

# Outrigger Red Wins Silver at Junior Nationals

By Diana McKibbin

On Friday, July 1, the Outrigger Red 12 and under boys volleyball team took second place at Junior Nationals in Minneapolis in the 13s division. For most of the players and their families this was their first time attending this annual event. Although they practiced and played hard all year nothing could have really prepared them for what was to come.

Coach Diana McKibbin and Assistant Coach Tony McInerney had a team of seven boys: Kanai Akana, Jake Chouljian, Jameson McKibbin, Buddy Scott, Shea Suzumoto, Parker Van Dyke, and Ryan Wilcox. They played 11 matches in three days in the Minneapolis Convention Center in the heart of downtown. Much to the boy's surprise, Diana's older sons, Riley and Maddison McKibbin were there to not only help with warm-ups but also to give words of advice and moral support. It was great to have them at our side.

A little over a month before competition the boys learned that they would have to play up in the 13s. Instead of playing in a pool of seven 12s teams, we combined with 13s for a total of 10 teams.

I give credit to all our 12s boys for having to make some last minute, but necessary adjustments to how they play. Instead of a seven foot net height they had to play seven foot four inches which sounds small but is a big difference for them. Also, they had to go from a volley lite ball to a heavier one-the same ball used by the 18s! We parents were initially concerned about these changes but that concern was short-lived. The athletes that they all are, they were able to adjust very quickly.

There was pool play the first two days with both 12s

and 13s teams from Puerto Rico, Wisconsin, and Hawaii. The boys did well the first day and on the second day they played in a very exciting and intense semi-final match against Hilo's Southside 12s. They were a strong team favored to win but our boys put up a great fight.

In the first set we lost 13-25 and in spite of it we came back and played hard to win the second set 25-22. They were now very motivated and inspired to win the next set which they knew could take them to the gold medal match on Center Court.

Now I must say, going into this third match I never thought I could feel such stress, anxiety, and excitement all at once. They started off strong and quickly the score was 12-4, an eight point lead with only three points needed to win.

As we were thinking victory was just around the corner Southside began to gain on us and suddenly it was a different ball game. Emotions on both sides were running high, not to mention those of the nail-biting parents eagerly watching.

For those of us who were there to watch that last heart-pounding point, we'd all agree it was the longest rally that we thought would never end. With a final score of 15-12 Outrigger Red proudly found themselves playing on Center Court against the undefeated Puerto Rican team, Vaqueros.

Playing on Center Court was a lifetime experience for them and one they won't ever forget. Vaqueros played tough and although OCC Red didn't win they walked away proud. Go Outrigger Boys!!

## Boys 18 Finish 5th in Junior National VB

By Marcie Nowack

The Outrigger Boys 18's volleyball team came together for one last appearance at the Junior National Championships in Minneapolis, Minnesota. It was a lean team of only eight players, but the boys believed they still had enough talent to represent the Outrigger well.

Winning all their pool play matches the first two days of competition and then placing second in their pool on the third day kept them in the Gold Division.

In the quarterfinal match they faced High Line from Long Beach, California and lost 16-18 in a heart breaking third game that could have easily gone either way. This put them

in a fifth place finish out of 38 open teams.

Micah Christenson was named to the All-Tournament team.

The OCC team consisted of seven seniors all preparing to go off the college and one junior. Ben Lam, Micah Christenson and Tyler Cundiff will all be playing volleyball next year at USC. Logan Nowack will be going to the University of Denver, Lowell Tong to Santa Clara, Daylan Chock to the University of Hawai'i and Danny Olson to Baruch College. Sean Gruebner will be a senior at Punahou School.

The team was coached by Jeff Hall (University of Hawai'i assistant coach).



The OCC Boys 18s: Front row: Logan Nowack, Daylan Chock, Danny Olson, Lowell Tong, Sean Gruebner. Back row: Assistant Coach Marcie Nowack, Tyler Cundiff, Micah Christenson, Ben Lam, Coach Jeff Hall.



## OCC White

By Mindy Karst

Outrigger's White 12 and under boys volleyball team also competed in the 12s division of Junior Nationals, finishing in fifth place. They were coached by Tony McInerny, along with Team Chaperone Chris Siegfried, who guided the boys over the three day tournament. As proud family members cheered them on from the sidelines, excitement prevailed throughout their nine matches against both under 12 and under 13 teams from Wisconsin, Puerto Rico and Hawaii.

For all seven players, participating in the Junior Nationals was a first. The team players included: Ethan Siegfried, DJ McInerny, Easton Karst, Drew Wauchula, Nicholas Yuh, Jon Stanley, and Connor McInerny.

All the boys have improved their volleyball skills over the last year thanks to the superb coaching done by Coach Tony and his sister Coach Diana McKibbin. For each boy so much was gained from this experience in Minneapolis.

With all these wonderful memories from both their wins and losses at the Junior National Championships, they are further motivated to take it to the next level! Congratulations to all the players and coaches for a job well done!



OCC's Boys 12 Red were Silver medalists at the Junior Nationals, front: Jameson McKibbin, Jake Chouljian, Shea Suzumoto, Ryan Wilcox, Buddy Scott. Back row, left to right: Debbie Wilcox (Chaperone), Kana'i Akana, Coach Tony McInerny, Parker Van Dyke, Coach Diana McKibbin.



Boys 12s at the Junior Nationals.