

OCC Masters Place 4th, 5th in USVBA Nationals

By Bill Johnson

Injuries were the order of the day for our 45s and 50s teams at the U.S. National Volleyball Championships in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, May 28-June 2. In spite of several key players burdened with significant ailments, the 45s finished 5th overall, and the 50s were 4th.

The 45s started strong, losing only one match in pool play. The preliminaries were costly, however, as All-American setter Charlie Jenkins went down with a strained hip muscle and reliable middle blocker, John Zabriskie, severely injured his hand and was virtually lost for the remainder of the tournament.

As the team started the playoff rounds, they had to adjust their lineup to make up for their lost starters. Initially, they had great success, crushing a very good Brazil team, 2-0, and winning a thrilling contest against perennial champions Bjamming, 2-1.

Putting up a valiant effort in a hard fought match with many great rallies, the OCC men lost, 2-1, to the eventual tournament champions, 25-23, 21-25, 15-11. Pressed into

the losers bracket early the next morning, our 45s couldn't muster any more magic with this patchwork lineup and lost 2-1 to the East Coast team and settled for fifth place.

Team members were Jon Andersen, Ralph Smith, Jay Anderson, John Zabriskie, Charlie Jenkins, Bill Lawson, Barney Robinson, T. C. Gray and Randy Shaw.

The 50s had a similar experience in their tournament. Starting strong, they cruised through pool play winning all six matches. This was no small feat considering Hall of Famer Jon Stanley had an injured right elbow and could only spike left-handed, and we were resting our setter, Tom Madison, who had pulled his calf muscle.

We breezed through our first playoff match, beating Brazil, 2-0. With Tom Madison back in the lineup, we played Rusty's from Oregon, a team with several All-Americans, in a tough winner's bracket semifinal contest and lost, 2-1.

This was indeed a costly match as the battered Jon Stanley pulled his abdomen muscle and now had difficulty blocking. We limped into our 9 a.m. match the next morning and surprised ourselves with a strong win over the Canadian Masters team. Then we played our old friends the Brazilians once again, and our injuries finally caught up to us. We lost two tough games to our compadres from South America.

Team members were Randy Shaw, Chris Crabb, Jon Stanley, Tom Madison, Rob Durand, Ilmar Tarikas, Bill Johnson, Jim Bukes and Buster Chapman.

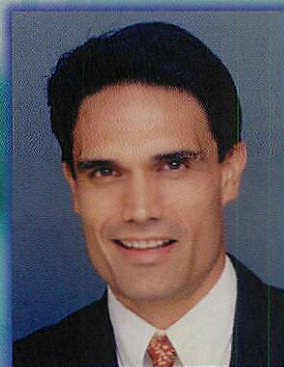
Both teams would like to thank the Outrigger Canoe Club for its generous support throughout the 2001 season.

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Members of the 50s team were: Randy Shaw, Jon Stanley, Jim Bukes, Buster Chapman, Rob Durand, Tom Madison, Bill Johnson, Ilmar Tarikas, Chris Crabb. Front, Eric Tarikas.