



Fall 2008

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Commissioner's Welcome

Patty Blacklock

Welcome to the start of the IREVA/USAV 2008-2009 volleyball season. My name is Patty Blacklock and I am happy to be starting my 3rd year as your Commissioner.

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 to background screenings being added this year, as well as all other 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. 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 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.

IREVA OFFICERS 2008

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Vacant

Regional Office Manager
Anna Turner

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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 great sport. Volleyball is one of the very few sports that can be played 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 moving toward a 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 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 year!!



2008 IREVA Adult Regional Results – Congratulations to all!

	Men BB	Men B	Women BB	Women B
Gold	Boomers Bangers Hack Fu Jackass Zero Gravity Gringos	UVA CD Select Green Supreme Court Past our Prime	Goonies River City Aces Jump On It Kilgore Smack That	Shakin Aces Hang & Bang 2 RPI Hang & Bang 1
Silver	Legion of Boom Final Approach RPI Venom Free Ballin'	Balls Deep Not in My House Unnecessary Spankings Jackass 2 Bad Fish	Slaughterhouse 6 Dig Into It Serve-ivors High Jinx NYCM	Shooters White Shooters Divas Peers LT-7
Bronze		Schenectady B Cross Court CD Select B Schenectady 55 CNY Aces		



Arsenal

BJ Carson

Well this was the first year that Arsenal made the trip for nationals. There were a couple of guys on the team that have been to the Adult nationals before, but for the most part we were all new to the event. Arsenal came into these nationals with high hopes of finishing well. Throughout the year the team played well at local tournaments, no wins but very competitive ball considering our youth and experience levels.

Day one for Arsenal started out strong. We would end up playing 3 teams on the first day and didn't drop a single game opening up our nationals with a 6-0 record. Day two was a different story for Arsenal when they played one of the top teams at the event, Prolifik. Not matching up well against a team that is defensively strong, Prolifik took both games from Arsenal handing Arsenal their first loss of the tournament. However, Arsenal bounced back strong and finished the day on a high note sweeping the final match of pool play and finishing with a 6-2 record.

With the strong pool play, Arsenal had a chance to make it to the gold bracket. They would have to beat two teams to get there though and their first matchup was against a team that hadn't dropped a pool play game yet and hadn't let the opposing team score over 20 points in a game. Well that streak ended quickly when this team faced Arsenal. Arsenal crushed Team Elevate in two games 25-17 and 25-18 to move on to the second challenge match for gold against Providence. This turned out to be a great, hard fought match with a deciding third game going down to the wire. Arsenal opened the match with a solid game taking the first game 25-15. Maybe losing a little focus, Arsenal let the second game slip by with a 19-25 loss. Providence ending up winning the third game 15-13, as they sent Arsenal into the silver bracket.

The silver bracket would require a team to win 4 rounds of playoffs to come out on top and Arsenal was out to win. First round was not too exciting with Arsenal crushing their first opponent 25-19 and 25-13. Round two proved to be more of a challenge. With the amount of playing time so far in our first nationals possibly starting to take its toll, Arsenal dug deep and played a hard match in round two winning the first game 25-22. With no let down

from either team, the second game went to the opposing team 25-22, and yet another deciding third game, not our specialty. In the short history of Arsenal, its record in third games and 0-however many we've played (not good). But the team prevailed winning the third game 15-11. The third round of playoffs resulted in some desperately needed fans cheering Arsenal on, and with their inspiration, Arsenal dispatched the final team to get Arsenal in the finals in two games.

The finals saw Arsenal playing a team out of Hawaii and also the biggest crowd that Arsenal had ever played before. With the juices flowing Arsenal seemingly cruised to a first game victory 25-20. However, the Hawaiian team was strong and not willing to go down that easily, taking the second game 25-23. So, on we went to our new specialty, game three (or so we thought). Arsenal and OVA went back and forth for the entire game with a critical side out going OVA's way and winning the silver bracket. Arsenal finished 10th in the nation in our first Adult National Championship. The future of this team is strong and we are very excited about the next coming season where we hope to build on our great start in Atlanta.



Balls Deep

Adam Gibson

Balls Deep went to Atlanta 2008 Nationals. This was the first time our team has ever gone, although a couple of players have gone in the past. It was a great experience to watch such great volleyball being played from so many

players and teams. Not to mention being able to play against teams we have never played against. As members of IREVA, we tend to see the same teams all season long. As a rookie team at nationals, we met most of our team goals and managed to finish within the top 60 with little to no arguing about getting enough sets. In fact, we even won a few games. With the exception of the hotel accommodations, we had a

great time in Atlanta, GA and anticipate going to Minnesota next year.

Boomers Bangers

Mike Shorkey

For the 9th year in a row we participated in the Volleyball Championships. Boomers were able to post our 8th successive BB regional championship against our nemesis, the pseudo Hack Fu squad. It surely did not have the same overall flair and drama as in previous years but definitely very competitive. It could have been Boomers' 9th championship in a row but myself & a couple other Boomers played for Hack Fu in '07 to help them win their 1st championship ☺

We arrived in Atlanta to play in the 72 team Men's BB Division. This years roster had some oldies: Faux(oh), Shorkey(s), Olson(oh) & Rutt(mh) and some newbies: Burkstahler(mh), Collins(opp), Kaplan(u) & my Martin twins Justin(L) & Jared(u). This was a major overall change and new look for my squad. So it was difficult to say if we could get back to the gold round.

The first two days of the tournament were used for the 6 team pool play. We finished 5-1 and in a 3 way tie for 1st in

our pool. We ended up taking the second seed due to points. We did manage to have a chance to stay in the Gold bracket but had a tough road ahead. We were seeded #16 out of 24 and had to play (and win) 2 play in matches for the gold. We were fortunate and won both in 2 games to make it to the top 12 double-elimination gold bracket, which this year did not include any teams that we play on a regular basis from our region or WEVA. We then lost a heartbreaker in 3 (13-15) to the team that finished 3rd and then lost to the 5th place team. We ended up finishing 9th out of 72. The tournament of course had other activities to engage in:

Highlights & Lowlights (in no particular order & others I forgot):

- View from our hotel room
- Snorers, coughers and random people on the floor at the foot of my bed ☺
- Getting cheered by the other players from our region and WEVA as well
- Party in hotel room various nights
- Party in the lobby area with an inebriated Libero putting his foot in his mouth SEVERAL times
- MOOOO!!!!!!!

- Drinking various crappy beers that my twins and Kap purchased. lol
- Team Dinner
- Centennial Park just outside the hotel
- CNN center and the 32 oz beverages.
- Meeting lots of new people and talking to folks that you really never get a chance to chat with
- Chat with region captains and J. Bishop about a league for A-ish teams from our region potentially for the 08-09 season.
- Watching the sitting VB team beat up on various takers
- Watching the other region teams compete and cheer/heckle them. So many of them went this year it was truly tough to watch them all.
- Crappy long arse walk even once you enter the convention center. Jeez!
- Weather was great
- Due to timing didn't get to see the Braves play

Thanks to Boomer's Bangers for another successful season and fun year. I am again very proud of our accomplishments. We look forward to doing it all again next year in Minneapolis.

Final Approach

Ben Rosenthal

This was the third National Tournament for us with, once again, a completely new team. Only two returning members from last year's Pac-Men Nationals team made the trip but the team played together for the whole season this year giving us high hopes again for Atlanta.

The members of Final Approach 2008 were Ben Rosenthal OPP – Captain, Caleb White OH, Andy Mink OH, Josh Hagel MB, Jim Brown MB, John Leighton S, Josh Huntley L, Jason Bruhn Util.

We were playing morning sessions this year. But that didn't stop us from

testing out the night life a little on Friday night. We discovered what might be the best kept secret of the ATL, 7 dollar 44 oz. draughts at the CNN center. As you can imagine we made quick friends with the owners there.

Day 1 started with a 9:00 match against Big Easy RVC and we took both games pretty easily. Our second match was a little tougher against Fox Valley Volleyball with all three games decided by 2 points. Unfortunately we were on the losing end of the match. The third and final match for the day was against Beach Quest, where again we took a pretty easy win in 2 games.

Day 2 came with high hopes. Our first match of the day was against the only

undefeated team in our pool, Nacho Libero. We played a very tight match but lost again in two games. Our final match of pool play we made the mistake of underestimating our opponent. We played East Coast Boyz, a young team that we thought we could roll right over. Naturally, we lost the last match leaving us with a 2-3 record for pool play and 4th place in our pool. This left us in a position familiar from New Orleans and Austin with a challenge match for bronze or copper playoffs. The good news was that we got a bye into the second challenge so we only needed to win one match to stay in bronze.

Day 3 continued with our early matches with our challenge at 8 AM. We played well even though only 7 of us survived the nights celebrating, winning the

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challenge in two games. Our next match, the bronze quarter finals, again with only 7 of us there, was another quick 2 game win for us. The semi final match was a little tougher, and after a tight loss in the first game things were

looking grim. We battled back and won the second game. The third game was back and forth with some interesting calls from the R1. We fought hard but ended up losing and thus ending our tournament. The only

consolation was that the team we lost to in the semi finals won the final as well. Overall the weekend was a great showing for a new team and we're looking forward to doing even better next year.

Uno, Dos, Tres – Gringos

Prineet Amin

The 2008 Volleyball US Open held in Atlanta, GA was an eventful experience. There are so many great reasons to play in the Nationals tournament each year, one of which is simply for the experience. There are always so many laughs to be had and memories to be made, and we sure had our share. Our first day in Atlanta may have been the most memorable, and yet it involved only some of our team and not an ounce of volleyball.

Three team members (and one significant-other/team mom) were the first to arrive in Atlanta. After arriving at the airport we realized that there was no free shuttle to our hotel. Deciding to out-smart the system, we decided to hop on what we thought was the free shuttle service to a neighboring hotel. Great idea, huh? Once we got there, we found ourselves unable to check in, no reservation...at least not at this Marriott. Turns out there is more than one Marriott Hotel that neighbors a Hilton Hotel. One happens to be no where near the downtown area, and you would have thought we would have realized we were at the wrong hotel before trying to check-in due to the lack of city life, tall buildings, and any human life...clearly the heat and heavy luggage was affecting us. Oh and to top it off, after carting ourselves and luggage through the parking lot of the Hilton to the Marriott and checking-in at the wrong hotel, we found out this hotel did in fact have their own airport shuttle

service. Clearly we were not off to a good start.

After going back to the airport, jumping on the Marta (Atlanta Train System), and finally arriving at the right hotel we went out to get acquainted with the city and hunt for some food. Our first exploration, lunch, we asked the front desk of the hotel for some direction on where to go and before we knew it the four of us were on our way, in the Hot-Lanta sun, to find some nourishment. The closest and cheapest place was the Metro Cafe Diner. The menu seemed endless and we were practically planning to eat every meal here...until everything flopped. The food was just blah and the service was horrible. We got stuck with a waiter who was failing miserably on the second day of his new job. I'll spare you the details and just say, you know something is wrong when you are offered a straw with your beers.

After regrouping at the hotel and getting settled in, the four of us went on our next exploration, beer/liquor and groceries. The two closest liquor stores were over-priced and extremely sketchy. We decided to continue on to Walgreens to get some supplies for the week. After walking countless blocks, through what appeared to be some not so nice areas, we found ourselves in the middle of a downpour. Rain! Out of nowhere! Sunny one minute, pouring the next! Walgreens was finally in sight but by the time we arrived we were beyond soaked. We took our time shopping, loaded up our belongings and got ready to head back out in the rain. We wanted to "borrow" a shopping cart to help cart our stuff back to the hotel but noticed the cart had a locking device on the wheel. Oh well! Low and

behold, a grocery store was right next-door, and here we were shopping at a drug store. Could this day get any worse? We ran in, got a few more items and loaded up a shopping cart to take back with us. We got to the edge of the parking lot and skeeeetttt....stuck...the cart wouldn't move. Magnetic poles at the corner of the parking lot that locks the wheels on the carts. Can someone explain how we noticed the locking device on the Walgreens cart but failed to even look at this cart? At this point we all realized this wasn't going to be a fun walk home. A few cases of beer, bottles of Powerade, bread, peanut butter, jelly, bananas, etc...way too much food for four people to carry so many miles away. No need to waste time, we were off, and complaining the whole way back, until a shopping cart appeared! We would like to thank whatever homeless man left us the nice silver carriage that made our lives a fairy tale. And for the record, that was the end to our bad day, from there we all lived happily ever after.

Ok so about that thing called volleyball, the reason we came to Atlanta. Introductions to the team: Prineet Amin – OH, Chris Kilmer – OH, Joe Wager – MB, Dan Librizzi – MB, Mark Harris – S, Bob Burbank – RS, Holly McLane – Team Co-Mom, Anna Kilmer – Team Co-Mom. After a rough regular season of trying to consistently put our starting squad at okvery tournament, we found ourselves going to Nationals with only 6 players. One of which, Chris Kilmer, is actually suppose to be our Libero but ended up doing a bang up job as our OH. With the inconsistent rotation, we decided to enter our team in the B division this year.

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After the pool play we were 4 and 1. If someone had told me that we would be 4 and 1 out of pool play before we left to go to Nationals, I would have said that whatever you're drinking is working! We were finally playing in sync. Even without a Libero, our back row defense was great. Our middle backs were picking up balls like they were Libero's. Our "big" middle blocker, Joe Wager, had an incredible week. Using every inch of his 6 foot 7 inch body to throw down some serious roofs! Even with a 4 and 1 record, we still fell to 2nd place in our pool to Team Providence from the Yankee Region.

The first game that we didn't play to our ability happened to the first game of our Gold Bracket Challenge, taking Team

Pepperocini to 3 sets. We now found ourselves in the Silver Bracket and 1 loss away from elimination. Our first Silver bracket match up was against a well rounded Team Slimed Down Beef. We had a close first game, which we barely took 25-23. We realized that their success was solely contributed to a 6'4 left handed hitting machine. Making some quick defensive adjustments, we shut the "big guy" down and ended up taking the match, moving us to the next round of the Silver Bracket, and only 4 games away from the Silver Bracket challenge Championship! To get there we have to play against OVA from Hawaii. We played them before during pool play and we felt pretty confident since we beat them easily in 2 games. However, much to our surprise, this was apparently not the same team we played

in pool play. It also didn't help that we played our worst game of the tournament at the worst possible time. We couldn't put a ball away to save our lives, our passing was repulsive and we might as well been playing defense while sitting in lawn chairs. We somehow managed to take them to 3 games, but ultimately fell in defeat. Needless to say, OVBC went on to win the Silver Bracket.

Deciding to register with the IREVA League this year has proven to be a great experience. We look forward to the next season. See you all again soon. Minneapolis here we come!

Jackass

Dmitri Gardner

This year USA Volleyball Nationals returned to Atlanta, GA, the same city that had hosted the tournament just a few years ago. While Atlanta itself leaves much to be desired as a tournament-friendly city, we still managed to have our share of fun at the tournament itself.

Jackass has established and continues to carry on two long-standing traditions at Nationals each year: ridiculous team warmups, and equally-ridiculous team stickers. This year's stickers read, "Let's be honest, you've done worse... jackass". Most folks not only found the stickers to be hilarious, but found them to be true as well. This year's warmups were cow outfits complete with cow ear bonnets, plastic udders and the "Herd of Jackass" moniker on the back. The concept was an unfortunate compromise from what was initially intended to be "Flock of Jackass" (think 8 sheep plus Adam as Bo Peep with the giant shepherd's crook). Oddly, it's impossible to find farm animal outfits in

adult sizes, except for cows. Seems like a market opportunity. Anyway, it's possible that we're the only ones that care about these antics anymore, but we doubt it. We get so much attention it's hard to believe that no other team has caught onto this yet. We certainly don't mind keeping all of the attention for ourselves, we're comfortable with the entertainment role that we provide. And for what it's worth, we do try hard to outdo ourselves each year, which, like pimpin', ain't easy. We also did not fail to offend, as usual, despite not really trying very hard. Security at the CNN center insisted that if we were going to enter the building to partake of the delicious, large, and inexpensive beers for sale there, we would need to cover up our udders. Dead serious. It could have been a scene from Monty Python, you can't make this stuff up.

On the court, Jackass tends to have one of two experiences at nationals: we either

play well during pool play and tank in the playoffs; or vice versa. This year it was the former. We had a surprisingly strong start the first day, Saturday, considering early morning matches and late night unscheduled social events that we absolutely could not miss (we have a reputation to uphold). We finished our first day 2-1, and were very optimistic about our play going into the second day. The second day of the tournament, Sunday, brought some tougher teams, and we finished pool play with a 4-2 record overall, which was good enough to seed us into the gold/silver challenge bracket. The first challenge match was



Team Jackass, stopping for a quick snack between matches.

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Sunday evening, which we lost to a tough team. That loss knocked us down into the silver bracket. Our first silver match was scheduled for Monday morning. That morning we went three games against a team that was about evenly matched with us, but we ultimately lost the match. After having done quite well in pool play, we found ourselves knocked out of the tournament by early in the third day of the tournament, one of the earliest finishes for us at any Nationals tournament.

Overall we were pleased to have done as well as we did during pool play. It would have been fun to have done better in the playoffs, and the tournament left us with experiences and goals that we can use to grow the team next year. We found that the competitiveness of the B division was much stronger this year than it ever had been in the past. If we had played as well last year as we did this year, we would have finished the tournament at a much higher position.

As a last comment, while the tournament itself was lots of fun as always, Atlanta was just as lousy a

destination as it was the previous time it hosted this tournament. Atlanta is particularly poorly laid out for an event like this, or for any convention for that matter. While the convention area is readily accessible by light rail from the airport, that's about the only positive aspect of the city's layout. We stayed at the tournament hotel, yet the tournament site was still a good 30 minute walk from the hotel lobby, which is a huge inconvenience for early morning matches, as well as the typical back and forth trips that players tend to make throughout the day. The restaurant and bar selection in that area of the city are pretty lousy, and the areas of the city better known for nightlife are a 20 to 30 minute cab ride from the hotel. When matches finish at 9 or 10pm, it just isn't realistic to get everyone together, have dinner, and then head that far out of town to go out. Austin, Minneapolis and New Orleans proved to be much more tournament-friendly cities with regard to layout, and we would like to see these issues play a more significant role in future tournament city decisions. We were very disappointed to find that Atlanta would host the 2008 tournament, and

we know of several teams that chose not to attend specifically because of that fact.

Moreover, at this year's captain's meeting we were notified that 2009 Nationals will be held in Minneapolis. Minneapolis is a fantastic city, and perfectly configured for a tournament like this, with the hotels and convention center all within easy walk of shopping, restaurants, and bars. However, as in 2008, we're very disappointed that USAV has made the decision to return to a city that has so recently hosted a nationals tournament. Part of the fun of playing at Nationals is experiencing a new city each year, for better or worse. It's disappointing that USAV continues to make tournament decisions based on what appears to be low bids, which may or may not ever benefit the players. At the very least, it would be helpful for us to know what the selection criteria are, and to have input in the process. The club teams subsidize this tournament every year, both in entry fees and in the tourism dollars that we spend, and there should be a greater effort to solicit feedback from us in the future.



Kick Some – Women's 55's

Lois Campbell

Session 2 brought another round of high hopes for the participants. There were more divisions to watch, more people to meet and more games for all of the volleyball enthusiasts. Adding in the warm and sunny Atlanta weather and everyone seemed glad to be there.

Our division had 12 teams in it this time and we were all hopeful for a change in the format. Unfortunately, there was

still only the gold bracket and some teams were done a day early again. In the men's 50's, they did have two divisions in the playoffs, gold and silver. That was good, but having it as a single elimination was not. There were a lot of people expressing their displeasure over the format for this tournament.

This is such a good event for the volleyball community. Why can't it be changed to provide more games for all so the participants feel like they are getting their money's worth? You would think that the goal would be to involve as many people as they can in

this great experience but maybe that isn't the case.

Throughout both sessions, many IREVA people were there. Whether it was just a quick recognition, a long conversation or cheering for fellow players from our region, it was fun to see another New Yorker.

Kilgore

Heidi Brower

Nationals 2008 was as expected, a great time! It was a chance for team Kilgore to pull together and play volleyball for four days in a row. With only seven members of the team traveling to Atlanta, and three of the seven new to nationals, we would rely on the experienced members of the team to show us the ropes and what nationals

are all about. We left our lives in Albany and took off with nothing to think about for four days besides volleyball and our team. When we arrived and learned that we had the early schedule, we knew we had our work cut out for us, and we were correct. Although the team struggled, there were times where we played flawlessly and solidly together, possibly the best all season! Our record turned out to be a disappointing 3 and 5, but glimpses of potential were frequent and we look forward to improving on them

next year. We celebrated our wins and analyzed our losses. The highlights of the trip include running through the Olympic Ring fountain after a late game, frequenting the CNN center for Moe's and ice cream, dinner at The Hard Rock Café and of course Karaoke at the Metro Café (Also our sponsor). We enjoyed cheering on our region and appreciate those who supported us on the court as well. Overall we enjoyed the experience and look forward to planning for next year!

Legion

Chris Hosley

LEGION VOLLEYBALL CLUB

- 1 Chris Hosley
- 4 Matty Smith
- 5 Mark Burik
- 6 Robert Soris
- 9 Chuck Haer
- 10 Eric Lanham
- 11 William Foley
- 12 Neil Lukas
- 13 Kevin Goncalves
- 14 Peter Fabbro
- 15 JJ Seitelman

Legion volleyball would first like to thank IREVA and all of its members for the continued support throughout the years and again in Atlanta in 2008. 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.

For some of us our journey began with a 1 am drive to Rochester on Friday morning followed by a 6 am flight to Atlanta. 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: FOG, Team OCVC/Smack, and Team Pineapple. 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 two-hour 2-3 marathon loss to FOG, a team from Canada (21-25, 18-25, 25-21, 25-27, 9-15). The irony in this match is that this was FOG's only win in the tournament. Immediately after the match I was informed that only the top three teams in each pool make it to the double-elimination gold bracket and the bottom three teams are placed in the single-elimination silver bracket. This is different from previous years where all six teams from each pool would advance to the double elimination gold bracket.

Next on the schedule was Team OCVC/Smack from southern California. We picked up a hard fought 3-0 win

(25-23, 25-22, 25-22) to put us at one and one for the tournament. Later on that night we played our final match versus Team Pineapple, an IPFW all-star team from the past ten years. In this match Legion pulled through with a 3-1 victory (21-25, 25-21, 25-13, 25-18) over Team Pineapple on center court.

Sunday began with another 9AM match, this time versus NY rival Creole. After an extremely slow start and being down 2 men from the night before (who never made it back from Buckhead), Legion came back from an 0-2 deficit to win 3-2 (18-25, 20-25, 25-18, 26-24, 15-9). Later on that night we faced off against Bameso, another NY team (composed of a Dominican Republic all-starts) who has won the Open division several times. Under the guidance of William Foley, Legion won 3-2 in our third two hour match in pool play (19-25, 25-19, 25-17, 32-34, 15-12). Legion finished pool play at 4 and 1 and was ranked 2nd overall (Bameso finished first based on set %). We advanced to the gold bracket for the second straight year to face Team Paul Mitchell at 9 AM on Monday.

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For the match, Team Paul Mitchell flew in Co-National Player of the year Paul Lotman from Long Beach State. For those of you who do not know, The Paul Mitchell Team has won for three straight years and composes their team from the best players in the land. With around 200 people crowded around court 2, Legion downed the Paul Mitchell powerhouse three games to one (25-21, 25-23, 20-25, 25-19).



Legion placed 5th overall in the 2008 US Open Championships.

Following our first playoff victory came two 3-0 defeats to the TPC Beavers (25-15, 25-20, 25-18) and FVVC – TWU (25-18, 25-18, 25-20) on Monday afternoon. With everything wrapped up,

Legion Red

Ashley DeNeal

Legion Red Volleyball Team

- 1 Blair Buchanan
- 2 Ashley DeNeal
- 3 Ashley Crenshaw
- 4 Emmy Blouin
- 7 Susan Johnson
- 9 Kelsey Fautsch
- 11 Alyse Lahti
- 12 Heather Lieberman
- 13 Amy Morris
- 14 Jennifer Amobi

After the experience of playing against the top teams and competitors at the 2007 Austin Nationals, our team was very excited for the opportunity to be playing in the Open division again this year. Despite the loss of two of our returning middle blockers in just the week prior to the event (injury and personal business), we still had a very strong team heading into the tournament. Legion Red is very proud of our showing and feels that we were able to compete at a high level in every match.



Legion Red would first like to thank all of the individuals in our region who work so hard, year round, to make playing volleyball under USAV possible. Most players can relate to the frustrations of trying to just get yourself registered to play. I could not imagine the patience and energy it must take to organize and meet deadlines for individual, team and tournament

registrations for the entire region. On behalf of Legion Red, thank you so much. IREVA and all of its members cannot be told enough how much all their effort is truly appreciated.

Legion Red would also like to thank all of the other IREVA teams for their support. It's great to look around and recognize so many faces from home. We would like to congratulate everyone on a great tournament for IREVA.

There were only 11 women's teams this year at the Open level. Our first day of play matched us up against Rusty Wahine, a team made up mostly by the University of Hawaii graduates. We were able to steal one game off of them, but lost the match 1-3 (25-16, 25-14, 17-25, 25-16). We played two more matches that first day and followed up with one match on the second day of pool. We lost out the rest of our pool play matches to The Exterminators (25-21, 25-21, 25-15), USA Red (25-20, 25-11, 25-21) and Smack Trim (25-16, 25-16, 25-16). Although we came out of our pool last, we felt that our pool was definitely tough and very competitive and were all excited to get a shot at some of the other teams during play-offs.

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For our first round of play-offs we were matched up with the TPC-Team Budweiser. Their team was comprised of a bunch of former PAC 10 players. We ended up beating them 3-0 (25-23, 25-22, 25-19) and clinching Legion Red's first ever match win at the Open level. Our 2nd play-off round put us back up against USA Red, whom had

beaten us earlier on in pool play. We dropped that match 0-3 (25-21, 25-18, 25-14). Unfortunately for our team, at that point we lost two more of our players (family emergency back home). We went into the next round of play-offs against Shinkara –Purple, a very beatable team. It was a fun game to watch. We had our libero and defensive specialist playing as outside hitters and

our best outside hitter playing middle. We played well, but dropped the match 3-1 (25-20, 20-25, 26-24, 25-15). Our team is very happy with our 7th place finish and is so excited to play again next year. Atlanta was a great trip and we are excited about where we will get to travel next. Thanks again to all of the IREVA members for their hard work.

Not in My House

Rich Chapin

We travelled to Atlanta with six players who had been with us all season (Chris Bowler, Doug Cole, Chris Grubb, Joe Vavruick, Dave Wick & myself) and added Jay Combs from Schenectady Y. Only Chris Bowler and I had been to Nationals before; for the rest it was a new experience.

The first day started out well as we won our first match 25-16, 25-19 against PZ-Hogs. Little did we know then, that would be our last match win. In our

next match we forgot how to pass and lost badly to In-Side-Out 10-25, 16-25. In our 3rd pool play match we recovered to play well against Team Peppercini, but lost 18-25, 23-25.

Day 2 was to be our undoing. Our 1st match was against Bid Kahunas who had gone 0-3 in Day 1 including a loss to PZ-Hogs. We won the first set 25-20, but ran out of gas and lost the next 2 sets 17-25 & 8-15. That loss gave us a lower seed in the challenge bracket and elimination round. We proceeded to lose to Team Hollywood 11-25, 18-25 and Marysville Goodyear 20-25, 17-25, finishing pool play at 1-5. We then had to play our 4th match of the day against

Getting Higher and lost 17-25 and 20-25.

That loss put us in the Copper division and a match-up with Natural Disasters on Day 3. De-moralized and with team unity a distant memory we bowed out 19-25, 18-25.

Everyone got an appreciation for the level of volleyball that is played in other parts of the country and I got a nice warm-up for the 2nd session, which I played with Schenectady 50's. I hope to have better success in Minneapolis in '09.

RPI - Women

The national tournament is always a unique experience for our team. There are always many players who have never been to such a large tournament before, and it is fun to see them experience such a thing. In addition, we always try to make it as fun of a trip as possible.

This year, we decided to drive down, stopping in Virginia Beach on the way. A day on the beach helped break up the long car ride and allowed us to extend our vacation. We got to our hotel in Atlanta Friday morning, luckily we even got there safely after driving the wrong way down a one way street, and after our GPS, who we referred to as "Barbara," led us astray. But we were there and ready to play some volleyball.

The team has been going to nationals the past few years, but has struggled against competition that is above the level we are used to. However, we came this year sure that we could win some games. Most of our team made the trip to Atlanta, and we had a really good season up to this point due to great team chemistry. We started off slow, a usual problem of ours, and finished the first day without a win. The same, unfortunately, went for the next day. As frustrated as we were, we didn't give up. Many of our games were very close, and we felt we were competitive throughout those two days. Finally, on our third day, we won a game. We were not able to take the match, but still, the first win was an accomplishment we were all proud of.

We also enjoyed the fact that the RPI Men's team was in Atlanta, and whenever possible, we went to watch

their games, and had much fun cheering them on.

Volleyball was not the only excitement of the trip. I'm sure the whole team will remember the waiter who entertained us and had us singing the YMCA at the Hollywood Café and the night we walked to the Olympic Fountain Park. And as much as we hated it at the time, I think the drive straight from Atlanta back to Albany will be remembered by all.

We would have liked to have left with a slightly better record, but all in all it was an amazing trip. We feel we will be more prepared next year. We have all experienced another national tournament and are well-aware of the competition it brings. Hopefully some higher level tournaments next season will allow us to go to Minneapolis next year and improve upon our record.

Schenectady 50's

Rich Chapin

We went to Atlanta with nine players. Five who had played together most of the year (Bob Lacerais, Jack Anderton, Ben Cottrell, Steve Davies & John Koska) We borrowed John Ray and Chris Lindquist from the 55's team and added Mike McNeil from Binghamton and myself from Not In My House.

There were 18 teams in the 50's bracket including, 2 from Brazil, 2 from Canada and 1 from Venezuela. The first day started out with our worst match of the tournament against King' Mountain Fog (A team from California that finished 3rd in Gold). We lost 12-25, 9-25. Next we played Papakoa 50 (A team from

Chicago who won Silver) and lost in 3 games 17-25, 25-20, 11-15. Our 3rd match was against RVC 50 from Virginia (2nd in Silver) and lost 19-25, 19-25.

Day 2 we lost matches to Crush from Canada (9th in Gold) 13-25, 16-25 and Venezuela (4th in Gold) 23-25, 13-25. Despite our record we were not discouraged. We felt that we had a tough pool (which turned out to be true, as the other 5 teams in our pool finished 3rd, 4th, 9th, 10th & 11th) and were looking forward to the playoffs.

On Thursday evening, Bernie Goldfine, an Atlanta native who had played with us in Austin, invited the team over to his house for a cookout and some hot tub time. His hospitality was greatly appreciated. I think it improved our play also as Day 3 was our best day.

Day 3 started with our Silver challenge match against Arkansas Road Kill. We lost a tough match 22-25, 25-18, 10-15. That put us into the elimination games against Brazil. We came out on top 25-21, 23-25, 15-10 to keep our tournament going. Our next match was against Ref Shop, a team from Florida, who had beaten us 2 straight games in the challenge round last year. We played well but lost 20-25, 25-22, 15-13 to end our tournament with our 3rd 3-set match of the day. Ref Shop went on to finish 2nd in Silver.

All in all, I felt we were very competitive. Everyone got along well and had a good time. As one of our spectators said "we were entertaining to watch". I look forward to Minneapolis in '09.



Schenectady 55's

Ken Shea

Congratulations to Geezerjocks Jim Bishop, Fred Chase, Chris Linquist, Larry Matura, John Ray, Paul Sander, Mike Sardella, and Ken Shea; we are still playing Volleyball. Actually, Schenectady 55's played better then we had all year; maybe it now takes a few months to warm up instead of a few minutes. It feels good when a team, beyond all obstacles, is still competitive. We were 2-1 in pool play, beating the team that eventually won the bronze medal.

Schenectady's average age was 59.9 and getting into the Gold Medal round was an accomplishment. Unlike most of the teams in the Gold Medal round all of our players were from one state. Keeping our heads high and our feet in cement, we quickly lost our two matches in double elimination.

Atlanta seems to get a bad rap, however we all enjoyed various aspects of the city and the tournament. Discussions have already started about playing in Minneapolis/St.Paul in 2009. See Ya There.

Serve-ivors

Lisa Mosher

Team Serve-ivors headed to Atlanta with one mission in mind: to repeat our victory from four years ago, bringing home a Gold Medal in our bracket. With that in mind returning players Diane Jaquays, Jan Suits, and Lisa Mosher brought Brooke Scholl, Becki Reed, and Kelly Cook on board to help us complete that mission.

Arriving on Thursday, a few days early, we took time to do some site seeing and reminisce about our visit four years ago, slowing recalling where all the hot spots were. We even took the time to check out the awesome Georgia Aquarium, which we missed last time (a must for those of you next time you're in Atlanta). We took it easy the first night out, but...we can't say the same for Friday night. Meeting up with our friends from Team Distillery at Stats around 11:30 PM (after our hard practice), whom had been there since 4 PM- we quickly caught up to them as far as drinking went. Then around 1:30 AM our nice friend "naked guy" decided that he would drive all of us (consisting of 7 people) back towards our hotel in his Aveo. That's right, 7 of

us in his really small Aveo. It was a sight to see and something to experience! For the remainder of our nights out we hit the Metro to do some Karaoke and Gibney's Pub to play pool (which was about the only game you could afford to play at \$2 a game!) And of course who could forget the Food Court- 32oz. Drafts for \$5- that is just craziness (but craziness we all took full advantage of more than once during our stay).

Oh, you want to know how we did playing.....Well let's just say we played well, we just couldn't finish to save our lives! After our wonderful night out on the town Friday, thank goodness we didn't have to play until 3pm, but even that late start time wasn't late enough for one of our players- she still wasn't feeling well by 9pm when we finished playing. Even being one player short (in essence) we manage to pull together as a team and play some really close games, losing the first two games to ABC Volleyball (22-25 and 21-25) and Girls Gone Wild (25-27 and 23-25), and taking the third to three games against Dykstra Swingers (25-19, 19-25, and 8-15). Day 2 of pool play wasn't much better. We could be ahead 22-15 and still manage to loose it. However, we did finally win two games against Moe Penguins and Set RVC to

kill, which helped boost our confidence level up before heading into playoffs.....And we're off...yup that's right, we lost our first round of playoffs in the bronze bracket, pushing us down into the copper bracket and being done for the day.....Day 2 of playoffs, well let's just say it didn't start off so pretty. Arriving to the convention center around 8:15am for our 9am game we found out that we were suppose to be working the game before ours-WHAT!!! Thank goodness what we had seen on the board the night before was not what was up there that morning so we were able to win the appeal to avoid being penalized points (for once a computer glitch was in our favor). Now with that behind us, we had to pull it together as a team. Once again we had to face Moe Penguins, but this time it didn't end in our favor. The first game was a nail bitter, bringing it down to the wire (23-25) and now needing the next game to be able to continue on, we just mentally weren't there and lost (18-25)...ending our chances of getting that gold medal.

Though the ending wasn't in our favor we really were pretty happy with how we played together and more importantly, how we got along together as a team. Thanks to all our local teams for coming and supporting us.....See you next year in Minneapolis.

Silent Threat- Women's 50's

Lois Campbell

The city of Atlanta was a very welcoming host for this year's volleyball nationals. From the hotel personnel to the city liaisons on the streets, we felt glad to be there. Evidence of the 1996 Olympics was everywhere. Using the World Congress Center as the playing site for its 40 courts meant an additional trek once you got to the front doors.

The competition level was impressive but the participation level in our age group was disappointing. With only 10 teams involved, we had hoped that we would be playing everyone in both pools. This wasn't the case and when they put everyone into just a gold bracket, some teams were eliminated on the third day. Plans (hotels, flights, etc) were made for four days so why couldn't they have had crossover games to give participants more playing time? If this is their standard way of running this tournament then I can see why the participation level is low. For the amount of money spent, the playing time should be maximized. There were some very unhappy people when the

discussion came around to how this tournament was run (not even taking the computer problems into account). It would be interesting to see if complaints from the regions involved could make a difference in its structure.

The outstanding part of this competition was that so many divisions were present so you could satisfy your volleyball cravings at any level. New friends were made and despite everything else, a good time was had by all. Only one questions remains, "if it is called Nationals, why are there teams from other countries?"

Smack That

Smack That went to Nationals in Atlanta, GA with seven players. Five of the players played on the team throughout the entire 07/08 season. These players included Kaitlin Olmstead (setter), Krista Provost (left side hitter), Lori Mariany (middle hitter), Sarah Peacock (right side hitter/libero), and Jamie Houghton (left side hitter/libero). We asked Tressa Fruchtnicht (middle/left side hitter) and Nicole Corbett (middle) to come and play with us at Nationals. The seven of us were only able to play with each other once before going to Nationals. This consisted of a Thursday night practice from 8:30-10:30pm after all of us had spent an entire day working or attending classes at school. It was definitely not the most energetic practice! The first day of the tournament in Atlanta was basically the first time all seven of us had competitively played together. During the first few games we had some brilliant moments and we had some

moments that wouldn't make the highlight reel, but as we played each game the seven of us began to gel as a team and we worked our way to the Bronze finals in the Women's B division. We were very excited, but the fans who got up at 7:30am to make the ½ hour hike to the convention center from the Marriot Marquis to cheer us on at our 8am match after a night out on the town were not as excited!

Our team wanted to go to Nationals this year in Atlanta because a few of us have gone to Nationals for the past 3-5 years and know how much fun it is to spend four days playing competitive volleyball against unfamiliar teams, cheering on (and/or heckling!) teams from the IREVA region, visiting with friends made at previous nationals, and watching the Open teams play. Not only does our addiction to the sport of volleyball drag us to different cities throughout the United States each year, but it is also the chance to take a vacation with a huge group of our friends from within our volleyball community. Every day involves

hanging out with friends, eating with friends, sightseeing with friends, drinking with friends, swimming and tanning with friends, cheering teams on together with friends, etc. At home it is very tough to get a huge group of friends together when we all have families, work, homes, etc. consuming the majority of our time. Nationals allows us to spend four days playing the sport that we love, spending time and making memories with friends, and meeting new friends who share the passion for the sport of volleyball. We look forward to doing it again next year in Minneapolis!

Zero Gravity

The Zero Gravity (ZG) experience at the 2008 USA Volleyball Adult Open Championships can best be described as "buckets of fun." As a whole, the team can reflect on the Southern hospitality afforded our players on a somewhat regular basis by the locals and the Atlanta police department. It seemed that any time a team member found themselves alone on the streets of Atlanta, an officer was there with a spot light and a loud speaker to help our players find their way back to their hotel.

The first night in Atlanta was highlighted by the buckets of beer served at the CNN tower and a heated debate over the capital of Georgia. Once the capital debate was settled and the security staff began requesting that we leave the premises, some of our players decided to head to a local fine dining

establishment (better known as Hooters) for some food and drinks, while others decided to introduce themselves to local law enforcement (see above).

The conclusion of Day 1 found ZG sitting at 2-1 (4-4) in pool play. The team was playing relatively well, but we were less than crisp. Different players stepped up at different points to keep our Gold Bracket hopes alive, but the team recognized a need to improve if we were going to achieve our overall goal.

Day 2 presented a "must win" situation. We came out fired up against both remaining teams in our pool and managed to knock the first-place team down to third in the last match of pool play as we bumped ourselves up to second. A 2-0 (4-0) start to the day and the audible excitement from our players and fans resulted in one newly converted fan of the ZG style of play

asking one of our players if our team name was "Steve Hicks (Clap! Clap!)." Our challenge match against Team Rambo left us wanting on a controversial no-call in the final point of the third game and once again, ZG was relegated to the Silver bracket. "Yahtzee!" developed a whole new meaning and became a favorite buzzword among the players and their fans alike.

Conquest Monkey ran into ZG at the CNN Center that night and mentioned that they were going to send us home the next morning. After a heart-wrenching loss, ZG was looking for some motivation to continue playing hard, and that proved to be just the ticket. Game 1 of pool play ended with a 25-10 victory for ZG. We would go on to win that match in two, only to have a determined Hack Fu team waiting for us in the next round.

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Having played against Hack Fu all season, there was a lot of mutual respect between the two teams. The game was refereed on a series of honor calls by both teams. Exemplary sportsmanship and a friendly rivalry were made evident and the class of IREVA was apparent to anyone watching the match.

ZG came out on top in two extremely hard fought games.

On the final day of Nationals, ZG was forced to switch setters as Nathan Rose took the reins and helped orchestrate a game 1 comeback to take a 1-0 lead in the match. Unfortunately, the gas would run out of the tank as ZG eventually fell to Vamo' Alla in 3.

Overall, the ZG trip to nationals was a success. As with everyone who didn't win the national title, we had hoped to do a little better, but we are happy with the progress of some of our young players and look forward to improving our performance next year.

North Country Albany Junior's 17 "Flash"

As we stepped off the plane after traveling from Albany, NY to Dallas, TX we could feel the heat as well as excitement in the air. The airport bustled with excitement as volleyball players, coaches, and enthusiastic parents filled the walkways and baggage claim areas. All were arriving to compete and watch the most exciting volleyball event of the year for USAV Junior Volleyball players.....Nationals. The NCAJ's 17 Flash team had finally arrived to compete at this great event after losing the region bid the previous two years as a 16's team. They had dreamed of competing at this

tournament for the past three years and finally their dream had come true.

Dallas was a very clean, friendly and welcoming city. We were fortunate to stay at an extremely nice hotel that was conveniently located downtown just a short distance from the convention center. The accommodations as well as the "awesome" authentic Mexican food made our stay in Dallas quite enjoyable.

On June 28th, 2008 nine dedicated young woman entered the Dallas Convention Center with determination as they knew they would play against some of the best junior's teams in the country. They were amazed at the size and speed of the girls on the court. Although this NCAJ 17 Flash team had traveled to tournaments this season in large venues such as Washington DC, Atlanta, Georgia, and Pittsburgh, PA

they had not seen such talent as at the Junior Nationals.

Although the team did not "win" many games during the five days of play they DID compete. These determined young ladies played each game with intensity and every game and match was contested. The NCAJ 17 Flash team represented our IREVA region with distinction and pride.

Members of the NCAJ 17 Flash team who attended the USAV Junior Nationals in Dallas, TX were Ariana Abrams, Lindsay Burgher, Shawna Dykens, Alexandra Hoey, Christianne Ludwick, Alyssa Paulsen, Gena Russo, Arielle Smith and Shevaun Sparks. The team was coached by Cathy Wysin and Abby Thornbladh.

High Performance Camp - Florida

Alexandra Hoey

I went to the National USA developmental camp at Saint Leo University, in Florida. This camp was a great experience for me, and I came out of the camp with life lessons and not just new volleyball skills. My experience attending the camp in Florida was nerve racking at first. You see, I live in Lake Placid, New York and I had to fly alone to Florida. This is something I have never done before, but once I arrived the nerves were gone, and I was very excited to start camp. The

coach that got me was great. He was full of energy and seemed just as excited about camp as I did. I couldn't wait to meet the other campers, and I remember the first girls I met were from Texas, Virginia Beach, and Pennsylvania. During camp there were many skills I was familiar with and there were many new skills that were introduced. They reviewed the basic skills of volleyball with great drills. They were all very intense and it made learning the basics that much more fun. One thing I learned that really stuck with me is that the basics of volleyball are the key to success. Executing skills the proper way leads to success which is what everyone is ultimately looking for. All of the coaches at the camp were really into

bringing intensity to the camp. This was great for me, as I have learned in myself that I compete better with a more intense atmosphere. Although the coaches did yell and scream at us, it was expected we bring the energy we needed, and I feel this really helped the camp prosper. With flying alone, and being so far away from my home was hard, but I feel I have matured from this experience, and realized I don't need my parents for everything. My experience at camp overall was very good, and I would definitely do the camp again in the future.

High Performance Camp – Lake Placid

Ariana Abrams

I recently finished training at the Olympic Training Center in Lake Placid, NY for the USAV A1 Developmental Training Camp. My National High Performance experience was very beneficial. Coming off my first injury (2nd degree ankle sprain) I had some apprehensions on how hard I should go at the sessions, in order to avoid re-injuring my ankle. However, what makes the USAV National High Performance camp different from any other camp is the higher level of competitiveness and volleyball that each player brings. This higher level of competition allowed me to have the confidence to forget about my injury and focus on how I could improve on the next drill or play.

We took a lot of time at camp to work on a jump float and top spin serve. I have always wanted to become a much more aggressive server with a top spin serve or float, but lacked the consistency to use either one in a game. This camp really helped me to improve my technique to become much more consistent and aggressive with both serves. I also adopted a four-step approach after learning that if there is enough time in a play to get back far enough for the four-step approach it allows the player to come in much more aggressive and with even more power than a three-step approach. Another skill that I adopted and had never even learned to do before was a swing blocking technique. Being only 5'9" I will do anything to get up just a couple inches higher for my block, and the swing block did just that for me.

After looking back at the camp, Coach Blaine was not interested in teaching the

little techniques involved in every aspect of the game because at this level you should really already know them by now. What Coach Blaine was focused on was helping us to develop different techniques that will allow us to outplay our opponent. These were not techniques that all called for a ton of power, but called for the athlete to think on every play, "what can I do that will help me win this next point?" And that is what I feel I can really take back from this camp, a whole new set of tools that will help me get to that next level of competition.

High Performance Camp – Lake Placid

Christianne Ludwick

When I first pulled into the parking lot at the Olympic Training Center in Lake Placid, NY, I knew that this National High Performance Camp would improve my volleyball skills. What I was not aware of at the time, was the national training lifestyle and atmosphere that I would be exposed to within the following five days. At camp we didn't just train for six hours a day in the gym, but we watched and discussed old men's and women's Olympic footage. I learned that when coaches and players from across the country come together to play and talk about a sport that each is truly passionate about, each person learns and grows.

"You never become a better player until you play with girls better than you." My

experience at the national camp has reinforced this statement. Each girl that attends is probably one of the best in their local area. In order for each of the girls to raise the level of play in their town, or state, they must play with girls who can push them further. This is something they can get at camp. Because you are playing and being coached by the best girls and coaches in the country, the camp is physically challenging. However, it is emotionally and mentally challenging as well. The coaches have the challenge of taking thirty players, with different volleyball backgrounds, and putting them into a uniform style of training. The USA style. While the players have to learn to play with thirty unfamiliar girls and remember to do things like accurately execute a jump serve each time they go back to the line. All of this being done in just five short days.

Despite these challenges faced, they were all overcome at Lake Placid this summer and by the end of the last day a sense of fulfillment came over most of

the camp. By then I was not only physically a stronger player, but I had grown to better understand and make connections with people who love the game as much as I do.

High Performance Camp – Ohio State

Jordan Armstrong

After trying out for the USA High Performance Boys Youth National Team, I was offered the chance to participate in a USA Volleyball Boys Developmental Camp. I chose to attend the developmental camp held at Ohio State University from July 27th through July 31st.

The coaches at this camp included Pete Hanson and Tim Embaugh from Ohio State, Charlie Sullivan from Springfield University, Mike Rumbaugh from St. Francis University, Steve Benson from Eastern Mennonite, Kevin Moore from

Pace Bootlegger, and John Klanac and Daniel Matthews who play for Ohio State. I got the opportunity to train with Coach Klanac, Coach Moore, and Coach Hanson. These three coaches helped improve my game that much more. They provided me with constant technique advice along with positioning and the mental aspect that go along with being a setter.

My long term goal is to hopefully play at the college level and to someday be able to give back to my community and region as a coach.

I am truly grateful for the opportunity that USA Volleyball has granted me and hope to continue to be a part of the USA Volleyball High Performance Pipeline for the years to come.

High Performance Camp – Ohio State

Mike Pelletier

The U.S.A Ohio state camp was a great benefit to go to. The coaches really helped me to improve on technique and overall skill. The other player competition was great and I met a lot of good volleyball players. Whenever I'm done with one of these camps I always feel like a better player even if I didn't think I played well. My only regret is that it wasn't longer.

North Country Albany Junior's 15 "Dynamite"

The NCAJ Dynamite (15's) competed in the 2008 Girls Junior Olympic National Volleyball Championships in Dallas, Texas from June 30th to July 3rd. They qualified for the Nationals by winning the IREVA Regional Championship at SUNY-Cortland earlier in the season. The girls competed in the 15 Club Division. The girls competed against teams from Texas, Nebraska, Florida, Iowa, Illinois, Missouri, Alabama, and Oklahoma over the four days of the tournament. During the first two days of the tournament, the girls played against some of the strongest teams in the tournament, including IPVA Black (the eventual 11th place finisher) and GI Power (the eventual 2nd place finisher).

Although they finished tied for 47th place, the girls remained competitive throughout the tournament. Parents from other teams commented on the excellent level of effort and sportsmanship that our girls demonstrated. This was the 2nd

consecutive year at Nationals for most of the girls, and the improvement they demonstrated in just one year was incredible. Five of the nine girls are actually 14 years old, but played up at the 15s level. They were never intimidated, and seemed to grow and improve daily at the tournament.

Back at the hotel, the girls met many other players from teams throughout the USA, which also proved to be a great learning experience. This gave them the opportunity to learn from the other girls (some of whom were on the eventual national championship team) about just how much hard work and practice goes into being a successful volleyball team at this level. Our girls came away from the tournament quite motivated to improve their game and to work hard to get back to Nationals next year.

Culturally, the entire Dallas experience was outstanding. From the great food and Texas hospitality, to the Dallas Aquarium, to the tour of the 6th Floor Kennedy Museum, the trip to Dallas proved to be a truly memorable experience for players, coaches, and parents. The Dallas Convention Center is a top-notch facility, and its proximity to downtown and our hotel was great.

Members of the NCAJ Dynamite are: Sylvia Sorriento, Bridget Haggerty, Bridget Diamond, Hattie Burgher, Jessica Fitzgerald, Emily Gillich, Amber Gass, Ellie Wagner, and Mandy Schott. They are coached by Patty Blacklock and Charles Megyesi.

Lakeside “Beachbums” Rock Junior Nationals

Melissa Armstrong - Coach

The Lakeside Beachbums - 16U boys volleyball team has returned from this year’s Junior Olympic National Tournament in Salt Lake City, Utah. Our team had a blast representing our club and community. They handled themselves with dignity and were great ambassadors of the IREVA region.

Once again they put the IREVA Region on the map with their 2nd appearance in the Bronze division. It was extremely exciting playing against some of the top teams in the tournament, including 2nd place Epic from San Diego, 3rd place OCVC from Laguna Niguel California,

as well as other top placed finishers such as (11) Riptides from Rancho Santa Margarita California, (14) Highline from Long Beach California and WA Lightning, West Allis Wisconsin. One of the biggest highlights for us was competing against (13) KU’IKAHI RoShamBo from Honolulu Hawaii.

Of the 9 teams representing the East Coast, the Lakeside Beachbums finished with the 2nd best record placing (17) overall in this year’s tournament behind (10) Pace Bootlegger from Rochester.

We had a great time and look forward to continue working to improve towards our goal of one day competing in the Gold Division at JO Nationals.

We would like to thank IREVA for all their support in helping us achieve this magical experience.

IREVA Junior High Performance Team

On behalf of the IREVA Junior High Performance Team, we would like to thank you for your gracious contributions that have allowed us to compete in the High Performance Championships Tournament in Tucson, Arizona. This experience has allowed each of us to challenge ourselves to step up and compete against the highest level of volleyball our country has to offer. Our dream came together as one off the court, helping us to support and compete together successfully on the court. We know that all of us are excited to spread the new volleyball knowledge we have learned here in Tucson with our teammates at home.

We are all very proud to be the first to represent our Region in the High Performance Championships and hope to pave the way for girls coming up through the program in the future to have the same experience. Once again, thank you for allowing us to have this

opportunity to compete in Tucson, Arizona. It was an experience that we will never forget.

Sincerely,

Kacy Boburka, Anne Fildes, Arielle Smith, Ariana Abrams, Laura Stanhewicz, Erin Little, Gena Russo, Jeanna Farruggia, Eve Richards, Taylor Payne, Kourtney Clark, and Nikki Robitaille

[ed. note – coaches were Sue Medley, Steve Pike, Johan Dulfer. The event was 7/23 – 26/08; the results are / were on the USAV website. See also related stories from the event.]

IREVA Junior High Performance Team

Tucson Day 1

July 22, 2008

Today was a very hectic and exciting day. After meeting at the airport at some ungodly hour in the morning, flying for about 6 hours, and driving for two, we finally arrived in Tucson, Arizona. We had to rush into the hotel get ready for practice and then find our way over to the convention center for practice. I was taken aback by all the courts in the gym. I couldn't believe I was actually at the HP Championships. After a good practice it was time for the Opening Ceremonies. We waited for a good hour to get our tickets and got a chance to take some pictures and play some games outside in the hallway. When we finally got into the ceremonies, we were welcomed by a Mariachi band and over 100 ten person tables. The room was packed with volleyball players from around the nation and around the world. It really emphasized the fact that anyone anywhere can play volleyball. It also made me realize just how far our sport

reaches around the world. There were teams there from Peru, Chile, Hawaii, and from all across the nation. The mayor of Tucson talked to us and seemed really excited to host this event, which made me even more excited and then Kevin Barnett talked to us. This recently retired Olympic athlete made me realize how I really could make a living out of this sport and make my life the happiest it could ever be. He's had volleyball in his life since he was 17 and he's still keeping it around by being an announcer for the Beijing Olympics. By the time we got back to the hotel, the day felt like three days all rolled into one and we all needed to get some sleep. Our first day in Arizona was not only productive, but also a great way to start off the tournament.

So here we are, our first day of playing in the tournament, not quite knowing what to expect. After getting a good's night rest to help adjust to the three-hour time difference, breakfast, a team meeting and lunch making we headed to the convention center for our first match. It was pretty sweet walking in seeing the different teams from all over the US and the international teams, both men's and women's. Our first match was scheduled for 12:15 against the USA Youth National Blue team so we

laced up, warmed up, and got ready for the match.

The team came out ready to play, but along with a lot of the things that come with a new team that has only played together for a couple of days. It didn't take long to get in the groove and just start playing though. The match went well with a close second game, and we got a feel for how the teams out here play (fast offences, hard serving, and great defense!).

In our second match we played the Northern California high performance team on court one. This court was pretty legit; it had an announcer, music for timeouts and separate paddles for substitutes. After we got back into the swing of things, the team seemed to improve on everything and came close in the second game. It is such a great experience getting to play these awesome teams with players from all over and fun just to be playing against them.

On a last note on our way out after watching some other teams play, the men's teams from USA and Hawaii and some women's, we did spot the jolly green giant (6'8!!). Can't wait until tomorrow!!

