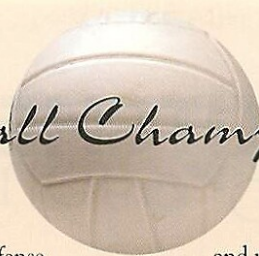


# Junior National Volleyball Championships at New Orleans



Our older boy's teams made our annual trek to the Junior Nationals on July 6-11 and played at the huge Morial Convention Center in the colorful city of New Orleans, Louisiana.

## Boys 18

Our young 18's Open team with five underclassman and only four seniors performed well in the 40 team event which featured the top high school talent in the country. Coached by Scott Rigg and Tony McInerny, the team got off to a good start by crushing LA Athletic Club #2 and then had to play a big physical Adversity team from Illinois, losing a heartbreaker in three games. Their next opponent, Team LA, another big and experienced squad that finished in the top four, provided one of our top matches of the tournament. Featuring long rallies and physical play at the net, we lost in three close games to a much bigger and older team, 17-15, 13-15, 11-15.

On day two, we started off with a challenge match to reenter the gold division and cruised past Las Vegas 15-2, 15-5. Our next match was against the top Midwest team, Mizuno Sports Performance. Our OCC boys played well in another spirited three game thriller losing a tough third game.

Our next opponent was the huge and talented Balboa Bay Club and we lost two straight but played well.

Now with a must win situation to stay alive in the gold division, we met Arizona Primitive. With many momentum shifts, we prevailed in a hard fought struggle by both teams, 17-15, 12-15, 15-13 and were still alive in the gold division.

After two days, our roles on the team were talking shape. Parker Smith and Jesse Lam are the go to guys, carrying the load at the net. Trapper Perkins, crafty hitter and consistent passer, and Robin Asam gave us stability in the back court. Arist DeWolff and Nick Watts gave us power and blocking at the net and Kaione Scott played as a defensive specialist and came up with some spectacular digs. Doug Johnstone showed a lot of

maturity running our offense as the 5-1 setter and played tremendous defense digging a hundred balls. Brennan Prahrer, who had a great season as a middle blocker, sprained his ankle prior to the trip and saw limited action.

On days three and four, we played in the top division against the best teams. We started off against Team LA, and lost in two. Now we faced Pacific Palisades and beat them soundly 15-5, 15-10.

We qualified for the top 16 single elimination on Saturday and drew the Balboa Bay again and played them gamely but lost in two.

We finished tied for ninth. For his hard work, Parker Smith was selected to the All-American First Team. The team wants to thank Paul Johnstone for his tireless work as our team chaperone.

## Boys 17

Our 17's team came into New Orleans with a young group of players. On day one we started off with an over loaded five team pool and overcoming jet lag, we started slow but played better as the day progressed.

We beat a game Sequoia from California and Toot City out of Pennsylvania to start the day but lost one of our top players Mike Harada to illness.

Not having his excellent passing and big hitting, we made some quick adjustments and played an excellent Southwest Milwaukee team and beat them with our makeshift lineup. We were 3-0

and played Bucaplaa Pumas from Puerto Rico in the last match of the night. We played a spirited match, losing in three games, 15-10, 13-15, 14-16. We went 3-1 in matches and had a good first day.

Unfortunately, after a 10:45 p.m. finish that night, we had to play a challenge match at 9 a.m. the next morning against a tough Surf City team from LA. With our smaller lineup, we played another tightly contested match with many long rallies and an unbelievable second game that capped at 17-16 for them. We lost 15-12, 16-17, 14-16. Our boys played their hearts out.

Then we got rewarded with another overloaded five team pool that started at 3 p.m. and went until after 10 p.m. again. The boys were exhausted and played gamely throughout the evening but we ended up third in the pool. Now our dilemma unfolded. We played nine matches in two days (most teams play six), we went 5-4 and yet had no chance to get back to the gold division.

Our boys could have thrown in the towel but playing for pride they won five out of their last six matches on days three and four. We beat the Irish team from Indiana convincingly, then lost to a resilient SW Milwaukee that we beat on day one. Rebounding, we crushed our good friends from Sequoia in two straight.

On day four, a single elimination format, we beat a scrappy Buckeyes team from Ohio, 15-7, 12-15, 15-9 and then again beat a

day two opponent, Addison, in another three game thriller. And for our finale, we were victorious by rolling over Adversity from Illinois in two straight. We won our division and went 10-5 in match record (the best won-loss record of all our teams) and played more matches than any other team in the tournament. Considering our scheduling obstacles and our player injuries, the boys did an outstanding job.

Will Rappun, nursing a hand injury throughout the tournament, and Ryan Go carried the hitting load for us on the outside. Gary Johnson and Jedd Chang did the setting in our 6-0 offense and served and dug many balls for us. Kea Kometani, Aka Beaumont and Tamahera McCabe played the middle and came up with some great blocks and middle hits. Koa Avery filled in for our ailing Mike Harada and displayed some awesome hitting from the left and right side. Kekane Yuen was a passing and digging machine and played some front court for us until he strained his back on day two.

Daniel Lam played the opposite position and gave us some much needed fire power with his trademark "x" hits. The team as a whole got along well on and off the court and displayed good sportsmanship developing many friends among their opponents.

Bill Johnson and Steve Corbelli coached the boys through their highs and lows and were ably assisted by team chaperone, Gerry Yuen, who had lots of help from our many family and friends who cheered the boys throughout the tournament.

Both of our teams would like to thank Alan Lau, Volleyball Committee chairperson, for his unending support and advice. All of the players, coaches and families would like to thank the Outrigger Canoe Club for the tremendous financial support that was provided to give these boys the opportunity to play at the Junior National Championships and develop into some of the state's top volleyball players.

