

2002 Junior National Volleyball Championships

Team Z 16-1

Salt Lake City Junior Olympics 2002 16 & Under National Champions

Day One – Playing in the 3/5 format, Team Z got off to a fast start, winning in three over Circle City 16-2 (12,11,20). CC 16-2 handed TZ a loss in the very first match of the JO season at a Central Zone event. A bit later that day TZ took on its first California opponent, defeating Delta Valley 16 Blue 29-27, 25-13, 25-12.

Day Two – The second day began fast again, with a 3-0 win over Front Range from Denver, CO (13, 21, 20). TZ's next opponent would be Austin Jrs. Navy. Austin featured a strong block and heavy hitting from antenna to antenna. While the match scores were close (26-28, 23-25, 25-21, 20-25), Team Z never did establish a comfortable pace as Austin avenged an earlier Mid East Qualifier defeat.

Day Three – Day three would be all about responding to the Austin loss. The morning started off with a 3-1 win over another nationally elite club, Tampa Bay Jrs., 25-17, 25-22, 23-25, 25-23. The last pool play had significant implications. A loss would mean a 3-way tie in the pool. A win would guarantee continuation in the Gold bracket. It was a five-game thriller against Copa Del Caribe Caribenias from Puerto Rico. Team Z prevailed 25-18, 25-18, 22-25, 26-28, 15-10. The tournament format required an extra match for 2nd- and 3rd-place pool finishers on day three. Team Z was cross-pooled with the vaunted Vision VBC from California. The Ohio girls prevailed in a 3-1 win 25-19, 25-12, 23-25, 25-17 to advance to the Gold Bracket.

Day Four – The last day of the tournament started with a foe/friend match that would determine advancement into the medal round. Munciana vs. Team Z over the past two seasons has produced many memorable matches and a number of continuing friendships. Day four produced another gut-wrenching contest. Team Z, down 8-3 at the turn, clawed their way back for a 16-14 win in game five. The semifinals were a rematch with Delta Valley Blue, with TZ advancing to the finals 3-0. The Championship match was with another national powerhouse, Milwaukee Sting. In front of a large crowd, Team Z lived out their dreams in a 3-1 win to become the USAV 2002 16-and-Under *National Champions*.

Team Z 16-1 team members included Julie Walroth (Oak Hills HS), Elaine Walroth (Oak Hills HS), Erin Kanetzke

(Ursuline HS), Brandie Molnar (Springboro HS), Beth Gillming (St. Ursula Academy), Beth Shelton (St. Ursula Academy), Bryn Kehoe (St. Ursula Academy), and Danielle Meyer (Mt. Notre Dame HS). Team Z is coached by Amy Kehoe and Rich Zeciski. Beth Shelton and Bryn Kehoe were All-Tournament Selections with Danielle Meyer selected as Tournament MVP. — Rich Zeciski, Director & Coach

Mizuno Cincy Classics 14 Red Take Nationals By Storm!



Front row: Katie Veatch, Gina Sabato.
Middle row: Nicole Dollries, Jaime Frey, Meagan Dooley, Madison Arents, Shelley Walroth.
Back row: Jessica Savage, Stephanie Roeper (coach), Victoria Randolph.

Mizuno Cincy Classics 14 Red qualified for the USA National Volleyball Tournament in April. All of their preparation that began in November of 2001 has finally paid off. They left for Sandy (a suburb of Salt Lake City), Utah on July 3rd not knowing what to expect when they got there. They were originally seeded 20th of 64 teams in the 14 Club division. They went through the entire tournament, 4 days of pool play, without losing one match (12-0), ending their season with a National Championship title. A team who had won their region (Ohio Valley Region) in May had traveled a long way to play against teams from all over the nation. Throughout their season they had won several tournaments that were held all over Ohio, but no one thought that a National Championship would be added to their list of many accomplishments. The girls had tryouts in November 2001 and have been working very hard 2-3 days every week, practicing for this one event! All of their

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hard work and dedication finally paid off when they walked away from Sandy, Utah with gold medals around their necks.

The following teams were among the 12 that Mizuno Cincy Classics defeated on their road to winning Nationals:

<i>Pool play, day 1</i>	Coast Jimmy, Tide Water, Iowa Power
<i>Pool play, day 2</i>	NKYVC Tide, KIVA White, Genesis Green
<i>Pool play, day 3</i>	St. Louis CYC, USA South, Club Momentum
<i>Quarter Finals</i>	NKYVC Tsunami
<i>Semi-Finals</i>	Cajunland Tommy
<i>Finals</i>	Seal Beach 14 Gold

Mizuno Cincy Classics 14 Red is coached by Stephanie Roeper, a graduate from the University of Findlay, where she played 4 years of varsity volleyball. She has just been hired as the head women's varsity volleyball coach at Fairfield High School and looks forward to a successful fall season.

— Stephanie Roeper

Mizuno Cincy Classics 16 Red

Sixty-four teams, or 16 pools of 4, began the tournament for the 16 Club Division. Mizuno Cincy Classics 16 Red started strong the first day by taking round one of pool play, winning against California's Team Complete Athlete, Iowa Power, and North Dallas.

The second day was tough, with two first- and two second-place teams from round one. Cincy Classics started off slow by losing their first match against Minnesota's Northern Lights. Although they lost the first match, they came on strong to win their next two matches against Hit Away (Texas) and Munciana Gators (Indiana).

By day three, 16 teams were still in it for the gold, and MCC played their worst day of the tournament. MCC started the day losing their first match to Olympia Relentless Pursuit in three tight games. Cincy continued to struggle and lost in two games to Centex. MCC pulled out a win against Mizuno M1 161 and finished third for the day. Finishing third knocked them out of the gold and into the silver bracket.

The fourth and final day, Mizuno Cincy Classics started strong by winning the first match against North Dallas but couldn't hold on in the semifinals. The loss to SW Minnesota Juniors placed Mizuno Cincy Classics in 11th position in the Silver Division.

Mizuno Cincy Classics 16 Black

Mizuno Cincy Classics 16 Black attended the Invitational Championships in Louisville, Kentucky in June. Here are the results:

Day 1 – Mizuno Cincy Classics 16 Black started the tournament strong winning three matches against San Gabriel, Tidal Wave, and the Dunes 16 Teal.

Day 2 – MCC Black continued to hold pace by taking three matches against Rolling Thunder, Sport Performance, and Circle City.

Day 3 – MCC won the first match against San Gabriel, but lost the second match to Spike Sport. MCC rallied to win a tight three-game match against South Central, finishing second in their pool. This placed them in the bronze bracket for day 4.

Day 4 – Cincy Classics started the day out with a win against Central Wisconsin but could not hold the course, losing the next match to Alabama Juniors in the finals. — Gina Litzler

Mizuno Cincy Classics 15 Red

The first day was CC 15 Red's best day. They fought back and beat some very good teams like Mizuno M-1 who made it to the Gold division. The team that was most surprising was Oahu. They were not a very tall team, but had good jump, were fast, and played great defense. Their style of play kept us out of sync most of the game. When we played our game, we were able to put the ball down. It was a great learning experience for the team, especially four first-year nationals players. Here is a quick recap of matches.

<i>Wednesday, 6/26</i>	Celtic Force	(25-22, 25-23)
	Team Complete Athlete	(25-22, 15-25, 15-13)
	Mizuno M-1	(17-25, 25-22, 15-13)
<i>Thursday, 6/27</i>	Alamo	(25-22, 25-12)
	Delta Valley VBC	(19-25, 25-23, 8-12)
	Oahu	(19-25, 13-25)
<i>Friday, 6/28</i>	Asics Munciana	(15-25, 21-25)
	Team St. Louis	(16-25, 23-25)
<i>Saturday, 6/29</i>	Oahu	(25-22, 21-25, 4-15)

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Mizuno Cincy Classics 15 Black

Mizuno Cincy Classics 15 Black started their road to Nationals in December. They began practicing 2-3 times a week, improving their game and setting their season goals high. The team played in challenging tournaments throughout the season in preparation for Nationals. It took them three tries to qualify for Nationals. 15 Black played in the Indy and Tampa qualifiers but failed to earn the national berth. They came in very close with both attempts, finishing a respectable 7th place. As the saying goes, the third time's a charm. At the OVR's regional qualifier, 15 Black came in 2nd, earning them a spot in the 15 Club Division in Salt Lake City, Utah.

On the first day of pool play, Mizuno Cincy Classics 15 Black got off to a good start, winning the first game against NASA 15, 25-18. The team then dropped the second game, 24-26, but rebounded in the third game 15-13 to win the match. 15 Black's second match of the day proved to be one of their easier ones. Playing with confidence, they took the match against Long Beach Club 15 Gold in two games: 25-21 and 25-19. The third and final match of the day was a difficult and trying one. 15 Black dropped the first game against Houston Jrs with a close score of 23-25. The team rebounded strongly the next game with a decisive 25-13 win, forcing the match to three games. Mizuno Cincy Classic Black won the third game in a dramatic 15-13 finish.

These three victories placed the 15 Black team first in their pool and earned them one of the eight coveted spots in the elite Gold Division. On Saturday at 8:00 AM, Mizuno Cincy Classics 15 Black played KC Power in the first round of play-offs. In a three-game battle, 15 Black lost, placing them 5th in the National Championships.

This team, Mizuno Cincy Classic 15 Black, has a lot to be proud of. They'd had a great season that enabled them to compete in Nationals and place 5th out of 64+ teams in the 15 Club Division. In addition to these accomplishments, two of the 15 Black players were selected to the All-Tournament Team.

— Al Roysse

Mizuno Cincy Classics 13 Red

Coach: Karen Lewis (Lew).

Players: Alison Bartish, Allison Bergheger, Maura Hovey, Hope Lohmueller, Sarah McGrath, Abby O'Connor, Kelsey Rose, Becky Shaffer, Kellie Torok.

Day 1, July 4 ... was great for Cincy Classics 13's, winning all three matches in two games each.

Match 1: Parkway Lightning VBC 13 Boltz (Manchester, MO)
We won the first game easily 25-18. Alli Bergheger started off with a run of 4 serves with PLB hitting long. Next Becky Shaffer had a streak of 5 serves resulting in points with the help of Kellie Torok and Kelsey Rose's strong net play. Kelsey finished the game with a great hit. The second game resulted in a 25-19 win for Cincy. Abby O'Connor played a great game at Libero. The combination of hits by Alli Bergheger and Kelsey Rose along with PLB serving long made this an easy win. Head coach Karen Lewis had this to say – "We Won – Woo Hoo. Despite first game jitters we played well".

Match 2: SW Minnesota Juniors 13s (Marshall, MN)
Cincy made the first game quick, winning 25-12. Hitting was strong by Kelsey Rose, Alison Bartish and Alli Bergheger. The 14th point was a great volley for both teams, with Cincy taking the point. Kellie Torok's great back-row hit and Sarah McGrath's block resulted in Cincy's 21st point. Hope Lohmueller's serves were great with multiple aces. Cincy Classics took the match in 2 games again, winning 25-22. Serving by Becky Shaffer, Hope Lohmueller and Alli Bergheger was strong. The game went back and forth between Cincy and SWM until it was tied at 22. Alli Bergheger took the serve when Cincy had 23 points and served out the game. It was strong defensive match with Cincy's back row, including Libero Abby O'Connor, playing very well.

Match 3: Maverick Volleyball Club 13-1 (San Antonio, TX)
Sarah McGrath started the game with a great ace serve. Kelsey Rose and Allison Bartish had a great block. Kelsey Rose then had a 6-serve streak to give Cincy a solid lead. Kellie Torok had a kill for our 18th point. Kelsey Rose's kill into the corner put Cincy ahead at 20-13. Becky Shaffer took the serve at 21-14 and served out for a final score of 25-14. Cincy once again won in two, with the second game score of 25-18. Becky Shaffer started off with a kill. Sarah McGrath had a great tip. Cincy fell behind during the middle of the game but came back strong with the help of Maura Hovey's strong hits and blocking by Sarah McGrath and Alli Bergheger.

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Day 2, July 5 ...

Match 1: Celtic Force 13 Green (Worth, IL)

Kelsey Rose started us off with great blocking. Becky Shaffer had a 6-serve streak to take us ahead 11-3. The Celtics went ahead 14-13. Alli Bergheger's ace serving along with Abby O'Connor's defensive play gave us the lead. Sarah McGrath stayed with the block to take Cincy ahead 21-14. Alli Bergheger had a streak of 5 good serves giving us a 25-23 win. Cincy started off slow with the Celtics taking a 12-6 lead. Kelsey Rose and Sarah McGrath had strong hits to the corner. Kelsey Rose served 5 straight to bring Cincy back 15-14. Hope Lohmueller's ace serving gave Cincy a 21-15 lead. Alli Bergheger served out the game giving Cincy a 25-16 win.

Match 2: Cal Juniors 13M (Norwalk, CA)

The first point was won with a great block by Sarah McGrath. Alli Bergheger tied up the game at 6 with a great hit. Kelsey Rose scored the 7th point with a hit to the corner. The game was tied again at 10 by a kill by Becky Shaffer. Both teams were evenly matched with the game being tied at the 16th, 17th, 18th, 19th, 21st, and 22nd point. Cal Juniors pulled ahead and won the game 25-22. Cincy had to be proud of playing a great game of volleyball. In game 2, Sarah McGrath started out again with a great serve. Cincy fell behind 9-3 with Abby O'Connor executing a great dig to give Cincy their 4th point. Cincy fell down 15-8. Sarah McGrath served 6 screaming serves to bring Cincy back. Maura Hovey had a great up. Cincy lost this game 25-20.

Match 3: St. Louis CYC D L (St. Louis, MO)

Alli Bergheger started the game with 3 strong serves. Cincy fell down 21-14. Becky Shaffer had 3 strong serves to bring us back 22-19. The game was tied at 22. Cincy pulled ahead 24-22 and won with a strong block by Alison Bartish. Once again, Abby O'Connor was a strong defensive force. In the second game, Sarah McGrath gave Cincy their first point with a strong hit. Once again, these two teams were evenly matched with ties at 2, 4, 5, 8, and 9. Cincy fell behind 18-16. St. Louis won 25-18 despite strong hitting by Kellie Torok and Allison Bartish. In game 3, Cincy came out strong with a 14-6 lead. Kellie Torok had a string of strong serves to give Cincy the lead. Cincy took control and won 15-7.

Day 3, July 6 ...

Match 1: Encinitas YMCA 13-1 (Encinitas, CA)

Cincy started out with strong defensive play by Maura Hovey and Abby O'Connor. Encinitas played a different brand of volleyball with no blocking at the net, which made Cincy have to adjust their game. Cincy was outmatched in this game 25-11. In the second game, Cincy once again had a difficult time with the Encinitas different court play and size. Sarah McGrath had some nice hits into the corners and Cincy made a valiant attempt to cover the net. Size won, with Encinitas winning 25-10.

Match 2: Washington VBC 13 TJ (Pacific, MO)

Alli Bergheger started out the match with 3 great serves. Sarah was the next server firing off 2 aces. Kelsey helped the effort by strong hits down the line. The game was tied at 16 all. Cincy pulled ahead 20-17 with Kelsey Rose's well-placed ball to the corner. Sarah McGrath's block brought Cincy home with a 25-20 win. Game 2: Once again, Cincy and Washington were evenly matched at the beginning of the game staying even until the 8th point. Washington pulled ahead but Cincy fought back to tie the game at 21. Cincy played strong to finish out the game with a 25-22 win. Hope Lohmueller and Becky Shaffer had great setting games. Sarah McGrath had a strong serving and hitting game.

Match 3: 2nd City 13 Nike (Evergreen Park, IL)

Sarah McGrath took the first point with a kill. Kelsey Rose's tip at the net tied the game at 3-3. Cincy fell down 9-5 but came back to tie it at 13 with serving by Becky Shaffer. Kellie Torok had a great dig to put Cincy ahead 21-17. 2nd City came back to tie the game at 22. 2nd City pulled ahead to win the game 25-22. In game 2, Cincy rallied with great serving and strong movement on the court. Once again, both teams were evenly matched and the score reflected it with ties at 3, 9, 12, 14, 16, and 18. Maura Hovey's strong serves pulled Cincy ahead 21-18. Cincy played a strong offensive game to win 25-19. Alli Bergheger game 3 with an ace. Cincy fell down 9-5 but quickly rallied to tie the game at 11. Maura Hovey had a strong hit for Cincy's 12th point. Becky Shaffer hit the back line to close 2nd City's lead to 14-13. Cincy played strong but lost 15-13 in game 3.

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Playoff Round: Cincy vs. 2nd City

Due to a three-way tie for second place in our pool, there was a playoff. Cincy had a bye the first round due to the point differential. After 2nd City won the first game against Washington VBC, they played Cincy. Cincy fell down quickly 5-0. Alli Bergheger's hitting brought the game to 9-3. Cincy rallied, but wasn't strong enough to get back into the game. 2nd City won 15-11. The Mizuno Cincy Classic 13 Red team qualified for the Silver Bracket – one of the top 16 teams in the country.

Day 4 – July 7 ... Silver Tournament, First Round: Midwest Select Starz (Fenton, MO)

Kelsey Rose and Alison Bartish worked together at the net with strong blocking. Kelly Torok had a nice up that Sarah McGrath took advantage of for a strong kill. This tied the game at 9. Hope Lohmueller had a 4 point serving streak to take Cincy ahead 12-10. Kelsey Rose had a great hit to the corner to pull ahead 19-14. Cincy stayed strong to win 25-22. Cincy started game 2 slow when Midwest went ahead 4-1. Abby O'Connor's great defensive play along with the consistent setting afforded Maura Hovey the chance to have numerous strong hits. Cincy fought hard to bring the score back to 13-9 Midwest. Cincy won their 13th point by sheer hustle. Midwest won the second game 25-19. Alli Bergheger won the first point of game 3 with a great kill. Sarah McGrath's string of ace serves took Cincy ahead 4-1. Hitting by Cincy's front row took Cincy ahead 13-12. Midwest tied the game at 13 and pulled ahead to win 15-13.

After losing to Midwest Select Starz, the team went to cheer (loudly) and show support for the Cincy Classics 14 Red team which won the 14 Club Tournament. The Cincy Classics 13 Red team finished the JO National Championships tied for 13th in the country. The experience is one that the players and their families will never forget.

— Chris Shaffer

Mizuno Cincy Classics – 12 Red

Our Cincy Classics 12 Red team was very excited about competing at Nationals this year. Some players were first-year junior olympic athletes while others were second-year. Several players had big sisters who had competed at Nationals before or were competing this year at the same time, making for even

more excitement.

The Mizuno Cincy Classics 12 Red team started off the first day rather anxious but settled down to win the first match against Front Range 12 Pink in three games. Our second match found us playing much more confidently, and we beat Milwaukee Sting 12 Gold in two games. The last match of the day was the most challenging, against HP Kaepa Impact, and we just couldn't close a game that match. The team was very excited about the caliber of play they experienced on the first day and knew it would be even tougher on the next day as we were still in contention for Gold.

Despite being really pumped up for the second day of competition, those old butterflies came back with a vengeance. Combine that with some really good competition, and needless to say the day just did not go well for us. We faced really good teams that day in Asics Kiva 12 Red, South Central 121 and Austin Jrs. 12 Navy Kaepa – they played awesome. Though we played up to the competition most of the time, we were just unable to close a match that day. Our team was sadly disappointed to be out of the running for Gold, but we had a team meeting that night and set our sights enthusiastically on the Bronze medal.

After the previous day's competition we wondered how we would start off the day: nervous or confident? Well, we took our first match against TES Lightning and then went on to play even more confidently against High Country 12 and won that match, which put us in the finals against Asics Mid-America 12-1. This was a really exciting and intense match. Our girls played their hearts out but we were unable to defeat our opponents. I think our team was actually more sad that it meant the experience of Nationals was over as opposed to the actual defeat. This placed us at a ranking of #20 overall, which was great for our first time at Nationals.

Overall this was an exciting experience for our girls. Many had never been to Salt Lake City before. The added opportunity of watching the USA women's team was a lot of fun as well. We met some really great coaches and players who exhibited super sportsmanship. The officials were professional, humorous, and very helpful, and the whole event seemed well-run. We are proud of what we accomplished this year, and I know many are already envisioning next year. However, next year once again we will be aiming for Gold.

— Nann Grome, Coach

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Toledo Volleyball Club Bottles Bronze in SLC

Toledo Volleyball Club's 14-1, 16-1 and 17-1 teams each won bronze in the club division in Salt Lake City, finishing 17th out of 64 teams.

The 16-1 team, coached by Shelli Smith, kicked off the Bronze Fest. After going 3-0 on their first day of play, they found themselves on Day 2 in the pool with the tournament's top seed and eventual champion. As luck and volleyball would have it, also in the pool was the #8 seed and our good friends, Team Atlantis. It was a long day, and Atlantis avenged our victory at Regionals, beating us in 2. We then lost to Nebraska and finished the day with our best play against St. Louis CYC, winning the first game, losing the second, and losing a heartbreaker in the third. Day 3, we looked for some redemption and won all of our matches. We saved our best play for tournament play winning big and getting a little redemption ourselves against Nebraska for the bronze title.

The 17-1s found themselves in a similar situation, though they arrived there a little differently. 17-1, coached by Sonny Lewis, also went 3-0 the first day and advanced to the top pool for day 2. Again, as luck and volleyball would have it, they went 2-1 on Day 2 and were in a 3-way tie to continue in gold. They lost a tiebreaker and ended the day in 3rd place. The tiebreaker would be the last match the team would lose, finishing the tournament in 17th place and winning the bronze division.

By the time the 14-1 team arrived in SLC, they had heard about the bronze babes and were hoping to improve the club's position. The 14-1s, coached by John Buck, finished 2-1 on Day 1 and stayed in the top half of the bracket. Once again, Day 2 was TVC's Achilles' heel and the 14-1s lost every match. Bronze was now the team's goal. And it was achieved in fine fashion with excellent play on Day 3 and 4.

The 15-1 team missed the clinic on finishing in bronze and lost in the finals of Flight 1. This was their first visit to nationals since they were 12 year olds, and they are committed to returning next year and finishing higher than any other TVC team. The team, coached by Jaime Walton, started out like gangbusters, barely breaking a sweat in their first day, winning all of their matches in 2. Day 2, was well, Day 2, and they lost all 3 matches. They were still hoping to make it to bronze, but one match on Day 3 got in their way. They fought hard and lost a tough one in the finals of flight 1 – still a respectable 27th out of 64 teams.

The 12-1 team, coached by Tom Duran, enjoyed their visit to Salt Lake City and their first experience in the big leagues. Unfortunately they had more fun sight seeing than they did playing volleyball. But, it was a learning experience and they are hoping to get another chance next year. They finished 35th out of 48 teams.

TVC is very proud to have represented the Ohio Valley Region and to have sent 5 teams to nationals. Our goal for 2003 is to send a team in every age group to nationals! Special thanks to the OVR Board for their support of volleyball in Northwest Ohio.

— Michelle Hills, Director

Kaepa Cleveland Volleyball Company – 13 Black

Even though 7 out of 9 players from the CVC 13 Black Team were returning to Utah again to represent their club team in the Junior Nationals, the thrill and excitement still existed. From the moment we qualified at our Bid Tournament until we hugged good bye on the flight home, it's an experience our team will always remember. Meeting girls from all over the nation, exchanging gifts with each other, having the same goals and dreams. I can hardly wait for my school volleyball season to end only because I know it's time for club season to begin! Thank you to all the people that make this possible. We appreciate it, we love it, and can't wait for it all to begin again in 2003.

— Hannah Brown

Kaepa Cleveland Volleyball Company – 18 Black

The Kaepa CVC 18 Black team had a successful National experience. The team finished 33rd out of 66 with a predominantly 17s team. Our two seniors, Julie Lewis and Jamie Herr, are headed off to college in August to Northern Kentucky and Walsh University respectively. We wish them well! The rest of the team will be back next year. (We know you can't wait, Troy.) The rest of the team consisted of 5 juniors, Kris Brown, Kailee Goold, Jessica Pompei, Brittany Alaburda, and Katie Tobiasz, and one sophomore, Jill Quayle. This team had a good time and played some solid volleyball.

— Jill Pompei, Kaepa CVC Coaching Supervisor

Kaepa Cleveland Volleyball Company – 15 Black

For six years, it has been my dream to go to Nationals. Two years ago, my team attended the Denver qualifier and placed 2nd in the club division. That was one year after the rule was

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changed to allow only the 1st-place team to qualify. The following year we just didn't play well at the Bid Tournament and once again did not qualify. It was torture! This season, I began coaching a new team and qualified for the Junior National Championships for the first time! My high school team qualified for State this past fall and now my club team had qualified for Nationals all in one year! It was unbelievable! I had met two of my goals within a matter of months.

Nationals was everything I thought it would be...all the college coaches, watching the best high school and middle school players in the country, meeting coaches from all over the country, and seeing the Women's National Team play! My goal now is to continue this dream and return to Nationals again next year. It was an experience I'll never forget!

— Rich Severino, Coach

Sports Express Red 17-1

We started this tournament not really knowing how we would do. Most of the team was tired and not focused. We just returned from a tournament in Chicago and only had two days of rest. Pool play started bright and early on Thursday, which wasn't a good thing trying to get a group of 17 year old girls up and ready to play at this time in the morning. To the parents and my surprise; the team started with a bang! We ended that day of pool the same as we did the rest of the week—undefeated, until we met up with the Lions VBC. We had beat them once, fairly easily, but played with our heads down the second match. It was upsetting to lose our first match of the week, but we knew what needed to be done to get to the finals. That is what this team did, they played their hearts out and made it to the championship. As we looked to see whom we were to play, our hearts pounded as we saw the Lions warming up. We had to get them back! Unfortunately, we did not play as well as we could have the first game of the match, and the Lions took it from us rather easily, but did we ever come back. Although we lost one of our outside hitters in the second game, we still came from behind and surprised the Lions, our parents, and the referees to get the win. It came down to the final match. We fought hard and long. We played with every last bit of energy we had, but couldn't hold on. We came in second place, but could not have been more proud. We did our best and that is all you can ask for.

— Jeni Case, Club Director

Sports Express Black 18-1

We were very excited this year to go to nationals in Utah, but didn't know exactly what to expect. We received an at-large bid to play 18 Open. This was the first time we played Open at nationals, so we were a little nervous. Most of the girls on the team are going on to play in college, so we figured playing Open would be very beneficial. There was some unbelievable volleyball being played in the 18 Open division.

We started off the first match going into 5 games, but winning 18-16 in the 5th game. It was good to have that happen right away, because playing the best of 5 was new to the girls also. We won the 2nd match fairly easy and we were done for the day! It was a pretty good way to start off the tournament. The next day we played Texas Advantage, a very good team, and beat them in 3 games. Everyone on the team played outstanding! We won 30-28, 27-25, 25-19. So here we were still undefeated! All we had to do was beat Munciana and the worst we could have done was silver! Needless to say, we ran out of gas and got beat in 3 games. The 3rd day was the hardest. We had to play City Beach and Sports Performance back to back. We lost each match in 3, but did have some pretty close games with both teams. This put us in the bronze division which was the top 16. The last day we played Houston Juniors in the semi-finals of the bronze and lost in 5 games! This match was disappointing because I know we were a better team than they were and we just didn't play with a lot of heart! I guess by the 4th day when you're not going for gold, it makes it hard to keep up the intensity.

Overall, it was a very successful trip. We played 2 of the teams that made it to the final four in gold, we won 3 matches, and the girls became better players by playing that level! We had a very successful year, and the girls should be proud of themselves and all that they have accomplished! We came in 4th at the 18 Open Mideast Qualifier and were seeded 32nd out of 36 teams, won the OVR Regional Championships, came in 3rd at the Asics Championships in Chicago and got a 15th in the 18 Open National tournament! Way to go Sports Express!

— Jeni Case, Club Director

Premier 15 Black Outlaws

Premier 15 Black Outlaws traveled to the National Junior Invitational. The team started off the tournament in great standings, finishing 3-0 in their first two rounds of play. The third

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day, the team went 2-1, but still managed to make it into the Gold Bracket. On the fourth and final day, the team played the best volleyball of their season and advanced to the final round. The gold medal match against the undefeated Wisconsin Juniors was before a crowd of hundreds and played right next to the final match of the 16s division, where Premier 16-1 was competing. All looked to be going Premier's way as they jumped out and won Game 1. Wisconsin, however, won the greatly-fought match, with Premier taking second place in the Gold Division.

Premier 15-1 had two USA All-Tournament Selections on the team: Morgan Ammons (Findlay, OH) and Lauren Henning (Bowling Green, OH). The team is coached by Brian Yale, Head volleyball Coach at Genoa High School and Co-Club Director of Premier. It was great to see the team compete in such a great event and a new addition to USA Volleyball National events. — *Jodi Schramm and Brian Yale*

Premier 18 Black Mavericks Travel to Two National Championships

June 13-19, they flew to Orlando, FL to compete in the AAU National Championships for the fourth straight year. They have finished in the top five in all four years, this year placing third. They went undefeated, having played some great teams including five Sports Performance teams, until the match against nationally-ranked KIVA, and then came back and beat Orlando Volleyball Academy to get into the final four. The famous Sports Performance 18-1 team stopped their try for National Champions. Premier played a great match, and we are proud of all of the players on the team for a great match to watch in front of a crowd of hundreds. This year, Ashlei Nofzinger was named a three-time AAU All-American Selection at the tournament.

Premier then trained another week and headed off to Salt Lake City to compete in the USA National tournament for the third straight year. Returning as the Silver Champions (9th place overall) from 2001, they looked to do well again. However, Orlando Volleyball Club stopped them in a three-game match that took them out of gold contention on the first day. From there the team could not find the tools needed to bounce back to play great volleyball and dropped another match on the second day. Day three proved to be better, going undefeated, but in the end the team finished in 42nd place.

Playing the best teams in the country is hard anywhere you do it. We are proud of our team for qualifying once again and for representing themselves very well in Salt Lake City. All but two of the players on the team are off to college to play.

Premier 16 Black Magic

Premier Volleyball Club, based in Maumee, Ohio, qualified four teams to the National Invitational tournament. We had our 13s, 15s, 16s, and 17s teams competing against volleyball teams from all over the US. Our 18s team qualified for the USA Nationals in Salt Lake City.

The highest finish: Premier 16 Black Magic won the 16s division, finishing first out of 32 teams. Their overall match record for the tournament was 10-1, dropping only one match to Sports Performance Red (Naperville, IL). Sports Performance Red was the team that Premier beat in the finals, defeating them in 2 games. Premier 16 Black Magic's results were:

- Day 1 defeated Great Lakes 16-1
defeated Arizona E. Valley Jrs.
defeated Rolling Thunder 16 Blue
- Day 2 defeated CVC 16 Black
defeated Lakes 16-1
defeated Tampa Sand Spurs
- Day 3 defeated Sports Performance 16 White
defeated Stewie Blue
lost to Sports Performance 16 Red (in three)
- Day 4 *Championship/Gold playoffs*
Semifinals: defeated KIVA 16 White 25-12, 23-25, 15-13
Finals: defeated Sports Performance Red 25-17, 25-20

Three Premier 16 Black Magic players earned national recognition: #6 Callie Miller (Anthony Wayne HS) and #8 Laurie Schade (Maumee HS) made the All-Tournament team, and #3 Elizabeth Simon (Bowling Green HS) was named Tournament MVP. The roster also included #1 Courtney Nissen (Genoa HS), #2 Brooke Amstutz (Northview HS), #4 Caitlin Scannell (St. Ursula Academy), #5 Erin Baier (Northview HS), #7 Beckie Lowery (Fremont St. Joseph HS), #9 Courtney Nelson (Bowling Green HS), #19 Haley Eshleman (Fremont St. Joseph HS), and Coach Heather Grieser. — *Jodi Schramm*

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Premier 17 Raptors

Premier Volleyball Club's 17-1 Team, the Raptors, finished in 12th place at the National Junior Invitational Tournament in Louisville, Kentucky. Out of 28 teams participating, the Raptors took second place in the Bronze division. Coached by Michelle McCord and Craig Vlietstra, the Raptors took second place in their pool on the first day of competition. On days two and three, losses to three teams by two points in game three placed the Raptors in the Bronze division. A great win against Club Sport (CA) in the Bronze semis put the Raptors in the finals against San Gabriel (CA), a team the Raptors beat in pool play on day one. A victory was not to be this time, though, as the Raptors lost to San Gabriel (CA) in two to take second in Bronze. Standouts for the Raptors at Louisville included Karyn Thomas (Soph. MB from Findlay, OH), Kelly Harms (Jr. OH from Bowling Green, OH) and Noelle Owen (Jr. OH from Rossford, OH). Premier Volleyball club is proud of the 17 Raptors for a good showing at the National Tournament, one of 6 Premier teams to qualify in 2002. Congratulations Raptors!
— Jodi Schramm

Premier 13 Black Superstars

Premier 13 Black Superstars were one of Four Premier teams that traveled to the Junior Olympic Invitational Tournament. The team was very excited about going to the event because it was new and the girls had never traveled to a national tournament before. They took a month off from playing in tournaments due to two major injuries on the team. When it was time to play, all ten girls were at the tournament, with only one player with a broken leg. The girls played very well on the first day, going 2-1 and dropping a match to OVR rival Cincy Classics.

The next day the competition was even better in the upper bracket. Premier ended up in a tie-breaker and won it in the end to go to the Gold/Silver round. On the third day, the team dropped a match, putting them in the Silver bracket for the last day. The team suffered two more injuries that day, putting the team at 7 players. The Superstars came out playing very well but lost in the second round, earning the team 7th place.

We are so proud of the 13s for going to the NIT and playing so well. It was a great experience and well-run event for USA Volleyball. The team is coached by Melissa Smith, Varsity Coach at Sylvania Northview High School.

NKYVC Reaches New Heights in OVR and Nationals

It's been a busy and exciting season for NKYVC in the Ohio Valley Region this year. In its inaugural season, the Northern Kentucky-Ohio Volleyball Club has a lot to be proud of, sending 4 of its 8 teams to the USA Nationals in Salt Lake City.

The following coaches and players represented NKYVC and the OVR:

12 Tide – Head Coach Sara Palazzo

Katelynn Bachman, Maggie Bowers, Meagan Dunn, Jessica Kramer, April Lubrecht, Kenzie Martin, Sarah Robinson, Cristin Shaughnessy, Nicole Staverman

13 Tide – Head Coach Angie Boden

Elizabeth Carl, Rachel Gadberry, Aimee Ryan, Rebecca Sebastian, Lauren Snyder, Allison Stark, Liza Toebe, Danielle Wurtz

14 Tide – Head Coach Maureen Donnellan

Allie Bertke, Abbey Blank, Sarah Crossman, Stephanie Hemmer, Kristy Hock, Andrea Price, Emma Kate Raver, Jenna Siemer, Lindsay Zumdick

14 Tsunami – Head Coach Jill Bornhorn

Nicole Baker, Megan Dooley, Jessica Isaac, Alex Klein, Katelyn Luckman, Sara Meineke, Hillary Otte, Jennifer Suedkamp, Stephanie Ward

All season long the coaches, players and their teams worked hard to prepare for the OVR bid tourney and then Nationals. And upon their arrival to SLC, NKYVC had one goal in mind: work hard, play hard, and have fun. For all the NKYVC teams, Nationals were a great opportunity to meet new people, watch great volleyball, and learn more about the sport and each other on many levels.

Dreams were realized, goals were met, some disappointments were inevitable, but the total experience each player took away from Nationals will be forever. NKYVC left Salt Lake City with a smile on their faces and a mission in their minds of how they will get back to Nationals again next year.

So congratulations to all the members of the NKYVC family. All season long you earned every point, every game, every match, and made it to Nationals. *Way to go!*

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Cincy VBC

Cincy VBC sent three teams to the Invitational in Louisville and two teams to Nationals in Salt Lake City. Our 12s accomplished the best, winning the gold in Louisville. This was an exciting moment for our young team to experience such an awesome awards ceremony for the first time in their careers as junior Olympic volleyball players. Just as it was a positive emotional remembrance for our players, it was a proud occasion for our parents. Our 13s also took part in an award ceremony, placing third overall and receiving the bronze medal.

Our 14s lost a tough match at the Invitational on the third day of pool play, bumping them down to the silver division, which they later won.

Our 18s made the trip to Salt Lake for the players' first-ever appearance to nationals. It was a great accomplishment in itself to be at playing at such caliber play for the first time in their careers. Five players returning next year hope to return as true 18 and under players after being part of the excitement of Nationals once before.

Our 17s made a fifth appearance at Nationals, competing for their dream of champions. However, both the 17s and 18s lost some great 2-point games and did not end up as far as they had dreamed.

Hats off to all the USVBA in making this another pleasurable year for Cincy VBC. — *Mindy Leonard*

Mid Ohio Juniors 18 Sharks

The Mid-Ohio Juniors 18 Sharks finished 19th at the 2002 USA Volleyball Junior Nationals in Salt Lake City, Utah in early July. The team was eliminated in the semi-finals of the bronze bracket by Austin Juniors. With the 19th spot, Mid-Ohio became the highest finisher from the Ohio Valley Region in the 18 Club division. One of the highlights was playing the first day against Players Volleyball Club from Orem, Utah, and Junior National Team player Kristen Richards. Mid-Ohio lost in two, but gave a valiant effort against a very talented Players team that eventually won the Club National Championship. Team members were: Allison Barnes and Danielle Holt of Galion, Jessica Fick of Fremont, Ashley Balogh of Clyde, Ashley Hill of Bellevue, Keri Kuhlman of Shelby and Jenna Maddocks of Norwalk. Joe Fick of Fremont coached the Mid-Ohio 18s, who qualified for nationals by winning the Northeast Qualifier in Baltimore in March. Congratulations on a great season! — *Jill Fick*

Mid Ohio Juniors 17 Black

Mid Ohio Juniors 17 Black qualified for the 2002 USA Volleyball Junior Nationals at the OVR Bid tournament. This was the first time that all of the girls on the team had ever been to nationals, which made it extra special to have the opportunity to participate. The team worked hard to prepare for nationals by having extra practices and scrimmages. They also worked hard at fund raising to help offset their travel expenses by selling candy bars, suckers, candles, cookie dough, washing cars, writing sponsor letters, and even parking cars at Norwalk Raceway. As the trip approached the girls grew closer together as a team, so much so that we even decided to stay together in a large vacation home near Brighton ski area; yep all 24 of us (players, parents, siblings, grandma, and coaches, too!) On the first day we struggled, I think it was nerves, but after realizing that it was still the same volleyball game we played in Ohio, the girls pulled it together. Playing better and better each day, winning more and more matches. This hard work and fantastic season paid off, Mid Ohio Juniors 17 Black won Flight 4, placing 49th. Mid Ohio 17 Black was composed of freshmen Tiffany Uhler (Hillsdale) and Erica Short (Orrville), sophomore TaNeisha Winters (Orrville), and juniors Brittany Rowe (Orrville), Kristen Playko (Norwalk St. Paul), Amanda Hoeft (Wynford), Ashley Kimmel (Buckeye Central), and Leah Wilson (Norwalk St. Paul). Mid Ohio 17 Black was coached by Melissa and Tom Fittante. — *Melissa Fittante*

Dayton 17-1 places 5th in Inaugural National Championships

The first-ever trip to the Boys Junior Nationals by the Dayton Boys VBC was a combination of fun, success, and valuable experience for everyone involved. Three teams represented the Ohio Valley Region from the Dayton area in the 18 Club, 17 Club, and 16 Club divisions, with the 17s team placing 5th overall and team member Bret Versen selected to the 17 Club All-Tournament team.

Dayton 18-1 began their Nationals experience with opening-day losses to Colorado Gold 18, Arizona Absolute, and Pittsburgh Elite Black. Day two began with a rematch loss to Pittsburgh Elite Black, followed by two three-game wins over West Coast Black and friendly inter-region rival Northcoast 18 Gold. A disappointing early loss to California Foothills 18-1 on day three was balanced with a win over

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Renaissance White to qualify the team for Flight One on the final day of competition. Dayton 18-1 ended the four-day tournament with a 25-16, 22-25, 12-15 loss to Santa Monica Beach Club 18 Red in the quarter-finals of the Flight 1 bracket to finish tied for 25th out of 36 teams. Members of the squad were Kevin Boehmer, Eric Franz, Jeremy Hartke, Matt Koons, Kevin Schultz, John Stahly, Jeremy Waldron, Zach Wilson, and coaches Jill Boehmer and Monte Moser.

Dayton 17-1's desire for a national championship opened well with three first-day wins over California Club Sport, Utah Twin Peaks, and Long Island VBC Gold. A hard-fought 21-25, 25-23, 13-15 loss to Puerto Rico Arsel VBC early on day two toughened the team, and they responded with easy wins over Pacific Waves and West Coast Black in their climb to the top. Day three was split between a loss to eventual national runner-up Renaissance Red and a win over NY Power Station to qualify the team for the Gold division bracket. The team ended its run for a national championship to Long Island VBC Elite in the Gold quarter-finals, 19-25, 18-25, to finish 5th out of 32 teams. In addition, team member Bret Versen was named to the All-Tournament team. Players for Dayton 17-1 included Adam Brust, Reed Chilton, Ben Devine, Tim Green, Andrew McFarlin, David Millward, Josh Millward, Bret Versen, and coaches Erik Versen and Jim Wannemacher.

Dayton 16-1's goal of "gain experience and steal a few matches" started as a good learning experience with opening day losses to Balboa Bay White, Wisconsin Tosa, and NY Power Station. Day two saw more determination on everyone's face, and following a first-match loss to inter-region rival Cincinnati Attack 16-3, the team responded with wins over Houston Mizuno and Maryland VBP Black. This success was continued on the third day with great defense and strong attacks to defeat California Club Marauder and Addison 16-2 to qualify for Flight 1 of day four's playoffs. Dayton 16-1's winning streak ended with the opening-round match against eventual bracket champion Asics Mid-America, 25-23, 18-25, 7-15, to finish tied for 29th out of 40 teams. The squad consisted of players Dylan Balser, Ryan Devine, Michael Earman, Tyler Jolly, Jesse Manders, Scott Mayer, Kyle Paxson, Brad Zavakos, and coach Gary Parker.

This was a great opportunity and wonderful experience for all involved. We appreciate the assistance provided by Ron Wyzynski and Steve Donahue in helping us with this endeavor and hope we've represented the OVR well. We look forward to next year's championships.

— Monte Moser

Director, Dayton Boys VBC

In Memoriam – John Ketchum

John W. Ketchum, born in Piqua, Ohio, died on June 30, 2002. John, known as "Mr. Volleyball" in Columbus, began playing volleyball at the age of 16 and played into his 50s. He was extremely active with the United States Volleyball Association, bringing the USVBA National Open Championships to Columbus in 1952, serving on committees for National Tournament Site Selection, Public Relations, Olympic Selections and player and team eligibility, and serving as Vice-President from 1962-1969. Donations in remembrance of John should be made to any children's charities, USAV, or the American Cancer Society. John will be remembered most for his kind and thoughtful treatment of any and all who met him. A Memorial Service will take place in early September.

A fuller biography for John, doing greater justice to his remarkable dedication, is available on USA Volleyball's website (www.usavolleyball.org/news/news.asp?id=111).

The 2003 OVR Handbook will
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www.ovr.org/handbook/

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