

# X C E L E R A T I O N

V O L L E Y B A L L

January 2016

Vol. 3, Issue #2

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Xceleration  
Volleyball Club

John B. David, Editor

## POWER BALL!

# Xceleration Launches New Season at Cal Kickoff

### 13 Teams Fielded for 2016, the Most in Club History



The number 13 usually receives a shady reputation in many different cultures and myths. For the superstitious, the number 13 brings the bad luck or the misfortune. Making matters worse, none of the 13 teams in the club was lucky enough to win even a small slice of the \$1.4 billion Powerball payoff last weekend! Many are convinced that number 13 is unlucky.

Not all agree. Some claim that the number 13 actually is quite lucky. For example, to the delight of many of our members, this is the first year a person is considered a teenager. This is also the age in the U.S., a person can watch, rent, or buy a PG-13 film without parental guidance. What else can be

better than that!? To the Xceleration Volleyball Club, this number is the luckiest of all after fielding 13 teams between the ages 12 and 18 for the 2016 season.

When the California Kickoff opened the new club season, the teams didn't need much luck at all with several outstanding performances throughout the Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday weekend. After the hard work during the past several weeks, Xceleration's teams were able to put practice into action against the best teams in the area.

Contested throughout the East Bay, South Bay, and the Peninsula, Cal Kickoff signaled the "unofficial" opening of the club season as results do not factor into future seeding or league rankings. The Kickoff serves as the early-season barometer for the team's level of competitiveness and, though records were kept, they will be tossed out the window, keeping the team's record unblemished.

The event allows the teams to tinker with different lineups to get a further gauge and assessment of the players before one of the biggest events of the year – Power League Qualifiers (PLQs).

*Continued on page 3*

**FACEBOOK GROUP PAGE**

Xceleration has a group page! Join our [Facebook](#) fan page and participate in the discussion forum where you'll hear about our athletes and various ongoing events. Search for "Xceleration Volleyball Club" and ask to join. Scan the QR code with your mobile device.



**XCELERATION WEBSITE**

Who, what, where, when and how? Our club's philosophy, frequently asked questions, photo galleries, team and player information, practice and tournament schedules, and information on our College Development Program are just some of the few things you can find on our website at: [www.xcelerationvbc.com](http://www.xcelerationvbc.com)

**OTHER USEFUL LINKS**

- [Advanced Event Systems](#)
- [Colorado Crossroads](#)
- [Las Vegas Classic](#)
- [NCVA](#)

**Shannon Says...**



XCELLent News will regularly include topical, pertinent, and other important messages from club director Shannon Kussman... here's Shannon!

Hello Xceleration Families,

WOW!! What a weekend Cal Kickoff was!! I had such an amazing time watching all of our teams play over the Kickoff weekend! I was thrilled to see all of our girls having fun and playing some very good volleyball! Watching our teams play just makes me all the more excited that this club season is underway! Kickoff is such a great start to our club season and I was beyond happy to see so many parents, family members, and friends supporting all of our teams! I love seeing big cheering sections for our girls, and I know they do as well, so thank you all very much for your support of our teams!! Thank you so much to all of the Xcel Team Parents for coordinating food, travel and so much more for Kickoff!

I have heard from a lot of you inquiring about lessons, which is amazing! Right now, lessons are booked through the Feb.20 lesson date, but we have many openings after that with Coach Manny!! I'll also be in touch with who the lesson coaches will be for Feb.27, Mar.5 and Apr.23, and those dates are wide open! Let me know immediately if you would like to reserve a lesson spot, as they are filling up quickly!!

We are extremely lucky and excited to have **Marcus Maxwell** as Xcel's Performance Development Coach/Trainer for this season! He has already worked with our 14s - 18s teams, and will continue to do so. You'll see a feature on Marcus in an XCELLent News coming up soon! If you would like individual training sessions with Marcus, which I highly recommend, please see our website for details or feel free to contact me and I'll get you in touch with Marcus.

Now that we are off and running and with big tournaments coming up for all of our teams, it's time to ramp up our play and take it to the next level! It's important to make sure all of our players are getting proper rest, eating right and staying hydrated throughout the week! This will help their performances during practices and tournaments! We don't want anyone getting sick before a big tournament! Xcel is so lucky to have a group of extremely committed coaches, players and parents!! I know our coaches are working very hard to ensure their teams are ready to go! And, there is no doubt we have the best and most supportive group of family and friends! I'm so excited to see our teams play at a high level against high level competition!

I will see all of you very soon! Thank you all so much for your continued support of Xceleration!!

**GO XCEL!!!**  
**Shannon**

**California Kickoff**  
(continued from page 1)

“We had a good start for all Xcel teams! We saw a LOT of good play and energy. We were really impressed,” said club partner **Jim Ross**. “Keep in mind the objective at this tourney. It tells us where we are and what we have to work on.”

Collectively, the club’s overall record was significantly higher than last year’s sub-.500 mark at the Kickoff, winning nearly 60 percent of our matches this year. Improved results were buoyed particularly by the strong performances (records-wise) by the 14Blue, 14White, 16White, and 18Blue, which is an astounding feat this early in the season. Some teams were already in mid-season form, with the 16White and the 14White winning the Division 2 titles and tournament t-shirts to boot!

A few others have a bit of work to do and will see better days ahead. Our coaches were able to identify the gaps that their respective teams need to work on during practice in the next few weeks, in preparation for PLQs.

As long as players continue to improve at every single practice and at every single tournament, then they’ve already found success. If players keep getting better, keep improving, keep taking a step forward, then there will be a lot of positives to come.

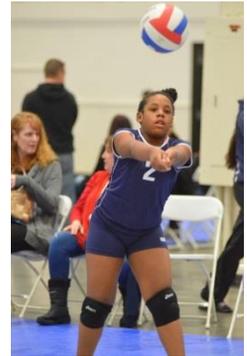
Here’s how the California Kickoff unfolded for each of our teams.

**Testing Their Strength, Endurance, Resolve – 12Blues Pass with Flying Colors**

The youngest and the least experienced members of the club were immediately put to the test – a baptism by fire per se – when the 12Blues had to face the #1 seeded team at the end of pool play on Day One of the competition. The 12Blue was the only Xceleration squad that was placed in a five-team pool, meaning that the team had to play an extra game in pool play and, against the top seed no less. Rather than considering themselves unlucky with the draw, the girls smiled and were unfazed seeing their arduous task ahead. Instead they gladly welcomed it as an opportunity to sharpen their game and gauge their competitiveness against the “top” seed.

The 12Blues passed with flying colors after taking the first set from the top seeded Polaris Power and stretching the match to three sets – the third three-setter in four games of the day for the 12Blue and all within a five-hour time span.

Starting from the 5<sup>th</sup> position at the beginning of pool play, the team placed 2<sup>nd</sup> in the pool to begin the next day of competition. They again competed hard to record their fourth three-setter during the tournament before finishing 13 spots higher from their starting seed to place 12<sup>th</sup> overall in the 27-team pool.



**California Kickoff**  
**(continued from previous page)**

**Starting Strong, Moving Up**

In each of the 13Blue's five matches during the weekend the team claimed the first sets from its opponents in convincing fashion. The team however was dealt consecutive setbacks in the third sets of each of the first three matches, 13-15, 15-17 and 13-15. All games could have easily tilted in the 13Blue's favor but not this weekend. They will realize that this is just a minor hurdle. They'll buckle down and learn to finish what they started in games going forward, now knowing that the last mile of the marathon is the hardest to conquer.

13Blue coach **Daniella Inzerillo** said,

"Even though the weekend started a bit shaky, we are proud of the way that the girls continued to play and improve throughout the tournament. We are looking forward to seeing them continue to grow and compete after the encouraging and promising start!" The team closed the weekend on a high note with two straight wins.

The 13White finished one game above .500 and a top quartile finish after moving a whopping 33 slots to end the tournament – from the 47<sup>th</sup> seed to 14<sup>th</sup> place in the 54-team pool. The team recorded two three-set victories along the way, including victories against higher seeded teams and the number one teams of the opposing clubs to give them confidence in the days ahead.



**California Kickoff (continued)**

**14Blue and 14White: Back to the Gym, Not Resting on Laurels**

The 14Blues dominated their matches with four consecutive wins, including several single-digit, straight-set shellacking of their opponents before succumbing in the play-in game on the second day. In the end, the team maintained its #7 position with a 4-1 record and finished in the top 15 percent of the pool – the best performer in terms of finish against the total pool out of all the Xceleration teams at the Kickoff.

The 14White was a strong performer on both days of the competition. The

team moved from #76 to the front of the pack at #13 after winning three straight on Day One. The team was dealt a short setback, losing in three sets in the play-in game before stringing together five straight wins to claim the Division 2 crown.

Superfan **Olga Yanneth Umana Reyes** said, “The last two matches almost gave all the parents heart attacks going to three close sets. They played their hearts out and never gave up! Love this team!”

The 14Whites successfully ended their run with an 8-1 record – 1<sup>st</sup> in Division 2 and in 25<sup>th</sup> overall in a pool of 87 teams.



*14 Blue had a great experience, finally stepping on the floor. The hours we trained and limited scrimmage time, the girls were more than ready to get on the floor and compete. This weekend opened up a lot of holes we need to fill. Being exposed has gotten us excited to get back in the gym and not let the little things get the best of us. We play hard with high energy, we train a lot of technical and after the first tourney need to work more on 'team'.*

Preseason is over! 😊

Coach Ari Smith

## 2016 California Kickoff Division 2 Champions – 14White & 16White

### XCELERATION 14WHITE

Front row, left to right:  
Miquela Mills, Sara Covin, and  
Jessica Larrick.

Second row, left to right:  
Zoe Berg, Alejandra Fraga, and  
Anelise Kiepen.

Back row, left to right:  
Coach Chelsea Hollenbeck, Coach  
Natasha Gayle, Mikayla Smith,  
Jasmine Baldo, Cameron Hawkins,  
Kira Junge, Ava Walz, and Reilly  
Wilson.



### XCELERATION 16WHITE

Front row, left to right:  
Maddy Krueger, Allison Lam,  
Alecs Llegado-Wong, Geneva  
Mays, and Colleen Chan.

Back row, left to right:  
Coach David Sin, Jenna Ingram,  
Karina Ong, Aria York, Camille El  
Ghaoui, Madison Cortessis, Sarah  
Coufal, Natalie Sluga, and Coach  
Daniel Pak.



*16 white had 3 goals going into our first tournament: 1. communicate, 2. stay motivated, and 3. have as much fun as possible. As a team we hit all 3 goals and had a great start to the 2016 club season, going 7-2 overall and winning the Division 2 bracket. Our parents were amazing with all the support.*

*The best thing about the weekend was the amount of volleyball the girls got to play, it gives us a lot to work with going into PLQ. The girls' energy and level of confidence grew match after match and it was fun to watch. I was really proud of how they came together as a team this weekend and didn't lose sight of our goals. I can't wait to see what these 12 talented young ladies can do this season. Let's go Xcel!!*

Coach David Sin

**California Kickoff (continued)**

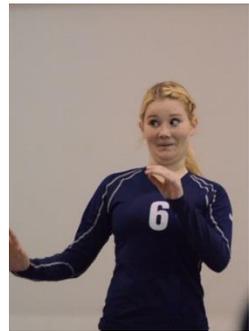
**Fundamentally Sound 15Blue & 15White Look to Make Waves Against Top Teams**

Both the 15Blue and 15White finished in the top half of the pool after dropping nine spots each from beginning to end.

The 15Blues looked sluggish and needed to be more vocal at the start, which is typical of the first game of the season. The team quickly adjusted and got into a groove to bounce back in the next two games,

including an easy straight-set win against a Top 10 seeded team before falling in a thrilling three-setter to end the weekend.

The 15Whites looked fundamentally sound and started their season with a lot of energy and enthusiasm to secure two quick victories to begin their season. The team performed well against teams they were supposed to beat and finished with a .500 record. They learned a lot against the top teams from other clubs and will use the lessons learned to prepare for PLQs.



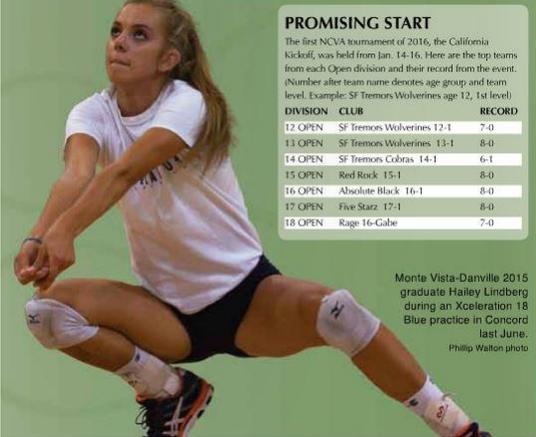
15B had a bit of a tough time at Cal Kickoff, although we did start to come together and make necessary adjustments as the tournament went on. It is a great tournament to see the girls in action and from the coaching standpoint see what needs the most immediate attention for the few practices we have leading up to PLQ's. Kayla and I are excited about the potential of this team and it will be really fun to see them realize how good they can be in the coming weeks/months. Onward and upward!

Coach Lucas Abbott



### XCELERATION IN SPORTSTARS MAGAZINE

**HOTT OFF THE PRESS!** The January 2016 issue of SportStars Magazine features an article on the club volleyball scene in the Bay Area, and it includes photos of our Class of 2015 alums **Hailey Lindberg** (Santa Clar), **Kelley Wirth** (Yale), **Lucy Moradian** (Georgetown) and You can view the article [here](#).



**PROMISING START**  
The first NCAA tournament of 2016, the California Kickoff, was held from Jan. 14-16. Here are the top teams from each Open division and their record from the event. (Number after team name denotes age group and team level. Example: SF Tremors Wolverines age 12, 1st level)

DIVISION	CLUB	RECORD
12 OPEN	SF Tremors Wolverines 12-1	7-0
13 OPEN	SF Tremors Wolverines 13-1	8-0
14 OPEN	SF Tremors Cobras 14-1	6-1
15 OPEN	Red Rock 15-1	8-0
16 OPEN	Absolute Black 16-1	8-0
17 OPEN	Five Starz 17-1	8-0
18 OPEN	Rage 16-Gabe	7-0

Monte Vista-Darville 2015 graduate Hailey Lindberg during an Xceleration 18 Blue practice in Concord last June.  
Phillip Walton photo



### VB Club Highlights-2015

#### XCELERATION GIRLS VOLLEYBALL (CONCORD)

Seven teams finished in the Top 36 of their respective age groups in the Championship Divisions of the NCVA Power League, with three of these teams finishing in Gold and four teams in Silver in the Regional Championships.

The 18 Blue and 17 Blue squads ultimately qualified for the Junior Nationals in the National and American divisions, respectively. The 18 Blue team earned a Top 20 finish at Nationals, going 5-4 overall and winning 11 of 19 sets.



Kelley Wirth goes up for a swing while playing for Xceleration 18 Blue. (Xceleration VBC photo)

**California Kickoff**  
**(continued from previous page)**

**Pretty Darn Good Start for 16s**  
**After Goal-Setting Sessions**

Playing in the Open Division, the 16Blue started slowly out of the gates but secured two straight-set wins to begin the Kickoff. It was a challenge, however, getting the victories as the team had to dig deep and mounted several furious comebacks from what many thought were insurmountable deficits. In their second match, the 16Blues were on the brink of dropping a second set that would force a third and deciding set, but the team

would have none of it. With the team on the short end of the stick at 18-24, the 16Blues rocked their opponents to come out on top, 27-25.

Similarly, the athletically gifted 16Whites had a successful start to their season, finishing in the top quartile of the 108-team pool with a 7-2 record and a Division 2 title. After beginning the tourney with an inauspicious 2-2 record, the team went on a tear by rattling off five straight victories to take home the D2 crown and tournament t-shirts. With nine games played during the weekend, the team will be battle-tested entering the PLQs.



*16 Blue had good learning experience during Cal Kickoff. We learned a lot about each other and what it takes to succeed at the higher levels. All 12 players contributed and all 12 plus the coaches looked like they had fun throughout the weekend.*

*It was great to see them try the things we are working on in practice. It was great to see them compete and see how they responded to adversity.*

*Some highlights include coming back from 8-1, 10-3, 13-5 deficits to win their first set of the tourney, 25-23... Coming back in the second set of their second match from a 24-18 deficit to win 27-25... And coming back from a poor showing with a much better effort in their last match of the tourney.*

*16 Blue is progressing nicely and will take the lessons from Cal Kickoff to heart in their 8 practices before PLQ.*

**Coach Manny Johnson**

### California Kickoff (continued from previous page)

Despite a drop in the seeding, the 16Golds exhibited raw talent and will only continue to improve over the course of the season.

This competition was the first foray into club volleyball for many of the 16Gold and they have definitely benefitted from the work they have put in to date. The 16Golds faced several experienced teams in the pool, but once the team is situated in a division where they will be competing against similar skill level teams in the league, they will excel in all facets of the game.

### Top 10 Finish for 17Blue

A Top 10 finish for the 17Blue in the Open Division of their age group is a great showing at the beginning of the season. The team will look forward to maintaining this lofty seeding going into PLQs, as their high-octane performance at the Cal Kickoff is just a glimpse of what this talented team can do against the best in the field.

The Cal Kickoff provided an opportunity for the team to identify the gaps it needs to fill during the next few weeks in practice. Minor tinkering here and there will set the table up for success in the months ahead.



#### PRIVATE LESSONS

16Blue Head Coach **Manny Johnson**, and 18 Blue Co-Head Coach **Jeremy Swann** will be available for lessons in 2016!

They are both fantastic lesson coaches and we are extremely excited that they are available for lessons!

Date	Manny	Jeremy
1/30	10 – 3	3 – 6
2/20	2 – 6	–
2/27	<b>Coach TBD 12 – 4</b>	
3/5	10 – 3	<b>Coach TBD 3 – 6</b>
3/12	2 – 6	–
3/19	2 – 6	–
3/26	–	12 – 4
4/2	10 – 3	3 – 6
4/23	<b>Coach TBD 12 – 4</b>	
5/23	10 – 3	3 – 6

Please contact **Shannon Kussman** if you'd like to schedule a lesson on any of these dates/times. All scheduled lessons are subject to a 48-hour cancellation policy, credit cards will be charged for the amount of your lesson if cancelled late.

#### Fee Structure:

- 1 Player: \$75 per player/hour**
- 2 Players: \$40 per player/hour**
- 3 Players: \$30 per player/hour**
- 4 Players: \$25 per player/hour**

Payment can be paid to the lesson coach directly. All checks should be made payable to the lesson coach, NOT Xceleration.

### California Kickoff (continued from previous page)

#### 18Blue & 18White: Representing at the Kickoff

With many of the college coaching ranks on the sidelines this early in the season – though they were already recruiting for the Class of 2019 – the 18Blues did not disappoint with their knockout performances as the #7 seed in the Open Division. With four straight wins to begin the Kickoff, the team is hungry for more and “is fired up to get back in the gym.”

Interchangeable... Versatile... Athletic... These are just some of the descriptive words heard around the sidelines during the Cal Kickoff when spectators witnessed action from the 18White. With flexibility to insert various players in different positions, many of the girls will have a great opportunity to work on their all-around game.

The 18White's depth of talent is extraordinary and bodes well for their season. The team moved 13 spots higher at the end of the Kickoff.



*I think all of us were proud of the many days and hours we put in leading up to the Cal Kickoff. We probably all left San Jose fired up to get back in the gym. We believe in what we're doing and we absolutely believe in our team. So it's back to working hard to prepare ourselves and our team to be the best it can be. Hard work with a conscious always pays off in the long run.*

**Coach Andy Schroeder**



**LAS VEGAS CLASSIC**

**February 12-15, 2016**

**18Blue, 18White, 17Blue and 16Blue**

Depart OAKLAND

Fri, February 12

Southwest Flt# 463 @ 9:35 am

Arrive LAS VEGAS @ 11:00 am

Depart LAS VEGAS

Mon, February 15

Southwest Flt# 1354 @ 7:05 pm

Arrive OAKLAND @ 8:30 pm

**Las Vegas Accommodations**  
**All Participating Teams**

Gold Coast Hotel & Casino

4000 W. Flamingo Road

Las Vegas, NV



# 2016 Unsigned Showcase: Registration Deadline – Feb 1

The Unsigned Showcase at the annual Las Vegas Classic is held on the night before the actual tourney and is a setting for college coaches to get a close look at unsigned Juniors (Class of 2017) and Seniors (Class of 2016) only. It is a great event to be seen, and Xceleration's College Development (CD) Team of **Jim Ross** and **Paul Harrison** will be there to work with the college coaches to see our players. **ALL Xceleration unsigned SENIORS MUST** attend this Showcase. For unsigned Juniors, this is optional.

Click [here](#) for more information on the Showcase.

Click [here](#) to register.

Absolutely **NO** walk-up registrations will be permitted.

Players that registered prior to the February 1st deadline will receive a bib number with their court assignments on them. If a player registered after the deadline or changed their time or position after February 1st it is possible that the bib will not have accurate information or name. Please make sure you confirm your court assignment online and at check-in.

**SENIORS (Class of 2016)**

When you get to the point where you select your Showcase times, **SELECT THE 4:30 PM - 6:00 PM TIME SLOT.** This will enable us to get all our players in the same session and coordinate transportation.

**JUNIORS (Class of 2017)**

The only option for Juniors is the **3:00 PM - 4:30 PM TIME SLOT.**

Jim and Paul will accompany the players to the Showcase and will arrange transportation with either team chaperones or parents who want to attend.

**NOTE TO PARENTS:** There is a recruiting seminar for parents that goes on at the same time as the Showcases. Parents are welcome to attend this, but parents will **NOT** be allowed inside the Showcase halls at any time.

Please register now so you can guarantee your time slot! The sessions will sell out.

Send an e-mail to [Jim Ross](#) to let him know when you have completed your registration. **Registration closes at 11:30 PM PST, February 1, 2016.**



# Colorado Crossroads Preview



One of club's biggest event of the year is almost here. The Colorado Crossroads [website](#) contains important information for players and families, including team and guest registration, team check-in times and locations, online wristband purchases (beginning mid-February), schedules (TBA) and things to do in Denver, among other things.

Also, remember that the annual Dig Pink Day will be honored on Day 2 of both weekends, where many of our teams will wear the color.

## WEEK 1:

**Feb 26 – Fri, Travel Day**

**Feb 27-29, Sat – Mon Competition**

16Blue	16 Open	AM Wave
16White	16 USA	AM Wave
16Gold	16 American	PM Wave

17Blue	17 USA	PM Wave
(Waitlisted)	17 Open	AM Wave)

18Blue	18 Open	AM Wave
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## WEEK 2:

**Mar 3 – Fri, Travel Day**

**Mar 4 - March 6, Fri – Sun Competition**

14Blue	14 Open	AM Wave
14White	14 USA	AM Wave

15Blue	15 Open	AM Wave
15White	15 USA	PM Wave

Schedules and brackets will be posted on [TM2sign.com](http://TM2sign.com) once seeding is completed.



## COLORADO CROSSROADS TRAVEL

**February 26-29, 2016**

**18Blue, 18White, 17Blue and 16Blue**

Depart OAKLAND

Fri, February 26

Southwest Flt # 2631 @ 9:55 am

Arrive DENVER @ 1:20 pm

Depart DENVER

Mon, February 29

Southwest Flt # 495 @ 5:35 pm

Arrive OAKLAND @ 7:15 pm

**16Gold**

Depart SAN FRANCISCO

Fri, February 26

United Flt # 1899 @ 8:07 am

Arrive DENVER @ 11:50 am

Depart DENVER

Mon, February 29

United Flt # 737 @ 5:37 pm

Arrive SAN FRANCISCO @ 7:26 pm

**March 3-6, 2016**

**15Blue, 15White, 14Blue and 14White**

Depart OAKLAND

Thursday, March 3

Southwest Flt # 2631 @ 9:55 am

Arrive DENVER @ 1:20 pm

Depart DENVER

Sunday, March 6

Southwest Flt # 495 @ 5:35 pm

Arrive OAKLAND @ 7:15 pm

## Denver Accommodations All Participating Teams

Hyatt Regency Tech Center – Denver  
7800 East Tufts Ave.  
Denver, CO

# 2015-2016 All-East Bay Selections

Congratulations to our Xceleration athletes that were recognized by the Contra Costa Newspaper Group on the All-East Bay Team, as announced on December 23, 2015.

## FIRST TEAM

**Taylor Dixon**, Liberty, Sr. – She led the Lions to a NCS Division 1 semifinal match, where she had 34 kills and 23 digs in a five-set loss to eventual NorCal finalist Monte Vista. Dixon finished with 473 kills, 351 digs and 64 aces this season.

## SECOND TEAM

<b>Emma Johnson</b>	18Blue
<b>Sam McGrath</b>	18Blue
<b>Katie Orbeta</b>	18Blue
<b>Kaitlynn Zdroik</b>	18Blue

Campolindo
Bishop O'Dowd
Bishop O'Dowd
Liberty

## THIRD TEAM

<b>Emma Doud</b>	18Blue
<b>Parker Jones</b>	17Blue

St. Joseph Notre Dame
Acalanes

## Signings on National Letter of Intent Day

Defensive specialist **Samantha McGrath** (center) is flanked by her fellow Bishop O’Dowd Dragons at the school’s signing day. Samantha will join Xceleration alumna **Lo Utchen** at San Diego State University of the Mountain West Conference in the Fall. *Source: Bishop O’Dowd HS athletic website.*



Outside Hitter **Mickayla Sherman** signed her letter of intent to play volleyball for UC Riverside. She finished off her impressive time at Oakley’s Freedom HS by being named to the all-league first team this season. She was also named to the all-league second team her sophomore and junior seasons. “When I went on my visit there, it felt like home,” she said, alluding to her visit to the college. “I am looking forward to playing with people that have the same passion as I do.” *Source: Kyle Szymanski, Contra Costa Times.*



As previously announced, several of our athletes have committed to play volleyball at the collegiate level next season. Here are a few photos taken during NLI Day.

### COACHES VIDEOS

In case you haven’t seen the coaches videos shown at the Parents Meeting during Tryouts, click on the links below.

[12Blue](#)

[13White](#)

[13Blue](#)

[14Blue](#)

[14White](#)

[15Blue](#)

[15White](#)

[16Blue](#)

[16White](#)

[17Blue](#)

[18White](#)

### PHOTO GALLERIES ATHLETES IN ACTION

#### Cal Kickoff Galleries

See the full set of photos of all our teams taken at the Cal Kickoff, courtesy of Tomas Pineda, by clicking [here](#).

Photos can be downloaded for FREE!

### INSTAGRAM

Xceleration now has an Instagram account where you can view posts throughout the season:

**XCELERATIONVBC**



# Sisters

To learn something more about our Xceleration athletes, in this and in future issues of XCELlent News we feature our players with a common bond, those you would call “different flowers from the same garden.” They are someone who is more than just family, they are forever friends – SISTERS!



## Gems (and Queens) of the Court: Ruby & Jade Santos

Sisters may be women who grew up under the same roof as you – or they may be dear friends, soul-kin you meet along the way.

For many, sisterhood means having a friend who will be there for life, and who was there in its beginning. Your sisters are irreplaceable, and no matter where life takes you, that much will always be true.

Sisters can share childhood memories with you that nobody else can connect to in quite that special way.

Your sister may drive you crazy, or she may inspire you.

Maybe you have an older sibling you look to for guidance, or maybe you have a younger sister who is looking to you for that inspiration. Sisterhood is a very special relationship, and this short feature celebrates that.

Jade and Ruby, the precious daughters of Jey and 14Blue coach Ricky Santos, grew up in the East Bay and have played volleyball for most of their lives. Jade returns to

Ruby (left) and Jade enjoy spending time on the beach, here making heart figures... Jade said, “I’m able to relax and play volleyball there as well.”

Ruby replied, “She also likes to go to Oracle Arena to watch the Warriors. She’s a member of DubNation... She’s obsessed! I would rather go to Disneyland.”

**“That’s the best thing about little sisters: They spend so much time wishing they were elder sisters that in the end they’re far wiser than the elder ones could ever be.”**

Gemma Burgess

	Jade	Ruby
<b>Most proud of</b>	Ruby and the amazing young lady and volleyball player she’s become.	Jade, she has accomplished most of her goals, academically and athletically.
<b>Favorite Meal</b>	Wing Stop Lemon Pepper and Garlic Parmesan with Fries and Ranch Dressing	Ice Cream! Likes eating ice cream for breakfast, lunch, and dinner
<b>Favorite Quote</b>	“Work hard, stay humble”	“Practice hard, play hard, win easy”
<b>Fun fact/ Little known fact</b>	Played Libero and Setter in college / Had heart surgery at 3 years old	A lefty but serves/plays volleyball with right hand
<b>Dream job</b>	Sports Psychologist	Nurse
<b>No meal is complete without...</b>	Water	Rice

# Sisters

## Ruby & Jade (continued)

Xceleration as a first-year coach for the 13Blue, after having played on one of several 18Blue teams that qualified for Junior Nationals four years ago.

Now with a Psychology degree in hand (completed in 3 ½ years!) from Chapman University and Dominican University of California, Jade looks back on her time with Xceleration and why she's come home. She said, "It was one of the best teams I've played on, not only in terms of where we ended up in Junior Nationals, but also in terms of coaches and teammates. I'm excited to pass on my knowledge to the young Xcel players and see what kind of impact I can make as a coach."

In her first go-around leading an Xceleration team, Jade knows how tough it can be getting used to a new coach. After she played for 18Blue coaches Andy Schroeder and Jeremy Swann, she said that Andy and Jeremy (who are her role models in the same breath with her parents and grandparents) motivated her 18s team more than any other coach that she's had, and she would like to emulate that drive into her players.

Always looking to perfect her game, Ruby is the feisty setter on the 14Blue. Playing in her fifth season with Xceleration, she's excited to have her sister back with the club.

"I'd like to follow in her footsteps. My sister is always pushing herself to play better and work harder, and I want to

be as determined and driven as she is," said Ruby. "She constantly tells me to never give up."

There is no other match for the girls' determination and passion for the game. They encourage and inspire each other to become better players and even more so, to be a better person. To do this, older sisters will certainly have a piece of advice for their younger siblings.

Jade's advice to Ruby? "Stay humble, work hard, and have fun. Take advantage of the fact that you're still young and enjoy all the time you have to play club volleyball." She continued, "Don't be too hard on yourself. No one is perfect and you can't expect to have perfect games. Just play your game and have fun. Also, make the most out of the fact that you get to work with great coaches and talented teammates... and above all, did I mention to have fun?" Jade will certainly be around the 13Blue and 14Blue courts to ensure that her girls and Ruby are following these tenets.

And to round out the Santos family, you can ask them why they named their Golden Retriever Juicy!



### Jade's Message to Ruby

*Have fun and don't be too hard on yourself. You're seriously an amazing volleyball player. I'm proud to call you my sister and show you off to everyone. Have an awesome season!*

**If they're not hanging out at the beach, Jade and Ruby can be seen hanging out with their family and friends, or "Netflixing."**

## QUICK TIPS

### Transcript from The Art of Coaching Volleyball

# RECRUITING: Finding Your Fit – How to Find the Right School... College Coaches Give Advice

Choosing a college is a huge decision, and it's even bigger for volleyball players who are evaluating both academics and athletics. High school or club coaches are asked frequently for guidance by players (and parents) who are looking for a good fit at the next level. Here's advice from college coaches.

Here are some great tips from college coaches who have loads of experience with the process of stepping up from high school/club ball to the collegiate game. Our list of experts includes **Erin Virtue** (University of Michigan), **Laura Kuhn** (University of Kansas), **Frank Lavrisha** (Regis University), **Ken Murczek** (Wake Forest University), **Dave Fleming** (Colorado Mesa University), **Brian Doyon** (University of Montana) and **Heather Roberts** (Colorado School of Mines).

**Virtue:** That's a good question, and it's not an easy thing. I think that keeping in mind the atmosphere that they like, the academic part that they like, how do they want to be coached, what kind of coach are they interested in having? Going and visiting is a giant piece of the recruiting process.

**Kuhn:** I highly recommend going to camp. So we tell all of our top kids we want you to come to camp, we want you to stay with the team, hang out with our players. Whenever recruits come on campus, I say – go with the team. When you take your visits, go with the team because

they're going to give you all the real answers. They're going to tell you about the coaching staff, the support staff, the lifestyle – so just hang out with the team, the players at the schools.

**Lavrisha:** You know it's got to be a fit because we're around each other for 9 months out of the year, six days a week.

**Kuhn:** This isn't a four-year decision. This is a lifetime decision because you're now connected to that school.

**Virtue:** You know, it was a long time ago when I went through the recruiting process, but I remember it and it sounds kind of corny, but I remember you just had that gut feeling when it's the school you should go to and it's the school that's meant for you. I think that athletes can't ignore that feeling of – this is where I should go and this is where I want to spend a very integral part of my career as an athlete and my academic career. And really, you're going to change a lot in college. You really grow up there no matter where it's at, so it's where you want to grow up, where do you want to find the next piece of your life?

### A FEW FB POSTS

ALUMS HELPING OUT ON THE LAST DAY OF 2015... Had a lot of great ones come from Las Lomas HS -- these two are among the best! Thanks Hailey Glass (Xcel Class of 2015, Grand Canyon University) and Madison Borch (Xcel Class of 2013, Carson-Newman University)! HAPPY NEW YEAR from the SQUUAADDD!



**GIVING BACK...** Look who showed up at the training facility – Hailey Glass (GCU), Malia Bolko (UC Davis), Lo Utchen (San Diego State) and Naomi Overstreet (VA Commonwealth)... 40 degrees when we walked in. They showed this year's team why they all play college volleyball. Great time, thanks girls for giving back! Means a lot to all of us!



## College Coaches Give Advice (continued)

**Murczek:** Kids and parents have to try to align themselves, not just with the name on the jacket just because they're an alum. They have to find a good fit both for academics – that's why you're going to college – and then obviously athletically because you don't want to go anywhere and just sit on the bench. It's not really a fun experience, and I've witnessed too many kids that make a decision because of a logo or because of a football game or a basketball game, and then I think their volleyball experience really suffers.

**Kuhn:** I think that's what's becoming more evident now with our transfer rate. People are want to go to the bigger school because of the success and they can be a part of that. But it's like, go be part of something great that you're actually going to have an impact on. A lot of kids are going to these bigger programs and then transferring because they are realizing that it's not what they wanted.

**Murczek:** If you actually count up for example, I'm in a big conference, the five big conferences. There are about 12 schools in each of those, so there are 60 opportunities. It's hard to play in those five conferences. Obviously because of football and basketball, they're on TV a lot, and a lot of those kids want to go to those schools but it's probably 1% or less

that can actually compete at those places. I mean you see how many thousands of kids are here.

**Doyon:** Volleyball is awesome at the D1, D2, D3, the NAIA, the junior college. I really think that if you love the sport and you want to play volleyball, there's opportunity for everybody out there.

**Roberts:** As with any division, there are different perks and things like that. Our balance is a little bit different than maybe D1. Our summers are different than maybe D3. Just show them the options. And so again they can make an educated decision – do I want to go on a 3-month internship in the summer and make \$40 an hour, you can do that at D 2. And sometimes you can't do that at different levels. You have to do your research. What do I want my student-athlete life to look like?

**Virtue:** When someone visits and they have that feeling and they just know. And they want to go to high school the next day and put a sweatshirt on that says Michigan on it and wear that to school, that's when we know it's the best fit. When both parties are really, really excited about it – whether it's a scholarship or a walk-on it doesn't matter when that offer comes and they know and they're excited to take it. I think those are the ones that I see the most committed.



# Warm Up and Maturity are Keys for Evaluating a Player's Potential

By Jenny Krueger, Austin Performance

**This article by Jenny Krueger on evaluating a player's potential is a perennial favorite of XCELent News. It appears annually in our newsletter, as her main points serve as important reminders to our older players participating in various showcases.**

A coach can tell a lot about a player just in the five-minute warm up at a tournament. What coaches are looking for is the player who prepares mentally and physically to win the set. Oftentimes the team does a few common things to warm up. They start with passing and progress into setting and eventually a full pepper with some type of variation or progression. After a couple of minutes, team captains are asked by the referee to join them in preparation for the match. During this time college coaches will stand courtside or one court over to see what a player is doing in the warm up. Is he/she casually warming up or taking the warm up seriously to prepare to compete? What coaches need on every team is the player that competes to win and uses every opportunity to prepare for a win.

I'll give you a true example. Nine months ago a player came to me about the recruiting process. After evaluating her, I immediately called a long-time friend and NCAA Division I coach that I knew was in need of a middle blocker for the 2010 season. Over the phone we discussed the player and the coach made arrangements to fly to Texas to watch this senior play in a home game during the high school season.

Within 5-6 minutes of warm up the coach leaned to me and said this trip was worth it, and we are going to make an offer. The coach had not even seen the middle play and only had time to watch the player warm up and go through six or seven swings at the net. She could see the work ethic and potential in the warm up and that scholarship offer was accepted after an official visit was made by the player.

Coaches are looking for the players who communicate and drive to make those around her better. We all know the importance of leadership and the ability to communicate on the court in relationship to winning. Communication is key even in warm up. Coaches are also looking for ball control, mechanics, and movement. When it comes to ball control, are they passing with intention or going through the motions? Is the player balanced when they set and are they quick to move to the ball? Do they hustle after the ball that is sent five feet further, or do they just let it drop and pick back up again? In hitting lines, is the player quick to swing and taking the ball at a high point and hitting angles? Is the setter quick to think about the next play and having a consistent location on the ball? Is the libero hustling after the ball with intention to play the ball? Work ethic and potential can all be seen in a warm up. There are several times that college coaches might be going to a specific court to watch a player but see something that really catches their eye in a warm up and they will literally stop and see what a player has to offer. Coaches are always on



## Evaluating a Player's Potential (continued)

the lookout for that player that is the difference maker, leader, and one who desires to win.

Usually after a warm up, a team gathers on its side to listen to the lineup and what the coaches have to offer in terms of strategy. This is the time college coaches are looking to see if a player is engaged with the team and looking in the eyes of the coach while he or she is communicating. Being engaged is extremely important for the success of the team, and it also shows the maturity level of a player who has intent of winning. During a set, there are oftentimes a player who is in the recruiting process will have to sit out for several points or even an entire set. This doesn't mean that the college coach is no longer going to be recruiting that player. Parents oftentimes panic if things aren't perfect or playing time is altered in some form or fashion. This is a natural reaction for most players and parents. The absolute worst thing a parent or player can do is start worrying during a set about the recruiting side of the game. All things turn out usually for the best in most cases and just because a player sits out doesn't mean they lost their chance or a coach won't evaluate the player. The coaches will also see how a player reacts to situations, such as sitting the bench or a change in pattern. Is the player on the sideline talking and engaged with the team or arms folded and not vocal? Does the player hustle in at a timeout and engage with the coach or does he/she

walk slowly to the huddle to hear what the coach says. Is the player engaging with team members and telling them what shots are open, or has the change in play time gotten the player down? This is a crucial side to teamwork that often fails when players think their value to the team no longer exist. It really is never the case until a player allows the playtime to become personal and negative. As a coach, I have never looked down the bench of players and put someone back in the game who is not engaged for the success of the team. If I have a player that I pull for some reason and they are at the bench with their hands on their knees encouraging the team and communicating during and between plays, then my confidence in that player stays extremely high and the chance of the player returning to the game stays high. If the player becomes selfish and takes it personal and is quiet, there is absolutely zero chance he/she will see the floor the rest of the day.

Coaches can see so much in a player during warm up and intense play situations. They want the player who drives to compete, prepares mentally and physically with one thing in mind, and that is to win. Anyone can pass a ball, set a ball, or attack the ball. Coaches are looking for the maturity level and the drive to win on every touch of the ball. It can all be seen in the small things, so warm up with intention and always take the high road when faced with a challenge. It can make a difference in the recruiting process.



# Five Essential Nutrition Tips for Volleyball Players

By Don Patterson, reprinted from StudentSports.com

A big part of getting players to perform their best is making sure they're eating the right things at the right time.

Experts will tell you that eating and drinking is as much a part of playing good volleyball as fitness training and practicing skills. Not surprisingly, Penn State, which has won several NCAA volleyball championships, pays close attention to nutrition.

We thought it would be a good idea to pass along some information on how players can improve their play by improving their diet. So we went right to the top and got five tips from Dr. Kristine Clark, who is Penn State's director of sports nutrition.

## 1. Eat throughout the day.

Athletes need fuel all day. Clark says it's a good idea for players to eat every two to three hours. "Every time we eat, we're bringing nutrients and energy into the bloodstream," she says. "That influences our ability to think because our brain uses glucose, and it's also the primary fuel for any muscle group." A common problem for student/athletes is going too long between meals or snacks, Clark says. By eating more frequently, you give your body the sustenance it needs to perform well.

## 2. Eat immediately after waking up in the morning.

Each day, you are creating a foundation for building your energy stores back up to where they were the day before, Clark says. So don't skip breakfast. A lot of teenagers and college students do, but it's a bad habit, especially for athletes. "Skipping breakfast puts you in a serious deficit and you can't catch up," Clark says. "If athletes go to practice at 3 o'clock – even though they've had lunch – they are falsely operating on the idea that their energy levels are high. (If they skip breakfast), their energy levels are actually very low."

## 3. Timing is everything.

Clark says that athletes need to pay close attention to how their day is going to unfold. "You've got to look at your day as if it matters that calories are available to you," she says. "You have to eat before a workout. You *have* to. (When you eat before a workout), you'll get more out of the workout because you'll have available energy. We want there to be energy in the bloodstream. If you're working out, you don't want to go into your bank account and dredge out the energy. You want to have high energy in the first part of your workout, and that means having good sugar or carbohydrates in your blood."

Clark recommends eating one hour before a workout, and she says that what you eat should be heavy on carbohydrates. Some options: fruit and half of a bagel, a peanut butter and jelly sandwich, yogurt and fruit, dry cereal or trail mix.

Keep in mind, the first half of a student/athlete's day is usually filled with classes, so eating an hour before practice or a workout means planning ahead. "You need to know where



## Essential Nutrition Tips

(continued)

you're going to be, and you need to carry the snack with you," Clark says.

### 4. Drink before you're thirsty.

"This is something I've had to implore my athletes at Penn State to be mindful of," Clark says. "They know they should drink more, but it's not on their minds because they're not stimulated to drink if they're not thirsty."

Clark recommends drinking 32 ounces of water before noon every day and 32 ounces of water before practice. Penn State athletes carry a 32-ounce water bottle with them to class so they're never without access to water.

### 5. Eat a balance of carbs and proteins after your workout

Muscle-cell repair occurs at the fastest rate within the first two hours after a workout,

Clark says. She advises her athletes to eat as soon after exercise as possible to facilitate maximum muscle-cell repair.

"We want players to be eating a meal within an hour after exercise," Clark

says. "If that can't happen, then a snack is appropriate until they can eat a meal. And the snack needs protein. This is where protein is most important for athletes. Fifty percent of what they eat should be protein, and 50 percent of what they eat should be carbohydrate."

At Penn State, we give the players protein-carb shakes. But (the snack) could be anything from nuts to trail mix, a sandwich, a protein bar. It could be a glass of chocolate milk – things that are easy to prepare in advance and don't require refrigeration."

Clark says that it's best if players start the recovery process while they're still in uniform. Ideally, they will be eating just a few minutes after they walk off the court.

"So many athletes don't understand that their muscle cells have undergone some microscopic damage during an intense practice," Clark says. "There are hormones, one of which is cortisol, that are elevated with intense exercise. The minute you bring protein into the diet, it suppresses that cortisol production, so it really helps prevent soreness and muscle-cell damage. That's part of the recovery process."



**With proper nutrition and training, you play at peak performance.**

**However, an unhealthy diet can often lead to impaired reaction time on the court, resulting in an unfortuitous knock to the noggin.**



# Nine Best Foods for Athletes

By Amanda MacMillan, reprinted from Outside Online

Sure, carbo-loading's important—but for top-notch performance, it's just part of the story. Supplement your training with these healthy eats that will help you build strength, sustain energy, and recover faster.

Eating for athletic performance shouldn't just take place after the gym or right before a big event. It's something you should be conscious of at every meal and every snack, say sports nutritionists Barbara Lewin and Jill Pluhar, and your strategy should involve more whole foods and natural nutrition than the factory-manufactured kind. Here are 9 of their favorite eats for athletes and tips on how to make the most of their nutritional benefits.

**Quinoa** – Considered a “super” whole grain, having twice as much protein as other grains, and it’s one of the only foods to contain all nine essential amino acids our bodies need to build lean muscle and recover from tough workouts.

**Berries** – Helps protect against oxidative stress and free radicals that form in the body during strenuous physical activity.

**Salmon** – Good source of lean protein and omega-3 fatty acids, which help reduce inflammation that can hamper athletic performance and contribute to chronic conditions like heart disease.

**Beans and Legumes** – For vegetarian athletes (or those who just want to go meatless once and a while), plant-based sources of protein are a must. Unlike animal protein, beans have no saturated fat and are also a good source of fiber, which can help keep you feeling fuller for longer.

**Pasta** – Carbohydrates are still the single most important component of an athlete’s diet. Whole-grain varieties are best. They have more fiber and, usually, less added sugar than their refined white counterparts. The night before a big competition, though, switch to the simple stuff—plain pasta with red sauce, for example.

**Bananas** – Great source of easy-to-digest sugar and natural electrolytes. A favorite post-event recovery food, containing potassium to regulate fluids and prevent muscle cramps and spasms. You sweat out potassium during physical activity, so it’s important to replenish as soon as possible afterward.

**Cruciferous Veggies** – Dark, leafy greens and members of the cruciferous family (like broccoli, cauliflower, brussels sprouts and kale) have higher concentrations of antioxidants, fiber, and other important nutrients.

**Nuts and Nut Butter** – A natural combination of protein and healthy fats, nuts (and nut products) are a staple in many athletes’ diets. Easy to digest and can help balance your blood sugar when paired with carbs.

**Chocolate Milk** – Simple carbs with a little bit of protein for recovery could be found in some store-bought drinks like low-fat chocolate milk. Plus, the caffeine in chocolate dilates and relaxes blood vessels, helping oxygen-rich blood reach your muscles more quickly and easily. Another favorite recovery drink is tart cherry juice to help prevent inflammation and reduce muscle soreness.



# Nine Foods to Avoid

By Tiffany Gagnon, reprinted from Men's Fitness

Top performing athletes know that nutrition is king when it comes to gaining an edge over their competitors. However, no matter what your goal is, the gateway to success lies on your plate. An athlete's diet is more than just calories in and calories out—it's fuel. The right foods increase your energy, promote muscle growth, and aid in muscle repair. The wrong ones set you back. When it comes to chowing down, there are certain eats a serious athlete just won't touch. Top athletes wouldn't dare devour these diet disasters—and neither should you.

**Diet Soda** – Increases your risk for health problems and weight gain; they trick the body into thinking it's consuming real food, and because they're over a hundred times sweeter than the real thing, your body starts producing insulin (the fat storage hormone).

**Canned Soup** – It's more convenient, but their long shelf life should tip you off. Some soups are so processed and high in sodium that it trumps over the health benefits.

**Rice Cakes** – This staple diet snack is practically empty—nutritionally speaking. They do boast a low calorie count, but athletes need calories to keep their energy levels up. Not to mention these crunchy little snacks will send your blood sugar soaring.

**Sugary Cereal** – Artificial sugar is a definite no, but eating too much of the real thing is just as bad. Too much sugar also causes a spike in insulin, priming your body to store more fat.

**White Bread** – White pastas, rice, and breads are OK, (but not ideal) because they are stripped of their nutrients and fiber, what is left is a highly processed food product, and when consumed, raises insulin levels and contributes to dips in energy and weight gain. Stick to whole-grain products.

**Microwave Popcorn** – Saturated with unhealthy fats, unearthly levels of sodium, and in some cases, laced with chemicals, popcorn does not fuel an athlete's body for a strenuous training session, nor does it encourage recovery after a long workout. There is a flip side, however. If you air pop the corn or pop it on the stove with a small amount of coconut oil, it turns into somewhat of a superfood, boasting high levels of antioxidants and a hearty dose of satiating fiber.

**Granola** – Might seem healthy, with fibrous oats as the base, but it's not exactly all it's cracked up to be. Most versions of the cereal come stacked with high amounts of sugar, unnecessary fat, and an excess amount of calories.

**Alcohol** – Slows muscle recovery, impairs motor skills, and decreases strength and sprint performance. Duh!

**A meal without protein** - Protein is important for repairing and strengthening muscle tissue and maintains adequacy, balance, and variety, while also helping lower blood sugar levels.

