

# XCELERATION

V O L L E Y B A L L

February 2016

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**Xceleration  
Volleyball Club**

John B. David, Editor

## JACKPOT! Hitting Stride in Vegas and Prez Tourney

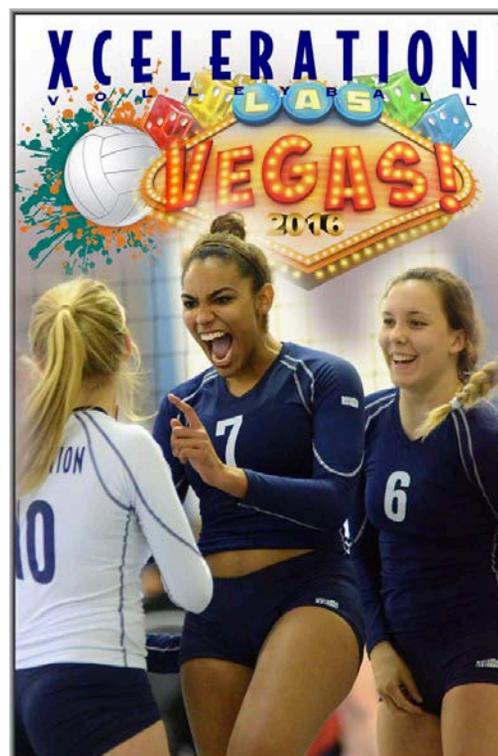
### Teams in good shape entering Power League Competition

Over the Presidents' Day holiday weekend, Xceleration's 16Blue, 17Blue and 18s teams made their annual trek to the desert for the Southern California Volleyball Association's Las Vegas Classic and Showcase, while the younger teams competed locally in the NCVA's Presidents' Day Tournament.

As the teams faced tougher opponents, they were ready to compete hard in preparation for league play that immediately follows. Club leadership is extremely pleased that many of the teams are hitting their stride and continuing to peak as we near the mid-point of the season.

At the Las Vegas Classic, over 400 colleges and their recruiters were on hand to witness one of the best volleyball showcases in the nation. Teams from around the country, comprised solely of 16- to 18-year olds, gathered in different courts surrounding the Las Vegas area to show their skills.

Thousands of volleyball hopefuls impressed iPad-toting recruiters with the best performances they can muster in the annual showcase. The wins, losses, and standings in this "tournament" were not as important. The notion is for college coaches to watch high school Sophomores (for the first time), Juniors, and Seniors play in



The 18Blue's Emma Doud, Mickayla Sherman, and Kaitlynn Zdroik celebrate a point after a hard-fought victory at the Las Vegas Classic.

the "tryout" setting and also watch them compete with their club in the three-day event.

For the last 30 years, this tournament was created to bring in 17- and 18-year old

*(Continued on page 4)*

# Shannon Says...

XCELlent News will regularly include topical, pertinent, and other important messages from club director Shannon Kussman and club partner Jim Ross... here's Shannon Says and J-Ross Speaks!

*Hello Xcel players, families, and friends:*

*At about the halfway point of our season, the Xcel leadership team and I couldn't be more pleased and extremely proud of all our teams that continue to work hard each and every day to improve their game. Yes, we've had our "ups and downs," and that is to be expected over the course of our volleyball journey. That's why it's important to find the right balance and stay on an even keel whenever possible – celebrate our highs and also move on from our lows, and then into the next step of the process.*

*This issue of the News provides a quick report on our teams' performance in the Las Vegas Classic and the Presidents' Day tournament. The action I witnessed in Las Vegas and the reports I received on the Presidents' Day tourney were all very encouraging and exciting. Our teams performed well, and the coaches are very impressed with the progression that their teams are going through. Skills are being developed and refined. The effort is there, the competitiveness is good, and I am loving every minute of it! Congratulations to the girls and coaches for playing so well in the tournaments, and more recently in the Power and Premier League competition. Thank you also to our parents, supporters and chaperones for all the work behind the scenes that often go unrecognized. We wouldn't be where we are without you!*

*There is still plenty of room to improve, move up the standings, and stretch our capabilities. Remember to follow Coach Maxwell's strength and conditioning program and workouts, sign up for private or group lessons if you feel that you need to do more to improve your skills, and of course, stay healthy with proper nutrition, sleep/rest and hydration to perform at our best – we will all need it in the next few weeks!*

*Now we're off to Denver! I strongly believe that our teams have prepared hard for this tournament and we are confident they will perform well on this big stage. As was stated before, we have placed our teams into divisions that we feel will challenge them. The competition is top notch in Denver, and we want to challenge our teams to step up. You can follow all the results at the Colorado Crossroads website (<https://coloradocrossroads.org/>).*

*Finally, I just want to echo a few thoughts that my Dad has shared with Xcel teams in the past, which I found very enlightening as we prepare for the upcoming tournaments:*

1. **The elevator to the top is broken** – Nothing comes easy and everything takes hard work!
2. **Passion** – Follow your heart and the body will follow.
3. **Commitment** – Have a commitment to excellence, doing your best and giving max effort each time out.
4. **Believe** – You must believe you are capable of a goal before you can achieve it.
5. **Adversity** – We all make mistakes, get over them! Quick recovery is important. Failure isn't fatal if you use it for fertilizer.
6. **Teamwork** – Move from ME to WE.

*For now, safe travels to Denver, and good luck! GO XCEL!  
Shannon*



### 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](#)  
[NCVA](#)

# J-Ross Speaks...

## Greetings Xcel Family!

This edition of XCELlent News finds us right in the middle of the busiest part of the season. I hope you are all staying well rested and healthy, so you can play at your best each time out.

We had a great trip to Las Vegas on the College Development side. Paul and I talked with well over 200 coaches and college programs and many of them are now actively seeking us out and making inquiries into our program and players. I cannot stress enough to players wanting to be recruited the value of making inquiries and getting dialogues going with colleges you have interest in. EVERY college coach we spoke with told us that their priorities at tournaments is getting out and watching each player who has contacted them and established a bit of relationship with the coaching staff. Paul and I will always do our best to grab coaches and get them to the courts our Xcel players are on (and we have a great success rate at doing this), but they are very busy and have a lot of players to watch. If you want to assure getting a look from a school you are interested in, make sure you have taken the steps to do so.

That means:

- Filling out the online questionnaire that every volleyball program has on their web sites for potential recruits.
- Contacting the volleyball coaching staff and letting them know you have filled out the questionnaire and of your interest in their program.
- Following up with the college staff and getting a back-and-forth conversation going
- Sending them a bit of footage of you playing. This is SO important, even if it is just a small amount. It gives them an idea of your play for one, but it also lets them SEE you so they can recognize you on the court.
- Be as realistic as you can with where you think you can play and at what level. If you have any doubts, ask Paul or me for an evaluation. We are happy to help.
- Details on how to accomplish all of this are in the College Development Handbook that you received at our seminar. If you need a copy, please e-mail me.

I received some inquiries from parents about the other tournaments that are taking place over the Presidents Day weekend and specifically the new Salt Lake City Tournament of Champions (SLC TOC). The SLC TOC is an invitation-only tournament that gained a lot of traction with college programs this season. The organizers of this event made it very clear to me that they wanted to establish a tournament for the best teams in

*(Continued on the next page)*



## PRACTICE & TRAINING LOCATIONS

**Bladium Sports Complex**  
800 W. Tower Avenue, Bldg 40  
Alameda, CA 94501

**Concord Facility**  
3911 Laura Alice Way  
Concord, CA 94520

**Mills College**  
5000 MacArthur Blvd.  
Oakland, CA 94613

**NorCal Courts**  
360 Ferry Street  
Martinez, CA 94553

**Oak Park Christian**  
2073 Oak Park Blvd.  
Pleasant Hill, CA 94523

## PHOTO GALLERIES

You can find more photos in the [Galleries](#) or Team sections of our website. If you would like to share your pictures during the season, please post them on our Facebook group page, and they may work their way into future issues of XCELlent News.

## INSTAGRAM

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

**XCELERATIONVBC**



Instagram

## J-Ross Speaks...

the country. Our 18Blue team was invited and we declined the invite and opted to stay in Las Vegas. The reasoning behind this is that we still felt LV gave our non-committed players the best opportunity to be seen by the programs they were looking at and that we knew (because we reached out to quite a few) many programs that would have interest in our players would still be in attendance. As it turned out, we were right. Many of the programs at larger programs either split staff between the two tournaments, or split days between the two. A good many of the smaller programs elected to attend the LV tourney, simply because of the number of players they could watch that would fit their programs.

We will continue to monitor this situation going forward to next season and will be talking to coaches all season about their plans for the future. The SLC TOC will remain the same size (from what we have heard) for next season, but will be doubling in size in 2018. We will also be monitoring the situation in Las Vegas. Rest assured, we will get our players to the places that we feel give them the best opportunities to get in front of the coaches they need to be seen by.

On we go to Denver! This is probably the largest Junior National Qualifier (JNQ) in the country and, other than AAUs, is the tournament where we see the most coaches. Update your lists. Send out your last few e-mails. Hydrate! Stay healthy. And most importantly, relax and play like you can. Do NOT look around the convention center at all the coaches. That is what Paul and I do! We will fill you in afterwards.

Safe travels. Go Xcel!!

Jim



## As Seen In... **SPORTSTARS**

# FULL SPEED Xceleration 18 Blue ready to hit Vegas



Kaitlynn Zdroik of Xceleration 18 Blue

As the heart of the girls club volleyball season is about to commence, the 18 Blue team of the Xceleration Volleyball Club in Walnut Creek is getting set to pack its bags for Las Vegas.

The 18U squad, featuring several of the top seniors from Contra Costa and Alameda County, will take on its first big competition of the season at the Southern California Volleyball Association's Las Vegas Classic from Feb. 13-15.

Coach Andy Schroeder has certainly liked what he's seen from this group so far. The squad was 4-1 in the Northern California Volleyball Association's California Kick-Off in San Jose on Jan. 14-16. They've since run their record to 10-5.

"They've come to work to improve and they're very coachable," Schroeder said. "I've been extremely happy. The adjustments need to be made on our end coaching-wise. But truly, the first 65 days have been nothing short of excellent."

Leading the offense for the 18 Blue this season is 6-foot-1 outside hitter Mickayla Sherman of Freedom High in Oakland.

"She's probably the most athletic kid who has come through our program," Schroeder said of the UC Riverside-bound Sherman. "We're very happy with her progress as a player and a leader."

Joining Sherman in 18 Blue's attack is her counterpart from rival school Liberty-Brentwood. Taylor Dixon is a 6-foot outside hitter headed to CSU San Marcos in the fall.

"(San Marcos is) getting a great athlete," Schroeder said. "She's also one of the most coachable kids we've had."

Dixon's Liberty teammate Kaitlynn Zdroik, a San Jose State-signee, will share setting duties along with Katie Orbeta out of

Bishop O'Dowd-Oakland. The middle hitters for 18 Blue include California-San Ramon's 6-foot-2 Nicole Tchabanov, and Cam-polindo-Moraga's 6-foot Emma Johnson. The latter is signed to Loyola Marymount.

All three of the team's defensive specialists are signed to collegiate programs. Sam McGrath (Bishop O'Dowd) is headed to San Diego State, Daiana Takashima (College Prep-Oakland) has signed to play at Williams College in Pennsylvania and Emma Doud (St. Joseph Notre Dame-Oakland) just recently signed to Loyola Marymount on a beach volleyball scholarship, which Schroeder says makes her the club's first true beach signee.

Other talents on the roster include opposite hitters Isabella Fernandez (Granada-Livermore), Ariann Harris-Ealy (Bishop O'Dowd) and middle blocker Halle Webster (St. Patrick/St. Vincent-Vallejo).

"They're probably in the same mold what we've had over the last five years at this level," Schroeder said. "The group has the potential to compete at the Open level if it all comes together. It will be a matter of taking care of the details and little things and sticking with it."

**NET NOTES:** Vision Volleyball of Los Gatos had its 15 Blue team go undefeated in NCVA Power League Qualifiers on Jan. 30-31. ... The Nor Cal Volleyball Club of Pleasanton went a combined 58-21 across all age groups during the NCVA California Kickoff. ... Northern California Volleyball Club from the Sacramento region had a strong showing at the Cal Kickoff. That included the 18-1 Asics team powered by Oak Ridge-El Dorado Hills standouts Megan Priest, Elizabeth Cameron and Olivia Reid which took second. 🏐



*(Continued from the front page)*

teams (and 16-year olds for the first time this year) from across the country and give them a three-day format of play to showcase them for college coaches. This tournament has no spots to Junior Nationals at stake and its sole purpose is to promote the players for the college coaches in attendance. With hundreds of college programs represented, it is a good venue for the girls to “show their volleyball stuff.”

As to the play, the goal of any team getting to the Classic (or any JN qualifier for that matter) is to “move up” the first day. That assures you of playing in the top half of the draw the last two days, which gives you better

competition and the preferred morning (AM) wave.

All four teams showed themselves well over the three days, with some big wins and close losses. The coaches were all pleased with the effort of their players and the competitiveness of their teams. While playing against some of the best teams in their divisions from other USA Volleyball regions, Xceleration teams represented themselves very well.

The 18Blue cruised through the 18 Open Division with shining performances and going 6-0 to open the Classic, which included its first-ever win against baja 18-1 at the end of the first day in one of the most hotly contested three-set victories to date.

The team won its sixth game in another barnburner on Day 2 that again ended in three-sets against SCVC. Each team wouldn't budge in the deciding set. SCVC pulled ahead by two points at 13-11 before 18Blue mounted a furious comeback to win four straight points with a strong service game

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## A Message from Coach Andy

*Jeremy and I were very satisfied with how the 18Blue performed in Las Vegas. We were dealt a tough crossover draw against the 5th seeded team from the Washington VBA who somehow got upset earlier in the day. This team has two University of Washington recruits – one of which towered at 6'5" – and was very good. Our girls played their collective hearts out and was edged in 3.*

*We were able to go 8-2 in matches and 18-7 in games played. We lost a very exciting last match of the tournament, 23-21, in the third game. The final result could have easily turned in our favor in the evenly matched contest.*

*The takeaways were – Lots of exciting play, all 12 players left Vegas feeling good about how they competed, some points left everyone breathless, some good wins, and some room improve.*

*All in all we feel like we improved. Thanks to everyone in the 18Blue family, including: parents and friends, Jim Ross, Paul Harrison, Normie and Tomas Pineda, John David, our chaperones Kristina and Bill Fernandez, our team parents Stephanie and Rob Doud, and Shannon Kussman for all of the support.*

*Onward to the Mile High City!!*

*Andy*

Reporting from  
the LV Classic...



**"VERY** impressed by the physicality of OH **Mickayla Sherman** of **Xceleration**. UC Riverside got a good one!"



### Las Vegas Classic (continued)

that was highlighted by the now infamous “D-Tak Wedgie” that knotted the score at 13 apiece. The team sealed the victory with a block down the middle.

The 18Blue would post a 2-2 record thereafter to finish at 8-2 in the Silver finals and in the 19<sup>th</sup> position out of the 104-team pool. Fans and spectators are still shaking their heads thinking about the last game of the day in the Silver finals against the Los Angeles Volleyball Academy (LAVA). On the brink of defeat, the 18Blue squeezed out a 25-23 win in the second set to even the match, but then fell to the hot-hitting LAVA team that kept the pressure on Xcel in the third set, winning 23-21 to take the Silver title.

The 18White in the Club Division jumped out of the gates with two wins and then finished at 3-4 in 67<sup>th</sup> place out of 192 teams. The 18Whites, with a few injured players, continued to play well under the circumstances and stretched their last two games of the tournament to three sets.

In the 17 Open, the 17Blue just needed a different venue to claim their two wins to end on a high note during the weekend. The team continues to identify the gaps they need to fill before heading into league play.

And lastly with the 16Blue, the team recorded a 4-3 record that included a three-



game win streak during the tournament. With more consistency and learning to apply what they’ve experienced with the “growth mindset” and the ropes exercises, the team is in good shape and is expected to play well in league.

### The Unsigned Showcase

With costs as little as \$60 to participate, hundreds of high school Juniors and Seniors could turn that small investment into a much bigger return by attracting the interests of college coaches in the Unsigned Showcase held on the day before the Las Vegas Classic. The showcase is open only  
*(Continued on the next page)*



### Las Vegas Classic (continued)

for uncommitted juniors and seniors.

In waves of 90 minutes each, players worked out by position and then played a modified six-on-six match, which are then followed up by coaches watching the girls play with their club at the Classic. The showcase organizers also will send jump test data and contact information gathered from the Showcase to every college and university in the country. Several resources were also available to help parents and athletes learn more about the collegiate volleyball recruiting process, including free recruiting seminars.

During the Showcase and Classic, Xceleration's College Development (CD) Directors, **Jim Ross** and **Paul Harrison** were hard at work and "worked the room" talking to numerous college coaches over the three days of the tournament. The CD team garners information as to what each university is looking for in their recruiting process, and in turn gives those programs the information on our players that could impact their teams. Valuable information was exchanged that will help Xceleration players. We move on with the process, as we will see many of these same coaches, and more, at the upcoming Denver tournament.

Promoting our players is part of the Xceleration's College Development Program. This is a free service of consulting its players and families of the college recruiting process.



While not all of our players may have received a good "look" at this event, there are many other opportunities in the coming

## Las Vegas Classic (continued)

months for other showcases, including the Colorado Crossroads or the Far Westerns, which will often have college recruiters scouting the convention floors. Jim and Paul will continue to stay in touch throughout these gatherings.

As indicated previously by **Jim Ross**, these simple messages or questions – likely also in the minds of college recruiters – are worth repeating: Do I see the effort or a fire in the players? Are they enjoying and embracing the competition? How do they handle success or defeat and what do they learn from it? What is the player’s work ethic? Is the player communicating, leading, and driving to make those around her better?

Coaches are also looking for ball control, mechanics, and movement – 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 this showcase.

Players also must realize that 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, and they will literally stop and see what a player has to offer. Coaches are always on the lookout for that player that is the difference maker, leader, and one who desires to win. Both mental and physical aspects of the game are on a microscope.

That said, it also helps to know that Jim and Paul are working the scene and greasing the wheels for potential visits from colleges or from those who happen to be in the Club’s database of college contacts.

# Presidents Day

Xceleration's teams overall performed strongly at the Presidents' Day tournament, collectively recording a 46-30 record, or a 61 percent clip. The majority of the teams also improved from the start of the tournament until the end.

The 12Blue maintained its #27 seed with a strong 6-3 record in the tournament en route to winning tournament T-shirts! The girls steadily ramped up their performance by winning five of their last six games, including three consecutively – all in three sets each to take the James Madison bracket. In six of the nine games contested in the tournament, the 12Blues were extended to three sets, and the team came out with an impressive 4-2 record in the three-set matches.

In the 13s age group, the 13Blue finished in the Top 15 percent of the pool and a 5-seed improvement to finish in 9th place out of 57 teams in the pool, with a 5-3 record. The team was exceptional, playing at or above the .500 mark on each day of the tournament.

Equally impressive were the 13Whites, which posted a 6-3 record and 16-seed improvement from start to finish. The team was formidable throughout the weekend, winning six of its first seven games that included victories with wide margins.

*(Continued on the next page)*



# XCELERATION VOLLEYBALL XCELLent NEWS 2016

(Left, clockwise from left)... 15Blue's Gillian Seguerre, 13White's Ali Booker, and 14Blue's Macey Cooper grace the cover of the Presidents' Day collage created by Tomas Pineda.





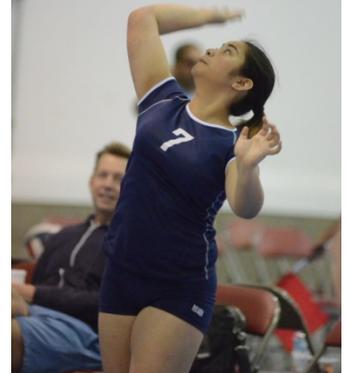
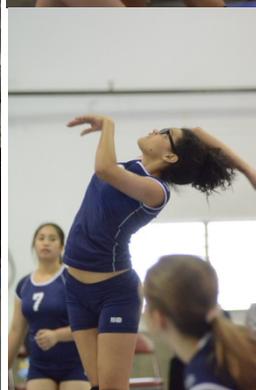
## Presidents' Day (continued)

The 13White reached the John Quincy Adams finals and came within a hair of the victory in the 15-17 third set.

The 14Blues dashed out of the gates and cruised to four straight set wins to open the tournament. The team left with a 5-3 record and a 9th place finish, or in Top 10 percent against 126 other teams in the pool. Three of their last four games ended in three sets each as they faced stronger opponents.

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### 13White



## Mustaches Anyone?

The 14Blue, led by Coaches Daniella Inzerillo and Jade Santos flash the disguises on Valentine's Day at the Presidents' Day Tournament.



## Presidents' Day (continued)

With a 31-seed improvement, the 14Whites ended in 21st place after starting in the 52nd slot. The Top 15 percent finish in the 126-team pool was a product of six straight wins to begin the tournament. The team also was not fazed by their opponents, as eight of the teams they faced were the #1 team of the opposing clubs, and the 14White won seven of eight.

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Presidents' Day  
(continued)

15White



The 15Blue's performance was nothing short of phenomenal, finishing in 5th place, or a +9 improvement in the seeding. The team won seven of its first eight games, which included a six-game win streak spread over three days. En route to the quarterfinals of the Theodore Roosevelt bracket, the 15Blue toppled the #4 and #6 seeds

along the way to finish a successful weekend.

The 15White moved up two spots to end the tournament as it had an up-and-down performance throughout the weekend. However, the team finished on a strong note, winning two of the last three matches that

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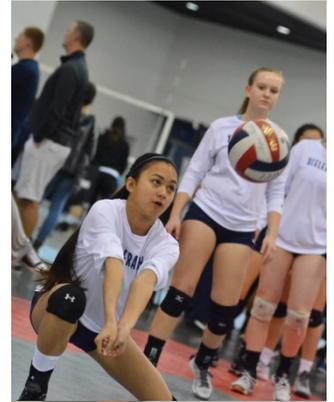
### Presidents' Day (continued)

went the distance. This included a strong comeback and a never-say-die performance in a game which the 15White surrendered the first set, 25-27, only to return the favor and even the match with a 27-25 win in the second set.

The 16White improved five slots to end their Presidents' Day performance in the 23rd position and a 4-4 record. After a slow start, the 16White rattled off four straight wins that included two victories in three-set contests. In the 120-team field, the 16White finished in the Top 20 percent of the age group.

More touches, familiarity with each other, and getting comfortable on the court are benefitting the 16Gold. The team continues to play well of late and is showing steady improvement with each week of practice and tournament play. The team is having fun learning and playing the game. The 16Gold will look to next week's power league opener to continue their skill development and competitiveness.

On to Power League 1!



# 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!

## Katie & Mary Orbeta: Use All Resources, Capitalize on Opportunities

Netflix’n for relaxation... becoming world travelers... identifying professional soccer player and Olympic gold medalist Sydney Leroux and her dog Boss as their role models... leaving their cell phones at home as their worst fears... serving simple float serves... and hating to lose, especially to each other! These are just some of the similarities



Mary (left) and Katie smile for the cameras during a portrait session in their early days.

Photos courtesy of Barbara Orbeta.

shared by Xceleration alum **Mary Orbeta** (Class of 2014) and her younger sister **Katie Orbeta**, setter for the 18Blue. Both are products of the Bishop O’Dowd high school volleyball program and, oh by the way, they are also the pride and joy of **Bob and Barbara Orbeta**.

Xceleration caught up with Mary, currently a sophomore and starting libero for the Seattle University Redhawks, and Katie for our ongoing

*For there is no friend like a sister in calm or stormy weather; To cheer one on the tedious way, to fetch one if one goes astray, to lift one if one totters down, to strengthen whilst one stands.*

**Christina Rossetti**  
*Goblin Market and Other Poems*

	Mary	Katie
<b>Dream job</b>	Food critic	Computer engineer
<b>Other passion</b>	Reading	Computers
<b>Favorite Quote</b>	“Clear eyes, full heart, can’t lose.” Coach Eric Taylor, Friday Night Lights	“It isn’t what you do but how you do it.” UCLA Coach John Wooden
<b>Little known fact</b>	Took first steps at 8 months	Loves to code programs on computer
<b>Hidden talent</b>	Incredibly fast ability to memorize lyrics to every song	Can head the ball 27 times in a row with a volleyball.
<b>Where to find you if not on VB courts</b>	Tanning at beach or pool	Mall
<b>Favorite meal</b>	Mexican food from Alameda Taqueria or La Penca	Grilled cheese and tomato soup

# Sisters

## Mary & Katie (continued)

feature on “Sisters” and found that the Alameda natives have more in common than they previously realized, including their time with Xceleration and their motivation to play volleyball.

On their choice to play for Xceleration, Mary and Katie boiled it down to one word – COACHES! Mary joined Xceleration because she wanted “to learn from great coaches on how to improve [her] game and a staff who would help in [her] journey to find the right school.” Likewise for Katie, she joined Xceleration because of “the club’s elite level of play and amazing coaches.” She said, “When I would watch my sister play, I got to see how much fun it is to have a higher level of competition.” As expected, Xceleration has met or is fulfilling the goals that the Orbetas set out when they joined the club.

Mary also cited the tremendous amount of resources and support that she was able to leverage from the club and that Katie can also take advantage of during the season with the club.

“While playing for Xceleration, use all of the resources that Andy, Jeremy, Jim, and Paul share to become a better player,” Mary said to Katie. “As you continue to play volleyball, my big-sister advice is to have a positive mindset and build strong relationships along the way. I found that with all the time spent in the gym, the great relationships with my teammates and coaching staff are so important. When times get tough, focus on the other people around you and use their vibes and energy to help you get through it.”

Mary’s words of wisdom for Katie are primarily based on her experience at Seattle U that will eventually help Katie prepare for and play at the collegiate level. Katie’s preparations are also complemented and guided by Xceleration’s coaches and college development directors who are well versed and very knowledgeable about the critical skills that volleyball athletes need to play at the next level.

“Xceleration helped me prepare to play in college but it was a lot harder than what I expected once I got on



### Mary’s Message to Katie:

*I am proud and very impressed at how you are handling club volleyball and all the pressures about college. Keep grinding it out and in only a few short months, you will see the results.*



**In their early years, the pair didn’t always start out playing with volleyballs.**

**Mary (left) the libero learned the game cradling the ball... er, pumpkin, without letting it drop.**

**Similarly, Katie (right) practiced her floaters and jump serves with the orange gourds.**

# Sisters

## Mary & Katie (continued)

board in Seattle,” said Mary. “The biggest adjustment that I’ve made from club to college volleyball is the amount of time spent in the gym and the extracurricular activities that revolve around the team. I knew that playing in college would require more time, but during the first few months, I was shocked at how much time I was in the gym – lifting, practicing, doing extra cardio, watching film, and even spending time strategizing in my coach’s office.”

Recognizing Mary’s strong work ethic, Seattle U head volleyball coach **James Finley** said, “Mary has worked very hard to improve in the classroom and on the volleyball court. We are happy with her progress and look forward to her continued success.”

An accounting major, Mary entered the new academic year maintaining a grade point average above 3.0, and her hard work in the classroom helped the Redhawk volleyball team earn the AVCA Team Academic Award last year.

Just recently during the last college volleyball season, Mary was named Seattle U’s Featured Student-Athlete of the Week based on performances both in the classroom and in competition, especially after an outstanding weekend at Cal’s Molten Classic Tournament where the Redhawks took home the title during the early part of the season. The trip to the Bay Area served as a homecoming for Mary, and her parents graciously arranged a trolley tour of San Francisco for the team before the competition.



Seattle University finished the 2015 season with an 18-11 overall record, tied for the second-most victories in a single season in program history. The Redhawks finished in a tie for third place in the Western Athletic Conference regular season standings with a 9-5 league record and qualified for the WAC Volleyball Tournament for the third straight year.

On the other hand, Katie is just beginning the heart of the club volleyball season with important showcases and tournaments on the slate. She said “Mary is serving as a great role model that I follow as much as I can, though I would say that I am more quiet on the court but louder off the court, and Mary is more loud on but quieter off.” Katie though is taking her sister’s off-the- court advice to heart. She is working harder than ever to follow her dreams.

“Keep grinding it out,” said Mary. “In only a few short months, you will see the results.”

Left photo: After Mary and the Seattle University Redhawks volleyball team tamed the Eagles, Wolfpack, and Bears to claim the Molten Classic title, the Orbeta sisters celebrated and got congratulatory hugs courtside at Haas Pavilion.

The Redhawks swept Eastern Washington, Nevada-Reno and Cal, all by 3-0 scores, and pulled off one of its greatest victories in program history, sweeping Cal on its home floor. Seattle U earned its first victory over a Pac-12 school since starting the transition to Division I status in 2008.



Photos courtesy of Tomas Pineda.

# Building Successful Teams



At a recent 16Blue and 16White practice, a few minutes of practice time were set aside to improve team chemistry, with the use of challenging individual and team exercises for personal development and team building. In the session, the 16s participated in an abbreviated low elements “ropes course,” taking place on the ground or only a few feet above the ground, as opposed to the more familiar high elements course with cables and wires attached through different trees. The course is a progression sequence of “elements” that use physical, emotional, and mental challenges. Programs using low ropes course elements or group initiatives are most often designed to explore group interaction, problem solving, communication, and leadership. Some of the commonly claimed outcomes include enhancement of cooperation, team development, decision-making, self-confidence, positive risk taking, social cohesion, trust, self-esteem, leadership, goal setting, and teamwork.

**XCELlent News** sat down with 16Blue coach **Manny Johnson** and 16White coach **David Sin**, along with team-building exercise leader **Jay Ingram**, parent of **Jenna Ingram** of the 16White, to explore the purpose of the exercises and to explain why it was incorporated into the team’s practice session.

School groups, corporate offices, or somewhere in between, have used programs like these, for example, to improve verbal and nonverbal communication skills, learn to solve problems creatively, set attainable goals, or just have a fun-filled experience. How did this idea of

bringing in an expert like Jay Ingram to facilitate a similar program for the 16Blue and 16White come about?

**JOHNSON:** Jay’s daughter Jenna played for me last year on 15Gold, and he was at one of our early



### Building Successful Teams (continued)

practices where we talked about team building and team culture. He let me know that he does team building exercises and is a trained “ropes course” facilitator who conducts trainings such as this as part of his job. We got to talking and I asked him to come in and work with our team. Our team last year was very young and raw. The team building activities Jay did with the team really paid dividends for us on the court! Our communication really improved and the camaraderie needed to be successful skyrocketed.

**With the success of the program on your 15Gold, have you used Jay to work with other teams that you’ve been involved with?**

**JOHNSON:** Yes, Jay’s work was so beneficial that I even asked him to come in and work with the Varsity, JV and freshman volleyball teams at Albany High. My Frosh were struggling with trusting each other and my JV was split between freshmen and sophomore factions. Jay’s work helped both teams get over their issues and

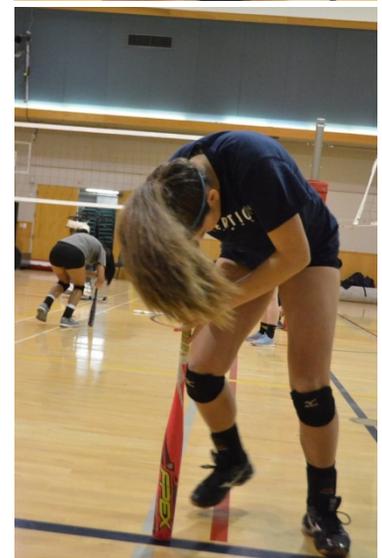
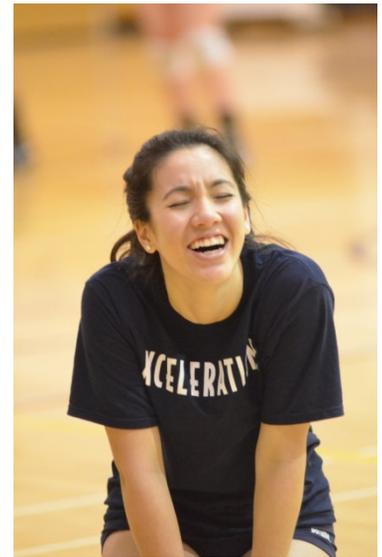
finish the season on high notes. When I saw that we would be practicing with 16White (Jenna’s current team), it was a no brainer to ask Jay for his expertise again.

**Can you tell us a little about the team building program that you led at the 16Blue and 16White practice session? And why is it so important for club volleyball?**

**INGRAM:** I provide a variety of fun and serious exercises that enables the girls to laugh with each other a little bit, and I also ask that they push their personal boundaries with trust and step out of their usual comfort zone. My training usually lasts two hours, but I’ve modified it for club volleyball to do either a 45- or 60-minute session.

The focus is on teamwork, trust, and communication – three life skills needed to be a successful volleyball team. I’ve found the training especially valuable for club teams as they are often 12 girls that haven’t played much together and need to

*(Continued on the next page)*



### Building Successful Teams (continued)

figure each other out very quickly before the first tournament. The club setting is much different than school volleyball teams where players already know each other, see each other all week, and practice together at least five days a week after school and on weekends. I know the training helped the 15Gold team last year, and I'm hopeful it will help the 16Blue and 16White teams this year – only time will tell!

#### What's the biggest challenge for you as a club coach, especially after just finishing Cal Kickoff, and how will the exercises alleviate this challenge?

**SIN:** I think that building team chemistry is the hardest part about being a club coach. I agree with Jay when he said that getting 12 girls to play and communicate on the same page is one tough task, let alone 12 girls from different schools coming together to compete at a high level, but with the right mindset and right tools you can easily build a great team that communicates well.

The great thing coming out of Cal Kickoff was that we saw a lot of holes

in our communication. Having Jay come in and work with our girls, with some team building exercises, will greatly help us on that end. Our girls are starting to build that trust with one another and it's coming along nicely.

**JOHNSON:** The timing of the team building was perfect. I had wanted to do it before Kickoff, but having that tourney under our belt gave us a better idea of what our deficiencies were. The two biggest were communication and trust. We chatter a lot – “Good job!”... “Nice swing,” etc. – but we are still working to communicate – “Hit angle”... “Line is open”... “They're trying to attack us deep corner,” etc.

The 16Blue has been working hard to get comfortable being uncomfortable, and we've been doing a lot of work on having a growth mindset and being good learners. This often translates into some squirrely volleyball and Kickoff was an eye opener for us, as we went back to old habits when under the duress of matches.

The team building is a way for them to foster the needed camaraderie and relationships to successfully compete and support each other. It's powerful stuff and I recommend it for all the teams in the club! I told poor Jay that as long as I'm coaching, he will be working with my teams early in the season!

*(Continued on the next page)*

“We had a great time watching and participating in the fun. Amazing stuff, Jay! On behalf of 16White, thank you for the help!”

**Coach David Sin**



### Building Successful Teams (continued)

**What was your first impression when you were presented with this opportunity to have Jay incorporate team building activities in practice?**

**SIN:** As coaches we have to be open-minded about trying new things. This was a first for me having someone else other than me do some team building exercises. It was good to take a step back and just watch how the girls worked together.

**What impressed you the most about these exercises? Were there any particular activities that helped your team the most?**

**SIN:** I was really impressed when they got themselves out of the “Human Knot” in less than 30 seconds. I have never seen a group that size get out of a knot that fast. The “Trust Fall” was also a big part of the team building activity. Everyone has some kind of problem with trust. After all the girls had gone, I think having myself go up there at the end and trusting my girls to catch me on the fall shows them that I can have fun and that I fully trust them to go out there and do their jobs on and off the court. It also shows that they can trust each other to have each other’s back on the court – covering, playing defense, making the pass, making the sets – it all helps in every aspect of the game that they all love and enjoy playing.

**JOHNSON:** A couple of Jay’s activities really focused on effective communication, so that was super helpful. We are struggling to trust the process and we want immediate results, the “Trust Fall” and the one where the girls pass each other along like they are “crowd surfing” were great ways to help us understand what trust is and how believing in the process and sharing the work is beneficial.

These two activities were quite scary for some of the girls, but they fought their fears and did them anyway. We told the girls that these exercises literally showed them that they have each other’s back. Now they have to trust that they will have each other’s back on and off the court.

We are trying to instill a sense of competition between the players in order to elevate their play, but without support, that competition can really blow up in your face and divide the team. The activities Jay provided for the girls showed that cooperation and support is necessary for a team to achieve heights they did not know were possible.

**Thank you – Jay, Manny, and David – for sitting down with XCELlent News to discuss these fun and important activities that you shared with Xceleration. These exercises will benefit the teams tremendously. Good luck with the rest of your season.**

“Thanks so much Jay! Your hard work and the team's openness to it has really and will continue to pay dividends for 16Blue!

I also believe that our team does not win three three-set matches this weekend at PLQ without your hard work with the girls. We even won a third set, 16-14, after being down 3-8!”

**Coach Manny Johnson**



# Learning the Ropes: 16White Works Together As a Whole Unit



## Human Knot



- ☞ Form groups of 5, 7, or 9
- ☞ Form a circle
- ☞ Put your right hand up in the air, and then grab the hand of someone across the circle from you.
- ☞ Next, put your left hand up in the air and grab the hand of a different person.
- ☞ Make sure that you are holding the hands of two different people and that you are not holding hands with someone directly next to you.
- ☞ Untangle yourselves without breaking the chain of hands.
- ☞ If you break the chain, you must start over.



**By Jenna Ingram,  
16White**

This experience was important to evaluate how our Xcel 16White team worked together as a whole unit, while being off of the volleyball courts. The series of activities that we completed demonstrated our chemistry as a whole unit and I am proud to say that we worked extremely well together.

For example, we did the Human Knot (one of the most popular team building exercises) and I

am proud to say that our Xcel 16White team completed this task of untying the knot within less than a minute. We were all surprised and ecstatic that we completed this task within under a minute.

My dad Jay, who led the exercises, told us; “You are the fastest group of people I have ever seen do this exercise through my many years of doing group building exercises!”

Then we moved into activities such as Trust Fall and completed it with prestige too. Each individual fell from the top of the bleachers in the gym and although at first, some were nervous to fall, everyone followed through and trusted their teammates. We then further encouraged our coach Dave to complete the trust fall and he did it; with complete trust in us. This demonstrated to us that not only our teammates trusts in one another but our coach also trusts us as players and individuals.

This team building experience was an important exercise of our team and I would highly recommend this for any other team that wants to strengthen their team chemistry.

“You are the fastest group of people I have ever seen do this exercise [The Human Knot] through my many years of doing group building exercises!”

**Jay Ingram**



**Photos courtesy of  
Tomas Pineda.**



# Growth Mindset in Action



**By Manny Johnson**

## What Kind of Mindset Do You Have?



I can learn anything I want to.  
When I'm frustrated, I persevere.  
I want to challenge myself.  
When I fail, I learn.  
Tell me I try hard.  
If you succeed, I'm inspired.  
My effort and attitude determine everything.



I'm either good at it, or I'm not.  
When I'm frustrated, I give up.  
I don't like to be challenged.  
When I fail, I'm no good.  
Tell me I'm smart.  
If you succeed, I feel threatened.  
My abilities determine everything.

Created by Reid Wilson @wayfairingpath © 2015 Icon from theonemindproject.com

The 16Blue team this season had a reading assignment over the Christmas break. My assistant **Gaby Gryko** and I asked the girls to read the book, *Mindset: The New Psychology of Success* by Stanford professor Carol Dweck. The book takes a look at fixed mindsets and the titular growth mindset. We have done some online discussions and constantly refer to the lessons from the book as we go through the season.

A fixed mindset believes that certain traits such as intelligence, athletic ability, musical ability, and the like are fixed traits, almost like the old religious concept of predestination.

The growth mindset believes that these traits can be developed and honed much like muscles. We combine this focus on mindset with an emphasis on learning. Success for us is not defined by wins and losses. To us, winning is a byproduct of the work we put in during practice and on our own throughout the season.

As the title of 49er legend coach Bill Walsh's biography states, "The Score Takes Care of Itself." For us the process is more important than

the result. It all connects back to being great learners and having a growth mindset. For the 16Blue, success can be answered very simply:

- **Did you compete at a high level?**
- **Did you do your best?**
- **Did you improve from the last time you were on the court?**

If you can say yes to all three, then the session/match was a success. We want our players to focus on the things they can control and the score is not something that we can control, therefore, we cannot base our success on the scoreboard.

*(Continued on the next page)*

"Success for us is not defined by wins and losses. To us, winning is a byproduct of the work we put in during practice and on our own throughout the season. "

**Coach Manny Johnson**

In this article by 16Blue head coach Manny Johnson, he discusses ways how his team can develop and learn a growth mindset and how the 16Blue has put it into action. A growth mindset is a simple idea discovered by world-renowned Stanford University psychologist Carol Dweck in decades of research on achievement and success – a simple idea that makes all the difference.

In a growth mindset, people believe that their most basic abilities can be developed through dedication and hard work – brains and talent are just the starting point. This view creates a love of learning and a resilience that is essential for great accomplishment. Virtually all great people have had these qualities.

Teaching a growth mindset creates motivation and productivity in the worlds of business, education, and in this case – volleyball.



**Growth Mindset in Action (continued)**

This emphasis on a growth mindset was a little difficult for the team to implement, as we constantly stress the girls to push themselves outside their comfort levels. We want the team to be comfortable being uncomfortable. This often leads to what some people would call “ugly” volleyball.

When we got our first chance to compete at Cal Kickoff, the team reverted back to old habits and stayed in their comfort zones. This regression led to some tentative play and a less than desirable finish. As coaches we had two choices on how to respond and what to do before the Power League Qualifiers (PLQs).

We could have taken a fixed mindset approach and told the team that their play was a reflection of their ability and, that it was a challenging tournament because the other teams were better than us. We needed to make changes in the way we were doing things, or we could have stayed the course with a growth mindset – continuing to focus on learning and competing a lot in practice.

We chose to stay the course and that meant having some frank discussions about why we fell short in the close games and what needed to be done to fix our process. Remember to us, results (i.e., wins and losses) are not what is important, they are feedback

and a way for us to measure how well our process is going.

We had eight practices between the Kickoff and PLQ, and as a staff we looked at the numbers and discussed what our team was struggling with (“big rocks”) and put together an outline of the eight practices based on our big rocks. At the same time we looked at each individual player and assessed what they needed to improve (“little rocks”).

We shared the big and little rocks with the team and changed our practice plans accordingly as our rocks disappeared. By emphasizing the process over the result, we were able to stay in the moment and really commit to pushing ourselves to do our best. Our approach was rewarded, with the team winning three matches in three sets: one after losing a second set, 25-10; another after blowing a late lead in set two; and the third after being down, 3-8, at the switch in the third set.

I firmly believe that we would not have been able to show such resiliency if we were focused on results instead of the process. The growth that our team showed between Kickoff and PLQ was tremendous and led to a finish in the top of Silver!





## QUICK TIPS

Reprinted from  
**The Art of Coaching Volleyball**

# PARENTS AND ATHLETES: Help Your Child be the Best Backup Player as Possible

By Janis Meredith

In the upper levels of youth sports, it's very clear that there are starters and there are backups. My son learned this hard lesson when he was a backup QB his junior year in high school. After being a shining starter in freshman and junior varsity football, he was moved up to varsity to stand and watch. He spent a few minutes in the game and a lot of time on the sideline thinking.

I reminded him of how important his role really was. "You never know," I'd say. "You're one play from getting in."

Once in a while, he *did* get in. When the first QB suffered a tweaked ankle, a cramp, a hard hit, my son took the field for a few plays until the starter was ready to return.

When young athletes are in a backup role, whether it's 2nd, 3rd or 4th string, it's easy for them to get lazy because they may think they will NEVER get an opportunity to play. Here are 3 things you can say to encourage them:

### **Stay tuned into the game.**

Pay attention. If you're called on to play, you want to know what you'll be facing.

### **Keep up the hard work in practice.**

At some point, chances are good that you'll get your chance. When you do, you'll be glad you didn't slough off in practice.

### **When you get in, give it all you've got.**

Athletes should always "leave it all on the field (or court)." That lets them feel good about the fact that they have done their very best, no matter the outcome.

In 21 years of sports parenting and 28 years of being a coach's wife, I've seen many games where backup players have played crucial roles in the team's success. When your children are in that position, help them stay focused and be ready to do their part for the team.

**Teaching young athletes to embrace their role allows them to focus on what matters most – bettering themselves to better the team.**

*Janis B. Meredith, sports mom and coach's wife, writes a sports parenting blog called JBM Thinks. She authored the Sports Parenting Survival Guide Series and has recently launched a podcasting series for sports parents. You can also find her on Facebook and Twitter.*

## QUICK TIPS

Transcript from  
The Art of  
Coaching  
Volleyball

### Which emails get noticed?

We posed that question to seven college coaches of which emails get noticed, and they offered a lot of helpful tips.

One good one came from Gonzaga assistant coach **Diane Nelson**, who talked about the importance of including all the essential facts - height, position, club, etc. College coaches are busy. If you want their attention, get to the point.

Others offering tips here are Michigan's **Erin Virtue**, Purdue's **Dave Shondell**, **Laura Kuhn** - known as "Bird" - from Kansas, Regis' **Joel List**, Colorado Mesa's **Dave Fleming** and Colorado School of Mines' **Heather Roberts**.

**Nelson:** I would say the best emails that I get are very pointed, they are directed to me, so my name is on them or the head coach's name is on them. The name of the club, the city the club is in, the position that the player plays, their height. Jump

## RECRUITING: How Do You Want to Set Yourself Apart from the Hundreds of E-Mails?

touch is something that we look for but we always like confirm when we see them live.

**Fleming:** You've got to accentuate the positive right away, that's No. 1. If you tell me you're a 5-3 middle, I'm probably not going to be very interested, especially in your first sentence. I might be interested if you tell me if you have a 46 inch vertical and then you're a 5-3 middle, but don't tell me you're a 5-3 middle.

**Nelson:** We like to see grade point average and maybe Honors classes that are being taken.

**Fleming:** I want to know why you're interested in my school.

**Shondell:** I think it's important who your references are that I can call to find out if you can really play right away. Give me some names and some contact information.

**Virtue:** I think one of the best ways to get recruited is to do a really good job at the program you're in. If you're doing a great job in your high school or your club, then those coaches, similar to getting a job, they're going to put a great reference forward.

**Fleming:** And then, a short video of what you can do... YouTube video that we can go to and so right away I can look at it and I can tell in 20 seconds, can she play at Purdue?

### SAY WHAT?!

*The best emails... are very pointed, they are directed to me, so my name is on them or the head coach's name is on them.*

*...We like to see grade point average and maybe Honors classes that are being taken.*

- Diane Nelson  
Gonzaga University

*You've got to accentuate the positives right away, that's No. 1.*

- Dave Fleming  
Colorado Mesa University

*I think it's important who your references are that I can call to find out if you can really play right away. Give me some names and some contact information.*

- Dave Shondell  
Purdue University

*Call the coaches. I always tell them, "You're not annoying." Just because you missed us, don't give up. Just keep calling because we can't return your phone calls, respond to emails right away.*

- Laura Kuhn  
Kansas University

*If you're doing a great job in your high school or your club, then those coaches, similar to getting a job, they're going to put a great reference forward.*

- Erin Virtue  
University of Michigan

## SAY WHAT?!

*Emma is Xcel's first all out beach recruit! The BEACH is now officially OPEN. A perfect fit for Emma, both academically and athletically. LMU has an idea how good this kid is, that's why they recruited her... but they will find out she is so much more! BIG CONGRATS to Emma Doud and the LMU Lions!!!*

*So happy for you Halle! Great choice for you. CBU and their coaching staff is so fortunate to have this young lady coming there for the next 4 years. Halle, you will be a star on and off the court in Lancerville!*

– Andy Schroeder

*Congratulations Emma !!! The mascot is perfect for you. Lions have a distinct prowess of leadership and charisma and possess a ferocity inside.*

*Halle... Fantastic News !! Congratulations!! I am so happy that you have selected a school that will fit your dreams and goals.*

– Paul Harrison

*DVC is lucky to get you! Congrats Ashley*

– Jim Ross

*Awesome news, Ashley!*

– Jeremy Swann

## Which E-mails Get Noticed? (continued)

**Nelson:** Really not too long. It saves us lot of time to be succinct and get right to the point of where you'll be and when you'll be there, and we'll do our best to come see you play.

**Fleming:** And that's why it's also nice if you could list your schedule. What's left on your schedule?

**List:** I got a phone call from a recruit, and now I'm going to go watch her play.

**Kuhn:** Call the coaches. I always tell them, "You're not annoying." Just because you missed us, don't give up. Just keep calling because we can't

return your phone calls, respond to emails right away.

**Roberts:** Depending on the year, you never know. If that coach, when you're in 18s and it's March, still needs a player. It happens all the time. SO, if you want to actually be recruited – again, get educated, and keep talking to those coaches, via email, via phone... "Hey, I'm still available. I like your school, here's why, come see me." They'll tell you if they're full or not. And other coaches may say, "Hey, I just have another roster spot open up."

**Nelson:** Remember, we don't always find you without these emails, so it's a really good way to let a coach know that you're interested.

## Three More XCELLent Athletes to Play College Volleyball



### THE LION, LANCER AND VIKING!

Congratulations to Emma, Halle and Ashley! Xceleration is super proud of this great news!

Xceleration is proud to announce that three more athletes will continue to play volleyball in college.

**Emma Doud** (left) will be gracing the beaches of Southern California, as she has committed to Loyola Marymount University's Sand Volleyball program. Emma will be coached by AVP men's Player of the Year John Mayer and assisted by Betsi Metter Flint who was the AVP women's Newcomer of the Year.

**Halle Webster** (middle) will be calling Riverside home for the next four years. She has committed to play for Cal Baptist University in the fall.

17Blue alum **Ashley Dixon** (right) will join the Diablo Valley College volleyball program when the new term begins, following her graduation from Brentwood's Liberty High School.

Congratulations to the Douds, Websters, and Dixons!

# Power/Premier League Qualifiers

## Teams Excel at PLQs, Finish in Top Brackets to Begin League Competition

### Premier League: 12Blue and 13White Shine Bright with Golden Finish

Starting with the youngest and newest members of the club, the 12Blue and 13White; both competed in the Eagle District of the Premier League, and they performed like veterans with

golden finishes to begin league. Both teams subsequently maintained their Gold standings after completing PL1 just recently. Congratulations on outstanding performances in your first foray of league competition.

*(Continued on the next page)*

Following California Kickoff, Xceleration immediately returned to action in the Power and Premier League (PL) Qualifiers. The teams repeated their success with knockout performances, setting the table for PL competition over the next few months. The end of league play leads to PL Regionals where our teams will compete for Junior Nationals bids.

The 18Blue and 18White will attempt to secure their Junior Nationals bids through various qualifiers, including the Colorado Crossroads, the Golden State Qualifier in San Mateo, and the SoCal Qualifier in Anaheim.

### PLQ Finishes

12Blue	Gold
13Blue	Bronze
13White	Gold
14Blue	Gold
14White	Blue
15Blue	Bronze
15White	Dusk
16Blue	Silver
16White	Blue
16Gold	Green
17Blue	Silver

*[We] could not be prouder of ALL our Xcel Power and Premier teams the last two weekends!*

*Great results. Inspired play. And so much improvement by all in just the first month. Take this and build on it. Work even harder. You all have a lot in you and will keep getting better and the results will show it.*

*Congrats girls, coaches, and parents. You made us all very proud to have you as a part of our club! Let's keep this rolling ... GO Xcel!*

Jim Ross



## GIRLS PREMIER LEAGUE

## PLQs (continued)

### Power League: Xcel Teams... Just Super!

Xceleration showed flashes of brilliance at PLQs to finish near the top of the standings where they will compete with like competition of similar skill levels.

The 13Blue ended with a 4-4 record. The team started slowly but then posted three straight wins at the

Alameda Fairgrounds to finish in Bronze and in the top half of the 71-team field.

The 14Blue held seed at #10 with an impressive and undefeated record at PLQs, winning seven games in straight sets. The defense was stingy as well, allowing only two of the 14 sets played to go beyond the 20-point mark. They will begin PL1 in Gold, ahead of 107 other teams in their age group!

*(Continued on the next page)*



14Blue

13Blue

GIRLS POWER LEAGUE

14 White

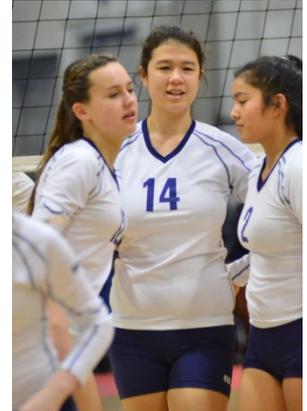
**PLQs (continued)**

The 14White continues its impressive run, finishing in the Blue Division and in the top half of the 108-team field. The team's 4-3 record could have easily swung in their favor with two of the setbacks being decided in the third set.

The 15Blue ended one game above the .500 mark and in the Bronze Division to start PLs. The team finished in the top third of the 109-team pool.

The 15White had a promising start but fell in consecutive games to fall out of the top seeding. It's encouraging however that the 15White was able to bounce back on the second day of competition, with strong performances to finish in the Dusk Division.

The 16Blue bombed in their first match against the Xplosion. The team quickly recovered and had an impressive 5-game win streak that included three 3-set wins. The 5-2 was good for a Silver Division finish.



## PLQs (continued)

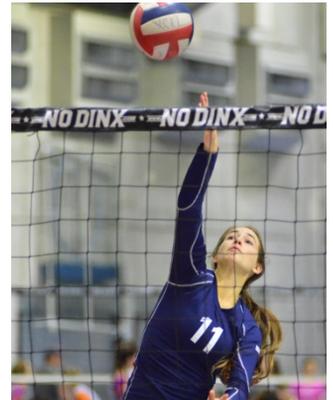
The 16White posted a 5-2 record, which was good for an Aqua finish after the girls dusted off the last three opponents to end the qualifiers on a high note.

The 16Golds will have their work cut out for them and will need to dig deep in power league in the Green Division. Nonetheless, skill

development is increasing at each tournament.

Lastly, the 17Blue in the combo 17/18 performed well at 5-2 and a Silver finish in the 21<sup>st</sup> position. The weekend included a win against the overall #5 seed.

All teams will have the opportunity to improve and move up the rung of the division ladders with top three finishes power league play. Good luck and go Xcel!



Photos courtesy of Tomas Pineda and Renee Nickerson.



# LBSU's Nieto Living Her Dream With A New Found Passion For Beach Volleyball



*The Beach*

This article, reprinted from the Big West Conference website, features Xceleration Class of 2013 alumnus Rachel Nieto, who is now playing Beach Volleyball for the Long Beach State 49ers.

Xceleration is gearing up to begin its Beach program shortly, and we encourage everyone to give it a try. More details on Xceleration's beach volleyball program coming soon!

2/18/2016

In the world of collegiate women's volleyball, Long Beach State is synonymous with winning. Having captured five national championships (3 NCAA, 2 AIAW), eight Final Four appearances, six national player of the year recipients and 13 conference titles, along with a national championship in the recently-added sport of beach volleyball, success has certainly found a home at Long Beach State. And that is exactly why sophomore **Rachel Nieto** chose to attend Long Beach State, to have opportunity to play on a high-caliber team where greatness was within reach.

"I knew coming in that Long Beach was great with both its indoor and beach programs, so I really wanted to pursue that," commented Nieto.

The Walnut Creek, Calif., native began her collegiate career as a walk-on for the 49ers' indoor women's volleyball team. Over the course of the season Nieto never real found the perfect fit so in the spring she gave beach volleyball a try and immediately fell in love and never looked back.



"Once I started playing beach volleyball I really fell in love with it and felt it would be the more appropriate fit for me as an athlete," stated Nieto. "I felt more inclined to play beach volleyball since I was given the opportunity to be outside, get sandy and be with all these girls and the great coaching staff."

Many indoor-turned-beach players share the same sentiments and Nieto credits the location of the university being one factor that may have influenced the crossover. With Long Beach State located in Southern California, and its proximity to the beach, allows the athlete the ability to play on any given day.

*(Continued on the next page)*



The Long Beach State beach volleyball team took home the 2013 AVCA title and returned to the championships in 2015. Long Beach State defeated Pepperdine to reach the AVCA National Championship Match, but the 49ers' magical run at the tournament finally came to an end as No. 1 USC went on to win the national title and finished their season unbeaten.

The 49ers had reached the winner's bracket with a pair of wins against Hawai'i and Florida International, but was unable to reach the finals directly, falling 4-1 to undefeated USC.

Photos courtesy of Paul Harrison and Big West Conference.

**New Found Passion For Beach Volleyball (continued)**

“You can literally play whenever you want,” Nieto reiterates. “It is so easy to pick up a few people, grab a ball and head to the beach and play. It’s hard to do that with indoor.”

She says beach volleyball is a completely different style of game from indoor and enjoys the more competitive and intimate nature of the game where you are involved in every play of a match. Prior to her freshman season at Long Beach State, Nieto had never played beach volleyball competitively so dealing with the elements, such as the sun and wind, has been an additional challenge for her to overcome with her transition from indoor to beach.

After Long Beach State finished runners-up in its quest for the 2015 national championship, Nieto enters the upcoming season with an added boost of confidence.

“With a second place finish in Alabama last year, we are all really enjoying it and I feel it has given us a lot more confidence going into this year,” commented Nieto. “We are super excited to see what the new season brings and with a lot of new players joining us this year it will be exciting to see how everything plays out.”

Nieto and her teammates have an added goal this...capturing the first-ever Big West Conference title for beach volleyball. The conference office recently announced the addition of women’s beach volleyball becoming a sponsored sport starting in 2016, which has brought a little more excitement to the teams.

“As a whole it is nice to see the sport being recognized as an NCAA sport, but I think that with all the teams it is still going to be pretty similar to the past few years,” commented Nieto. “The main difference is now having conferences added to the mix. In that regard, if it comes down to us and possibly Hawai’i, who is one of our biggest rivals, whoever takes first in the conference could use that as an extra push into the NCAA Tournament. I think that is where the excitement comes, having that Big West title on the line brings more amp to it.”

With just a few weeks before the 2016 season starts, the excitement has already begun for Nieto. She is looking forward to seeing how the new partnerships develop and the dynamics of the team play out, which hopefully translates to another successful season for the storied Long Beach State volleyball program.

*Source: Big West Conference and Long Beach State Athletics websites.*



**(2014):** Redshirted during the 2014 season.

**Long Beach State Women's Volleyball:** Redshirted during the 2013 season before focusing on beach volleyball.

**High School:** A two-time all-conference selection at Las Lomas High School ... Averaged 3.44 kills per set while leading the Knights offensively as a senior ... Finished with 203 kills on .358 hitting ... Also led Las Lomas in digs, averaging 4.1 per set ... A two-time scholar-athlete.

**Personal:** Born in Walnut Creek, Calif. ... Parents are Mark and Dede Nieto ... Majoring in Psychology.



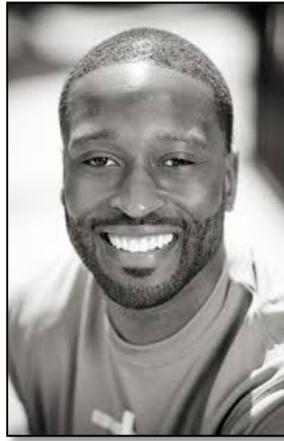
**Rachel Nieto Player Profile-Long Beach State (2015)**

Had an outstanding first competitive season, posting a 17-9 overall record while playing at No. 5 with Sammee Thomas ... Made 391 kills and 312 digs over the course of the season ... Opened her career with a 21-12, 21-16 win at No. 5 over Jones/Cannon of Irvine Valley ... Won 24-22, 21-16 over Jasper-Baylin/Schmitt of UCLA to help capture a 3-2 win over the Bruins at UCLA ... Made 19 digs along with 14 kills in a 21-13, 21-10 win over Castellanos/Scioscia of Loyola Marymount ... Rebounded from a loss to Boyan/Schreiber of Hawai’i in the final regular season match with a 21-19, 21-18 win over the Rainbow Wahine duo at the AVCA Championships ... Also captured a win over Cupp/Toghiyani of Florida International at Gulf Shores.



# Nutrition & Fitness

by **Marcus Maxwell**



Xceleration's high-performance trainer and coach **Marcus Maxwell** provides a few pointers on proper nutrition and fitness before the teams head out to the Rockies for the Colorado Crossroads. The high altitude in Denver will have different effects on the body that most of us may not be accustomed to. Treating your body right with proper meals and preparation will lead to high performance on the courts.

## High-Altitude Performance

The more you run, exercise, or compete at high altitudes, the lower the concentration of oxygen per breath, which means that your heart and lungs have to work much harder to deliver the oxygen to the working muscles.

In addition to eating a clean and balanced diet during the season to aid in recovery and performance, it is vital to boost your hydration and carbohydrate intake at high altitudes to avoid developing fatigue, dehydration, and altitude sickness. Because the body is working harder at high altitudes, it requires more fuel for the effort. It is also wise to avoid caffeine (and alcohol) up high as they can contribute to more stress on an already stressed body. In general,

***A high carbohydrate, low salt diet allows for better adaptation and less risk of "mountain sickness".***

***Fluids - Because mountain air is cool and dry you can lose a lot of water so be sure to maintain adequate hydration.***

## The Energy Balance

Your body is a highly efficient machine that's at work 24/7 taking the energy, or calories, you provide from the foods you eat and turning it into energy that can be used by your body to keep you going strong. **Energy balance** is the relationship between the energy you take in and the energy you put out. So, when you consume the same amount of energy as you use,

your energy is balanced and your body weight stays the same.

When athletes train more than once per day and sessions are close together, speedy recovery of the muscle carbohydrate stores is essential.

Consuming carbohydrate-rich foods and drinks soon after the session helps with rapid refueling, since the muscle can't store glycogen effectively in the absence of carbohydrate intake.

When rapid refueling is needed after a session or competition, target a carbohydrate intake of about 1 g per kg of body mass per hour for the first hour. Athletes should make choices based on convenience, palatability, cost, and the contribution these foods can make to other nutritional goals.

When it isn't possible to meet these carbohydrate targets during the early hours of recovery, the presence of protein in recovery snacks is likely to promote higher rates of glycogen storage than carbohydrate alone.

*(Continued on the next page)*



**Marcus Maxwell** has accumulated years of practical application of all areas of strength and performance, specifically: starting strength; power and maximum velocity mechanics; core strength; rehabilitation; mobility; and multiplanar exercises, along with sports-specific conditioning.

Since Marcus's departure from the University of Oregon in 2005 and National Football League (NFL) in 2012, he has studied amongst the best sports performance coaches who have assisted Marcus in successfully helping his athletes unlock their innate human performance potential through cognitive and physical preparation.

"For an athlete to rise above my mistakes and transcend past my individual accolades is the most rewarding part of my job." This is why Maxwell Performance is a company of visionaries with our sights set on surrounding our athletes with a professional approach through sports, as well as life!

We build competitors to compete at the highest level on and off the court!

### Where we stand:

At **Maxwell Performance** we challenge our athletes and coaches to provide a fun and safe educational training environment to help athletes learn as they develop.

## Nutrition & Fitness (continued)

This is useful since post-workout protein intake addresses other goals of recovery eating. During longer recovery periods (24 hours), the pattern and timing of carbohydrate-rich meals and snacks does not appear to be critical, and can be organized according to what is practical and comfortable for each athlete. There is no difference in glycogen synthesis when carbohydrate is consumed in liquid form or as solid foods. It is valuable to choose nutrient-rich.

### Carbo-Loading

Carbohydrates are the main source for energy, found mostly in fruits, vegetables and grains, and are broken down to the simple sugar we know as glucose. Simple carbs are small chains of sugar that break down quickly (high glycemic), while complex carbs such as starch or fiber are long chains of sugar that take more time to break down. Carbs should make up about 40-60% of daily calorie intake.

During and after exercise is the one time that sugar and high-glycemic carbs are healthy because they will supply energy for working muscle, increase insulin and assist in the breakdown of fats for fuel.

During rest or the normal day it's best to avoid the insulin boosting sugars and high-glycemic carbs since that will promote unhealthy storage of fat.

### The Menu Before the Competition

**Morning Competition:** If you have a morning event, your dinner the night before becomes your most important meal! You want to eat a high carbohydrate dinner the night before competition and a light breakfast the morning of.

*Here is an example of what this looks like:*

Dinner: Chicken + roasted potatoes + spinach salad with vegetables + whole grain bread

Breakfast: Oatmeal + banana + orange juice



**Afternoon Competition:** If you have an afternoon event, it is still important to have a high carbohydrate dinner the night before. This is to ensure that your body is fueled with enough energy to compete. Breakfast should also be high in carbohydrates. Lunch will follow with a lighter-portioned meal.

*Here is another example of what this may look like:*

Dinner: Whole grain pasta with chicken and marinara sauce + roasted vegetables + parmesan cheese + milk

Breakfast: Two-egg breakfast burrito with peppers and onions + apple and peanut butter

Lunch: 3 slices of deli meat + fruit/vegetables + crackers and hummus



**Evening Competition:** For an evening event, follow the same routine with a high carbohydrate breakfast and lunch, followed by a light dinner meal.

Breakfast: Whole wheat pancakes + strawberries + peanut butter + milk

Lunch: Turkey sandwich with lettuce, tomato, cheese + crackers and hummus + apples and peanut butter

Dinner: Chicken + ½ baked potato + water

*(Continued on the next page)*

### A Tip When Flying

Stiff legs, a creaky back, and a generally grumpy attitude often accompany a long trip on an airplane. Yes, the drudgery of hauling a suitcase through an airport and standing in a security line may have an effect, and there is a real physical impact from a long flight that can hamper your ability to perform at your best following a big trip.

A group of super-fit soccer players were measured for their mood and 30-second sprint ability after a long flight. This may not come as a surprise to any veteran traveler, but their mood and sprint power both dropped for two days following the flight. For any athlete traveling to a competition or simply looking to have a great workout during a business trip, this drop in performance and attitude makes a big difference.

**Compression apparel** can play a role in preventing serious medical issues that may occur when sitting for a long time, such as during a flight. In addition to promoting recovery, compressive lower body clothing also helps improve blood circulation during a long stay in a cozy coach-class seat. A group of scientists reviewed nine different studies to determine if compression socks reduced the chance of blood clotting – deep vein thrombosis – during air travel. Their findings were clear – wearing compression socks improved the chances of avoiding a clot.

*(Continued on the next page)*

#### A Tip When Flying (continued)

Cardiologist and triathlete, Dr. Alice Perlowski, agrees that the effects of compression can benefit an athlete while traveling. "Blood is pooling because you're not walking around on the plane," she told *Competitor's* sister publication, *Women's Running*. The right set of medical-grade compression apparel can help reduce pooling.

Another study helps to explain the effect compression socks have on a frequent flyer. This 2011 study from the peer-reviewed scientific journal *Advances in Therapy* found that graduated compression socks "enhance venous blood flow" in the lower body when sitting for a long time, such as while traveling to an event. Wearing compression helped cycle blood through the body and reduced ankle and foot swelling.

Before going to the airport, make sure to slip on a pair of graduated compression socks. Your legs will thank you.

*Reprinted from Competitor.com*

"If you only do what you can do, you will never be more than you are now."

**Po's diminutive, eternally exasperated master, Shifu, urging his protégé to strike out on his own to develop his own power in *Kung Fu Panda 3*.**

## Nutrition & Fitness (continued)

Don't have a competition coming up but want to stay fueled for your practices? Below are some lists of foods that will maximize your energy levels before you exercise, sustain it throughout your workout, and decrease your body's recovery time once you are finished!

### Pre-Exercise Meal Foods:

#### Complex carbs + small amount of lean protein

- Whole grain pasta
- Whole wheat breads
- Fruits
- Vegetables
- Eggs
- Lean meats: Chicken, Turkey, Fish

### 30 Minutes Before Workout/During Exercise Foods: Simple carbs

- Granola bar
- Sports drink
- Fruit
- Vegetables

### Post Workout Food: Complex carbs + moderate amount of protein (Within 2 hours)

- Whole grain pasta
- Whole grain pizza
- Brown rice
- Quinoa
- Fruits: Apples, Bananas, Oranges, Kiwi, Grapes, Berries
- Vegetables: spinach, asparagus, bell peppers, broccoli, kale, carrots, avocado
- Cheese
- Milk
- Chocolate Milk
- Protein: Beef, Chicken, Fish, Pork
- Potatoes: Sweet potatoes, yams, red potatoes, russet potatoes

Fueling your body with the right types of food will ensure your body is able to compete at its highest potential. Eating high fat, simple carbohydrate foods before competition makes it difficult to

function at maximum efficiency. Choosing foods from the lists above and getting adequate hydration will give you the best opportunity for success on the court. Good luck and eat smart!

Here are some examples of foods with high vitamin and mineral content provided by the American College of Sports Medicine!

- Minerals + B Vitamins
- Beef (lean)
- Pork (lean)
- Chicken (skinless)
- Tuna (in water)
- Kidney beans
- Milk (skim)
- Yogurt (Greek)
- Vitamins A, C, and E
- Carrots
- Milk (skim)
- Peanuts
- Orange juice
- Broccoli
- Spinach
- Strawberries

Here are two important minerals for a young athlete according to KidsHealth:

**Calcium:** helps build strong bones to resist breaking and stress fractures –

- Milk
- Cheese
- Yogurt
- Leafy green vegetables: Broccoli, spinach, Brussels sprouts

**Iron:** helps carry oxygen to all parts of the body –

- Chicken
- Tuna
- Salmon
- Eggs
- Dried fruits
- Leafy green vegetables
- Fortified whole grains

## Preparing for High-Altitude Competition

### Did you know?

#### 1. High Altitude = Less Oxygen

The underlying problem with high altitude (Denver, CO, 5,280 ft. above sea level) is that there is less oxygen and while this may not be that threatening to individuals at rest it does pose a challenge to athletes.

#### 2. Takes Longer to Adapt in Higher Altitude

In general the higher the altitude the longer it takes to adapt. The first thing that happens is your respiratory rate and heart rates speed up. This occurs both at rest and during sub-max. exercise.

#### 3. Hydrate!

Because mountain air is cool and dry you can lose a lot of water so be sure to maintain adequate hydration. So this means hydration begins this weekend.

#### 4. High-Carb, Low-Salt Diet

Because the body is working harder at altitude, it requires more fuel for the effort. Diet – A high carbohydrate, low salt diet allows for better adaptation and less risk of "mountain sickness". Some people experience significant decline in appetite and the resulting loss of muscle mass may hinder performance.

#### 5. Workout Intensity

This will necessarily be lower until adaptation can occur. Pushing your workouts too hard may increase your risk of overtraining or injury. Additionally some people just do not adapt as well as others. Upon arrival a day or two before competition be sure to test your cardio with very light to medium work

#### 6. Recirculation and Recovery

Compression apparel can play a role in preventing serious medical issues that may occur when sitting for a long time, such as during a flight. In addition to promoting recovery, compressive lower body clothing also helps improve blood circulation during a long stay in a cozy coach-class seat.

A group of scientists reviewed nine different studies to determine if compression socks reduced the chance of blood clotting—deep vein thrombosis—during air travel. Their findings were clear—wearing compression socks improved the chances of avoiding a clot. Cardiologist and triathlete, Dr. Alice Perlowski, agrees that the effects of compression can benefit a runner while traveling. "Blood is pooling because you're not walking around on the plane," she told Competitor's sister publication, Women's Running. The right set of medical-grade compression apparel can help reduce pooling.



**Marcus Maxwell** is owner and founder of Maxwell Performance. Marcus is also the performance and training coach for Xceleration athletes during the season.

As a retired NFL wide receiver, Marcus retains a deep-rooted passion in the development of children and young adults through sports, academics, and commitment. As an athlete, he was lucky enough to reach a personal goal to play in the NFL. However, for many young athletes the goal is to make a team, rise above mistakes, and just be the best they can be.

Marcus believes players will benefit from performance training by being exposed to certain tools and techniques that will give them a competitive edge now and when moving on to the next level. He truly believes that having a performance program brings value to Xceleration.

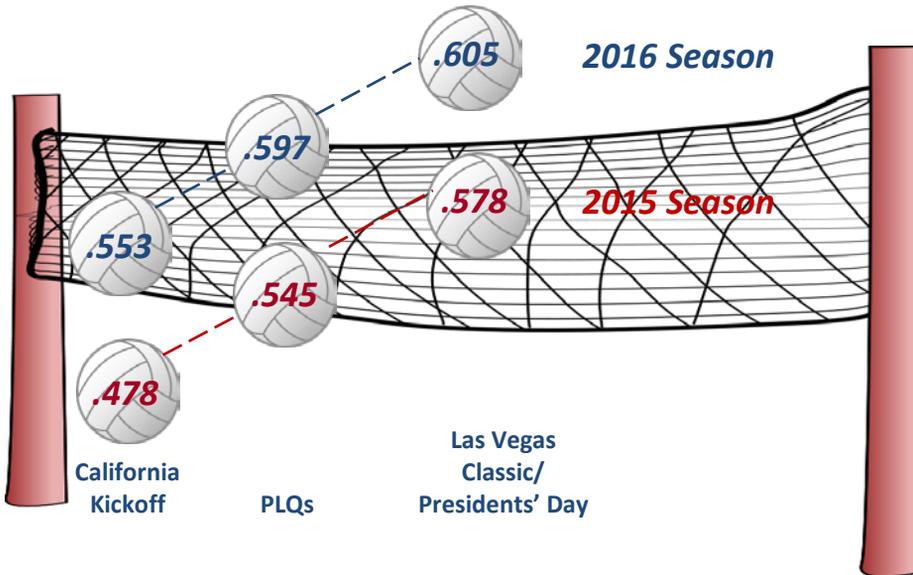
All of our Xceleration coaches are 100% behind Marcus, as is the executive team. We truly believe that Marcus will make each team more conditioned, more competitive, and his programs will help prevent against injury as well. Marcus will also be available for individual training for your daughters, and he can discuss that with anyone interested at the practices he attends.

## On the Rise

### Xceleration's Teams Show Continuous Improvement

The club's winning percentages from each tournament are shown below. Xceleration continues to increase its numbers, a small indicator that the teams are improving as the season moves along.

### Follow the Bouncing Volleyball Xceleration's Winning Percentages



### Quote of the Week

"Xcel 14Blue - It was a pleasure to watch you [at PL1] this morning! The smiles, hustle, good play, and effort were great.

Know the day didn't go as you'd wished, but that big win in the end was super! Considering you were down a few players, I thought the effort by all of you was big.

Stay with it!! You ARE a good team and will be a better one. Learn from today and move forward.

Look out Colorado. We're coming!"

Jim Ross

## Good luck in Denver... from the 13Blue!



Photo courtesy of Patrick Artiaga.