

Sunday July 6 - Monday July 7
Day 1 – USA to Madrid
By Hannah Angeli & Ashley Brueggeman
Northern Lights 16-1

Hey Everyone!

Today we flew from home to Atlanta then to Madrid! We had a 3 hour layover in Atlanta, which ended up to be a little longer than expected due to a couple that had forgotten to go through customs... hmm. The flight was about 8 hours, faster than expected (: Once we got to Madrid, we met up with our tour guide, Brooke. We then dropped off our bags in the rooms that were available and immediately began our adventure. Brooke toured us around for a couple hours, and then we had time to go off on our own!

We all went straight to the churros for lunch which was kind of a disappointment. After lunch, we all went back to the hotels to take some siestas which were very refreshing. At 5:00, we met a different tour guide and he took us through other parts of Madrid; it was gorgeous! During the tour, our guide stopped mid-story to point out two pick pocketers who were on the move. We did see someone get pick pocketed so our tour guide called the cops!

After the tour, we went for dinner and had some delicious tapas. We had salad, cheese, prosciutto, quiche, mushrooms, and calamari! Everyone loved the calamari... except Britt After hours of begging Curt for gelato, he eventually gave in. Overall, it was a great day! Excited for more adventures to come!

Love and miss you all,
Ashley Brueggeman and Hannah Angeli

Tuesday July 8
Day 2 –Madrid
By Erin Slinde & Brittany McLean
Northern Lights 16-1

Hola de Espana!

We are all having a ton of fun in Madrid! Today we got the chance to sleep in a little and continue exploring the beautiful city. We started off walking in the streets of Madrid to find ourselves standing in front of the Royal Palace in Madrid. Spain is a

monarchy which means that they have a state that doesn't have a lot of power and their country is run by a king and queen. They have a palace in Madrid that has 3,418 rooms inside. The architecture is absolutely amazing here in Spain!

We then went inside the main cathedral in Madrid. The cathedral was built recently. The stain glass windows were gorgeous inside followed by brass sculptures by the alter.

After our site seeing adventure, we found ourselves at a local market with many food stands that represent Spain's ethnic culture. The fruit stand and the dessert stand were by far the teams' favorite. The team then split up for the rest of the free time we had to roam in Madrid.

Some of the team was drawn by the tattoo parlor... We stepped inside to find colored hair braiding that was fairly cheap and a lot less permanent. The team got all different sorts of colors in their hair.

We then went back to the hotel where we napped for a while and packed our volleyball bags to go to our match in one of the suburbs of Madrid. We left at 5:30 for our match at 8. We took the subway station in Madrid, which they call the metro, to our match. We had to switch trains multiple times until we got to our stop. We got there around 7 pm and started playing after 8. The warm up was fairly long but finally we began playing after shared hitting lines.

We played 4 games and won all of them. Natalie got to play outside for the first time this year because of Chloe and Ashley's injuries, but they both did a very nice job being the refs. Chloe tried multiple times to kick us out, but it never happened.

After our game, we got to talk to the girls for a while. We found out that their ages ranged from 14-22 years old. We then took the metro back to the city where we finally got to eat. We got to the restaurant at 11pm where we ate paella which is cooked Spanish rice with different vegetables on top. One of the dishes had seafood and the other had chicken. The food here is very different then the U.S. Most of us enjoyed the paella and had another wonderful day in Madrid.

We finally got home at 12am when most of us were dead and went straight to bed. We are enjoying every moment here in Europe and we can't wait to tell you more about it when we get home! Miss you all so much! Adios!

Sincerely,
Erin Slinde and Brittany McLean

Wednesday July 9
Day 3 –Madrid
By Haley Kauth & Chloe Dousette
Northern Lights 16-1

Hello all,

It's Haley #7 and Chloe #4 (the one that looks like #3). Yesterday, we woke up around 9A.M., ate at 10, and began our journey at 11. We walked to the Egyptian ruins and went inside a museum which was very warm and dark (they wouldn't let us touch the walls, but I did). After that, we saw the overview of the city and took pictures with our phones.

Then, we returned to the heart of the city via foot. A group of us went to an Italian pizzeria and ordered one pizza and one salad (the salad did not have any lettuce, just tomato and cheese, poor Callie didn't like it). Afterwards, we split up into groups and went shopping. A lot of the girls bought dresses, souvenirs, churros, ice cream, and much more! I (Chloe) was walking by a Mickey Mouse street entertainer and he asked me if I wanted a balloon in exchange for money. I said no thanks, and he hit me with his balloons ☹.

Then we went back to the hotel and packed up for our train ride to Barcelona; around 5:30, we headed out to the Metro, had a few issues with our tickets (but eventually got on), and made our way to the gym. We arrived there around 6:50 and warmed up. We beat them in all 4 sets like the previous day and took pictures with the girls afterwards. On our way back to dinner, we stopped for some ice cream before getting on the Metro. Once we got back to Puerta del Sol, we walked to a pizzeria and had delicious pizza and pasta! Some of us even got seconds. The night life was very entertaining; the Argentina vs. Netherlands game had finished (Argentina won) while we were getting ready for bed and all we heard was cheering and honking horns. And that concluded our day, thanks for reading

Sincerely, Haley and Chloe

Thursday July 10
Day 4 –Madrid to Barcelona
By Kathryn Graf & Callie Schapekahm
Northern Lights 16-1

8:30 am: We rose to the BEAUTIFUL sunrise of Madrid, and soon realized that we had forgotten to take a shower the night before...

9:00 am: The excitement arose as we walked down the stairs to enjoy a delightful breakfast meal. Until... a small child sneezed and wiped his voluptuous boogers all over the clean plates and fresh food. BRUH come on.

10:00 am: As we headed out the hotel front doors we soon realized how heavy our large red bags actually were.

10:30 am: The Taxis. We got a ride to the train station which was really very close to our hotel but then the bags... We arrived and turtles were there (inside) and we enjoyed watching them a lot. **“By watching the turtles we then realized that moving slowly but steady through life will create a rewarding outcome”**.

10:47 am: Lunch was purchased. Sandwiches=4 euros. We bought some.

11:20 am: We got on the train with our very large bags. Finding space for all of the bags was a colossal task, but by shoving bags (Kat's) in a tight space behind a seat, we got the job done.

11:31 am: Sleep. The train was spacious and calming. The constant swaying rocked many of us to sleep like babies. Until 2:40 pm.

3:00 pm: As we stepped off the train we entered the Metro. Barcelona style. For many of us, it was one of the most frightening experiences of our young lives. We took guard of our bags and had our hawk eyes on for the two pick pocketers aboard ready to throw a punch if crossed.

The bags were still heavy. (Carried up many flights of STAIRS)

3:45 pm: Caught first glimpse of the Cathedral. Wow. Very beautiful. The architect is Gaudi. He must have had swag in his days.

4:00 pm: Arrive at hotel. Get Wi-Fi passwords and go on phones for quite some time.

5:00 pm: Walked and walked oh and walked many many miles until finally we reached our destination. The soles of my shoes should have had holes in them by now. Then we shopped and bought things with these wonderful little things called euros. They are great.

8:00 pm: Dinner was great. Many of us had our fourth round of pizza over the duration of the trip and enjoyed it just as much as the first. Also calzones and pasta.

9:17 pm: GELATO ON CURT ROUND
3!!

10:00 pm: Back at hotel. Wi-Fi and sleep and still no shower.

-Cal and Kat (We take showers.)

Friday July 11
Day 5 –Barcelona
By Jenae Alderson & Natalie Haben
Northern Lights 16-1

Today we woke up at around 8 o'clock with breakfast being at 8:30. Some people got ready before breakfast and others after. Everyone was ready to go around 9:30, we went to Park Guell for a nice stroll. Before walking around the park however, we took a nice 2 mile walk straight up a hill. The park was very exquisite with fine architecture and landscaping. We spent about 2 hours and managed to reach the highest point of the park which overlooked the entire city of Barcelona.

We then took taxis back to the Subway near our hotel, Subway the food joint that is ... Here, we each got a meal to hold us over for 3 hours. We then had to rush back to our hotel because we were crunched for time. Next we took taxis once again to the venue where the competition was younger than expected. It turned out to be a clinic with about 44 or so girls with the oldest being 14 years of age.

We lost in a quick 3 games ... JUST KIDDING, we creamed them. We also had to incorporate our little Spanish skills we had to try to understand these girls, but they surprisingly knew English very well. We connected very well with them, some even got phone numbers and shirts from us, they loved us, who doesn't? In return, we got some of the best lollipops in Spain. Some of their parents also volunteered to give us a ride to the metro.

So to end the day, we all went out to dinner and of course got some delicious gelato before returning to the hotel and hitting the sheets. The end.

I miss you Danita and Bj... I love you dearly. Your prize possession and favorite daughter, Jenae!

You know the code dad-Natalie

Saturday July 12

Day 6 –Barcelona

By Erin Slinde & Hannah Angeli

Northern Lights 16-1

Hello everyone!

Today was our last day in Barcelona, Spain. We woke up and ate breakfast before we headed to the ocean to spend time at one of Barcelona beautiful beaches. We got to the beach at 10:30 and went swimming in the bright blue water (after putting on some sunscreen of course). We got to swim around for a while. The water was fairly cold, so we walked around for a while on the beach in search of a sand volleyball court. There was only a small net with no ball so sadly, we never got to play. Curt had warned us about the nudity on the beach, but we didn't realize how serious he was until we got there. Not only were there topless women but there with bottomless men... It was a sight we all wish we hadn't seen.

After we were done at the beach, we took the metro back to the hotel and Curt let us go off on our own for lunch. We really branched out and tried something new... pizza. We all ate at least one full pizza (some of us 2) We had some troubles paying for our expensive bill, but no worries, we got it all paid for in the end. Then, we were on our way back to hotel and decided to stop at an ATM (because we were all broke) and the machine unfortunately shredded Kathryn's debit card. While we were waiting, Erin, Callie, and Haley went to get some gelato. Chloe and Ashley stayed with Kat at the ATM while the rest of us went to find Curt and Adam to come help. Kat never ended up getting her card back ☹

After we found Adam and Curt, we went up to shower and get ready to go shopping and out to dinner. We got 2.5 hours to shop in the main shopping area in Barcelona with many designer stores and shops. Most of us bought clothes or souvenirs and Adam got a merse (man purse) After a successful shopping day, we met up at 7pm for dinner. We told Curt and Brooke that we wanted pizza again, so... We somehow ended up at another pizza restaurant. After dinner, Curt bought the team gelato. On our way back to the hotel, we stopped to watch some local street performers. They did all sorts of flips and cool dance moves. The street performers were pretty interested in our group and Natalie and Haley were picked out of the crowd. One of the street performers' tricks was where they had to flip over both of them in which he

was successful. After their performance, one of them came over and kissed each of us on the cheek ☺ He asked us what we had going on that night and we sadly declined his request to take us out. Maybe next time ;) We headed back to the hotel where we all packed and got ready for our 6am flight to Venice and a long travel day to Croatia.

We are all doing fine and are excited to see what happens next. See you all very soon. Hope all is well back home ☺

Lots of Love,

Erin Slinde & Hannah Angeli

Sunday July 13

Day 7 –Barcelona to Pula

By Haley Kauth & Brittany McLean

Northern Lights 16-1

Zdravo (Hello)!

Haley Kauth and Brittany McLean coming at cha live from Pula, Croatia. Today was full of adventures such as sleeping on a plane and bus to going swimming in a beautiful ocean. Sleeping on a bus AND plane you may ask? Well we started the day with waking up at 4 am in Barcelona. We were at the airport by five. We took taxi's that ran every light and almost made us sick. (Ash was about to pass out it was so bad.)

After stumbling out of the taxi's we then stood in line to check-in for 30min. Curt DID NOT pick the right line. No one was over the weight limit for our bags as in MN Chloe's 44lb bag gave us some concern. Calle took one for the team and sacrificed her space for Chloe's dirty laundry. We then boarded the plane with no complications, except, I, Brittany McLean was in the 22nd row while Haley was in the 5th. Talk about being un-fair.

We landed in Venice aka the Wetlands and retrieved our bags. We searched and found our beloved bus that we would spend the next 4 hours on. Chloe, a current University of Texas setter joined us at that point. About an hour into the drive we picked up a Southern California team that basically brought the whole town with them. This caused us to share seats.

Next was the border control which took forever. The bus driver decided to shut the AC off and we about sweated to death. We added one more stamp to our collection and Haley learned how to say Thank you in Croatian. Brittany is rooming with Haley and Brittany is tired of Haley saying thank you. She says it about every 10 sec.

When we arrived, Curt took us to the ocean and within 5 min the team was changed and at the beach. It was so clear and beautiful. The only problem is the Sea Urchins, but everyone managed to not step on one. Some girls, including Haley and I, climbed and explored the rocky ledges that surrounded the bay. We even jumped off some.

We came back, showered, and hopped on another bus that took us to the main part of town. Then we were a part of opening ceremonies. We took pictures with multiple teams from other countries. The ceremonies began and we were second to last. We walked up on stage to the song "Summer" by Calvin Harris, we took a picture, and went back in line.

After that we got gelato then walked to The Coliseum in Pula. It was an amazing sight and we took a lot of pictures. The buses then picked us up and we went to bed!

We all miss you Minnesotan's and we can't wait to see you all soon.

Sighing off Curt's computer,
Haley Kauth and Brittany McLean

Monday July 14

Day 8 –Pula, Croatia – European Global Challenge Tournament

By Chloe Dousette & Ashley Brueggeman

Northern Lights 16-1

Hello all,

It's Ashley and Chloe and it's our second day in Croatia. We started off the day by being woken up at 6:00 A.M. by the thunderstorm which caused flooding and a power outage in our gym for 10 minutes. We played at 10:00 A.M. against an Italian team, who we beat in all three sets. Lunch was served at the hotel, and we switched jerseys. We played again at 3 P.M. against a Hungarian team; we won the first and third sets and got annihilated the second set (7-25).

After we got back from our second match, 7 of us went swimming in the ocean, while the others took a nap. We had a fun time jumping off rocks and we saw a lot of fish

and sea urchins (through Chloe's Michael Phelps's goggles). As a few of us were coming out of the water, Chloe found a ring and kept it 😊

The evening began with the four-star dinner at the buffet! Shortly after, we relaxed on the terrace and had our team meeting (top secret). After begging Curt for the fifth time, we finally convinced him to take us to a café to get some ice cream 😊 A few of us went down by the ocean to take pictures of the sunset, while some of us went inside to enjoy some fries. And now here we are, in Curt's sweet suite that has a beautiful ocean view. We have to go now, Curt's butler is here to turn his bed down and tuck him in 😊 Goodnight!

Tuesday July 15

Day 8 –Pula, Croatia – European Global Challenge Tournament

By Kathryn Graff & Callie Schapekahn

Northern Lights 16-1

Another day, another adventure. First, we awoke in our rooms (which were freezing) and went to eat breakfast. We walked to the arena and faced off a short and stout Italian team. Yes we beat them thankfully. Quickly, we sped back to the hotel because of the adventure awaiting. Cliff Jumping!!

Driving down in our large vans drove by a 7 foot Californian/ Nicaraguan man and our travel guide, Brooke, we had difficulties proceeding up the off road hill to the site with our manual stick shift. Yes, we almost rolled into the car directly behind us. Then Curt saved the day with his stellar driving skills.

We arrived at the park site, which was one of the most beautiful places any of us had ever been. Clear blue water and skies. Everyone was very excited... until we reached the edge of the cliff. But before anyone stepped to the edge we all said, "There goes Jenae." Shortly after everyone, including Chloe, took the 40 foot jump. **Being honest, the massive cliff into the deep abyss of the sea is much like life. You never know what's to come from your actions, but you go forward anyway. No matter how frightening it might be.**

There was a stunning cave in which we explored. We swam under 10 ft of rock to enter into the amazing beauty of the inner cavern.

We swam, jumped, laughed, smiled and made memories throughout the entire adventure.

Then we proceeded back to the hotel to play our next match. The day must have taken a lot of energy from us and we played very very very horrible. We still won so it's all good in the hood. Final 8 in the gold bracket! Yay us!

More gelato (Round nine on Curt)... yummy.

Chloe still refuses to take a full and thorough shower. (10 days strong)

Having a wonderful and good time.

-Kat and Callie

Friday July 18
Day 12 –Venice
By: Curt

The last day of our trip.

What can I say that hasn't already been said by this amazing group of young ladies?

An amazing time in Madrid, the sights, the food, the world cup excitement, and some good volleyball with a wonderful club.

An amazing time in Barcelona, the cathedral, Guell Park, the La Rambla shopping area, interacting with the young players at our match, and the gorgeous beach.

An amazing time in Pula Croatia. Great volleyball against teams from Hungary, Italy, Slovenia, & the USA. A beach with beautiful waters (and sea urchins). A national park with amazing cliff jumping and a gorgeous underwater cave. A Roman Coliseum and Roman Forum building. Rovinj a seaside town with lots of character and beautiful scenery. Lots of new friends from all over Europe. And winning the Global Challenge, congrats Ladies.

An amazing end to our trip in Venice. Narrow streets, getting lost, lots of fun shopping, good pizza, beautiful views around the island, a Gondola ride, and of course our final Gelato.

An amazing group of young ladies. Always smiling, always happy, always on time. Great volleyball players and great ambassadors for not only Northern Lights but

also the USA. Kathryn, Ashley, Chloe, Natalie, Haley, Hannah, Erin, Brittany, Jenae,
& Callie....thanks for the great memories. You can travel with me anytime.

Curt Glesmann
Northern Lights Juniors