I'm convinced that people remember how tall they wish they were when they were

younger, not how tall they really were – to say nothing about what they have shrunk to by now!

For a variety of reasons, our play was amazingly inconsistent – competitive for stretches, flat for the remainder. We won one match, and then lost to the same team in playoffs. It wasn't pretty, but participation in the event was still worthwhile (for me, at least); just being there is a success of sorts.

Other memories of Austin: USAV meetings (ugh); hazy, hot and humid; the beginning of the monsoon season; no problem at all finding beer and BBQ; dueling pianos; seeing a lot of old friends and acquaintances; 18 IREVA teams to cheer for - 2 in open, no less; being reminded by my friends from Texas that "y'all" is singular – "all of y'all" is plural.

I'm already looking forward to next year in Atlanta. Sure, we've been there and done that, but there are worse alternatives – like not being able to go!

Serve-ivors

Lisa Mosher

Year two for Team Serve-ivors didn't end as we hoped. Our beginning journey to Austin didn't start out well either and it just continued on for the remainder of Nationals. With half of our team being stuck in Chicago for almost 24 hours (and having to sleep on cots and waking up at 4am), the mood and drive of our team- consisting of Diane Jaquays, Kristi Custer, Jessica

Custer, Marnee Card, Lisa Mosher, and Jan Suits- just wasn't there.

Day one of pool play starting out with playing Easy as Pi. We played very well considering we hadn't practiced together as a team in over a month, but we just didn't have enough to win the match (24-26, 25-23, 15-8). Our next two games we played right down to the wire. We lost game two to the Texas Satellites, one minute playing really hot and the next minute playing like it was our first time (26-24, 25-16). Finally in game three we pulled it together and

beat GHVB- Girls Gone Wild (25-14, 25-21), ending the day 1 and 2 overall.

With one win under our belts we were hoping to maybe have our luck turn around for day two. Unfortunately it didn't. We lost to Blue Fish Bowl in game one (25-23, 25-19), and came up short again in game two, losing to Ensemble in three (27-25, 13-25, 15-8). By now the team has lost their drive and any and all positive outlook we may have had coming to the convention center. And losing game three to Has Beens (and quite badly) didn't help

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matters any.

After having two bad days of pool play we now found out that we were going to have to play a team from our own region- Blue Karma, to fight to get into the Bronze bracket. In a way we were kind of relieved to find out we were playing a team that we knew and faced quite often throughout the season, but we knew it wasn't going to be an easy task. And that it wasn't- Blue Karma played their best game yet and beat us in two (25-19, 25-20), pushing us down into the Copper Bracket. By now, the team had lost any and all togetherness and it showed during our first (and

final) game of the Copper. We lost in two very quick games to The Shockers (25-15, 25-19).

We still managed to have fun even though we didn't play so hot. The first night out, the whole team headed to 6th Street and checked out a few of the local places and made our last stop Coyote Ugly- dancing the night away on the bar. The next night we each did our own thing, setting an early curfew of midnight- hoping that getting some sleep would help us play better; however, that didn't quite happen for two of us. We ran into Team Wally's at Buffalo Billiards and from there it was downhill- making it back to our hotel by 1:30am but not to our room until 3am-

OOPS, must be our watches stopped! For the remainder of our time in Austin, we just figured that we were playing so horribly, that us drinking by noon and going out at night wasn't going to really make matters worse. So after we played we would have a few, cheer our other local teams like UVA, Hackfu, Rockstar, Zero Gravity, Club Distillery B, and Goonies, and then head out to 6th Street to meet up with our out-of-state friends from Team Wally's (NJ), our Pennsylvania friends, and Nacho Libero.

Onto next year.....hopefully it won't be a rerun of this year! See you in Atlanta!

Legion Red

Ashley DeNeal

ROSTER:

- #1 Blair Buchanan
- #2 Ashley DeNeal
- #3 Ashley Crenshaw
- #4 Emmy Blouin
- #9 Ashlee Reed
- #10 Jen Leone
- #11 Alyse Lahti
- #12 Kate Eckhardt
- #20 Kamisha Kellam

In our first time ever taking part in the USA Open Volleyball Competition, the Legion Red Women's team competed



pretty well for playing in the Open Division. Although we could not pull out any matches, it was a great experience to be able to go up against some of the best competition in the nation.

By bringing together girls with recent college volleyball experience, we thought we would all go and have some fun playing volleyball. We ended up doing both. Along with playing a ton of volleyball, we had a great time hanging out with others who share in our appreciation for the sport. Though the scores of our matches may not reflect it, we all left feeling that we played well and were able to compete in every match. However,



with a year of experience now under our belt, we hope to play in a few more tournaments to better prepare ourselves for heading into next year's event.

We would like to thank USA Volleyball for a great event, everyone from the region who came out and showed their support at our matches, and all the people behind the scenes in our region who helped make this all possible! Thanks again and we can't wait for this time again next year!

PacMen

Ben Rosenthal

This was the Second National Tournament for PacMen. Although only three returning members from last years team made the trip, the team had played together for the whole season this year giving us high hopes in Austin for a strong finish.

Before I get into the detail of the 2007 Open Championships I would like to introduce the members of PacMen for this season. Ben Rosenthal OH – Captain, Doug Gordon OH, Jared Bazan OPP, Adam Vaughn OH, Ken Wei L, BJ Carson MB, Cameron Erickson S and Josh Hagel MB. John Leighton played with us all season as well but due do some unfortunate planning by another volleyball player, John had to miss the tournament this year to be the best man in what I'm sure was a fantastic wedding.

Day 1 started with a refreshing change from last year with our first game at 2:30 PM. We played well the first day winning some matches and losing some. We were in a pool of 7 teams and ended up having 3 pool play matches on each of the first two days.

Day 2 was much better for us. Winning another match and a competitive loss on our second. Our last match was against the undefeated team in our pool (who ended up second overall in B). We took the match out strong with some of the best play from our team I've seen all season. We just about took them with some fantastic offense and defense to match but they ended up winning out in the end. With complements from them on some great playing we ended our pool in 5th place. This left us in a position familiar from New Orleans last year with a challenge match for bronze or copper playoffs. It turns out that with a new software package the tournament was using this year there was a little format change and there were now two challenge matches to make it to the

bronze playoffs. With memories from last year rising to the surface we gave it our all again for our evening challenge match and took it in three games. The bronze playoffs were within our grasp.

Day 3 started a little earlier with our second challenge match. I don't know if it was the earlier start or the celebration of playing so well the day before but we didn't look so hot on this Monday morning and found ourselves losing the match leaving us in the copper division again. Little did we know but our final match was just hours away. We tried to take the victory but fatigue had set in from our previous 2 days and we lost again, finishing around 33rd overall.

Although I had hoped for a better finish this year it was good to play with a team that was together all season. I did think the competition was much tougher this year and I am looking forward to taking it on again in Atlanta in 2008.

Zero Gravity

Jeff Evans

Zero gravity struggled a bit this season with injuries. Our middle hitter (Pat 'a little less FK' Furman) from last year was limited to a libero role this year due to shoulder injuries, and our team 'Monster' (Mike Forster) was limited towards the end of the season; however, we picked up several new players for the season and for our trip to Austin. The new talent (Nick 'FK' Laratta, Stu 'Stuuuuuuuu' Hess, and Lou 'break his finger' Gristwood) stepped up big for Zero Gravity in numerous roles. They covered every position -- middle, outside, opposite, setter, and even libero through the season depending on our need. So first and foremost, thanks to them for their flexibility this season.

As for Nationals, what a trip! Day one

of pool play felt a lot like New Orleans last year -- undefeated the entire day, and solid play all around the court. Stu and Steve Hicks (clap, clap) dominated the middle, freeing up outsides Nick, Mike, and Lou for big, explosive hits from the outside. Jeff ("Coach") Evans put up a consistent block, and terminated well from both front and back row. We felt good leaving the gym; ready to build on the momentum developed through the day.

Perhaps we celebrated our victory a bit too much that night as Zero Gravity found out on day two that we are actually affected -- quite a bit -- by gravity. At the end the day we still stood on the verge of Gold bracket for a second year, despite struggling through our matches. Our first "play-in" match was against an old rival -- Team Metropolis, the BB champions from Denver nationals. The match was heated, long rallies, big swings, and great blocking all around. Nick Laratta

stepped in to the setter's role, as then setter Nathan shifted to Middle Blocker. The match went three games, and Zero Gravity kept Gold bracket hopes alive, putting the match away 20-18 with an ace from Nathan. What a match! This was what we came for.

Again perhaps our celebration went a little long that night as we played early on day 3 and came out a little flat against team 'Club Chaos', losing two tight games. That loss put us solidly into the silver bracket where we ended up 17th overall.

With the new talent in Nick Laratta, Stu Hess and Lou Gristwood, and continuing solid performances from the rest of the team, next year looks bright for team Zero Gravity. See you in ATLANTA!!!

Kilgore

Heidi Brower

For a team that decided in the very beginning that we were going to Nationals every OTHER year to save some money and avoid getting fired from our jobs, we sure do spend a lot of time on the road. Kilgore made up our minds to go to Austin about a month before Regionals and immediately began brainstorming ways to get time off and get enough players to go. For a decision that was so spur of the moment, it sure did work out well!

We didn't come off a great season this year, but we were looking forward to partying it up in Austin and supporting other IREVA teams if our own efforts weren't very successful. Plus, we knew that Jackass would provide MORE than enough entertainment in their warm-up outfits and we'd get to see that for free! Everything seemed to be going as planned when nobody from our team got Kemmer-fied on the way down to Texas. Note for the future, do NOT book a plane ticket for the same flight as Aaron Kemmer...EVER. It is virtually guaranteed that you will be lost, circling an airport, renting a car and driving yourself, or having your plane struck by airport personnel vehicles on the runway. Basically, you will not get to your destination (or home for that matter) even remotely close to the time your ticket states. That being said, onto the part about...what is this about again? 6th street? Oh yeah, volleyball.

We brought seven players to Nationals this year, including one innocent bystander from another team. Christy McCarroll (setter), Amy Legendziewicz (RS), Jess Meliosky (MH), Patti Paniccia (MH), Heidi Brower (OH), Jess Hageman (OH), and Michele Deguire (Libero) each brought something unique and important to our team for the week. After checking out the convention center and checking into the tournament, we all breathed a sigh of relief when we realized that we once again, for the third time in a row, had

the afternoon shift. This meant that we could go out at night, sleep in and even get to check out other teams in our region who were playing in the morning (if we woke up in time!). We started our pool play on Saturday afternoon with a tough three set loss to Ninjas with Attitude, but we followed it up with four wins against ROOF, Pink Ladies, Go Fish and Shinkara-Red that resulted in a 4-1 record and a first place finish in our pool! Our pool play was tough, but our attitude and spirit were tougher and with each win, we became more confident and comfortable with our lineup.

When it came time for our first gold challenge match on Monday morning, our team was eager to play again and excited to be doing so well. We played the Renegades, a team that we have played before at the USA Open. One Kilgore player was particularly fired up to play after having noticed the other team imitating her "sexy serve" and unique hitting approach prior to the match. With Hack Fu in the crowd and a hunger for revenge, we sent the Renegades packing in two sets. This led to our second gold challenge match against SFVC Cheers. We suffered a disappointing loss to them in three sets, with the third set going five points past game at 20-18. Although we lost, it was reassuring to find out after the tournament that this team finished second overall in our division!

Despite dropping down to the silver bracket, we were psyched to find out that we would be playing a team from our own region that had given us a great deal of trouble in the past, the Goonies. After taking a break to eat and watch Hack Fu and Jackass, we gathered back at our court to come up with a game plan for the next match. After some serious discussion, but much more joking around, we decided to just let it ride and hope for the best. Our match was inspired by one brilliant dance move from Patti and we came out on top, beating Goonies in two sets, 25-19 and 25-20. We sailed through our next match on Tuesday morning against CVA ONE in two sets (25-21, 25-16). This put us in the semifinals of the

silver bracket versus The Victors. Unfortunately, their twelve-player roster proved to be too much for our meager seven players and we fell to them in two games.

After a long four days of playing, watching volleyball and going out on the town, our team was thrilled with our 11th place finish! Despite a difficult season and a new lineup, we persevered and proved that we've still got it! Each player on our roster brought not only her "A" volleyball game, but also her A+ heart and soul that we all know is the key to success out there on the court. Congrats to all the IREVA teams and we look forward to next year's Open in Atlanta! See you there!

Hack Fu Brings Home the Bronze

Tim Stewart

Back Row (L-R): Kevin Eitzmann, Mike D'Agnese, Peter Fabbro, Josh Kohout
Front Row (L-R): Makoto Nagasawa, Jake Bluhm, Timothy Stewart, Frank Spataro, Michael Shorkey

Results

Hack Fu had its best finish of any IREVA team competing in Men's BB for quite some time, taking home 3rd place along and the bronze medal. We went 5-0 in match play during pool, 2-0 in our challenge matches to make the gold round and 2-2 in the gold round, losing to the eventual runner-up, Chicago Coast South and the champs, Nemesis from Saint Louis.

The Team

This year's team was truly the deepest we have ever had as we traveled out to Austin with 9 guys. All of us saw plenty of action during the tournament and it was the first time we all had been playing together in the same tournament. Everyone seemed to understand the team's mission quite well; bring home the gold to IREVA.

We worked hard on-court and battled through our mix of aggression and attitudes to do the best we could. It truly was the highest level of play that we have achieved during the national tournament and we look forward to competing at an even higher level in the future.

Highlights

- Beating your bags to Austin – Tim Stewart's travel from Albany to Austin involved 2 flight delays, 1 surprise landing in Arkansas, a 4 hr. bus ride from Dallas to Austin, and a disagreement over fare with Austin's finest cab driver. In the



end, Tim still beat his bags to the Austin airport arriving 16 hrs. after he left Albany, only to wait 1 more hour for his bags.

- Makoto's chestee – In front of a packed house of IREVA fans, the decision by Kevin Eitzmann and Tim Stewart to leave Makoto in for a few extra plays in the front row proved successful, as Makoto peeled off the net to bump chest the ball up to setter Mike Shorkey, making for the best defensive up of the tournament.
- Jake's swan dive of sweat – Proving that defense is nothing new, Jake Bluhm made a stunning defensive effort as he used the swan dive technique to dig up a ball up in our final match of the tournament. While the ball was played up, two players went down immediately as they tried to traverse the pool of sweat that remained on the sport court.
- Mr. Versatility – Playing 3 different positions (weakside, outside and middle) in the last 3 nationals, Frank Spataro has truly been Mr. Versatile and a team player.

Wherever nationals are next year, look for Frank to be playing one of these positions.

- "Let's Go" – Coined by opposite hitter Kevin Eitzmann and probably the two words most screamed around a Hack Fu court, "let's go" is quickly becoming a way of saying "good play". Look for it next time you watch us play.
- Hitting Lines – Josh Kohout is this year's hitting lines champion for Hack Fu. He gets the award for most balls over the curtain. When presented with the award, Josh responded, "This game is easy".
- Fabbro is Forman – Each night Pete Fabbro was grilling up something to eat in our hotel room with fully equipped kitchen. Burgers, fries, the television remote, whatever it was, Pete was putting Foreman cooker to shame with a frying pan, half-a-gallon of vegetable oil and hamburger meat.
- All Tournament Team – Finally realizing that he could play middle and do it well, Mike D'Agnese slashed and burned up middle

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blockers from all over country to get onto the all-tournament team. Must have been due to his mental preparation each night before play.

- Truly Touched – Playing the ball with feet, chest, head and

sometimes his arms, Mike Shorkey played amazing right back defense and was truly touched just about everywhere on his body.

Once Again, A Promise

The team members of Hackfu would like to send out a special thank you to all the IREVA fans and others who

cheered us on during the tournament. Your support can be the difference between a win and a loss and it is always a pleasure to have.

The team hopes to make it to nationals again next year, wherever it may be, and bring back gold.

Slaughterhouse

Jen Sangiacomo

After a three-year hiatus, Slaughterhouse 6 made the trip back to USA Nationals. The road to Austin started with putting together the team. Most of the regulars could not make the trip, and the team was presented with what seemed like the easy challenge of finding four players. The original cast of Slaughterhouse, Ann “Jill of all Trades” Mantha, Ruthie “Damn That’s A Huge Bitch” Huehn, Jen “Have You Seen My Jumpserve” Sangiacomo and former setter Erin “Energizer Bunny on Crack” Breithaupt were ready to go from the start. Then came a long list of people who had the mantra of “commit and forget.” After a month of e-mails and phone calls, we finally had enough to field the team. We added Melissa Mosher from Philadelphia, a former Geneseo player, and Liz Akin from Monument, Colorado who currently plays for Siena College. It was not until April until we added our ringer middle hitter, Katie Higgins out of Buffalo, NY. So two months into the process we finally had the team! So with no practice together or tournaments under our belt we headed to Austin, Texas for a great weekend of volleyball – most of us without knowing anything about who are teammates were, yet all of us confident that we had a solid core of players and looking forward to the trip.

Taking the court for the first time, no one knew what to expect. The first match flew by, shocking most of us. We quickly learned that our setting and middles were strong enough to help us compete against good teams and that our serving was going to give us the edge when we most needed it. The question remained though – with four outsides which two would were going to play outside? As we played musical chairs of outside hitters the first day, things quickly came together. We won our next two matches of the day.

On day two, we once again tried out new lineups. After winning our first match of the day our record was 3-1. We were in contention to take first in our pool heading into our last pool play match against HCA Blue, also 3-1. We finally found a lineup that worked. As a team, we played our best ball in that match, but eventually lost in an intense third game 17-15. Heading into our gold challenge round match the next day we were optimistic that we would pick up where we left off the day before. Yet it wasn’t meant to be and we headed off for the Silver Bracket. The first elimination match ended in a disappointing fashion, with us losing in two.

It is said that it is okay to lose as long as you learn from those lessons, and the team would like to share these lessons

with IREVA teams who make future trips to Nationals:

1. Make sure when you go Nationals, you have a set lineup
2. Don’t forget to add Tim Stewart on your roster as a coach. Even if it’s a late addition, it’s worth the \$50.
3. Do not allow Aaron Kemmer to walk across a highway at 4 a.m.
4. Remember to work out your biceps before wearing sleeveless uniforms or you run the risk of looking like a 12-year-old.
5. To the ladies. . . at places with names like “Harry’s Oil Can”, they don’t like it when you dance on the tables

Much thanks to the Turner Construction Company who sponsored the team for this event. Thanks to all the IREVA members and others who came to cheer us on throughout the event, and even those who “molested” our players as they got ready to serve. Our region might not have had the highest participation, but we definitely had the best fan support, which adds another dimension to playing in a tournament like this. Another thank you to CDGD for holding a tournament to benefit the team. And last, but not least, to Pete Fabbro, our “team mom!”

Goonies

Crystal Lynch

Heeeey Yooooo Guuuys!! The Goonies, quirky yes... and far from ordinary, set sail from New Orleans, checked all our worries at the city limits sign, and traded in our pirate hats for something a bit more casual as we prepared for experiences that we would only find at the 2007 US Open Volleyball Championships in Austin, Texas. We had a full crew this year as all of the Goonies were able to make this unforgettable trip to the "city with a heart and the city with soul". However, once a pirate always a pirate, we were definitely looking for golden treasures as we readied ourselves for the challenge of fast paced games and exciting volleyball... playing in the Women's BB Division this year.

Starting pool play and still having our sea legs on it was a bit of a rough start losing our first match to OB Clark's out of St. Louis, Missouri. We came back to win our next match against Pejsa Enterprises from Oxford, Iowa, but lost a very close third match to Reno, Nevada's own Reno Rah. Getting in the Goonie-style groove, we won our next match against TriState CASE (Port Jefferson Station, NY) and then we defeated Combat (Mansfield, Texas)



while overcoming one of our Goonies, Erin Hanlon, getting caught in a court-divider net "booby-trap". We finished

up pool play with a win-loss record of 3-2.

Still looking for our golden treasure, we came up short in our match in the Gold Bracket against Crank'n & Spank'n out of Hampton, New Hampshire.

Yes, the gold eluded us again this year, but after our loss to Crank'n & Spank'n we had a shot at silver treasures in the Silver Bracket. With high hopes to attain our silver, we beat our first challengers from Fort Worth, Texas, NT LMRA House Rules, and we readied ourselves for a match against one of our own league rivals... Kilgore-Club Vonegut out of Clifton Park, New York. It was a tough match with Kilgore-Club Vonegut coming out as the victors. This left the Goonies finishing up tied for 5th amongst other great teams in the Silver Bracket of the Women's BB Division.

It wasn't all volleyball for the Goonies though. As we pillaged through the thriving cultural scene of Austin, we definitely took in the sights ...the bat colony at Congress Avenue Bridge, a duck tour around Austin, the Capitol Building, Texas University and Town Lake to name a few. We found that Austin definitely lives up to its name, "the live music capital of the world", with great music on every corner! Austin's nightlife is totally vibrant and there were liquid treasures all around us



on Sixth Street... and boy did we drink it down, definitely the best "Fuel" anyone has to offer! However this Goonie would say we definitely struck it gold at one of the best Texas Barbeque places in Austin.... Iron Works BBQ. Hanging out and enjoying a great barbeque as a team was the best treasure of the trip! This time with the Goonies made the chaotic journey to Nationals even more pleasurable.

Live music, live action, livin' it up in Austin, Texas.... the Goonies definitely did that and in Goonie-style! We didn't get too comfortable though... the Goonies are still restless looking for their golden volleyball treasures...so continue to hide ye treasures, mateys for the Goonies be settin' sail again in 2008!!

UVA

Tom White

UVA rolled back into Texas fresh off of a 2006 Men's B Silver championship from the Big Easy, but this visit to Texas was to Austin and not Dallas. Unfortunately, UVA did not duplicate the success of New Orleans but we were able to spread our geographic curtain of rostered members to include Long Island (Troy Riddle) and the Southern Tier (Jim Sculley) as well as Houston, TX (Doug Miller) and somewhere in Wisconsin (Dave Hamil). We can now proudly proclaim our team name as UVA Syracuse-Utica-Rome-Long Island-Binghamton-Houston-Wisconsin. Swwwweeet!

Day 1: (Saturday) A relatively unimpressive start to our tournament placed us in a hole, down 1-2 in matches. We ended the day 4-4 in games won and lost but needed a good day on Sunday if we had any chance of challenging for the Gold bracket.

Day 2: (Sunday) Sticky must have been really inspired when he went to church

Sunday morning because in our first match on Sunday afternoon he took over. In what could only be described as some sort of divine intervention Sticky had his best Nationals performance while being forced out of his libero role and into an all around position player. It was the match of the tournament to see if you were tracking UVA's quest for gold.

We managed to win our final match of pool play that put us 2nd in our pool and into the first of two Gold Bracket challenge matches. For the first time in UVA history the challenge matches were held on Day 2. We managed to beat NETYETI-2 in our first challenge match, which put us in a position to avenge an earlier pool play loss to Marysville Goodyear on Day 3.

Day 3: (Monday) Marysville Goodyear proved to be too much for UVA and returned the favor we provided to them in New Orleans by bouncing us to the lower bracket (silver). As a result we faced an elimination match later that day and unfortunately had our hopes of repeating as B-Silver champions ended.

As disappointing as it was to lose, the 2007 version of UVA, consisting of ...

- Doug "Chip" Lynch
- Chris "CJ" Johnson
- Troy Riddle
- Dave Hamil
- Jim Sculley
- Sean "Sticky" Porta
- Doug Miller
- Tom White

gave it their best and tried to represent IREVA with sportsmanship and respect. I think we had alot of fun doing so and enjoyed the new additions to the team. Thank you Troy, Dave, and Jim. You did UVA proud!!!! We appreciate Doug Miller being there and being available should the need have presented itself. We tried where possible to provide support to our other teams and appreciated the support our other teams gave to us. We look forward to giving it another run next year.....WHERE EVER THAT MAY BE.....UVA will be back in '08!!!!

Legion

Chris Hosley

Roster

- #1 Chris Hosley
- #2 Chris Ganje
- #3 CJ Denk
- #4 Matty Smith
- #5 Brandon Mueller
- #6 Rob Soris
- #9 Charlie Haer
- #11 Sean-Miguel Morrison
- #14 Andrew Sipe
- #15 JJ Seitelman

For the third consecutive year Legion participated at the USA Volleyball Adult Open Championships. This year we decided to beef up our team, move up a level and play in the Open division. We played well all week long beating solid teams and playing with the best teams in the country.

To start our Saturday morning we beat the Mexican UACH Chihuahua team 3-0 (25-20, 25-21, 25-19). Our second match had us face off against last year's second place team Alumni VBC who we lost to 0-3 (23-25, 13-25, 14-25). Later on that evening in our third match, we played deep into the night versus



Summit where we won a marathon match 3-2 (25-23, 23-25, 33-31, 19-25, 15-12).

On Sunday we lost to So Cal Riptide (the eventual second place team this year) and Bameso (The first place team from Denver in 2005). The scores for the So Cal match were 0-3 (19-25, 23-25, 19-25) and versus Bameso the

scores were 2-3 (25-20, 14-25, 25-21, 14-25, 11-15). Following pool play all 12 teams enter the double elimination playoffs and get seeded based on their pool play record.

Our first playoff match had us lined up against Fog, a team from Canada. We were handed a tough 2-3 (25-23, 24-26, 21-25, 25-18, 13-15) loss in a match that we really had control over. Later on Monday night we faced off versus Summit again where our tournament run ended with another tough loss at 1-3 (27-25, 22-25, 24-26, 22-25).

We would like to thank USA Volleyball for putting on a tremendous event this year. Also, the city of Austin, TX was truly a great host and we look forward to the next time it is back there. Most importantly Legion would like to thank all the familiar faces that showed up to support us at our matches this year. We are looking forward to next year and all the fun times it will bring. Go Legion!

