



IN THE NEWS...

- Far Westerns
- Power League Regionals
- 15White at SoCal Qualifiers
- 18Blue at 2017 Junior Nationals
- Prepvolleyball.com Shining Stars
- Pics of the Week
- JVA West Coast Preview
- Helpful Tips: How to Deal with Setbacks: Bounce Back from Life's Hurdles
- An Open Letter to the Volleyball Player I Used to Be
- What is the Role of the Coach?
- Time Management
- Sand Volleyball – What's Not to Love?
- Alumni News

**Xceleration
Volleyball Club**

John B. David, Editor

Golden Games for Xceleration at Power League Regionals

**Five Teams Finish the Power League Season in Gold,
Teams also Compete Hard at Far Western Qualifiers**

At about this time of the year – every year – at various graduation ceremonies across the nation, we hear from eloquent and distinguished speakers imparting profound words of wisdom and encouragement in their commencement addresses. We also hear these dynamic speakers showering students with overwhelming praise for their glorious achievements as they cross another threshold.

Oftentimes, these orators will describe their paths to success, but on rare occasions a speaker, in this case Martin Casado, a Silicon Valley venture capitalist who just sold his startup for \$1.3 billion, tells grads to “get good at failure” at his alma mater Northern Arizona University. How is this related to volleyball? Read on.

Casado offered four solid bits of advice to students, which is good advice for anyone, at any age.

1. “You’re unlikely to achieve your goals.”

No one can predict the future, and when you’re on the path to a goal, a better goal “is likely to smack you while you’re looking the other way,” Casado said, “and you’d be an idiot not to follow it.”



His advice is to “take some fraction of that effort and work on being open to change and to opportunity” while working toward your goals.

If he hadn’t been open to change in his career, he may never have invented an industry-changing technology.

2. “You are going to fail. A lot. It’s inevitable.”

He suggests that it is failure, not progress, that indicates whether you are living up to your potential.

If you are failing, you are pushing yourself and “not stalling your own progress by hiding,” he said.

The true skill, then, is “to learn to embrace failure – not only embrace

(Continued on the next page)

Shannon Says...

Hello Xcel Family!!!

We're into the homestretch and nearing the end of the season. I know it's a cliché to say "to finish strong" but we're actually seeing many of our teams doing that, especially at the Power League Regionals in Reno and Sacramento. We saw outstanding individual and team performances, and we couldn't be more proud.



Our job is not done quite yet though. We will be closing the 2017 season either at the Bay View Classic, JVA West Coast Cup, AAU Nationals, or at Junior Nationals. To all our teams, good luck and FINISH STRONG!

In the next several weeks, for those who want to jump right back into action, be on the lookout for our summer open gym schedule. We also appreciate your support for our players participating in our Beach program, which will begin shortly.

GO XCEL!!
Shannon

Get Good at Failure (continued)

failure, get good at it, and by that I mean get back up, apply what you've learned, and hit reset."

3. "No one really knows what contributes to success."

Every person is unique, and that means what's right for another isn't always right for you. When it comes to advice, listen to the parts that ring true for you and disregard the rest.

"You're going to take one path out of an infinite number of possibilities," Casado said. "And you're going to navigate it your way."

4. "The universe is a messy place."

If there is a secret to life, happiness, and success, it's this: "The opportunity is hidden in the sloppiness. If you hold too hard to specific ideas of where you want to go, or what the landscape will look like, or what the world will provide you, I can guarantee you'll be disappointed."

So, how do these apply to us at Xceleration and the journey that we're on together? In a way, we have experienced some or maybe all of these at some point during our season, which has been a mix of failures and successes. These are all evident in games and competition and a part of the sport.

We saw evidence of this particularly during the last two tournaments at the Far Westerns and at Power League Regionals. Many of our teams did not do particularly well record-wise at the Far Westerns, but they found ways to hit the reset button and to regain their footing. They navigated their way towards success as the opportunities presented themselves. For that resiliency and gallant comeback, Xceleration is ecstatic for how our teams learn and move on from one competition to another.

Thank you to Business Insider reporter Julie Bort for allowing **XCELent NEWS** to borrow liberally from her article, dated May 21, 2017.



Photo Galleries

You can find more photos in the Team Pages 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 **XCELent NEWS**.



Find us on:
facebook.



All photos courtesy of Tomas Pineda, unless otherwise noted.

13Blue / 13White

The 13Blue's results at Far Westerns were mixed, going 3-6 to end the tournament in 87th. It was encouraging however to finish the tournament on a high note. The 13Blue won two of its last three games entering the PL Regionals. There the team was vastly improved with a 4-4 record and a 17th place finish to conclude the league season in BLUE.

The 13White got a taste of high-level competition in their first travel tournament. This was a great opportunity for the girls to learn from and it provided them valuable experience that will take them far in years to come. Xceleration is excited for the future, and hope these ladies continue in their volleyball development.



14Blue / 14White

The 14Blue started well on both occasions at the FW and PLR, winning their first two games but then were outscored the rest of the way, finishing under the .500 mark at 3-4 and 2-4, respectively. With a 12th place finish in the Championship Division of PLR, the team remained solidly in GOLD.

The 14White completed a turnaround performance from FW to PLR. After finishing well below the median at the FWs, the team ended with a 4-3 record at PLRs to secure a 21st place in the standings of the Challenger 2 Division, placing them in EVERGREEN.



I wanted to share how proud Kelsey and I are of 14Blue for battling the best of the best all season long and finishing in Gold over the weekend!

We have been so lucky to coach this great group of young athletes and we couldn't be more proud of them. Great job girls! (and special thanks to Tomas Pineda for never missing a photo op!)

COACH MARIAH

Ridiculous accomplishment. So proud of Kelsey and Mariah and the 12 girls that enjoyed the journey and the process and competed all year long. Thanks to all!!

COACH ANDY



Photos courtesy of Rich Johnson.

15Blue / 15White

The 15Blue outperformed the competition at both FWs and PLRs. The team dropped two of three on the first day of FWs, but got back on track in a big way by posting five consecutive victories to finish in 13th place overall with a 6-2 record. As a result, the 15Blue took 1st in 15 Open Bronze Division at Far Western Qualifiers.

The team got even better in PLR competition. The 15Blue locked in and nabbed a National bid to Junior Nationals after winning six in a row before falling in the finals to Vision VBC for a 2nd place finish. The team ended the league in GOLD. Minneapolis, here we come!

The 15White was solid throughout. A three-game win streak and a 5-4 record at FW was satisfying. The team then had a brief hiccup at PLR by dropping their first four games before pushing the reset button thereafter. The team won three of its last four games to end the league season in COPPER. The 15White will finish at the Bay View Classic.



15 Blue went 4-0 on Day 1 of Regionals, keep it up girls! Way to finish the day strong!

Couldn't be more proud of 15B this weekend. Ending league with a 2nd place finish in NCVA. They fought hard all weekend and battled through lots of adversity to come together as a team and get the job done. Nice work ladies.

COACH LUCAS ABBOTT



15Blue Secures National Bid

A Note from 15Blue Mom Dee Ortega... reprinted from Facebook group page.

A happy ending for Xceleration 15 Blue on Mother's Day at PLR as they earn a National bid! The girls retained their #3 seed on Day 1 with a 4-0 record. It was an exhausting day with 2 of the matches going to 3 sets. The girls faced #5 seed NNJ winning their first match on Day 2. Their next opponent was the all too familiar Red Rock team. Xcel played them previously at PL3 with Xcel winning in 3 sets. Well history repeated itself because the girls

fought hard after dropping the 1st set 26-24 and grabbed set 2 & 3 (21-25, 11-15) to advance to the Gold Division Championship game against #1 seed Vision. The 1st set was a close one but lost 26-24 and then Vision closed it out in the 2nd set to take the Championship. So proud of the girls for pushing through adversity and never giving up! Thank you Coaches, Xcel staff and parents for supporting our girls. Long Beach and JNs, here we come! through adversity and never giving up! Thank you Coaches, Xcel staff and parents for supporting our girls. Long Beach and JNs, here we come!



- Stephanie Colozza** Good job!
Like · Reply · 1 · April 30 at 3:22pm
- Gloria Lamb** 🍌🍌🍌🍌🍌
Like · Reply · 3 · April 30 at 7:01pm
- Jim Ross** Very proud of you all!!! Finished very strong and showed your stuff in Open!
On to regionals!
Like · Reply · 3 · April 30 at 7:58pm
- Paul D Harrison** Great job 15B
Like · Reply · 3 · April 30 at 8:26pm
- Shannon Kussman** Awesome job 15 blue!!!
Like · Reply · 3 · April 30 at 9:10pm

15White at the SoCal Qualifier

With permission, the following is a reprint of Karen Elliott's note to 15White families following the SoCal Qualifier. The team went solo and competed in Southern California in lieu of Colorado Crossroads.

Hi Xcel 15White Family!!

Just wanted to send out an email saying how much fun this weekend was! The girls played some killer volleyball! Especially against the 1st seed! We almost beat them! It was such an exciting game – and the girls played well under extreme pressure! There were some definite amazing play moments we will always remember!

The group dinners were so fun for the girls, the parents and the coaches. What started as a birthday dinner for Fai on the first night – turned into an entire team dinner – as everyone joined in at last minute as word spread and people arrived into town. Such a delicious venue! I shall be talking about my crab cakes for quite awhile!!

And then because of Fai's incredible detective work – we continued those delicious group dinners for the next two nights. Thank you everybody for being so flexible and willing to join in the fun! It made the weekend great fun and the girls got to spend more bonding time off the court.

I am especially thrilled about the escape room for a team bonding outing. When we realized we had enough free time – Fai encouraged me to finalize my idea of an escape room that would accommodate 9 girls with no adult supervision. And I was quite excited when I found one appropriate for the girls – Sherlock Holmes – that met our requirements and was 10 minutes from the hotel!

Fai then took over and booked it with her credit card and collected the funds from everyone as they arrived. And Phil drove a load of girls to the escape room. The three of us sat in the lobby and could hear the girls – it was hilarious! They worked hard! We were very proud of them when they were on the last clue – with about 5 minutes to go – and their one hour was up.

Just to think that nine 14 year old girls almost escaped from a room with a 45% success rate was a proud moment!

They loved it!

(Continued on the next page)



15White Escapes!

The 15White escaped the room and went out for ice cream after a hard day of work at the SoCal Qualifier.

It's Time to Hit the Beach!

XCEL BEACH IS BACK!! Coaches Michelle and Melinda are extremely excited to be back on the beach with Xcel this summer!!

- Location: Moraga Commons Beach Courts
- Practice Days: Monday/Wednesdays
- Times: First 2 weeks: 4:00 - 7:00 pm
(12-14s will be first 90 mins, 15-18s last 90 mins)
- After first 2 weeks: 1:00 - 5:00 pm
(12-14s will be first 2 hours, 15-18s last 2 hours)
- Start Date: Monday, June 5th
- End Date: Wednesday, Aug 2nd
- Tournaments: June 28 and July 26
- Cost - \$721 (includes player uniforms/gear and entry fees for 2 tournaments).

Contact Shannon Kussman for more information.



15 White at the SoCal Qualifier

Thank you to Normie for booking us a fabulous hotel! It was fun to be close to the convention center. It was a beautiful stroll each way – morning afternoon and evening!

And thank you to Phil for driving groups to the court in the morning!

Also – thank you to Tomas and Phil for taking photos! As most of you may know – I LOVE photos!!!

But most of all – I love all my new best friends!

You all are amazing...and I feel lucky to call you my friends!

Karen Elliott



16Blue / 16White

The 16Blue finished above the .500 mark at FW and PLR with 5-4 and 6-2 records, respectively. In nine matches at FW, the team endured three games going the distance. In the Championship Division of PLRs, the 16Blue slightly underperformed, but then restored order with five consecutive wins to garner 1st place in the BRONZE bracket.

The 16White is rolling after going 5-3 at FW and 4-4 at PLR. Winning four of its last five games and an 87th place finish at FW, the 16White did equally or even better in the Challenger round at PLR with a 26th place ending. The team again posted four victories in its last five games to close out the league season in COPPER.



Having visited with all our teams at PLR's the last two weekends, I have to say I was terribly impressed. I saw lots of hustle, witnessed maturity on the courts, enjoyed plenty of I-got-your-back play, just great hustle and resiliency. Plenty of dad moments for me for sure - so much of what our leadership hopes to achieve as we work to nurture our athletes. Our PL season had challenges, to be sure. The challenges took backstage this weekend; rather, it's how we all met those challenges that stood out. Well done, everyone.

Congratulations to the coaches and thank you to our families for the caring and support. And to our athletes, thank you for wearing the jersey proudly and for representing the club so well. I was actually approached by a few parents from opposing teams commenting on how well you've conducted yourselves. I hope you are all as proud of yourselves as we (coaches, parents and family, club leadership and staff) are of you.

TOMAS PINEDA

Congrats! You guys are all doing Xcel proud! Wonderful job by the players, coaches, and Admin.

JON SEGALL






Photo courtesy of Lindsey Parrott.



Tomas Pineda 🍌🍌🍌🍌

Like · Reply ·  1 · May 14 at 9:31pm



Andy Schroeder Great job 16 blue coaches and 10 players. Love the smiles and how hard you battled this weekend! Lots of hope and optimism out there. Super proud of all of you. Keep pushing all the way thru Orlando

Like · Reply · 3 · May 14 at 10:03pm



Leslie Ray so proud of this group

Like · Reply ·  1 · May 15 at 8:28am



Pia Angela Dominguez Loving the smiles!!!! Great job ladies 😊

Like · Reply · May 15 at 8:50am



Tomas Pineda What Pia said.

Like · Reply · 2 · May 15 at 4:15pm



Shannon Kussman Great job 16 blue!! 🍌🍌🍌🍌🍌🍌🍌🍌❤️❤️❤️

Like · Reply ·  1 · May 15 at 8:23pm



Deanna Daniele-Jordan Great way to finish the tournament. These girls did great (and I love the smiles too)

Like · Reply · 1 · May 15 at 9:06pm



Jeremy Swann Way to stick together ladies- all the challenges you've faced have made you stronger- keep it up!!

Like · Reply ·  3 · May 16 at 4:54pm



Lauren Bates Jones I am so proud of you ladies for persevering through a few dips. **Lindsey** and I sincerely mean we are beyond proud of how well you have done this season. Not many could have done what you all have done under the circumstances.

Like · Reply · 1 · May 16 at 10:55pm

The 17Blue's results at FW did not quite meet the team's expectations, finishing in the 21st position with a 3-5 record. The team learned quickly! With a four-game win streak to begin the tournament, its final 5-2 record and a 6th place finish at the PLR's Championship round was enough to

secure the American bid to Junior Nationals, which the club has declined per its policy on JN participation. Instead, the team will head to Orlando to compete in the Open Division at the AAU Nationals. The 17Blue maintained its GOLD standing in league.



Couldn't be more proud of the 17Blue. Hard fought weekend and you continued to battle. It was worth every moment. One goal down, you have earned your bid and I'm so filled with joy as you all should be. Even more impressive is that you stayed in the Top 6 all season. I can't teach a team to have heart and you guys have that and more. I'm one lucky coach.

Thank you to those that continue to support us, it wouldn't be the same without you. Next stop Long Beach, then Florida. — with Jade Sanford and Lindsey Alyce Ray.

COACH LESLIE RAY



Andy Schroeder Leslie Jade Lindsey and the 17 Blue Players

Like · Reply · 2 · May 15 at 9:34am

Andy Schroeder I'm so proud of all of you-I mean really proud of you! Unbelievable-incredible season all of you have had so far. Please (all of you) stay in the process of embedding yourself in the journey of improvement and enjoyment going forward into your final 2... [See More](#)

Like · Reply · 2 · May 15 at 9:50am

Jeremy Swann This is a HUGE accomplishment- no doubt a hard fought power league to get here ladies. Use that momentum and finish stronger than ever at AAU's! Congrats to the awesome coaching staff- love them too!!

Like · Reply · May 16 at 1:37pm

18White

Bypassing the FWs, the 18White entered the Championship round of PLRs in GOLD and remained in that bracket with a 4-4 record and a 6th place finish. The 18White had the highest finish of any 2-team in the field.



Paul D Harrison It's ok Andy you're part of the team !!

Like · Reply · 2 · May 14 at 7:20pm



Jeremy Swann What a fabulous group of talented young ladies. I will always remember this tournament, thanks for letting us be a part of it 18W!!

Like · Reply · 4 · May 14 at 8:24pm



Andy Schroeder I'm in awe of this group of 10 players. I still have goose bumps thinking about this weekend! I was honored as was Jer to have the privilege of coaching this group. I literally enjoyed every second. Thanks for letting me into your group. It's a group that's overwhelmed with unbelievable people/character and Teammates. Congrats again

Like · Reply · 4 · May 14 at 9:24pm



Andy Schroeder To Cindy and James-Incredible job preparing these young student athletes for competition. They were Fantastic! Thanks again

Like · Reply · 1 · May 15 at 9:55am



Andy Schroeder haha Paul-yah i'm always off a little!

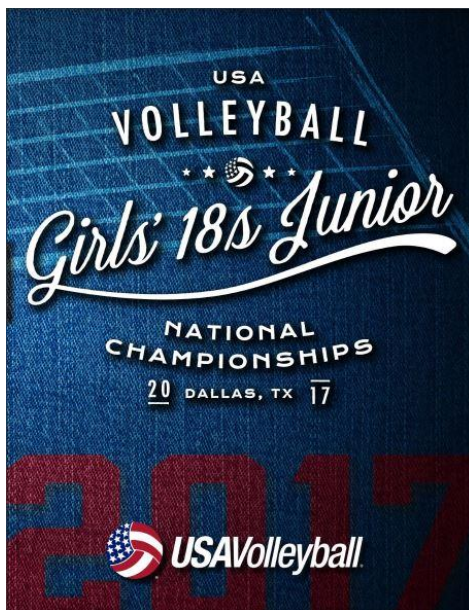
Like · Reply · May 15 at 9:59am

18Blue in Dallas: 2017 Junior Nationals Finalists

After a one-year hiatus from the USAV Junior Nationals, Xceleration's 18Blue returned to the national stage in Dallas, TX to compete in one of the most hotly contested tournaments of the season.

In this tournament reserved only for top teams that have won qualifiers throughout the season or have done particularly well in their respective leagues to qualify with an at-large bid, the winners in five divisions – Open, USA, National, American, and Patriot – will be crowned and will have the privilege of being called National Champions at the end of the tournament. The 18s Spring Nationals are scheduled earlier than usual as a result of players needing to fulfill commitments to get on college campuses by early summer to begin their collegiate volleyball workouts.

Entering the 64-team American Division, Xceleration 18Blue was one of only two teams representing the NCVA, with Rage 18 Greg being the other. In the opening round of pool play, the 18Blue steamrolled past Flatrock from North Platte, NE; Ama Extreme



from Bushland, TX; and 352 Elite Rox from Ocala, FL. The 18Blue was running on all cylinders and was fueled by consistent play to speed away easily from the Nebraska and Texas teams. After surrendering the first set to 352 Elite, the 18Blue tightened the seat belts and went on a wild ride to flawlessly capture the last two sets and win the pool with a 3-0 record.

(Continued on the next page)

Xceleration 18Blue

Front row: Jamie Brown, Mere Naqase, Jackie Kupeli, Alex Nickerson, Janelle Gong, Nikki Jensen, and Kelsey Budde.

Coach Jeremy Swann, Brianna Ranney, Parker Jones, Delaney McKee, Michelle Anderson, and Coach Andy Schroeder.



A MESSAGE FROM JIM ROSS... THREE XCELERATION TEAMS EARN POST-SEASON BIDS!

For the first time in club history, Xceleration had three teams earn bids for the post-season!

We want to take this time to congratulate the players and coaches on 18Blue, 17Blue, and 15Blue for earning Junior National bids through the NCVA Power League.

18Blue already competed in the 18 Junior Nationals in April (the 18s schedule is different from the rest of the age groups) in Dallas. Congratulations to the team for their second place finish at this national tournament.

17Blue and 15Blue earned bids at PL Regionals this past weekend. 15Blue earned the National bid and will compete in Minneapolis in June. 17Blue earned the American bid and, per club policy, declined that bid and will compete in the Open Division at the AAU Nationals in Orlando in June.

Big congrats to the players and coaches on all three of these teams for this accomplishment, and a huge thank you for bringing Xceleration multiple post-season bids!

JIM

18Blue at Junior Nationals

The 18Blue kept the pedal to the metal on the second day of competition and posted two more victories to run its streak to five games. Jamba 18 Tom from Bakersfield, CA and Southport G18 from Kenosha, WI were left in the dust in straight-set drawbacks against the 18Blue. The team, however, could not get past a temporary roadblock set up by Valley Venom from Edinburg, TX, which bit the 18Blue in two sets. Nonetheless, with a 6-1 record after two days of competition, the 18Blue reached the Gold bracket, but it was not quite the finish line.

The 18Blue immediately recovered in the quarterfinal round on the last day of the Nationals against Legacy 18-North from White Lake, MI. Revved up and ready to face tougher competition, the 18Blue met it with grit and determination to win with ease and catapulting the team to the semifinals against a tough rival in Rage 18 Greg, a familiar team that it had faced on several occasions with mixed results.

Although the early going in the semifinal game was a challenge – with the 18Blue falling in the first set in another tight one – the outcome this time was sweeter for the 18Blue. The tit-for-tat continued throughout the game between the two balanced and evenly matched teams, but the 18Blue eventually prevailed, as the Ripon-based team could barely muster a wisp of a flame in the deciding set of the 25-27, 25-23, 15-5 match.

The championship table was set. The 18Blue entered the finals with a 7-1 record to face Arsenal 18 Gold, a team from the North Texas



Texas Volleyball Region and the Plano/ Dallas area that has only given

(Continued on the next page)



Photos courtesy of Dean Anderson.

18Blue at Junior Nationals

up a total of one set in the tournament en route to a gaudy 9-0 record. The road ended for the 18Blue as the Arsenal remained perfect to end the tournament as the 2017 American National Champions. The 18Blue may not have crossed the finish line first, but the wonderful memories of competing in this national event with lifelong friends will linger forever. Read Coach Andy's message on what The Medal that each player received really means to the team.

Along with the hardware came the recognition for players who had outstanding performances during the competition. Tournament organizers honored three players from Xceleration – **Parker Jones, Mere Naqase, and Ashby Russell** – who were named on the 2017 Spring Junior Nationals Championship All-Tournament Team... Congratulations!



A Message from Andy Schroeder: The Medal and What it Means...

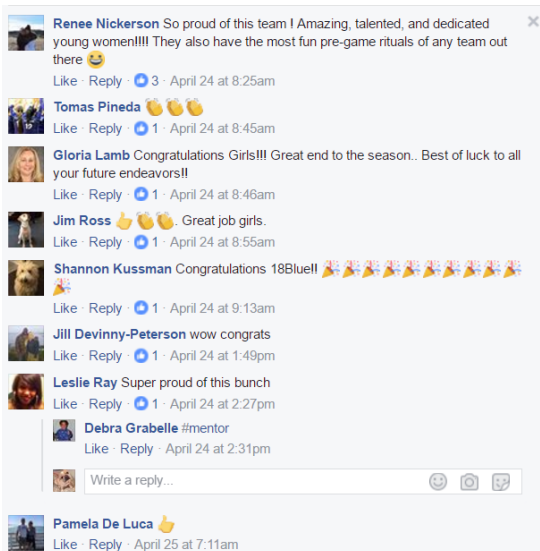
We want it to be a life lesson about **TEAM - DETERMINATION - RESOLVE - ENJOYING THE JOURNEY**, and the **PROCESS!**

The Medal is the by-product (or should be) of the **PROCESS**, and the collective **WILL** and **DETERMINATION** of you 12 players. You come from all different backgrounds, families, and high schools for the common goal of being 12 as 1.

The life lesson isn't the Medal, it's the journey taken to get to the podium to receive the Medal. The life lesson is embedding yourself into the day-in and day-out mentality of working hard (be it a great day or not-so-great day). **EFFORT** never takes days off. You 12 understood that you had to **ALWAYS BATTLE** for "BETTER" and for your Team.

It's obviously fun to do well and be on the podium, but what Jeremy and I loved most was the **RESOLVE** to stay with the Xceleration system and the process for entire matches. Some of the points against 303, Rage, and Arsenal were simply put - **EPIC!!**

Thanks to all 12 of you and my co-coach Jeremy for the honor to work with all of you. It's truly a privilege that I take very seriously.





SHINING STARS

The following is a reprint from PrepVolleyball.com's report from the 2017 Spring Junior Nationals.

The final tally from Dallas is in and it says the players below were awesome on the last day of competition!

Here's the best-of-the-best from all divisions who I witnessed in action Sunday, starting with Supernovas and moving to Others Who Shined!

Supernovas

Parker Jones, Xceleration 18 Blue, OH – Carrying a big load for Xceleration, Jones did well shouldering it and coming through time and time again as Xceleration reached the final of 18 American.

Others Who Shined

Michelle Anderson

Jacqueline Kupeli



The following section is a reprint from Prepvolleyball.com written by Chris Tobolski on May 24, 2017, previewing the upcoming JVA West Coast Cup.

The inaugural JVA West Coast Cup commences this weekend in Long Beach and the first-year tournament is off to an unbelievable beginning, judging by the draws.

Take 18 Open for example, where six of the Top 10 teams from PVB's National Rankings are participating, and seven of the Top 15. It includes Triple Crown Sports NIT and Bluegrass champ **Munciana**, plus USAV GJNC 18 Open runner up **TAV**.

The division is also using power pools, meaning no teams are going to be eliminated from competition on Day 1.

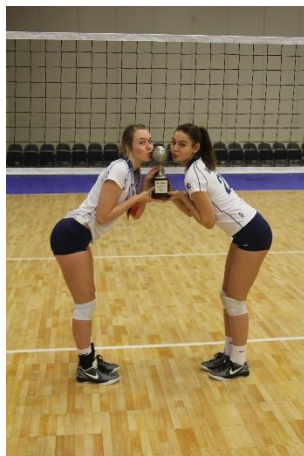
In 17 Open, there are 24 teams and 13 are nationally-ranked, including No. 1 TAV, No. 6 **Legacy** and No. 10 **Idaho Crush**.

Moving down, 16 Open is power-packed, containing four of the Top 5 teams in the country! The division also features five teams from the Top 10 and eight from the Top 25.

Not to be outdone by any of them, 15 Open is also loaded.

That division holds five of the Top 10 teams in the nation, and nine from the Top 30.

Those types of numbers and ratios are only seen at the few top-flight national qualifiers. That's why the West Coast Cup figures to be a perfect tune up for the end-of-the-year events in Orlando and Minneapolis.



Left to right: Parker Jones, Michelle Anderson, and Jackie Kupeli.
Photos courtesy of Tomas Pineda, Dean Anderson, and Prepvolleyball.com.

Pics of the Week



Tomas Pineda

May 15 at 8:08am

Because. Teammates.



Like Comment Share

Paul D Harrison, Iza Uma and 10 others



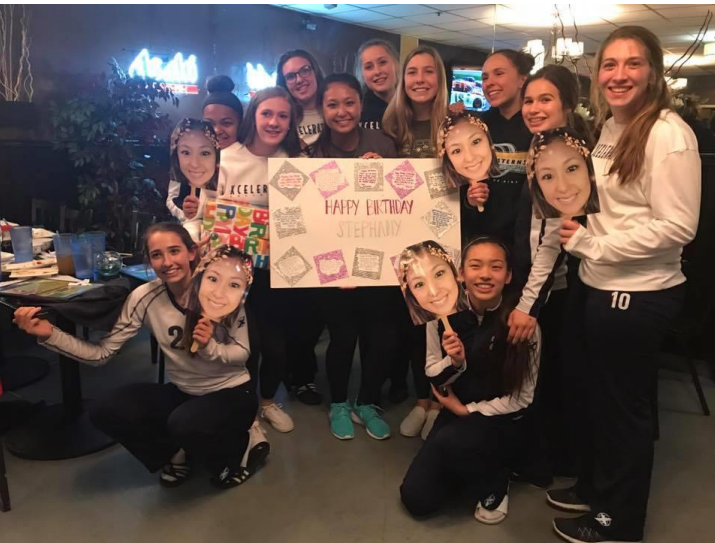
Eileen Fletcher Schilke Aww. Ashley has had such a great time being part of a team that has so much heart! There's a lot to be said for girls that encourage each other to be their best and also have the respect and admiration for their coaches that they do.

Like · Reply · 3 · May 15 at 9:36am



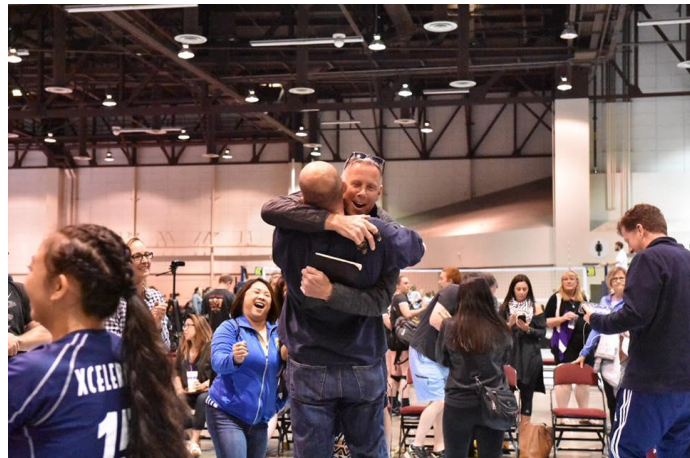
Iza Uma Love this pic!

Like · Reply · May 16 at 8:00am



Happy Birthday!

The 16White celebrates Coach Stephany Van Horn's birthday at a sushi restaurant in Reno.



We're Going to Nationals!

The 15Blue jumps for joy after winning the final point.

Helpful Tips

How to Deal with Setbacks: Bounce Back from Life's Hurdles

By Liz Noelcke, Reprinted from SparkPeople, Inc.

We've all hit that bump in the road, the setback, the problem. What sets people apart is how they react to that bump. Are you one to spin out of control, in despair? Or do you grab a hold of that wheel and steer yourself straight? Whether it's a school assignment, a work project, or a volunteer mission, we all encounter things that slow us down. You just have to keep in mind that a setback is only temporary and greater things lay ahead.

It is easy just to quit, give up and ignore the hard work you have put into something. But at SparkPeople, we believe in the "two steps forward, one step back" philosophy. So what if something bad happens? Keep moving forward, developing what you have. You've already built a solid foundation on which you can rely. Hard work can't be overlooked.

So how can you react when something doesn't turn out as you've expected? First, be objective. Step back and look at the situation. Take responsibility where it is due, but don't place blame on others. Is your setback really that significant, or will it just require a little extra exertion on your part? Come to terms with it and then start planning your next move. Ask for help. Don't be afraid or ashamed to do this. Oftentimes, people are more than willing to give you support and advice, maybe even after being in a similar situation. You don't have to be perfect; after all, nobody else is.

Bounce back. Reevaluate the goals you should have set for yourself at the beginning and retool them as necessary. Goals should be realistic and specific, but that doesn't mean they can't be flexible and are allowed for minor impediments. Instead of looking at your project as a disaster or failure, view it with success.

Concentrate on how great it will feel after it is finally done, after you have put your all into it. Instead of focusing on a possible unsatisfactory performance one single time, take a moment to sit back and reward yourself for all that you have accomplished.

Above all, don't live with regrets. Approach life with perseverance and dedication to the things that matter most to you. Success is never easy. It remains up to you whether you will give up, or fight through the tough battles to earn whatever it is you want.

A fragment of a poem by Ralph Waldo Emerson is telling:

"Finish each day
And be done with it.
You have done what you could.
Some blunders and
Absurdities have crept in.
Forget them as soon as you can."

Move on with your life. Keep reaching for your goals and you will achieve them. One minor setback is nothing if you really want something and are willing to work for it.



We have just experienced exceptional play from all of our teams and the competition. Sometimes the ball just didn't bounce in our favor and that is to be expected. We will deal with many ups and downs during the season and this short essay is good to keep in mind as we reach the peaks and valleys that we'll encounter throughout the season and through the game of life.

**Setbacks
will only
make me
STRONGER.**

- Daily Affirmation -
POSITIVEMOTIVATION.NET

"A setback
is a setup for
a comeback"
- T.D. Jakes



An Open Letter to the Volleyball Player I Used to Be

By Alexa Nicole DeClue, at Missouri State University and reprinted from OdysseyOnline.com

The thing is volleyball, you taught me so much about who I am today.

First of all, I kind miss you. Like, a lot. It has been so long that I even miss the floor burns I had in the most random places but also hurt so bad. But I will never miss setting the net up and taking it down because I still strongly believe that all nets should be the ones that can come down from the ceiling with a turn of the key. There was a time that you were my everything and in a blink of an eye we are no longer together and sometimes I feel kinda lost.

I can still remember the thrill of winning match point after the longest rally. Everyone on the team had made a spectacular play and you could never catch your breath. But that was okay because you were still screaming at the top of your lungs because you freaking did it, you won. I can also remember being on the other side of that net, hanging my head in defeat. Sometimes the Sport Court that you were on was surrounded and all eyes were on you.

I can still remember opening up my bag after a three-day tournament weekend and swearing to myself because I forgot to wash my kneepads. Because it always became obvious that next practice after the tournament in the huddle who had and hadn't washed their kneepads and you would get called out. And who could forget the love/hate relationship I had with my ankle braces because they took so much time to take on and off. And then the battle of making

sure they were comfortable the entire time they were on.

I miss that sore, but rewarding, feeling I got after good practices. The kind of practice that pushed your boundaries or where you finally got that deep corner ball up. Or the practice that you finally fixed your swing and hit the most epic line shot.

The thing is volleyball, you taught me so much about who I am today. I learned how to deal with time management and loyalty. If I could go back I would give it my all at every practice, even if it had been a long day that I just wanted to be over already. I miss the sting of getting an up from a brutal down ball. I miss traveling the country with some of my best friends and building relationships that still last today. I miss putting on my uniform and feeling a sense of pride and determination.

Volleyball, you gave me more than I ever thought imaginable. You gave me self-confidence, a coach that ended up being my biggest supporter, a healthier lifestyle, a fire to succeed, and memories that will last a lifetime.

I miss you every day volleyball and that is never going to change. Thank you for unforgettable experiences and people along the way. It's been a journey and I hope you continue to give other people the same joy you have brought me.

*Love,
Alexa*



Volleyball, you gave me more than I ever thought imaginable. You gave me self-confidence, a coach that ended up being my biggest supporter, a healthier lifestyle, a fire to succeed, and memories that will last a lifetime.

Alexa Nicole DeClue,



What is the Role of the Coach?

By Matt Sonnichsen, Director of Volleyball and National Speaker for NCSA Athletic Recruiting. Matt has over 20 years of experience coaching volleyball at the collegiate level.

In my NCSA Recruiting Education talks with club volleyball programs, I often get asked by families, what is the role of the coach?

Today's club volleyball world has grown to proportions which are staggering. Who knew 25 years ago that there would be clubs sponsoring 75+ teams, entire convention centers packed wall to wall with courts and hundreds of college coaches descending upon these events to recruit?

With the professionalism of club volleyball and the amount of money families pay to participate, there can be certain spoken or unspoken expectations of the coach's role. Some club programs are large, well organized, with staff members focused on expanding the recruiting reach of the club, while other clubs are just trying to make sure they have a gym next week to practice in.

I encourage families to reduce the coach's role to the simplest, yet arguably, most important: To Coach.

Below are some points to better explain:

The role of the coach is to enhance a player's volleyball IQ and volleyball skill. Period. The player's ability will determine his/her opportunity. The role of the player, is to listen and apply what the coach is teaching to become a better player.

For instance, when a coach tells a player to "hit line", the coach is instructing the player to become better. When an outside hitter can attack the ball down the line it can be a very effective attack leading to kills. Plus, it puts less stress on the shoulder and the ability of an outside to attack line is something that college coaches value. So, if the player listens to the coach and applies the instruction, he/she will become a better outside hitter, and thus, more recruitable to college coaches.

The coach, on the other hand, is not the recruiting coordinator for each player on the team, ultimately the players and families need to take on this role. In some cases, the family has the assistance of the club's Recruiting Coordinator, who is also trying to help several other families in addition to other duties with the club and/or a full-time job.

The coach is a volleyball professional who's job description is to improve the level of the team and all the individual players that comprise the team. That will ultimately be the best

(Continued on the next page)



The role of the coach is to enhance a player's volleyball IQ and volleyball skill. Period. The player's ability will determine his/her opportunity. The role of the player, is to listen and apply what the coach is teaching to become a better player.

Matt Sonnichsen



What is the Role of the Coach? (continued)

way the coach will help a player realize her goals of playing collegiate volleyball. If the coach is emailing, calling me, and tweeting a college coach every day promoting a player but she cannot hit line, then the coach will not recruit her.

When deciding which club(s) to tryout for, it is important that parents and players understand what the club's role and the coach's role will be in the player's recruiting process. Many times it is assumed that the coach will act as a recruiting coordinator for each player when that is not the case. If you have not read the post about having realistic expectations in the recruiting process, definitely have a read. The more active the player's role in the recruiting process is, the better the chance that he/she will enjoy the junior volleyball season, and find the right fit for college.



Time Management

By Cassidy Lichtman, assistant coach, Stanford University and Vision VBC. A reprint from PrepVolleyball.com

Cassidy Lichtman was a first-year assistant coach in 2016 when she won a national championship with Stanford University, her alma mater. Lichtman, a two-time First Team All-American during her playing days, wrote thoughtful articles for PrepVolleyball.com during her high school days at Francis Parker, where she was a two-time California state champion. This piece was written when she was a 16-year-old junior.

Aaaauugggghhhh! This sound echoes through every teenager's head as she slumps into her chair, finally answering the call of that dreaded mountain of homework. Head pounding, she contemplates how to manipulate time so that she can finish all her work in the little time that she has before she has to go to volleyball practice. She allows herself a moment to think about how she is going to miss her favorite television show tonight and how she has not seen her

friends in a while. That is what the weekend is for, right? She looks back to her work; maybe if she's lucky she might have time for dinner.

The picture is pretty dismal but it happens a lot. So many kids today have to be master schedulers just to keep their lives going. It's not like when our parents were kids, when they did their homework and went outside until their moms called them in for supper. Every minute of the day is scheduled and the family dinner is a rare occurrence. Kids today do it all, partly because that is the expectation. They are supposed to do well in school, excel in sports, and master an instrument. All that brings activity-filled days and stress-filled nights to many kids.

Life often resembles a juggling act and it is important to know how to balance it all. If you pay too much attention to one thing, you might accidentally drop something else. You have to decide how much you can do without compromising your ability to do the rest. Prioritizing is also important. If you juggle an egg, an apple, and an orange, which is the one that you do not want to drop? In my family, academics are a big priority. That does not mean, however, that I will let it affect my performance on the court. You have to learn how to keep the egg and the apple in the air.

Now that we've gotten through that extended metaphor, I can't say how to schedule time or give a formula for success. Each kid can handle different amounts of stress or activities. Some have better time-management skills or get their work done faster. Time

(Continued on the next page)



Everyone's life is chaotic, demanding, and amazing. Sometimes instead of thinking of all the things we still have to do, we need to enjoy just what we are doing at that moment. Because besides all that, life is short, and we can plan our days and pack our schedules, but if you don't love what you're doing, then what's the point, really?

Cassidy Lichtman



Time Management (continued)

management is extremely important for the survival of a high school student. Self-discipline is also significant. It is difficult to get work done when you are also watching TV, talking on SnapChat and texting your friends. Most kids would probably be surprised to see how little time homework actually takes without these minor distractions.

Volleyball can add to some people's stress. I know that most volleyball players skip practice sometimes to study for a big test or finish a project. To me volleyball is a release from all that. I know that when I step into the gym all of the stress, all of the problems, are going to go away. They are still going to be there when I am done but at least I have a couple of hours that let me get away from it all.

And, you know somehow, my projects always get done, I'm ready for the test the next day, and maybe I'm just a little bit less stressed-out than my classmates.

The recruiting process can also add some stress that kids otherwise would not have to deal with. Most freshman and sophomores are not thinking about what colleges to start communicating with, and normal juniors do not have to worry about where they are going quite yet. It is really just a different timeline than everybody else has, though. It is hard to think about college when you are fifteen years old but going into senior year already knowing what you are going to do will relieve some stress.

The bottom line is that everyone's life is chaotic, demanding, and amazing. Sometimes instead of thinking of all the things we still have to do, we need to enjoy just what we are doing at that moment. Because besides all that, life is short, and we can plan our days and pack our schedules, but if you don't



love what you're doing, then what's the point, really? Now I would love to write some more, but I have a tournament tomorrow, and AP tests starting next week, and a recital coming up, and homework to be done, and...



Sand Volleyball – What's Not to Love?

By Briana Schunzel, JVA Marketing & Membership Coordinator

This past weekend Jenny Hahn, JVA Executive Director, and I traveled down to beautiful Gulf Shores, Alabama for the ACVA Collegiate Sand Championship. Neither of us had ever been to Gulf Shores and it was our first trip to the national championships. It didn't take us long to realize what an awesome event it is, and something every volleyball fan, player and coach should witness.

The atmosphere could not be more different from indoor. Seating is wherever you find a spot - it is a free for all - no tickets, no assign seating. Just pick a spot in the sand, bring your own beach chair and umbrella and enjoy some volleyball... in the sun. Hopefully you do not run into some rainy weather, however, as there was some rain late afternoon on the first day of competition, Jenny and I simply made our way into the restaurant right across the street (less than 50 feet away) and grabbed a bite to eat while still being able to watch the main court. Poor us!

Besides the fact that there are only 2 players on the court, the player/coach interaction is much different than indoor. Coaches manage their time among the 5 teams they have competing so many times a team does not have their coach their and have to find a way to win. Plus, during play, coaches are not supposed to get up and coach their team. They can coach them during timeouts and during side changes while they walk along side the court to the other "bench" area. It is really refreshing to watch players trust their teammate and communicate

mostly with their teammate, rather than look over at the bench toward their coach. Players need to learn how to face adversity, get a side-out and score points by relying on their teammate.

As I mentioned, each college team had 5 pairs of teams competing against the other college team's 5 pairs. So 5 courts were simultaneously competing and the college team that won 3 out of the 5 matches was the overall winner. This means that every match counts, regardless of what seed or ranking your individual pairs team is. So when the score was 2-2, everyone made their way to the remaining court still in play and before you knew it, the court was surrounded by cheering fans. It was awesome!

We witnessed the development of volleyball maturity and volleyball IQ by watching the juniors sand tournament taking place during the collegiate championships. Over 200 teams signed up to play in age divisions 12-18. Parents sat along side the courts and looked surprisingly relaxed while their kids competed. Parents... relaxed? YES! After all, you are outside, on a beach, ocean view, watching your child play a sport she loves. There were no arguments about the score, a reffing call, the other team's coach; it was all about the enjoyment of the sport and the experience.

This game is on the rise and spiking a fever. Sand volleyball... What's not to love?



ALUMNINEWS

*Xceleration's first-ever
Collegiate All-American!*



There are a lot of ways to continue playing the sport you love. **Kirsten Rutledge** (#10/Xcel Class of 2011) is currently serving in the Army, and just back from a tour in the Middle East. She recently competed in the Armed Forces Women's Volleyball Championships at Naval Station Mayport, Florida. After the first day of competition, Kirsten was on the tournament's individual leaderboard, with a top four standing in kill percentage and first in service aces. At the end of the tournament that ended on May 24, Kirsten tied for the top in service aces.



Seems like we were all (just) saying our goodbyes in Dallas, TX. Lo and behold, four years later **Rachel Nieto** has made All-American status. Great accomplishment, Rachel. All goes back to that incredible tournament you had in Vegas at the college showcase. Long Beach and their coaching staff knew they were getting a special player!

Coach Andy

Really happy and proud of you Rachel! You worked HARD to get to this point. A great lesson for all our Xcel young ones following behind you.

Jim Ross