



Fall 2006

### Inside this Issue

1	Commissioner's Welcome
1	Ireva Officers 2006
2	Nationals 2006 New Orleans, LA
2	Total Chaos
3	6ICB
4	Boomers Bangers
5	Goonies
5	Legion
5	Kilgore
6	Hackfu
9	Legion of Boom
10	Jackass
11	Zero Gravity
12	Syracuse Women's Masters
12	Schenectady 55's
12	Team Rockstar
14	Pacmen
15	Three Sheets to the Wind
16	Serve-ivors
17	UVA
19	Boys Junior Nationals Minneapolis, MN
19	The 518 – 18 & Under
20	The 518 – 17 & Under
21	Lakeside Riptide
21	Girls Junior Nationals Atlanta, GA
21	Kaappa Woosh Justice

## Commissioner's Welcome

*Patty Blacklock*

I'd like to welcome all of the returning and new IREVA members to the 2006-2007 volleyball season and ask that everyone does their part in making it the best season possible!!

While I am new to the role of IREVA Commissioner, I am not new to the region or the sport of volleyball being that I have been an active member as a player since 1978, an official (on and off again) since the late 1980s, a JO Club Director and Coach since 1993, and a board member since 2000.

The volleyball community has had an enormously positive impact on my life and has been a major influence on my values of teamwork, commitment, dedication, honesty, helping others, and appreciation of the people and things that you have while you have them!

It is my goal to see our region pull together with the intention to grow the life-long sport of volleyball for participants at all levels (grassroots to AA) and gender/age divisions (youth to golden masters), as well as implement programs to develop players to their maximum potential thereby improving the national representation of IREVA at all levels of competition. So please, join me, and the dedicated board members that I will be working with, to make our region expand with increased numbers of tournaments, teams, officials, and exposure of novices to the various levels of the wonderful and fun sport of volleyball!

### IREVA OFFICERS 2006

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# Nationals 2006

*Darcy Rosenthal*

The city of New Orleans, Louisiana played host to the 2006 US Open Volleyball Tournament. Despite the ongoing struggle to rebuild the area after Hurricane Katrina, the City was up

to the task of housing, feeding and entertaining the thousands of volleyball players, coaches, spouses and fans over the course of the weeklong tournament.

The IREVA region itself sent 22 teams to the tournament. Several teams have provided articles on their experiences in the Big Easy. As most of these articles

will attest, visiting New Orleans is a unique experience. For those lucky enough to attend the 2006 National Tournament, they were able to experience great volleyball and the great atmosphere of New Orleans in one trip. Thanks to the USA Volleyball Association for keeping the 2006 tournament in New Orleans.



## Total Chaos

*Jamie Houghton and Kari Fuller*

This year, Total Chaos brought seven girls to New Orleans, LA for Nationals '06. Among the seven were Kari Fuller, Jessica Hageman, Ruthie Huehn, Ann McClain, Sarah Peacock, Krista Provost, and myself, Jamie Houghton.

Similar to last year in Denver we brought players that had not played with us during the season. Our team would not be the same if we did not throw a little chaos into the mix!! Jess Hageman is from Slaughterhouse and Kari Fuller had played on Total Chaos in previous years, but had recently moved to Massachusetts.

Our first day, we were scheduled to play two matches in the afternoon. The afternoon session ended up being a blessing since Jess's flight was cancelled the night before. By the end of the day our record was 1-1 and we

were getting used to playing with each other. The second day we were given a very tough schedule, four matches!! The games started at 1:50pm and did not end until 10pm. Needless to say, it was a very long day. We had our ups and our downs and left the gym with an overall record of 3-3. The next day we had our first morning game at 10:40am. This match would determine whether we would continue in the Bronze bracket or move to the Copper division.

We convincingly won our 10:40am match in two games against BVA out of New England. This meant we would play at 6pm that evening in the Quarterfinals of Bronze. This game was won, with much support from the cheering/heckling of the Albany teams.

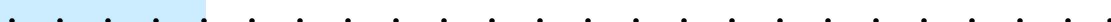
Winning the Quarterfinal match put us into the Semi-Final round the next morning at 8am. Bourbon St. was abandoned much earlier that night!!

The next morning we all had a rough start. We had a tough time shaking

those Stone Toads but we did take them to 3 games. The team was a bit disappointed until Tom Roger's awarded us with colorful Mardi Gras beads!! We continued forgetting our loss at the post-game pool party back at the hotel with all of the IREVA teams and a few friends we had made from New England. There were at least 30-40 players there bathing in the sun and watching Dimitri Garder do flips off of anything he could climb onto!! There were also some very heated games of chicken going on.

New Orleans definitely was not prepared to feed the massive volleyball crowd, but it was ready to serve us Hurricanes and provide us with a street full of entertainment!! Our nights were filled with bar hopping, riding the mechanical bull, and dancing the night away.

Total Chaos enjoyed their time in New Orleans and look forward to bringing a little chaos to Austin, Texas!!



# 6ICB

*John Nolan*

The days and weeks leading up to the 2006 National Volleyball Tournament were generating a lot of discussions from players that were going to New Orleans and from players that were not. Concerns over safety, living conditions, available food and attractions consumed most of the conversations. As I look back now, I have mixed feelings about all those original discussions. It was interesting that there were few conversations about playing the game of volleyball itself. All in all I had a great time in New Orleans and enjoyed the tournament, at least until the last match.

6ICB returned again to the National Tournament with 8 players on the roster plus a 9<sup>th</sup> player that suited up for another team. Day 1 only involved 2 matches for us, one of which was against our neighbor, RPI. The first match went 3 sets, a trend that would not soon go away. We lost the match 16-14 in the third, playing streaky throughout all the games. Next was RPI, and again we went 3 sets. The result was the same, we lost 19-17 in a great third set. That left us 0-2 in matches and 2-4 in games. We all knew we really didn't play a full match to this point so we weren't overly concerned yet. Our intuition would be correct as we found out the next day.

Day 2 meant 4 matches and a lot of court time. We kept our streak alive playing another 3 set match. This time we came out on top, 15-11 in the third for our first win of the tournament. All

along we had won the first set fairly easily but then would not play to the same level during sets 2 and 3. The second match would change that. We lost the first set and had to scrap to win sets 2 and 3. Yup, our streak continues, another 3 set match. The afternoon session was more of the same. We typically come out slow after lunch but today, we won the match in 2 straight sets. That put us at 3-2 in matches and 6-5 in sets. The last match of the day was against the team in our bracket that had not won a match all tournament. We came out strong in the first set and won by 10 points. The second set was just the opposite as we lost by 8. The third set was ugly but we managed to win by 3. That put us at 4-2 and we wound up in 3<sup>rd</sup> place in our pool based on tie breakers. It felt good to win all our matches that day but still we weren't playing close to our best volleyball.

Day 3 began early at 8:00 for work then we played at 9:10. This was the play in for the gold bracket. Again we started strong and won the first set by 7 points. In set 2 we had the lead at 22-19 but couldn't finish and had to play a third set. We lost the third set 15-11 and that dropped us into the silver bracket. As much as we were feeling down about losing the match, we were definitely battle tested. So far we have played only one game less than the maximum and we were still somewhat fresh.

Our next match would wind up being my last playing in this tournament. We played another 3 set match and wound up winning in a close match. I can't emphasize enough how much of a boost

it is to have the other IREVA teams cheering from the stands, they definitely helped us win that match. Thank you all!!! This win put us in the semis against another familiar team, UVA.

It's funny to travel so far just to play against a team we see at almost every tournament. This match however, I could only watch from the bench as I injured my shoulder in the previous match. Both 6ICB and UVA played very well, the first set ended 25-21 with UVA taking it. They played their typical great defense and picked a ton of loose balls. Set 2 would be more of the same. It was another set with few errors by either team. Points were earned and not given away on errors. It was a great match to watch. UVA won the 2<sup>nd</sup> set 25-20 and would eventually win the silver bracket. Congratulations to UVA!

Next year, it's Austin and another chance for 6ICB. We'll see you there. For all my teammates, I want to say thank you for a memorable year. Have a great summer everyone.

## 6ICB Players

Gary Christie -Setter  
 Cameron Erickson - Libero/Left Side  
 Sean Lammerts - Middle  
 Bernie Mantha - Middle/Left Side  
 Tom Rogers - Opposite/Setter/Libero  
 Tony Roy - Middle  
 Chris Shillinglaw - Middle/Opposite  
 Tim Skinner - Left Side  
 Brian Tatting - Left Side

# BOOMERS BANGERS

Mike Shorkey

For the 7<sup>th</sup> year in a row we participated in the US Open Volleyball Championships. Boomers were able to post our 7<sup>th</sup> successive BB regional championship against our nemesis Hack Fu although with not the same flair and drama as in previous years.

We arrived in New Orleans to play in the 50 team Men's BB Division. This year's roster included 6 of last year's 7 players with one new exception. We of course were worried with only going with 7 (inc libero) due to last years issue after losing our #1 middle to a torn knee. The team consisted of Jay Hays(OH), Mike Doolittle(OH), Ben Rutt(MH), Jason Olson(MH), Brian Fox(L), Sean Clements (Opp & Oldest) and myself Michael Shorkey at Setter.

The first two days of the tournament were used for the 7 team pool play. We played both days at 2-1 to finish 4-2 and tied for 2<sup>nd</sup> in our pool. Not to well considering we weren't hitting on all cylinders. We did manage to stay in the top '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 against the #17 and then #1 seeded teams. We won both in 2 games to make it to the top 8 double



elimination gold bracket which included 3 other teams that we play against continuously from our area. Congrats to them as well. We then played 3 more matches on Friday and played extremely well.

We dropped Distillery in 3 close games to the losers bracket then we got bumped into the losers bracket by Cavaliers (finished 3<sup>rd</sup>). We then played Distillery in an elimination match the next morning and they beat us in 3 close games. It was a tough match to lose as we didn't play our best but still had shots to knock them out. We ended up finishing 4<sup>th</sup> out of 50 as we did the previous year.

The tournament had other activities to engage in. We enjoyed seeing the Open mens teams play in the finals.

Highlights (in no particular order & lots I forgot):

- Players party
- Getting cheered by the other players from our region and western as well
- Players from Dykestra Engineering cheering for us almost every match
- Party in the kids' room (Jager Bombs)
- Aquarium tour and IMAX show
- Team Dinner



at Mulate's (nice band)

- Swamp tour and alligators (see pic) right next to us on the boat (tour guide = simply amazing)
- Coyote Ugly for Hays – Too funny!
- Meeting lots of new people and talking to folks that you really never get a chance to chat with
- Bourbon Street on the last night plus events leading up to it (weird folk I tell you)
- Watching the sitting VB team beat up on Distillery
- Monster cockroaches around at night
- Watching the other region teams compete and cheer/heckle them. So many of them went this year it was truly tough.

Congrats to Zero Gravity (t-7<sup>th</sup>), Hack Fu (t-5<sup>th</sup>) & Distillery (2<sup>nd</sup>) on their finishes and representing our region/area.

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 hopefully in Austin Texas.

# Goonies

The Goonies were a new team this year. For our first Nationals as the Goonies, we were lucky enough to borrow two great players from Dig Into It: Katrina Fox and Erica Nissen. This year was a blast in New Orleans...both on and off the court.

As we all know from that fabulous movie...Goonies never say die!! With that motto on our minds, we felt up to the challenge of playing in the Women's A Division this year. Ok, maybe it had to do with the timing and most of us being teachers, but we weren't afraid! It actually turned out to be great. The pace of some games may have been quicker than we are used to playing in the usual BB tournaments, however our playing experiences this season really helped us hang with the higher level of

competition. Unfortunately we were unable to attain One-Eyed Willie's treasure, falling into the Chester "Copper"-pot pool. The good news is, the Goonies LOVE playing volleyball, and anyone who has seen us play knows that we usually have a good time: win or lose.

The Goonies were more successful off the court in New Orleans. At first it was sad to see the Big Easy not so busy, but then we found Bourbon Street. I mean come on, you haven't lived until you're had a Hurricane hanging around your neck as you walk past the various strip clubs with beads being thrown at your feet. It was definitely an experience that one would never forget. The smells alone (and if you were there you know what I mean) were enough to make Bourbon Street unforgettable. We had a great time and saw things that can only

be seen in New Orleans.

It wasn't all volleyball and going out. The Goonies also took advantage of some of the sights around New Orleans. The French Quarter was awesome. It was cool to hear Jazz bands playing in the streets. You don't find that too often in Upstate New York. We were also lucky enough to donate some money to a very friendly local teacher trying to raise money to help rebuild New Orleans. That alone was worth the trip.

Heeeeey Yooooou Guuuuuys! Do the Goonies recommend New Orleans? Absolutely! Did we have fun pillaging the city? Again, absolutely! We can't wait to see what awaits us in Austin, Texas. So...hide ye treasures, mateys! For the Goonies be settin' sail in 2007!!

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# Legion

*Rob Soris*

It is amazing, and a credit to the city of New Orleans, that in spite of the disastrous effects of hurricane Katrina, nationals was able to proceed as scheduled. Although the gym itself was completely free of damage and provided

for a great venue, the rest of the immense convention center, the city itself, and especially some outlying areas still showed, many months later, just how powerful the storm was. Even while driving through Mississippi, lanes were closed as road crews still tried to clear whole forests of downed trees. The closer we got to our destination, the more obvious the damage became.

Whole plazas were shut down with trees, power lines and light posts scattered throughout parking lots. Charred frames of houses sat months later, waiting for repairs for which contractors simply can not spare the time. The roof of the Superdome, while somewhat intact, still showed millions of dollars worth of damage.

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# Kilgore

Kilgore team members Patti Paniccia, Heidi Brower, Jess Meliosky, Jen Hoerup, Jenn Dragstedt, Michele Deguire, Corinna DuCharme, and Christy McCarroll went to New Orleans confident of having a great time and were not disappointed. We were not as successful on the court as had hoped, but our fearless "ducky" leader, Brian

Tatting, kept us in line and our spirits high. We did achieve one of our goals, which was to still be playing on Saturday. Unfortunately we lost in the semi-finals of the BB Copper Bracket.

Aside from our evening of doing laundry, bonding with the college students of Dillon University, of course, Bourbon Street was the center of our evening entertainment. We bonded

over Karoke, Hurricanes at Pat O'Brien's, and Bull Riding.

We are all eagerly awaiting our trip next year to Austin, Texas. Here we come Schlitterban!

# Hackfu Takes You To the Big Easy

Tim Stewart

## The Team

- #2 - Kevin "Hi-Yahhhh" Eitzmann
- #5 - Frank "the Real Deal" Spataro
- #7 - Tim "best setter on Hackfu" Stewart
- #10 - Brett "Backrow" Williams
- #12 - Mike "Highest Jumper" D'Agnese
- #14 - Jake "the Snake" Bluhm
- #15 - Josh "Killer" Kohout

## The Mission

Bring home the gold medal in Men's BB for all in the land of IREVA to see and share.

## The Location

New Orleans, Louisiana

## The Saga

### Day 1 - Bourbon Street Blues

The members of Hackfu left Ireville separately but were united again on the eve of their first day of play. Receiving their pool and schedule information, they discussed what would be their plan of attack. Virtually unknown to most of the teams in the tournament, many on Hackfu thought that they could utilize the USA Volleyball program to mentally challenge the competition. Tim "the best setter on Hack Fu" decided that it would be appropriate to increase the height of each player on the team by 2 inches. This would give us the mental edge that we needed, he reasoned. Frank "the Real Deal" suggested that this was a wise plan, but to maximize on something like this, Hackfu needed to have at least one really short guy, of midget proportions.



"There is nothing more terrifying than a 5 footer that knows how to play the game." The Real Deal felt that Jake "the snake" was the man to play this role, and so the best setter on Hack fu shaved off 9 inches on the snake making him a force to be reckoned with at 5'2".

This very peculiar strategy by Fu seemed to work as they met a very shaky and weary first team in CAVBC. Fu put it together nicely, playing sideout volleyball until the middle of the first game, then letting "Killer" Kohout and "the Highest Jumper" D'Agnese take over, beating CAVBC 25-20, 25-17. Their first match was out of the way and Fu was already looking past pool play.

Match 2 for the day was against one of New England's best BB teams, the Executioners. The Executioners came out slow and weren't used to the fast paced style of Hack Fu. The best setter on Hack fu utilized the hitting strengths of Real Deal and Killer, while the Snake ripped up a series of shank-inducing jump serves to take command of the first game. Killer capped off game 1 with an earth shattering weak-side smash that landed on the 5 ft. line,

bouncing up off the sport court like a racquetball. All in the gym that saw this hit were amazed by the force and knew this team was no joke. Fu's game 1 score of 25-14 put them in a cocky position. The Executioners were a wise bunch though, and knew that Hackfu had misrepresented their heights in the program. Feeling foolish for not picking up on this earlier, the Executioners threw aside their game 1 fears, and showed Fu their best with a series of defensive rallies and strong serving to come back and take Hack Fu in game 2, 19-25. Caught off-guard, Fu came unraveled and dropped the 3<sup>rd</sup> game 11-15.

Following their 1<sup>st</sup> loss of the tournament, the Hackfu boys held a come-to-jesus, in which Kevin "Hi-Yahhh" Eitzmann and "best setter" Stewart shared their post-match thoughts in a spirited discussion. After that blowup, "Backrow" Brett added that coming together as a team after each point could get the team out of any just about any funk. All agreeing, Fu

*Continued on Page 7*

*Continued from Page 6*

adjourned the meeting and waited for their final match of the night against Skeelz.

Backrow Brett’s suggestion was a good one, but didn’t work and Hackfu lost in two games, 22-25, 23-25. Battered and bruised from the first day of play, only a 1-2 record to show, the team went back to the hotel for a drink to cap off their lackluster play.

Many on the team seemed to think the wonders of Bourbon Street would wash away the blues. Soon after entering a saloon, with their first drink ordered, the Hackfu boys contemplated their day and reckoned that their chances to make gold were slim. They hoisted their drinks and began a quick toast but then stopped. In the corner of this tiny saloon was the thing that they had been missing. The thing that they needed to overcome their opponents. It represented the wild, fearless, and untamed nature that Hackfu would have to assume to be the best – it was of course a mechanical bull. Anxious to ride, the team readied their quarters, and one by one, rode the bull, harnessing its beastly powers into their bodies. This bull, the team reckoned, would ride them all the way to the championships in gold.

Day 2 – Great Night For a Baseball Game

After a late night of boozing with the bull, the boys awoke refreshed and renewed, ready for some action on court. Making the trek over to the convention center, it appeared Hackfu would have to win both remaining matches in pool play to give themselves a chance to play for gold.

The first match was against California native Team Tribe. This would be the second time in as many years that

Hackfu would meet up with Tribe. The match was quick and painless to both sides, as Kevin “Hi-Yaahh” was true to his name slashing kills down line and cross court, and “Highest Jumper” could not be stopped with his slide approach to the pin. Fu dismantled Tribe, 25-14, 25-16.

Riding a renewed high and doing the bull dance, Fu marched into the last match of pool play needing a victory. With such an important game to be played, Fu would leave nothing to chance and the boys called upon their network of intelligence to get the scouting report on the Texas Rangers.

Each team in Fu’s pool had lost to the Rangers and none had taken a game from them. Best setter Stewart asked a down-trodden Team Tribe if Hackfu could take ‘em out. Tribe members stared blankly at Stewart, and Stewart asked once again, if Fu played their best, could they take out the Rangers? Tribe members, thought for a long time, then responded, “maybe”.

It wasn’t looking good, but since most of the other IREVA teams were done playing, the crowd began to gather and root Fu on. Game 1 showed some intense offense. Most of the plays were being ended with the first team that swung. The Rangers displayed why they had not lost a game yet, versatile in every swinging position and very big on the weak side. Fu stayed strong with good passing and defense from backrow Brett, solid hitting and blocking from Killer Kohout and the Snake began to warm up, sneaking balls around the block and digging the cross court angles. The IREVA crowd, composed of a bunch of Jackasses, UVA’s, Booming Bangers, and others, were cheering Fu on. It was Total Chaos and Ice Cold Beer was being shared everywhere. Fu was able to hold off the Rangers 25-21 in game one with the

crowd’s help, and it was a social for everyone.

Fu used up most of their energy in the first game, and the Texas Rangers retaliated with powerful serving and blocking silencing the IREVA crowd and Hackfu with a 12-25 loss in game two. To call upon the wild beast of Bourbon Street, “The Highest Jumper” and Frank the Real Deal cracked open a Red Bull. The energy of the bull emerged from them. The HackFu boys came out swinging high and hard and playing great defense to take an 8-6 side change that put them back next to their home crowd of drunkards. The drunkards were charged up enjoying socials every time Fu killed the ball. Eitzmann went back to serve after the switch, while Killer Kohout was sizing up the Rangers front row attack, averaging out at 6’4”. There was no worry in Kohout’s mind though, as he looked to his right and left the 5’9” Stewart and 6’0” Bluhm were sure to assist at blocking these monsters.

The two sides traded points through impressive offensive flurries, but the turning point came at 12-11 (Hackfu leads), when the Ranger’s opposite hitter pelted the Snake off the chest causing the ball to head directly for the net. The best setter Stewart played the rebound off the net and popped it up for a quick swipe by D’Agnese that propelled the ball off the shoulder joint of Ranger’s leftback, sending the ball over to Hackfu again. The rally was something out of a pin ball machine and continued with the best setter passing it up over to the Real Deal who then took a chance and set Stewart for a point ending tool off the block to give Hackfu a 13-11 lead. The elated IREVA crowd cheered for it was their first time to have a drink for a kill by the setter.

*Continued on Page 8*

*Continued from Page 7*

The Rangers felt the pressure and imploded allowing Hackfu to side out on the last play with a Jake the Snake kill shot off the body of a Ranger and out of bounds. Hackfu shocked the Texas Rangers and gave themselves a chance to make it into the gold round. It was a great end to the day and many of the watching IREVA teams congratulated Fu on a job well done. The power of the bull had been unleashed.

Day 3 – Who said there isn't a three pointer in Volleyball?

The team's 3-2 pool play finish earned them a right to a challenge match against Boston native Hurricanes. This was a team that Fu had seen numerous times before, but had never beaten. Despite numerous comparisons between setter Stewart's hands and a catcher's mitt, the official would not listen to the Hurricanes captain and allowed the teams to play on. Fu was steady and took out the Canes in 3 games giving them a shot at gold with one team in the way.

Ace Fire was a formidable opponent, a team that had knocked off Boomers in 2 games during pool play and was undefeated in the tournament so far. The boys once again called upon the energy of the bull and channeled it into the serve of Kevin "Hi-Yahhh" Eitzmann. Out of all the matches during pool play, not once had Eitzmann jump-serve, but this was no time for just getting it in. Kevin's jump serve single handedly overpowered the serve receive of Ace Fire and the rest of the jump servers on Hackfu followed. Fu mounted a comeback in the first game and took a large lead in game 2, to eventually oust Ace Fire 25-22, 25-20. Hackfu, Boomers, Zero Gravity and Distillery all had made the gold bracket,

an impressive showing of NY volleyball.

After their victory and knowing that the teams in the gold round were going to be tough, the Hackfu boys decided to intimidate them by showing off their bulky leg muscles.



The team's first round opponent Court Jesters, (CJVBC) had a strong offense but could not outmatch the block of Fu. One play featured a fury of 3 straight blocks by Killer Kohout, the last one ending the play and causing a celebratory "bring it on" by Kohout. The best Setter on Hackfu was angered by this blocking demonstration, as he was trying to compete for best blocker on Hackfu as well best setter. The match ended with Hackfu taking it quickly in two, 25-12, 25-21.

Completing it's 3<sup>rd</sup> match of the day, tired and weary, the boys met up with the revenge seeking Texas Rangers from pool play. Without any red bull or serve receive, the team quietly succumbed to the Rangers, in two

games, failing to reach 20 points in either game.

With the loss to the Rangers, Fu had to get by Team Distillery to make it to Saturday. Distillery was anxious to take out an IREVA team, as they had been beaten earlier by Boomers in three

games. Game 1 was a back and forth battle that featured both teams trading points till the end. Distillery came out on top with a stronger offense and good serve receive to take the first game. Game 2 was just as close, but Fu had seized some early opportunities off of the Snake's jump serve and strong defense by Backrow Brett, to get to a 22-19 lead. The best setter on Hackfu ripped a jump serve to the cross court, creating an off pass and a pushed out set causing the outside hitter to swing line grazing the antennae. Backrow Brett had dug the ball but was anxiously awaiting the official's call that never came. After

losing the point, Eitzmann and the Snake had politely thanked the official for his lack of attention to detail and hoped he would continue to award points to the other team. The official agreed and issued to yellow cards for their appreciation of his officiating, thus two more points were awarded to Distillery, making this play a 3 pointer. With the score now reading 22-22, the odds were against Hackfu, as it could not compete against Distillery and the officials at the same time. Game 2 ended in a loss, 25-27. A well-played match, with impressive offense and

*Continued on Page 9*

*Continued from Page 8*

defense by both squads.

The season ended that night, and Hackfu did not return to the land of Irevaville with a gold medal to share as their efforts landed them a 5th place finish. A missed opportunity to play Boomers in the next round, a loss to a nearby squad of volleyball players sponsored by a drunk's brewery, a valiant display of athleticism and courage thwarted by a power hungry volleyball ref. Some say the team would never be the same. All will have to wait till next year to see what becomes of Hack Fu. One thing is for sure, the rumors about Mike are true; he is the highest jumper.



## Legion of Boom

Legion of Boom returned for the second straight year to Nationals. Our team looked a bit different from last year but as usual we always bring the height. We brought eight players after taking an extra player from Pac-Men (Steve Heilman) and ICB (Tom Rogers). They brought extra energy and more importantly extra bodies for LOB. The first day started out early with us working a 7:50 AM match. Our first match was right after that at 9:10 AM and we took both games without too much trouble. In our second match we lost the first game but worked our way back to win the second two and take the match.

After going 2-0 in matches and 4-1 in games, we went into the second day in good position but not feeling cocky. The second day though went even better than the first with us taking all 3 matches in 2 games each. With all of this hard work we ended up overall with

the second best record in Men's B pool play which meant that we made the gold bracket automatically and a bye in the first round of playoffs.

On the third day we won our first match at 11:30 AM and then another one at 3pm. After those, we play Nothing Hits. If we beat them we would get to play Saturday morning for a chance to win the winner's bracket and if we lose we have to play again Friday evening in the loser's bracket. Unfortunately, we play with no energy and ended up losing the match in two games. They were the best team that we faced in the tournament and ended up finished second in Gold. Since we lost, we ended up extending our day. We played tired again and lost to a team that we should probably beat 9 times out of 10. A bit of a disappointing finish with losing our last two matches after winning our first 7 but we leave being the fifth place team at our level which is a big improvement over our previous year's performance. This also leaves us two full nights of enjoying New Orleans

and the chance to cheer on other IREVA teams on Saturday (although people may have only noticed Tom Rogers, the rest of LOB was giving him help in the cheering).

As for New Orleans itself, we were able to enjoy the free happy hours at Embassy Suites and the great food and drinks available elsewhere. We ended Nationals with a great time on Bourbon Street enjoying riding a mechanical bull, hurricanes, beads and everything else New Orleans has to offer. Although not everything in New Orleans is the way it was before Katrina, they still know how to treat the tourists and LOB appreciated the hospitality!

# Jackass

It's likely that Jackass was not the only team that traveled to New Orleans with a sense of foreboding over what the city would be like post-Katrina. In fact, a number of players and teams we spoke with elected not to attend this year specifically because of concerns over health and safety. What we found when we arrived was a New Orleans much subdued in comparison with the past, but still very much alive and with plenty to offer as a great convention city.

2006 marked the fourth season for team Jackass, and the fourth national tournament. As in past years, there were moments of brilliance on and off the court, and likewise moments we would like to forget (there are probably moments on Bourbon Street that unfortunate spectators would like to forget, but that's not our problem).

Nationals performance for our team typically involves a lackluster pool play followed by very strong playoff results. This year was quite different – we started strong and declined steadily over the course of the tournament. Ignorant bystanders might be tempted to comment, “ah well, it's New Orleans and it should be expected that performance would suffer over time as the local nightlife takes its toll.” But what such nay-sayers must remember is that we are highly conditioned athletes, at least from the social perspective. All season we undergo a rigorous and disciplined training schedule of pre- and post-tournament “conditioning” in order to prepare for the demanding social requirements of nationals. While it is true that from time to time we do not have 6 guys on the court at the beginning of a regular season tournament's “official” start time, this is all part of the training plan. These are minor battles and we have our eye on the prize – we fully expect to be in top

form for the four full days of stamina and endurance tests that nationals dishes out. No, conditioning was not the problem this year. What did us in was our mis-calibration of the playing schedule. We had trained on afternoon time, you see, and the tournament coordinator saw it fit to schedule us for morning matches, with absolutely no consultation, warning, or even so much as a polite heads-up. Consider the statistics. We didn't win a single game prior to 11:30am, and we won the very large majority after 11:30am. The stats don't lie.

Naturally as with any smart team we are prepared to learn from our past mistakes. Next season we will adjust our training schedule accordingly, starting our training sessions at midnight so that we are fully warmed up and ready to go by 8am. With such a well thought-out strategy, what can possibly go wrong?

With regard to presentation, those who waited eagerly in anticipation to see the new team warmup concept were not disappointed (although a few of the Boomers guys looked disappointed, but we think that had more to do with their girlfriends – again, not our problem). This year's warmups were red one-piece union suits with butt flaps in back, complete with straw hillbilly hats (and yes, a corn-cob pipe). You haven't lived until you've seen Mark Werner in one of these things. If another team managed to more effectively make themselves the center of attention, we didn't notice.

In terms of the local surroundings of New Orleans, while a shadow of its former self the city still has a great deal to offer, especially in the convention center district which was not hit as hard by Katrina and where clearly much of the economic reconstruction is being focused. While several local restaurants were still closed or just re-opening with

limited menus, the convention district and French Quarter were mostly open for business. Some of our favorite stops included Mother's (best breakfast south of the North Pole), Zydeque (best barbeque anywhere, just off Bourbon St.), and needless to say Bourbon Street itself. The River Walk offered a very convenient indoor trek from the Hilton Riverside to the convention center, with food and libations en-route. And while we did not partake ourselves, word on the street was that the Harrah's casino buffet was one of the best anywhere.

The people of New Orleans were especially impressive. They were friendly, accommodating, and greatly appreciative of our business, and they displayed a truly impressive sense of commitment and resolve to rebuild their great city. Those who were lucky enough to visit New Orleans before Katrina will probably agree that the city will never be what it once was. Nevertheless, it is still very much a great convention city with lots to offer, and well worth a week's visit.

. . . . .

## Zero Gravity

With a less than stellar performance the previous year in a little city called Denver, Colorado, the men from Zero Gravity had to discover a way to pick up the almost 'Humpty Dumpty' like pieces. Not quite dead last but tied for last; clinging to the sheer fact that we were the only team to defeat the Metropolis monster that was. Upon further investigation of the tournament to be in New Orleans, we realized it would be impossible to do any worse than before. That reason was because there weren't as many teams signed up to play as there was the year before. So the stage was set. Enter Zero Gravity, stage right.

We were ranked quite low and dumped into a seven team pool. Now was our chance to come on strong. Our two days of pool play proved to be exactly what we needed to get our game going in the right direction. Something brought us together as a team finally, be it position changes, sea level, Cajun food, alcohol, the wonder of Bourbon Street, or just pure drive we'll never know, but a flawless first six matches it was. Basically everyone played to the maximum of their abilities and put up quite a whoopin' giving us a first place ranking and a bye into the second gold medal challenge match. Up came a fantastic team from St. Louis, Skeelz, who proved they deserved to be where they were but it was no match for the power of Zero Gravity. Probably the best match for us in the tournament, giving us an entrance into the Gold Medal bracket. What a tremendous feeling that was!

But alas, our ride came to a halt with a loss to the Cavaliers in our first match in the bracket, sending us into the 'New York' loser's bracket. Represented by four teams, I think we had the losers covered pretty well. Nice job men! And

low and behold, the boys from Rochester, team Distillery, stepped onto the court opposite our eager team. Fighting through tooth and nail into the third game, we were outplayed by the final-bound Distillery team. Seventh place in the end was still quite an accomplishment.

Overall, everybody played spectacularly. We were all very pleased by the veterans, Mike 'Doc' Keating and Bob 'not crazy anymore' Faux, who had earlier played for Penn State Alumni in the 40's tournament. Mikes aggressive nature in the middle proved very useful against everyone who came up against him. Bobs controlled passing made it possible and he powered his way through many big blocks on the outside. I personally tip my hat to them. They played inspired volleyball as well as keeping a positive attitude across the team. Truly amazing athletes.

Mike 'Monster' Forster gave what I thought was an MVP performance with his destructive swing in front and back row, and mere shadowing presence on the court. Anyone who would disagree to that would be eaten for sure.

Nathan 'no name' Rose ran a very fast paced and aggressive offense from the setter spot. From all points on the court, I thought he played like an experienced setter, making quick decision and efficiently feeding his hungry hitters.

Jeff 'coach' Evans, not being distracted by filming, taking notes, and doing stats, showed that the A-cups *are* the real deal. Another dependable back row option and he was hardly even touched in the front row.

Andy 'Twiki' Radcliffe, despite his dismay towards the position, shined through as a defensive specialist. I recall the words "this is fun when everyone is hitting the ball hard at me all the time" or something along that

line. With a quirky index finger pointed to the side of his head occasionally, his giant digs and pin point passing were a huge contribution to the success of the team.

Pat 'Whiskers, FK' Furman rounded off the team with an excellent performance in the middle. After coming off a season position as libero, it was like he never skipped a beat. He expressed the excitement needed to fire himself up to be an exceptional threat in the middle. Way to go Firebush!

I personally got some playing time in pool play thanks to coach being a sucker when I told him I felt fine. I'm just happy I didn't get 'Hicks'd' this year. Lots of ice. Lots of ibuprofen. Next year is a new year.

Thanks to the whole team for one heck of a roller coaster season ending on a perfectly satisfying note. Hey Rangers.....whas goin on!!!!!! See you in Austin!!!!!! Cubs win Cubs win!!!!

# Syracuse Women's Masters

*Jody White*

This year at nationals, we competed in the Women's U-Volley. It was a great experience. It was truly a defensive game. We went in thinking that each team would be short. We were wrong. Many teams had players right at the 5'9" level. However, some had a few very "vertically challenged" players, like

myself. :)

It was a different type of game without the big blockers and the defense was great to be a part of. There was not one team that you could count as a given win.

At times, we played very well....at others, we played like we had no idea how to play. We ended up losing a game that would have put us in the semi finals. However, that was a game that we played like we had never touched a volleyball before. That knocked us into the losers bracket. We ended up losing

to the team that won the whole U-Volley tournament.

It was a great experience and a ton of fun. We finished 5th over all. We would love to play u-volley again.

We would like to thank all the members of IREVA that put in the time and work to get all the teams registered and in to the tournament.

Thanks so much for the chance to play at nationals.

# Schenectady 55's

This was our first USA Volleyball Championship as a Schenectady 55'S Team. We sure are getting "MATURE". Lucky for us we get to play on a lower net..HOW LOW? Low enough that even our Libero could block.

"Geezer Jocks" Jim Bishop, Jim Butler,Larry Matura, John Ray, Paul Sander, Mike Sardella, Ken Shea, Jim Webber, and Bruce Whiting played tough enough to earn a seed in the Gold

Metal Bracket. We almost won our quarter final match with a third game score of 15-13. Congratulations: Fifth out of Twenty-Two teams. We thank All the IREVA players and friends for supporting Schenectady 55'S. It makes a difference.

Our stay at the Embassy Suites Hotel was memorable. Complementary "Full Breakfast" and "Happy Two Hours" was included. Most of the 300 volleyball players staying at the Hotel took advantage the deal and we all got

our monies worth. After our last match on Friday night we misplaced a sleeve of "Molten" Super Touch Volleyballs. We checked all locations for the sleeve including Bourbon Street and the French Quarter and after a few "Hurricanes" we concluded "Hawaii" is the probable location.

Twenty-one Teams from IREVA played in New Orleans. Congratulations. Let's keep the momentum and SEE YA in AUSTIN 07.

# Team Rockstar

*Krista Paoff*

I have to say that New Orleans was a fine choice for the 2006 National Championships and made for a great time for Team Rockstar!! It was the second year of Nationals for most of the members of our team, and we fared MUCH better this year than last year in Denver, both on the court and off. We had a great team dynamic this year and lots of experienced players to keep us in the game all 4 days-yes, we made it to

Saturday this year!!! And although we didn't win a medal, we made such improvement from last year that we felt like we won anyway.

From the moment we found out that Nationals was bound for New Orleans, we were ready to party!! Headed down south 4 days early with a suitcase full of Rockstar Energy drink, T-shirts, tank tops and wristbands all donated from Rockstar, we were hardly thinking of volleyball. We were ready to experience New Orleans for 3 full days and then worry about the volleyball part. And we certainly did just that.

With 9 people in our hotel room- Krista, Jo, Angela, Liz, Dina, Pat, Steve, Charles, and Lou, we crammed ourselves in, unpacked (sort of) and took off for the night to experience Bourbon Street. And we didn't forget the video camera, borrowed from Zero Gravity "coach" Jeff Evans. Little did he know what we were going to be using it for...all of you that saw the tape know what I am talking about...Anyway, 3 solid days of hurricanes from Pat O'Brien's, peanut

*Continued on Page 13*

*Continued from Page 12*

butter and bacon burgers from Yo Mama's, Irish Car Bombs at Boondock Saint, and lots of music, beads, and HUGE ASS beers, I think we were finally ready to play some ball.

And we did- even after drinking quite a bit at the Players party on Tuesday night, we were all psyched to play on Wednesday...and no one was hung over!! The first day of competition, we won all three matches and felt on top of the world. Donned in all of our Rockstar gear, we took the court not really knowing what to expect. We had never played a tournament together with our whole team at once!! We won our first 2 matches easily, and beat the second seeded team in three games to come out undefeated after the first day! What a great feeling. Considering our 1-8 record from last year, we were amazed. The four of us that played together last year were not used to the feeling of victory at Nationals, but the new additions of Jodi as our setter, Brooke hitting outside and Dina kicking ass as our libero, really turned our team around. Having such experienced players as Jodi and Dina to anchor our offense and defense made playing the game so much easier and a lot more fun!! I know we all learned a lot this year and I am grateful to Jodi, Brooke and Dina for playing with us at the last second- thanks guys!! We left the convention center that night with the Zero Gravity guys, also undefeated for the day. We were all in high spirits and ready for some relaxation.

As for the rest of the week, the second day we fell off the wagon and lost all three matches, but not for lack of trying.

Jo hit the ball harder than I've ever seen her at this tournament and our middles were playing out of their mind all week. No one could block Angela and Liz's big block was definitely working for us. Even though we didn't play so hot Thursday, we did come up with a VERY loud team cheer that has since become a legend to us all. I think some of us are still deaf and Jo's voice hasn't been the same since.

So at 3-3, on Friday we had to play a match that would place us in either the bronze or copper round. We ended up losing our match on Friday morning, putting us into the copper medal round. We were all disappointed but we bounced back and won the next 2 matches to make it to quarterfinals. After we played, we proceeded to watch the amazing match-ups between the mens' teams from our region. Our region put on quite a show this year, with Zero Gravity, Boomers, and Hack Fu, all playing amazing and making it into the BB gold bracket, all top ten finishes. Zero Gravity went 6-0 in pool play- they all played great and we were very proud of them. We got a chance to see a lot of their matches throughout the week and cheered them on...very loudly (especially Jo-Jo... you know the cheer I mean...). Although they didn't make it to the finals on Saturday, they went 7-2 and came out 7<sup>th</sup> overall in the BB division- Great Job Guys! Other teams to watch from around our area were Distillery, Jackass, Boomers, Hack Fu, and UVA - all did a great job and we were happy to cheer you on!! That is one of the best parts of Nationals- how all the teams that play against each other throughout the year, will rally around each other for this tournament. You get to meet and become friends with a lot of

people here. It's just an amazing atmosphere for volleyball and camaraderie.

Our last day of competition was bittersweet- we won our semi-final match in the morning to put us in contention for the medal. With outstanding hitting from Jo, great serving from Brooke, and solid defense from Krista and Dina, the semi-final match was a blow-out. We were feeling great and ready to put those medals around our necks! One more match and we would be done, and have come such a long way from last year. Unfortunately, the team we faced in finals was a bit too much for us. With about 10-11 girls on their team and with a definite height advantage, we just couldn't get past them. So we left the gym without a medal...but we went 6-5 overall and we were all happy with that. We all had an unforgettable time playing together and I think Team ROCKSTAR made quite an impression on New Orleans.

We would like to thank the city of New Orleans for opening its arms to us, especially at this time when the city is struggling so badly. We had a fantastic time enjoying the city- the French Quarter, the Garden District, the Mississippi River, the restaurants, stores, and of course, the drinking establishments. Our video camera witnessed a lot of interesting footage during our 8-day stay in the Big Easy and those of you that are lucky enough to watch it will get to glimpse the extraordinary (and sometimes sick and twisted) experience we had at Nationals 2006!!

1-2-3 ROCKSTAR!!!

# Pacmen

*Ben Rosenthal*

This was the first National Tournament for PacMen although several members of the team had been before with other teams.

**Day 1** The tournament started out a little rough for us finding out that we were playing in the morning session but we were here to play so we weren't going to let a little thing like that bother us. What was going to be an issue though was that our

setter, John Leighton, had his flight stuck in Chicago, which ultimately ended up being canceled, causing him to miss the entire first day of the tournament. As if that weren't bad enough, the initial solution was to have Dan Batcher and me set a 6-2 for the first match. This ended up not being such a great idea and we had Dan switch to a 5-1 for the second match and played much better. Overall not a great start to the tournament with a record of 0-2.

John arrived in town just as we finished up playing on Day 1, so to celebrate the whole team finally being in New Orleans (NO) we went out to a brewpub around the corner from the convention center for lunch and began our self-guided walking tour of the city. We learned a few things about NO on our trip that day and a few about the team. First, it is way too hot in NO to walk around without a frozen alcoholic beverage in hand; luckily this was very easy to remedy on Bourbon St. Josh will talk to anyone when he's drunk ("Hey



foxy lady"), the Jester drink glass is Josh's twin brother, ordering drinks by color will scare Chris and Jim away but make Ben and Josh very happy, Dan "has beautiful eyes" as observed by a large man in a pink "I love Zack Morris" t-shirt, and that coffee and beignets are not enough to sober us up for the rest of the walk home.

**Day 2** With John there we assumed everything would now be better. Silly us, it's New Orleans, anything can happen. Ken "libero-master" Wei came into the convention center on the morning of Day 2, limping with a sprained ankle. We all asked what happened; turns out he fell while walking back from the French Quarter the previous night. Dan and Josh would like to thank the complete stranger who drove them and Ken back to their hotel that night. Otherwise, Ken may still be lying there screaming. Despite the sprain, Ken was determined to play. Not so surprisingly he is able to perform his signature cover plays with no apparent problems from the new injury.

The team played much better on Day 2, although we only won one of the matches for an overall pool record of 1-4. At the end of day 2 we found out that we had a challenge match to determine if we will be in the Bronze or Copper playoffs. The match wasn't going to be until 1:30 pm on Day 3 (something I realize now I should have held back from some members of the team) giving us a chance to experience Bourbon St. at night. Ken hooked up the team with dinner at a restaurant run by a friend of his. A huge delicious meal ensued, and then the team split up to head to the casino and Bourbon Street. Chris and Jim can testify that Bourbon St. is much more pleasant at night, although it's important to have a wingman along to verify certain "details" ("please tell me that's a woman...").

**Day 3** The challenge match didn't go as well as we had hoped. We lost the match in 2 games and were a little

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*Continued on Page15*

*Continued from Page 14*

disappointed to be playing in what we had come to call the “tin-foil” bracket. Since we had no more matches that day the team decided to watch some of the other local teams play, of course with frosty beverage in hand.

**Day 4** It’s playoff time and we seem to have finally remembered how to play volleyball at 8:00 am on day 4. We won our first match of playoffs in 3 games, the first time this tournament we had gotten to a third game. We then moved on to play the semifinal match again managing to win in 3 games, thanks in part to the huge group of IREVA supporters that have now rolled out of bed and are lining the sidelines. With that win we moved on to the bronze bracket finals to meet a team from Boston. The Irevva cheering section followed us over to our new court to meet an equally strong Boston cheering section. The JackAss crew stepped up to the challenge and led the Irevva group in some new and innovative cheers to keep us going.

We started of the match strong. It was a back and forth game, nobody really pulling ahead during the game. Then came a very controversial call, where the down ref missed a down ball call (which should have given us game point) and Boston wound up winning the point. The IREVA cheering section reacted immediately, complaining and heckling the ref about the call. Tim Stewart even tried to get the ref to kick him out. Meanwhile the team handled the situation well, and kept playing hard, unfortunately not bringing in the win. The first game seemed to have deflated the team, and the second game was not as competitive. John tried his hardest to earn a yellow card, but couldn’t even win that battle. Instead he was just warned repetitively by both referees. Needless to say, Boston won the second game handily. While the team was disappointed to not have won the final match, everyone seemed happy to have had a competitive finish to the tournament. Then everyone prepared for the final night out in New Orleans and the trip back to Albany the next day. For some, that trip was an all day ordeal.

Overall we had a great experience in New Orleans with some great volleyball and very friendly locals. We also learned some valuable lessons for next year in Austin.

- Don’t fly on the same plane as John going to Nationals, you’ll never make it there on the same day the ticket says.
- Do anticipate that it will be insanely hot and humid, and re-hydration with frozen alcoholic beverages will be necessary (although it won’t be as easy in Austin).
- Do watch where you are walking, so you don’t step in a hole and sprain your ankle while making your way back to the hotel from the bars.
- Don’t let Jim make your flight arrangements from Nationals. You’ll wind up with 4 layovers and it will take you 18 hours.

Hope to see everyone in Austin next year!

## Three Sheets to the Wind

*Cassie Brekke*

New Orleans was a great time for Three Sheets to the Wind. Unfortunately we did not do a whole lot of winning while we were there. However, we were lucky enough to have a two hour cocktail hour where we could get

anything we wanted to drink for free. Thanks to the wonderful open container law in New Orleans, we were able to bring it with us. This may have been the reason for our downfall however because we usually had to play after this.

While in New Orleans, we managed to lose consistently by a few points. Usually we would try to lead until the end of the game when we would just

give the other team the points necessary for a win. There was only one game where we really did not play well and that is when we learned that apparently alcohol can affect a person’s ability to pass the ball. We were knocked out of the tourney fairly quickly (by another IREVA team nonetheless), but we managed to have fun on and off the court regardless.

# Serve-ivors

With only three returning members from last year's team (Totally Spiked), we decided to start over with a new name. And with that Diane Jaquays, Jan Suits, Marnee Card, Beth McCanney, Antoinette DiGennaro, and Lisa Mosher headed to New Orleans to compete in the 35 team women's B pool.

Arriving late Tuesday afternoon the team didn't really get to do much except head to the Convention Center for practice (which by the way was 1-1/2 mile walk- ONE WAY) and catch a little of the men's and women's open championship games. But our prayers were answered once we found out that we had the later playing schedule, which meant that we could go to the player's party and mingle with everyone and go check out Bourbon Street.

During the first day of pool play the team played awesome- actually the best we have ever done in the four years of competing at Nationals. After some close matches, we ended up 3-0, beating 5-Minute Fling, MR Sommer Attitude, and NADS. This really helped boost our esteem going into day two however,

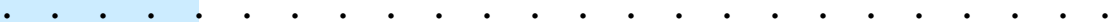
day two didn't turn out quite as nice as day one (1-2). But hey, we had nothing to be ashamed of, we ended up 4-2 and looking forward to the challenge match, that if we win we would end up in the Gold Bracket! So knowing we had our work cut out for us, we all decided to call it a night early so we would be fully rested.

Headed into our challenge match and knowing how important it was, you could tell we were all a little on edge. After losing the first game 25-9 we settled down a little and started to play our game, but we just couldn't pull it off and ended up losing the second game 25-23, thus moving us into the Silver Bracket. While we waited for our 1:50 game we decided to relax and keep our minds busy- trying not to think about what just happened, looking only forward. During this time, we hopped from court to court cheering on some of our other local teams competing (UVA, Rockstar, Boomers, Distillery, Jackass, and Hackfu)...Two o'clock finally rolled around and we knew it was now or never. Facing the Noisy Crickets (which we have played against in past Nationals), we went in felling pretty good but knew it wasn't going to be an easy game. And that definitely was the

case. We lost the first game 25-22 and just couldn't manage to play together as a team- like we had been the past two days, and ended up losing the second game 25-11. As frustrated and annoyed with ourselves as we were, we still were extremely happy with how we ended up overall. Out of 35 teams we ended up tied for 13<sup>th</sup> place with Cocktails-RVC and NADS.

Now done with playing we all decided it was time to really show our local teams some true spirit by cheering them on (and of course drinking to all their good- and sometimes not so good- playing). Once done with our cheering we headed to the Red Eye with our Jersey friends from Team Wally's and then onto Bourbon Street to make it an all night and into the morning excursion. Who needs sleep anyways?!?!

Overall this year was clearly a great year for us. We were pleased with our playing but more so with the fact that we played together as a team. Thanks to all of our local teams that supported us and we look forward to competing next year in Austin, TX.



# UVA

During the regular season UVA had some ups and many downs. A year filled with disappointing losses sprinkled with occasional wins over some tough teams. Due to the addition of children (congratulations Chris Johnson and Jeff Morris), new jobs, and a lack of tournaments, UVA struggled to field a team in preparation for nationals.

Missing UVA stalwarts Craig “Turn-it-up” Turner and Jim “Hammer” Hameline for this tournament, we enlisted support from Jake “Excuses” Roberts (Supreme Court) to accompany the UVA core of Chip “I invented the game” Lynch, Chris “Yeah, I roofed you” Johnson, Scott “Trainwreck” Tucker, Brandon “No relation to Bruce” Lee, Sticky “My Bad” Porta, and Tom “Head and Turtle Pass” White. With this group of miscreants UVA set out for an adventure in “Nah-lins”.

UVA arrived in The Big Easy with high hopes. After a 3 game first match loss, UVA was over the first match jitters. It was a loss that mirrored the regular season... a disappointing loss brought about by unforced errors. As always we blamed Chip. (Why break with tradition) Going into the next match UVA was fired up and ready to make someone pay. UVA rebounded by winning the second match in three games. (As always we didn’t give credit to Chip) After day one, we were surprised at the high level of play in our pool but we still had hopes of having a good tournament.

Day 2 saw a three match schedule start with a tough opponent in Onipa’a, Hawaii. Onipa’a, a rival from back in Minneapolis, has been a force in Men’s B for many years. UVA has had classic matches against Onipa’a in pool play and in playoffs. We looked forward to

another and were ready for them, or so we thought. After a crushing 2 game Hawaiian beat down, UVA walked away with a 1-2 tournament record. Battered but not ready to quit, we set our sights on team Amnesia. We needed to win our next two matches to have a chance at advancing to the Gold/Silver bracket.

Although it took a few matches for the new crew to gel and with our backs against the wall, UVA stepped it up for a 2 game win against Amnesia and a 3 game win against BAMF. We ended pool play with a record of 3-2.

As a reward for finally playing like a team, UVA advanced as the number 16 seed and was faced with two challenge matches to make it into the gold bracket. UVA soundly defeated Lemonheads to advance to the second challenge match against the Number 1 Seed. UVA squared up against eventual Gold Winner, Standard Rubber Products, and lost in a tough 3 game match that sent UVA into the silver bracket. Unable to advance in the Gold bracket, UVA refocused its energy and defeated Hard Armor to once again face our old foe Onipa’a. In another UVA – Onipa’a classic 3 game match (exciting if not pretty) we defeated Onipa’a to advance to the Semifinals.

As well represented as IREVA was this year and as well as each team performed, it was only a matter of time before we ran into a familiar foe. Our next opponent came in the form of a frosty beverage.

**Déjà vu** - UVA vs. ICB. Two IREVA Titans meeting one last time this season for bragging rights. ICB came ready to play, trying their hardest to outwit their opponent. It was no use, the decades of experience (many decades) that UVA had tucked away proved too much for ICB to overcome. It was a win that sent UVA to the Gold medal match. We

were pumped and ready to go. (with a little help from the convention center paging system.)

Matched up against local favorite, team Hydra, and having played two extra matches than our opponent, UVA was tired but determined. Middles, Roberts and Tucker proved to be an entertaining and dominant presence in the middle. Sticky as libero provided the necessary rest for our middles to keep them on their game and our opponent off of theirs. Both teams were exhausted and mustered every ounce of energy they could. Stellar defense from Chip, Brandon, Sticky and Blanco along with a well choreographed offense from the hands of Chris Johnson provided the impetus for UVA to push past team Hydra for a well deserved Gold. It was the first medal of any kind for UVA at nationals. A medal we have been chasing for years. Made sweeter by being able to wear it around Hammer ALL next year.

UVA struck gold in the Big Easy... and it wasn’t at Harrah’s!!!

Upon reflection, it was an interesting tournament to say the least. From a tough pool (teams from our pool won Gold in the Silver, Bronze, and Copper brackets and we had to beat another from our pool to advance to the semi-finals) to adjusting to a new player, to overcoming early breakdowns and finally to playing some of our best volleyball in years. We laughed and screamed at each other as only UVA can do. We had extraordinary contributions from every member on the team and overall had a great time playing and hanging out with each other. We had exceptional support from Donna Lynch, Jody White and the many IREVA teams that cheered us on during our run, even during the early morning

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*Continued on Page 18*

*Continued from Page 17*

matches. It was great. We thank all who cheered us on. We look forward to another adventure next year in Austin.

Special Moments:

- Blanco head butts a serve receive – Son-o-vah!!!
- Sticky Crushes Blanco with his knee brace.
- Chip with his patented Block-dump on our side of the net.
- Jace Roberts screaming...”I GOT EVERYTHING!”
- Jace Roberts strangely attracted to the Molten Hawaii team and disappointed we couldn’t play them.
- Blanco yelling at Jace to “DO YOUR JOB!!!”
- Johnson yelling at Blanco...”I don’t care how big he is...PUT IT AWAY!!!”
- Trainwreck Tucker blasting a match point ball out of bounds... Ouch!!!
- Brandon Lee getting solid medical advice from ... A CABBY!!!! Raisins are truly a miracle drug. Woowoo.
- Medal Ceremony and the immediate calls to Hammer who wished us well...but hoped we didn’t do that well.
- Blanco almost getting thrown out of the tournament for “cheering” too good for Boomers.

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# The 518 Volleyball Club (18 & Under)

First, to clarify, we are “The five-one-eight” not “The five-eighteen’s” not “The five hundred-eighteen” and definitely not “The fifty-one eight’s.” It’s the area code and all...

So The 518 18’s team went off to Minneapolis feeling pretty good about their chances. The team consisted of Alex Harrison (headed to Springfield College in the fall / Columbia HS), Matt McCarty (Northeastern / Bethlehem), Austin Michalski (New Haven / Voorheesville), Adrian Michalski (Stevens Tech / Voorheesville), Ian Michalski (Mercyhurst / Voorheesville), Damian Privitera (senior Bethlehem), Dave Spangler (senior Niskayuna), AJ Witkofsky (Endicott / Burnt Hills), and Bill Yates (Springfield / Bethlehem). Shawn Gordon (Colonie) was unable to attend because he was off to boot camp before attending the US Naval Academy in the fall.

The team was surprised when we learned that we had earned the number three seed in the tournament; our hard work all season had paid off. Day one started off with an 8:00 AM match against the Santa Monica Beach Club. We dropped the first set 24-26, bounced back to win the second 25-23, but fell apart in the third, losing 8-15. In the second match, we played the Northern Alberta VC, and dropped the match 17-25, 18-25. Although we were 0-2, we still had an opportunity to finish second

in the pool by winning the last match of the day – against Northcoast, who we had beaten several times during the year. We responded by winning 25-19, 25-23, and moved on to day two, still alive for the championships.

On day 2 we had another 8:00 AM match. The first match was against Rhode Island Blast, and we rolled to a 25-19, 25-19 victory. Our next match was against Chicago Select, and we won again, this time 25-23, 25-20. Unfortunately, we dropped the third match, against the Molten Warriors 14-25, 17-25. Nonetheless, we took care of business, and ensured a place in either the gold or silver bracket.

On day 3 ... surprise!!! Another 8:00 AM match! Our first match was against Cinci Attack, and we split the first two sets 25-21, 20-25. In the third set, at 11-8, a couple unfortunate calls went against us, and we dropped the set 10-15. Match two was against Nor Cal and we dropped a rather difficult set 27-29. We had the lead at 22-18 and just couldn’t close it out. In the second set, for the first time, the team seemed lethargic and uncaring. We dropped the set miserably 13-25. We had to re-group quickly because we still an opportunity to finish second in the pool and play for the championship the following day. We dropped the first set against Southern Ohio 19-25, but were rebounding in the second set until we completely ran out of gas and dropped the match 26-28, which dropped us into the silver bracket for the last day of

play. After the pool was complete, several of the opposing coaches told us they thought we were the best team in the pool. Small consolation for dropping out of the gold bracket, but still nice to hear.

On day 4 we didn’t have an 8:00 AM match to play in! So they assigned us an 8:00 AM match to work. Lovely. So at 9:00 we played Club Cactus and won the match 25-20, 25-22. In the semi-finals, we were completely, utterly enervated and dropped the match 16-25, 14-25. We later learned that Alex broke his hand during play, but refused to say anything about it because he didn’t want to be sitting on his last day of play.

The loss meant we finish 11<sup>th</sup> in the country in the 18-Club division. The result was a great improvement for the squad that had finished 35<sup>th</sup> in the country the previous year. We are so proud of our graduating seniors with 6 of the 8 seniors going off to play volleyball at the varsity level at college. The other 2 seniors chose academically excellent schools that don’t have varsity programs, but are planning on playing club ball next year. And 2 of our players will be returning next year. And lastly, a HUGE thank you to all of our parents who came to every tournament, organized our travel, meals, hotels, entertainment, everything! We could not function nearly as well as a club without all of your efforts!

Coaches: Hansen Leong, Paul Vink-Lainas, Chris Aiello, Andy Mink

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# The 518 Volleyball Club (17 & Under)

See paragraph one of the 18's – the 17's would like to point out the same...

The 17's team consisted of Steve Eames (Columbia), Ryan Earl (our player from the 845 – Minisink Valley), Spencer Hilland (Bethlehem), JT Kent (Saratoga), Zeke Kubisch (Bethlehem), Steve Sisson (Saratoga), and Aaron Zakrzewski (Guilderland).

The 17's showed up too late in the day to see the 18's play, but we had a team meeting where the 18's were able to talk to the 17's about what it takes to compete and win at National events. The 17's took much of it to heart, but with 5 of the 7 players not having experienced Nationals before, we knew that they didn't take it seriously enough. We did have to threaten to take away all their cell phones if there was a repeat of the 2:00 AM conversations with their girl friends instead of sleeping.

Day one started off with a trip to the Mall of America and team tattoos. Even the parents who went to the mall with us got the tattoos done. Our first match wasn't until 4:00 PM against Balboa Bay. The team was a little intimidated when they saw the size of the team – their short players were as tall as our

tallest players. But we came out fired up and dropped a close first set 23-25 before getting shelled in the second 11-25. In the second match, we didn't fare much better, losing to the Asics Rainbows 13-25, 11-25. In the last match against Sky High we dropped a close set 28-30, and then lost 21-25. We reminded the team that last year's team did the same thing on day one, but managed to finish 35<sup>th</sup> (the best possible result after day one was 33<sup>rd</sup>).

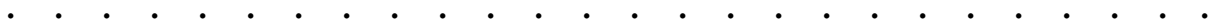
The second day started out with the news that Spencer was out for the day with a bad cold. The rest of the team went out to blow off some steam by playing some ultimate Frisbee, which almost ended badly when the play started getting rather intense. Quickly wrapping up the game, we went to get some lunch before playing at 3:00 PM (so unlike the 18's!). We came out inspired, with two players who hadn't passed all year forced into passing with our Libero out. Against Northern Virginia VA we won 25-18, 25-21. Next up was Missouri Thunder, who we dispatched 25-16, 25-18. The last match of the day was against Tool City, which we lost in three: 25-22, 21-25, 11-15.

Finishing second in the pool meant we had a challenge match to play our way back into the top portion of the brackets. We played Onipa'a from Hawaii and came out on the short end of a tight

match: 22-25, 25-16, 14-16. The loss dropped us to the bottom third of the tournament. Our next match was against Rolling Thunder VBC, which we lost 20-25, 19-25. The second match was against Bear VBC who we beat 25-21, 25-20.

In the first match of the Flight #2 bracket, we beat United VBC 25-18, 25-20. The semi-final match pitted us against Santa Monica Beach Club, and dropped the match 21-25, 19-25. The loss meant we finished the tournament in 33<sup>rd</sup> place. The team learned that the 18's weren't exaggerating about the energy one needed to expend to perform well on such a big stage. They're eagerly looking forward to next year, hoping to duplicate the improvement made by the 18's. As with the 18's, we owe a HUGE thank you to our parents for everything they have done for us. One parent stands out above all others: Ray Earl drove Ryan between 220-280 miles (round trip) twice a week to practices from November to July. Of course the other parents felt that was unfair because they could never ever complain about driving any distance at all! We're already all looking forward to the 2006-7 season!

Coaches: Hansen Leong, Paul Vink-Lainas, Chris Aiello, Andy Mink



## Lakeside Riptide

Gary Bynon

The Lakeside Riptide 16u boys just returned from the JO National Championships in Minneapolis, Minnesota. It was an honor to represent our region in Minnesota. To be one of the top 36 teams in the country was something that we were very proud of. We qualified for the open championships with a very strong 3rd place showing at the East Coast Championships in Richmond over the Memorial Day Weekend.

Minnesota was just an amazing city. The convention center was huge! What a classy place to play volleyball. We got to see fireworks over the Mississippi, the Nicolette Mall, the Metrodome, the Target Center, and of course the unbelievable Mall of America. A truly great experience for our players and their families.

The volleyball, as you can imagine, was VERY competitive. Our team is comprised of nine players from the same high school playing against the best All-Star clubs in America. We finished 1-8 and tied for 33rd overall. Of our 8 losses, two were by 8 points.

The rest were by 6 or less. Truly an amazing accomplishment for a "local team". We lost three games 26-24 and two games 25-23. We just could not score big points when they were needed.

We would like to thank the IREVA region for the support of our team. It is a great region to be a part of. Our trip provided us with many fantastic memories. I am very proud of our team and our entire club.

## Kaepa Woosh Justice

David Garmendia

**Thursday, June 29, 8:00 AM** On our third stop picked up 1 player and 1 more coach; then off to Atlanta for the USA National Junior Olympic Championships for volleyball. The caravan started and then phone chain started. Van #2, which was transporting 4 more players and two parents. Van # 3 with one more player and her family, all on the road by 8:30 heading south. First stop at gas and bathroom break. Gas \$2.65 a gallon in Pennsylvania. Back on the road and a second stop for food and gas, (\$2.68 a gallon.)

Seven girls and two vans for a quick lunch break. Back on the road, one more gas break in Virginia (\$2.73 a gallon) arrived in Jefferson City, TN for an over night girls stayed at the coach's brother's house on a golf course. Of course a golf cart ride was a necessity. Then a jog around the course and a late dinner at Applebees and back to the golf course and off to bed.

**Day two, Friday, June 30, 8:30 AM**  
Up and off to Carson-Newman College



for a practice, 8 players present and worked out. Two others were still on the way down; they had left a day later due to another commitment. Left at 11:30 for Atlanta with a quick stop at a Subway. Five and a half hours later, after 4th of July traffic and accident slowed us way down, we arrived at our Hampton Inn. When we arrived our fan base that had come by plane was already there. Two Moms and another three families that had driven and/or flown in. The girls enjoyed the pool and ordering dinner in.

**Day 3, Saturday, July 1** The first day of play- our coaches were frustrated that USAV did not show their certifications- after having one of them retake the exam. Opened up against Nebraska Juniors and opened with a 1-0 lead which was wiped out just a quickly. Lost both of the first two games. Second match against Oklahoma and were out matched physically, very big girls much like Nebraska team. At least three girls over 6'0" tall. Game three against Northern Kentucky, which

*Continued on Page 22*

*Continued from Page 21*

was ranked 6th overall in the National bracket. Their team lacked the superior size advantage and we competed well with them, but lost both close games. Finished at 9:30 and it was late.

**Day 4, Sunday July 2** Opened up at 6:00 against a team from Northern California, size was not a factor however we played with a lack of energy and lost convincingly. Final match of pool #1 was against previous years U15 champions of National division, Hawaiian Rainbows. Once again no large difference in size of players and the girls all showed great spirit and intensity, eventually lost both games but each point was contested fiercely.

**Day 5, Monday, July 3** Opened up against an Orlando Volleyball Club and girls were not there emotionally or physically. Second match against a 9th ranked team from Parried Sound, Washington, split first two games and

lost rubber match 15-11. Competed and deserved better. Had to wait till 9:00 PM for next match, which was against a southern Minnesota team, which we won!! A day earlier than in 2004 Championships in Houston, TX, when the team played Under 14's. It set us up for a Day 6 match once again to play a local club, Downstate Juniors the final day at 2:00 PM. We also saw Niagara Frontier club team there, it seems all teams from the northeast always end up in the bottom level. We all have to be proud of making it to Nationals but have a lot more work to do. The final match ended our otherwise fine season with a loss to a local team. We finished 42 out of 48 teams, five places higher than our Under 14 trip to Nationals, so we are getting better. Keep playing and working hard should be our regions mantra for the next 5 years. Hopefully we can all compete against each other and learn the level we need to strive for.

After our match the team took a picture in front of the Georgia Congress Conventional Center and then we were

all off in different directions with the eventual destinations being Orange County New York.

Our group headed for Pigeon Forge, TN and spent a day at the tourist area riding go-carts, and other rides as well as some shopping. Tried some Tennessee Barbecue and enjoyed our coaches hospitality at his riverside hideaway

**Day 6, Tuesday, July 5.** Visited Pigeon Forge, commercial tourist area and got hit with four or five hours of thundershowers after our site seeing was finished.

**Day 7, Wednesday, July 6,** departed 11:00 AM and arrived home at 11:30 PM. End of a long ride and end of a very long season.

Many thanks to our club for their support and help and all the dedicated parents who gave so much of their time and energy!

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