

OCC Wins Silver Bracket at USVBA Championships

By TC Gray

The OCC 50s team competed successfully in the USA Volleyball Championship Tournament in Atlanta, Georgia from June 2-5, 2004. The team won a Gold medal in the Silver Bracket in the Men's 50 and over division.

The team did not compete in the 2003 National Championships due to injuries. The team won two gold medals and a bronze in the 50+ Division prior to 2003. The team had its sights set on another national championship. With most of the OCC players closer to 60 than 50 years young, the 50+ Division provides very challenging competition.

There were 28 teams from across the USA, Canada and Brazil competing in the Men's 50 Division in four pools of seven teams. The OCC 50's started the tournament as the fourth seed in pool 2. We finished third in the pool with a match record of 4-2 and a game record of 9-4.

Pool play results with OCC score shown first: Harrisburg Divers, 25-12 and 25-19; TS/MV – Texas Yahoos, 25-11 and 25-14; No Touch 19-25 and 22-25; Two Men & a Truck, 25-22, 23-25 and 12-15; Plowboy Seniors, 25-6 and 25-11; and Timelords 25-22 and 29-27.

The OCC 50's lost a tough early morning double elimination match in three games to Midwest Masters 21-24, 25-7, and 7-15. The loss put the team in the single elimination Silver Bracket. The first match in the Silver Bracket was with X-Mac's the Silver Medalists in the Gold Division in 2003. X-Mac's has been a perennial medal winner in the Gold Division and proved that they were a medal caliber team again. OCC won the match in two games 26-24 and 25-20.

On day four of the tournament San Diego Gold another former medalist in the Men's 50+ Gold Division was the

semi-final opponent. The OCC 50 team dug deep after losing the first game and trailing game three by 10-14 to win the match in three games 15-25, 25-19, and 16-14. The OCC 50's carried the momentum to the Silver Bracket final and defeated Louisville Seniors 25-16 and 25-12.

The Team was led by Chris Crabb who anchored passing duties, carried a heavy hitting load and was an emotional court leader. Charlie Jenkins, the perennial All American setter, displayed his ability to run the offense and played great defense. Bill Johnson provided key left side hitting particularly in the final matches.

Bill Lawson played middle. Bill made the defensive play of the tournament with a spectacular sliding dig off the court to keep the comeback alive in the semi-final match against SD Gold at match point.

Tony Crabb provided consistent play in the middle and left side hitter positions. Ilmar Tarikas was the most versatile player with action in the middle, right side hitting in the opposite position, and setting. Randy Shaw provided steady hitting and passing from the left side and importantly he managed and coached the team. TC Gray was a utility player and provided back-row defense, passing and middle blocking.

Thank you to Bill Johnson for helping with this summary. The team appreciates the support the OCC provides the team to make competitions like this possible. We take great pride in representing the OCC and are thankful for the OCC support during the indoor season. We would also like to thank Peter Ehrman, Volleyball Committee Chair for his support. The 2005 USA Volleyball National Championships will be held in Denver.