

NL 18-1, 18-2, 18-Black, & 18-Red travel to Italy

The Northern Lights 18-1, 18-2, 18-Black, and 18 Red teams will be traveling and competing in Italy from March 24- April 2. They will be spending the first few days sightseeing in Rome, Milan, and Venice. After that they will be competing in tournaments in Pordenone Italy (18-1), Falconara (18-2), Milan (18-Black), and Albisola (18-Red) with Junior teams from Italy and around the world.

Tournament Link for Pordenone=<http://www.memorialcornacchia.com>

No links available for Falconara, Milan or Albisola tournaments

Day 1

March 25 - Arrival to Rome

By: Sarah Watne & Hannah Redman 18 Black

Italy bound! At 4:20 pm we all boarded the flight and prepared ourselves for an 8 hour trip that would start us on our legendary trip to Italy! The flight was... long. Most of us watched movies or slept and we got a snack, dinner, and breakfast. I think we all wish we could have slept more because in Amsterdam, where our layover was, it was already the next day! We reached Amsterdam at 5:30 am, but it was only 11:30 pm in Minneapolis. After our 2 hour flight from Amsterdam to Rome we reached our final destination.

On the way from the airport to the hotel we drove by many sights that we would later see and it caused our excitement to build. The hotel is quite small and we were surprised how everyone here seems to get by on the bare minimum. However, they do have bidets! What a fun and new experience. After we cleaned up at the hotel, we headed out to go sightseeing.

We went to the Spanish Steps first and took lots of beautiful photos. While we were there we also got hit on by some strange Italian guys. They loved blowing kisses. Then we headed to the jaw-dropping Trevi Fountain. We all made a wish while we were there; hopefully everyone wished that we would get first place in the tournaments to come! Then we visited the Pantheon and Painter's Square.

After seeing all those wonderful sights, Curt very graciously allowed us an hour or two of free time to wander the city and investigate on our own. The city at night was unbelievable and we had lots of fun together! After letting our appetites brew, we headed to a restaurant that served us never ending food. When our stomachs were all filled to the brim we headed back to the hotel. After a long 36 hours of being awake we finally got to crash.

[Pictures for today](#)

[Videos for today](#)

Day 2

Rome – Vatican

By: Maddie Borwege & Bri Pernsteiner 18-2

We started off the day by having breakfast at our hotel, it consisted of croissants, nutella, cereal, yogurt, and juice. After that, we set out for the busy subway station, which we have already taken numerous times throughout the trip. This morning, the subway was really crowded but the fact that we would soon be at the Vatican made up for it. While we were there, we had the opportunity to see the courtyard, the Sistine chapel, St. Peter's Basilica, an area where former popes are buried, and other buildings/rooms within the Vatican. Most of the rooms were filled with beautiful artwork, such as sculptures, paintings, mosaics, and architecture. The Sistine chapel was an amazing experience because the artwork on the ceilings was so detailed. Unfortunately, we were not allowed to take pictures within the chapel. St. Peter's Basilica was, without a doubt, the largest church we have ever been to. It was incredible to be there because it is an area where Pope Francis celebrates Mass. After that, we headed downstairs, beneath the main part of the Basilica. That area was a place of burial and remembrance of former popes.

After leaving, we were free to roam the area outside of the Vatican for lunch and a little bit of shopping. The entire 18-2s team (besides Ganzarno and Brianno – our new Italian nicknames for our coaches, Ganser and Bryan) ate lunch at a small pizzeria. The majority of us had pizza and LOVED it. After lunch, we headed into a few small stores to purchase souvenirs for ourselves and our families and friends. During this time, there was a change in the weather and we broke out our umbrellas to stay dry from the rain. Eventually we made our way back to the subway station and to our hotel. We had about a half hour to get ready before we set out on the second adventure of the day.

Our second adventure began with an hour bus ride to our first match of the Italy trip. We arrived at a dome in the middle of nowhere and got all of our volleyball gear on. We entered the area which housed the volleyball court and warmed up by playing a friendly game of Queens with the 18-Black team, our coaches, and a few of the Italian players. It was fun to introduce ourselves to the Italian players and ask them questions because most of them spoke some English. We encouraged them to take us to the "La Discoteca", which is a dance club that they said they go to for entertainment in their free time. Sadly, Ganzarno shot down that idea. Next we played a 3 set game against an Italian team and lost all 3 sets. The first set was definitely the warm up, we lost 12-25. We woke up a little for the second set, but still lost 18-25. In the final set, we continued to progress and better our play, which allowed us to extend the game but eventually lose with a score of 24-26. After shaking hands and thanking the players, we took a large group picture with our new Italian friends. We still have one more match to play tonight against Roma Centro, a team that we have already made friends with and even traded some Mizuno Northern Lights shirts with. Now we must leave and go warm up for that final match. Hope all is well in Minnesota!

XOXO,
-Madeline & Brianna

[Pictures for today](#)
[18-2 & 18-Black Warm-up in Italy](#)
[Lauren & Ida talk about today](#)
[Sara B & Carlee comment on their match](#)

Day 3

Rome - Coliseum and Forum

By: Janell Finkbeiner & Kirsten Johnson 18-2

Ciao friends and family in Minnesota,

We started out the day being able to sleep in until 8:30, which was much needed after a long day walking and playing on Tuesday, as well as an 11:30p.m. Gelato run. At breakfast most of us had bread and yogurt. Then we set off to see the Coliseum and the Roman Forum, which are ruins of the old Roman city. We started out on the outside taking pictures and doing a little shopping from the street vendors, and then we made our way inside. Inside we trekked our way to the top by going up four cases of very steep stairs. Once at the top we all split up to take more pictures and to enjoy the view of what used to be a battle arena where many men and animals lost their lives.

Our next stop was the ruins. We spent most of our time looking down at the ground, so none of us would trip on the very unstable cobblestone path. And then went up a few more flights of stairs. The view from the ruins was amazing and you could see the whole city of Rome. After going up more stairs, we exited the forum and were able to go off in groups to shop and find food. Some went to a nice sit down restaurant while others grabbed a quick sandwich and headed off to the shops. We then were surprised to find Curt standing in a Gelato shop waiting to buy us Gelato. It was a great snack on this 60 degree and sunny day.

We then made are way back to the hotel on the Metro. So far there has been three attempted pick pocketings on us, but no successes. We then had 5 minutes at the hotel to get changed and get on a bus to go play. We only had one match today. It started off a little slow, but as the games went on it got much better and we had some really close games. We did not win any games yet, but we played pretty well considering some of them are 25 to 30 years old.

Now we get to sit and watch the 1's Black and Red teams play their last few matches in Rome before going back to the hotel and ordering pizza for the night. We will pack up tonight and tomorrow everyone will go their separate ways. We will be heading to Falconara by train and starting our tournament tomorrow night. We are very excited to get started and bring home a trophy!

Everything is going great and we are having a blast! Keith and Joan if you are reading this the camera battery still does not work, but no worries Curt was prepared and had an extra camera for me.

Love,

Janell and Kirsten

Ciao!

[Pictures for today](#)

[Alyssa in the Coliseum](#)

[Sarah and Tegan on a Motorcycle](#)

Day 4

Rome – Venice 181, 18-Black, 18 Red

Rome - Falconara 182

By: Bella Nelson, Ida Steingas 18-Black

Today we got up around 7am and went to breakfast. After breakfast we finished packing (Curt made us pack everything in to a red bags including our backpacks) most of our bags were pretty heavy. Around 8:15 we walked to the train station and set on our journey to Venice. While on the train everyone was fast asleep.

Once we arrived in Venice Curt abandoned us to fend for ourselves and find our way to the San Marco Square by 5pm. No MAPS. No PHONES. No WI-FI. No English. POURING RAIN. You can only imagine what we were going through... Many of us got lost and walked way out of the way. But somehow we all made it there in time with our newly bought items such as purses, sweatshirts, key chains, pasta, scarfs, pants, and shoes. For lunch many of us dined on pizza, pasta, or Panini's. Also, we bought some gelato and some groups even had two servings of gelato.

After we were all gathered together again at the San Marco Sqaure Curt lead the pack back to the train station where we picked up our luggage and head our separate ways. 18-1s to Pordenone and 18-Black, 18-Red to Milan. Once arriving in Milan we plan to eat more pizza, pasta, and maybe more gelato. Then off to bed with full stomachs and sore feet from walking after a long day of travel.

CAIO!!

-Ida and Bella

Editors note: 182 left for Falconara this morning and arrived safely. They two matches this afternoon. They lost the first one match and won the 2nd match. Here is their report:

18-2's Day by Jamie Cairncross and Taylor Goar:

Yesterday, we traveled from Rome to Falconara by train! It was about a 3 hour train ride and a 40 minute car ride to where we are staying. We are staying in little bungalows; they are very small. We have limited hot water but it isn't that bad. :) A lot of the other teams stay here too, so last night there was a big dinner and we met some albanians that were very friendly!

It was also Bryans birthday so we gave him the cake/muffin, that we got from the last tournament, and had the dj let us all sing happy birthday! It's pretty chilly here now since were by the coast.

Love, Jamie and Taylor

P.S. hi leslee

[Pictures for today](#)

[Maggie, Bella, & Ida on the train](#)

Day 5

Pordenone 181

Falconara 182

Milan 18-Black & 18-Red

By: Emily Kukacka 18-Red

Today we had the pleasure of waking up at 9:00am!!! We ate breakfast at the hotel and headed to the subway with the 18-Black. We took the subway to the Duomo, a large church in the center of Milan. Once there we were given money for food and told us to explore once again and find our way about the city.

My group that I was in did window shopping at stores like Gucci, Prada and Louis Vuitton before finding stores that were off the beaten path that were a little more in our price range. Our group had a pretty successful day finding an abundance of scarves, sweatshirts, bracelets, etc. however some groups were not as lucky coming up empty handed.

At 3:30 the 18-Reds met back up and returned to the hotel on the subway with Curt and the tour guide. There we met up with our drivers who are accompanying us for the rest of our journey. After maneuvering the winding street into the valley we finally arrived in Genova like celebrities. All the little girls watching were excited to see the Americans (mostly the blond ones). We played 3 official set and then we played a fun one after that. (We won all of them!!) After the match we went to a little place across the street for more pizza with the team that we played against. Our 2 teams mingled and many of made some new Facebook friends. We left the pizzeria very late. Finally we made it to the hotel in Albisola at around midnight. After washing ourselves and our clothes in a shower without a curtain (which was interesting to say the least) we made it to bed and slept like rocks the rest of the very short night.

See you all soon.

Emily

18-1's by: Hannah & Tegan

We woke up at 9:00 and had a delicious breakfast at our hotel, the Best Western. We shopped around the city until noon, the shopping was wonderful!! At noon we drove to a local gym and played a Slovenian team. We split two and two games with them. Afterwards we got to know the team and ate pizza.

We then drove back to the hotel and got ready for the opening ceremony. On stage we got a standing ovation, it was so fun! We ate dinner and took a lot of pictures with other teams and 14 year old soccer players, haha. We returned and went to bed.

Ciao from Pordenone!

18-1

(Teg and Han)

[Pictures for today](#)

[Anne & Emily have a bedtime chat](#)

Day 6

Pordenone 181

Falconara 182

Milan 18-Black

Albisola 18-Red

By: Maggie Larson & Maggie Holcombe

Today we woke up to eat breakfast at 8:30. We had packaged croissants... yummy... NOT! Most of the players didn't eat much then we headed off (in the pouring rain) to play. At least our bus driver had a great CD to listen to and he also dropped us off at the door, like all gentlemen should.

It was a close game but in the end, we pulled out a loss. After our match, we went to lunch. First we were served pasta with red sauce followed by prosciutto and mozzarella cheese. Lastly, we finally got our first dessert of the trip- apricot pie.... -____-

We came back to the hotel for a much needed nappy poo. It was our first real down time since we arrived in Italy.

After awaking from our slumber, we took a never ending (two minute) bus ride to the gymnasium once again. Surprisingly, we pulled out another loss! GO TEAM! This meant we took 3rd out of the three teams in our "tournament". An up-side to losing so quickly was that we made it to the chocolate store before it closed at 7:30.

Then we took a quick stop at the ocean and went to dinner. Our first course was a salad that looked like weeds they pulled from the garden. Then we had chicken alfredo which hit the spot. Our dessert was a creamy cocoa delight that was MUCH better than the apricot pie.

Once we returned to our hotel and were getting settled in our rooms, Curt came a-knocking and made us write this journal and here we are.

Ciao,

The Maggies <3

Editor's notes: 181 won their pool today in Pordenone and are playing in the Gold bracket tomorrow. 182 finished their tournament in 5th place today in Falconara, 18-Black played a friendly match of 4 sets winning 2 and losing 2. No other journals have been submitted by the other teams.

[18 Red Pictures for today](#)

Day 7

Pordenone 181

San Marino 182

Darfo Boario Terme 18-Black
Albisola 18-Red

18-Black's Easter

By: Haley Walker and Erin Schwarz

Today we got to sleep in a bit however there was a bit of confusion because of daylight savings time in Italy, so some of had to set 3 alarms just in case our phones didn't automatically do it. We decided last night we wanted to attend a local church for Easter so we got all jazzed up and and walked to the service. It was a great experience even though we had no clue what the Priest was saying, and the church was absolutely beautiful!

After, we walked to a local park which had some great views of the Italian Alps and took some pictures then went back to the hotel. We ate lunch then got ready for our matches. We all crammed into a van (all 12 of us) and went too a local gym. We won our first match in 2 and lost our second in 2.

18-Red

By: Garet Miliner

Today was Easter Sunday and when we woke up for breakfast, the Easter Bunny had paid us a trip with lots of chocolate eggs!! It turns out that the Easter Bunny wasn't real... It was Curt. After discovering this, we had a really good breakfast that included food other than croissants.

When breakfast was over, we played a friendly match at the gym nearby and we won in 3 sets. Because the other team wanted a chance to beat us, we played a 4th set for fun and we got to mix up our line-up a little bit. We won that game too!!

After, we went back to the hotel quickly to change into shorts and t-shirt and headed to the beach! It was really nice out but the Mediterranean Sea was pretty cold. We took lots of pictures and walked around for a while before we went to lunch at Fiore.

After lunch, we went back to the hotel again to get our things ready for a 30 min drive to another gym in Albisola for a match. When we got there, they had a poster with our team picture on it showing that this match was a big deal to them. At first, the match started off a little rough for us and we ended up losing the first two sets. Then, we were able to stick together as a team and came back winning the next 3 sets!! After our fantastic win, we went to a new restaurant and ate some really good pasta.

Over all, we had a wonderful day as a team!

[18 Red Pictures for today](#)

[Ellen on the Beach](#)

[Keagan & Morgan on Easter Sunday](#)

Day 8

Pordenone 181

Venice 182

Darfo Boario Terme 18-Black

Nice France 18-Red 18-Red

By: Ellen Sachs & Imani Mansfield

Today we woke up at about 8, still excited from our win the night before. We had a small breakfast of bread and cereal then it was right off to Eze, France to look around and shop a little. The view and the ride over was gorgeous and you could see the Alps and the ocean but it was very twisty and it made our tummies hurt (:

After we looked around in Eze we took the 30 minute drive to Nice, France. It was very touristy so we split up to get food and to shop. Then once we were done, Curt treated us to gelato which was AMAZING!

We then went to the Hotel and since we all had fancy clothes that we never got the chance to wear we decided it was a night to get dolled up. Once we got fancy, we ate dinner and had our last discussion with Curt about our favorite parts of the trip and we had a mini photoshoot with our team, coaches, and drivers.

Now we're writing the journal wondering when we're gonna get to sleep because we have to be up by 345 to get everything ready to go by 415... AM... yayyyy. So goodnight world! See you back in the USA

Imani and Ellen

[18 Red Pictures for today](#)

[The Annie's together](#)