

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

Pictures are posted on our facebook page.

Video's will be posted on YouTube, if I can get them uploaded.

The Northern Lights 18-1, 18-2, 18- Black, & 18-Red teams will be traveling and competing in Italy from April 9- April 18 with [BringitUSA](#). They will be spending the first few days sightseeing in Rome, Milan, and Venice. After that they will be competing in a high level tournament in Pordenone Italy (18-1), Falconara (18-2), Verona (18-Black), and Milan (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 Verona tournaments

Day 1

April 10 - Arrival to Rome

By: Mariena Hayden & Meg Schmidt

We started our trip with a flight to Detroit, had a 4 hour layover there, and then a 9 hour flight to Rome. When we got to our hotel, we quickly had to get ready and make our way over to the Coliseum to tour that for most of the day.

After walking around there looking at ancient history, we walked over to them Palitino, and the Forum where all the daily shopping, banking, etc was done back in the day. When everyone was done touring that, we walking to the metro station where we could either go back to the hotel or go see San Petrio.

After everyone made their way back to the hotel, we gathered back up about two hours later to go eat a huge dinner that included 5 course meals.

[Lauren & Erin at the Coliseum](#)

[Anna & Alivia at the Forum](#)

Day 2

Rome - Vatican

By: Deaira Gresham, Abby Loe

Today we woke up at 7:00 am, and got very pretty (Deaira's words), and then went to breakfast, where there were pastries, meats, cheeses, and yogurts. Deaira had an espresso... Then after we went on the bus to the Vatican! It was pretty hot, and there was a long line, but Curt has connections, so we sped through the line, and saw the Vatican museums. There were a lot of statues from the Renaissance, and there were some "different" ones. There were also a lot of bathtubs and sarcophagi. People took a ton of pictures, and then after we saw the museums, we went to the Sistine Chapel.

The Sistine Chapel was beautiful. There were sooo many people there, and everyone was supposed to be quiet, and there weren't any pictures allowed, but neither of those two things happened as often as the guards would like. After the chapel, we went through St. Peter's Cathedral, which was pretty cool. It was really ornate, and some of us saw a really famous statue of Christ after the Crucifixion, the Pieta, by Michelangelo. Afterwards the players and coaches met up and then we went out for lunch. Both of us had pizza—it was really good.

After lunch, everyone reconvened in St. Peter's square and then took the Metro back to the hotel. We had about forty minutes to change and get ready so Deaira took a nap. Then everyone piled into the tour bus one more time and drove to our playing venue. It looks like an indoor soccer dome, with a white puffy top. There are two courts, and it also has no air conditioning, so it's pretty hot in here.

The 18-1's and 18- Black went splitsies with the teams they played. Black lost 25-27 then won 25-22. 18-1's lost 22-25 then won 25-22. 18-Red and 18-2's lost the first set 19-25. The twos lost the second set The competition was great, it was fun to play international teams. After competing, we all got to go back to the yummy restaurant with 18-Black's favorite chef/server, JoJo.J

We have to go play now, so love to everyone back in Minnesota!

[Erin & Jenni at VolleyRo](#)

Day 3

Rome - Shopping day!

By: Ashley Perrin & Helen Forman

We started off our day with a breakfast consisting of sweet croissants and experimenting with the Italian coffee machines in the hotel. Shortly after, taking the Roma Metro we found ourselves at the Spanish steps where we took many cute pictures and only encountered one major wardrobe malfunction.

We also spent our time in beautiful, sunny weather enjoying the many historic sights in Rome, including (Me) Ashley's personal favorites the Patheon di Roma and The

Fontana de Trevi. The girls were blown away by the size and detail of these famous structures.

We then had a few hours to explore in the streets, the art plazas, eat lunch and plenty of gelato. Our personal favorite find, was the gelato shop that had a chocolate waterfall as a wall. Once we all made it back to the Trevi fountain and took a few more pictures, we headed back to the gym for our second day of play. Although we lost our match against a strong Volleyro team, we made many new “amichi” (friends) who we will say in touch with.

After the tournament all the teams enjoyed a nice ceremony and pizza party to celebrate our last day in Rome.

Once we all returned to the hotel, our team had an incredible opportunity to go back to the Trevi fountain and see its beauty at night. It was an experience we will never forget—the water was crystal blue and the moon was bright. One of our own (Ashley), had not showered yet, so she slyly dunked her head in the fountain but slightly tapped her forehead on the marble and got a bit of a headache. Although it was a late night, it was the best night. Our team ended our time in Rome in fashion and with many stories to take home.

[181 Playing VolleyRo](#)

[Bella & Ailsa talk about the day in Rome](#)

Day 4 - 18 Red

Rome - Venice - Milan

By: Emily King & Tatum Pickar & Isabel Carlisano

After our spontaneous adventure to the Trevi Fountain last night, we woke up bright and early (6:15 am) to start our day of travel. Following a nice breakfast, we walked to the train station with extremely full suitcases in our hands and departed for Venice at 7:50 am. During the four hour train ride we made a lot of friendship bracelets, slept, ate, did some homework, and admired the priceless countryside views.

Upon our arrival in Venice, we checked our bags at the train station and started our exploration of the city. The first thing we did was jump aboard one of the infamous gondolas. Our gondoliers were extremely nice and told us many facts about Venice, such as that there are 427 bridges in the city. We also had a fun little dance party while on our gondola ride, and Hailey impressed our gondoliers with her American dance moves.

Next, we wandered around the alley ways of Venice in search for souvenirs. We bought sweatshirts, bracelets, and leather purses. We eventually stumbled upon a

really cute restaurant and decided to stop there for some lunch. After eating pizza and pasta, it was of course time for some gelato. Then we continued our trek to our final destination, San Marco, where we saw a beautiful church decorated with the symbol of Venice: a lion. In front of the church we met our coaches, parents, and Curt, and then made our way back to the train station to leave for Milan.

However, before reaching the station, we had to make another quick gelato run, making it the seventh time in only four days. At 5:20 pm we boarded the train for Milan where we will stay the next day (or the rest of our lives). Although we were only in Venice for a short time, it was a favorite among many and lots of lifelong memories were created.

[Hailey and Alyssa - short and sweet on Venice](#)

Day 4 - 18 Black

Rome - Verona

By: Abby Loe

This morning we woke up at 5:00am to make it to our train for Verona at 6:45am. The hotel packed us breakfast in brown paper bags consisting of juice, an apple that made our stomachs turn, and a weird pastry.

We got to Verona, picked up the vans, and dropped off our luggage at the hotel. We then ate lunch, but there was some mix up with the restaurants so our guide Luca, who speaks four languages, none of them Italian, was getting slightly heated... half of us had pizza and the other half lasagna.

From the restaurant we went straight to the gym. We changed from our plain clothes to our uniforms in a locker room, and were unpleasantly surprised by the fact that many Italian toilets are just holes in the ground. There is no flushing, no toilet paper, and the stench almost made us throw up. Seven of us managed to overcome our disgust, but the other unnamed three have "bladders of steel."

We went one and one today, but should have played better. It was painful, but we hopefully will get a good nights sleep tonight and will play better tomorrow morning. Our first game is at 9:00 am and we could potentially play four games.

We ate dinner in the hotel, and then went on a gelato run in a nearby mall. Favorite flavors included brownie, termisu', coffee and chocolate mint. Erin says she liked all of them, and we know Deaira liked them all because she had five scoops...

We are back in the hotel now, and are playing games before heading to bed.

Good night!

Day 4 - 181

Rome - Venice

By: Alyssa & Anna

The day started with a few young ladies lacking in time management. We left from Rome (around 7:20 am) after breakfast. We then took a 4-hour train ride.

When we arrived in Venice we went to the hotel and dropped off our luggage and had lunch at a mall nearby that we walked to. We were tired and excited for the rest of the day and shopping at San Marco Square later in the evening. The square was awesome and we bought lots of gifts for our family and friends.

As we were heading home, Cory Soloman (our guide) surprised us with a boat taxi ride back to the train station (instead of making the long haul on foot); the boat ride was awesome and we loved it! We got back to the hotel and off the train around 9:15 pm.

Tomorrow we leave for Pordenone at 11 am. Super excited to play soon! :)

-Douce and Blaschko

Day 4 - 182

Rome - Falconara

By: Eric

An early wake up and a 3 1/2 hour train ride brought us to Ancona. We shuttled to a new resort being used to his year called Numana Blu. It's a newer and upgraded version from the previous Nuovo Natural Village that the team usually stays in.

The girls then had a great lunch at the resort and we prepared for our first match of Easter Volley 23. The team played the first set well and the second set was tighter at 27-25. We swept 2-0.

After the match we took the girls to the small shopping center and supermarket. We all bought some food and small gifts for family. I bought ice cream for the players and parents.

We are headed back now to have dinner and rest. Tomorrow we have 2 morning matches and the afternoon off. The girls are excited to explore more of the resort grounds and do a little swimming (wading) in the pool area.

Ciao!

Day 5 - 181

Venice - Pordenone

By: Eliza Dahly

This morning, we woke up and ate the best breakfast we have had all trip. We ate scrambled eggs, pancakes, and mini hot dog weiners.

After breakfast, we got on two trains to go to Pordenone. Once we arrived in Pordenone, we walked to our hotel to check in. Then, we were able to walk around the town, shop, or even take a nap if we wanted to.

We all put on our warm up jackets and leggings, and got in the vans to go to the opening ceremonies. Before the opening ceremonies started, we took many pictures with teams from all around the world, and we got a sign that says Northern Lights and USA. All of the teams walked in a line to the square where the opening ceremonies would actually take place. There were police officers in the roads that stopped traffic so all of us were able to cross!

All of the teams walked together and filled up the entire streets once we got in the town. People who lived in apartments opened up their windows to watch us all walk down to the square. Once we got down to the square, there was the stage where the teams would walk up on once their team name and country was called.

We were the 87th team called up on stage out of 100! After the opening ceremonies, we went back to the mess hall where we had dinner, which consisted of lasagna, salad, potatoes, pasta, and ice cream! We then went back to our hotel and are now relaxing in the beds and are going to bed soon.

We are all very excited for our first day of play tomorrow!

Day 5 - 182

Falconara

By: Eric

4 matches today. 2 sweeps in the morning in Porto Potenza. Back to Numana Blu for lunch and some tanning.

We returned to Loreto and swept our first team quickly. Our most challenging opponent thus far was our 1/4 final match. We played amazing and swept a talented and highly energetic team. The girls exchanged shirts and took a nice team photo.

Our semifinal tomorrow is at 9:00 back in Loreto. Finals at 3:00!

Day 5 - 18 Black

Verona

By: Abby Loe

This morning we played at 9:00, so breakfast was at 7:40, and the hotel had a really good buffet with a lot of options. After breakfast we headed back upstairs and grabbed our bags before we headed out to finish pool play.

We won our first game in three today. We played better than yesterday, and we won our second match in two. The girls were really nice and asked for a picture. Unfortunately there was a three way tie for first, and since we won one in three yesterday and lost in two, we lost the three way tie. It was slightly disappointing, but hey, we are still in Italy, right?

After the second match today we went out to lunch at a little restaurant and then went out for gelato at a little shop within 2 minutes walk from the venue. Since we were third in our pool we are now playing for 8th, and we won our next match in two. The girls on the team were really short and so they kept wanting pictures with Leah...

We showered then went to dinner, and half of us went to the mall with Joy, and went to the supermarket inside the mall.

Tomorrow is one more match, and then hopefully some shopping in downtown Verona.

Day 5 - 18 Red

Milan

By: Fiona Parcher (with help by Sarah McCarthy)

The format of this update is going to be a time line of Sarah McCarthy's struggles. Sit tight and enjoy, we know she did.

Breakfast: The team went down to continental breakfast at 9:30. Sarah wasn't there though, she overslept. Sarah woke up a half an hour later to violent pounding on the door and a cold hard croissant her teammates saved her.

After breakfast: The team got dressed to go take pictures around the hotel. Sarah messed up her eyeliner on BOTH eyes. Then we went shopping across the street from the hotel. Some girls bought nice things, Sarah saw two shirts she really liked, but they looked awful on (trust me) so she didn't get anything.

Lunch: We ate lunch at the hotel. The whole team sat at the same table after getting the buffet the hotel offered, except Sarah, she sat with the coaches, because there was no more room.

Afternoon: The team rode the Metro to the main square in Milan, where they were going to tour the Duomo. Sarah couldn't tour however, because her romper didn't cover her knees. Then she got in line to walk on top of the Duomo, after a 45 minute

wait in line, she was told that they stopped selling tickets, and couldn't go in. After that she turned to shopping. Half way through H&M (the only store we could afford) she had to sit down because she was experiencing heat flashes, and thought she was going to throw up. She made it through because she caught sight of an inspirational shirt hanging near by, reading, "Babe, you got this.". The rest of the team had a very successful time shopping. We had lots of free time to walk around and explore the beautiful city and high end stores. Alyssa Peterson added an 11th pair to her nike shoe collection, so good for her. Sarah bought some bubble tea, but then she left it in Lush so she didn't get to enjoy the whole thing. Yikes.

Dinner: We ate dinner at an adorable restaurant, and discussed topics for a TV show we are creating; Emily King and Helen Foreman are the main characters. The team selected Sarah to play the role of the creepy and annoying neighbor because we thought it was fitting. As we enjoyed the spaghetti and chicken, Sarah complained about not liking it, no one cared though.

*****things to know while reading the next section:

- No one was harmed
- We got gelato twice which gave us the endurance to survive (thanks Curt)
- Sarah had to pee the whole time

After dinner: We all hoped on the Metro to head back to the hotel. Everything was completely normal, and the Metro was approaching our stop. Sarah was sitting down letting her legs rest on one of the seats, and being her lazy self waited until the doors opened before getting up. Alas, getting up took much too long. As Sarah approached the open doors they began to quickly close, her being the last one in line to get out was left to choose between dying by being crushed by the doors, or by staying on the train by herself. Not wanting to challenge death, Sarah stayed on the Metro.

Looking out the window to her teammates she tossed them the peace sign and watched them quickly disappear before her eyes. Before she knew it, she was alone. Almost immediately everyone on the Metro turned to stare at Sarah, and one even told her "everything is going to be okay." Finally she got off the next stop, and she accidentally exited the station, wasting her Metro ticket. She then bought herself a brand new one, and got back onto the wrong car, taking her farther away from her teammates. After being 2 stops away from where she should be, she got off, went around to catch the correct car, and unbelievably made it through.

Long story short the day was great for everyone but Sarah. We hope everyone could find joy in her pain, our team always does.

Love, Fiona Parcher and all of 18-Red, even Sarah.

[Sarah's Metro Ride in Milan](#)

[Ashley & Tatum about the day in Milan](#)

Day 6 - 181

Pordenone

By: Bryan

The 18-1's had 3 matches in Group D of the tournament today. The first match at 11:30 was against an Italian Club, Horizon. All 3 sets were pretty tight and we had to steal the 2nd set to get a nice 3-0 win. The team was pretty up and down, but a couple great saves and pretty good blocking helped us prevail. Then we grabbed lunch at the mess hall and some naps at the hotel.

The 2nd match at 5:30 was against another Italian Club that we understand won the tournament the last 2 years. They had a 8' right side (okay, maybe only 6'5") and a jumpy middle that would cause some problems. After splitting the first 2 sets, Lights played very strong in the 3rd to get the "W."

Looking pretty good with 5 points (1 point per set), we were set to play the Spaniards at 8:30. We needed 1 more point to clinch the pool (1st & 2nd move on). They, on the other hand, needed to win all 3 points to survive Group play. Their serves had explosives in them and we pretty much got blasted off the court for straight sets. The Spaniards played very hard. Despite hard-fought efforts, those Spaniards stole all of our points. This left us unsure of our final position in pool play (the old 3 teams at 2-1 dilemma). The coaches may have had an inkling, but the players had some time to let the wounds burn a bit. Alas, with 5 points and our big 2nd match win of the day, we took 2nd in Group play. This has us set up to play another Group's 1 seed tomorrow at 10 a.m. (note: there are 8 groups so this the round of 16).

Turns out it's been a long day. By the time we finished dinner with yet another mystery meat at the mess hall, it's 11:30 and we are just heading to bed. Wish us some good sleep and refreshed legs for tomorrow.

Day 6 - 18 Black

Verona

By: Deaira Gresham

Today we woke up at 9 and went to breakfast at the hotel. We played at 11am against a team from Portugal. We won in two sets. We played pretty well together. Our teamwork helped us place 9th out of 20 teams.

After playing, we took a trip to the shopping center in downtown Verona. In the shopping center, there were cool places like: Romeo and Juliet's balcony and "a super cool" castle that Joy really enjoyed! We all liked the shopping center a lot, there was a lot of time spent in the Birkenstocks store...

Lastly, after shopping we went to the awards ceremony for the tournament. It was extremely cool to see teams from all over the world. For dinner, we ate at the hotel. Most of our dinner was spent trying to convince Luka, our tour guide, to take us out to gelato. After convincing Luka, we all got what we wanted, evening gelato. It was an overall great day! :)

Day 6 - 18 Black ----Duplicated

Verons

By: Abby Loe

This morning we woke up at 9:00 for 9:30 breakfast because the hotel breakfast closed at 10:00 sharp. Again we had the same pastry, fruit, egg and coffee options, but no donuts with chocolate frosting which were missed by all.

After breakfast everyone went up to their rooms to hang out before we left for our playing site. We played Lusofóna from Portugal at 11:30. We won easily in two sets. Afterwards we traded tshirts with them.

Everyone then hurried downstairs to the locker room to get semi-cleaned up before going out to lunch and then going into downtown Verona. We had about an hour and a half to do some shopping, site seeing, and gelato eating in downtown Verona. All of us saw "Juliette's window" and most of us got some souvenirs.

Shopping was cut short because we had to get to closing ceremonies in which the awards were handed out to the winning teams. We got a little plate thing that said our place, but it was an hour and a half sitting on our butts.

We went to dinner in the hotel again. We were all kind of sick of it because it was all the same food, but tonight was quieter and we got risotto.

During dinner the team managed to convince Luca to take us out to gelato. He kept insisting he wouldn't, but it's really hard sometimes to tell if he is joking or not. Luckily Norman convinced him in the end and another round of gelato was had.

Day 6 - 18 Red

Darfo Boario Terme

By: Tatum Pickar

Yesterday we woke up around nine and ate breakfast in Milan, and then we went to our hotel rooms and packed for the journey to the mountains. At eleven we got on a bus that took two hours. Some napped and some added information to our upcoming Netflix Original tv show. About 15 minutes to our arrival we were in awe by the scenery of the mountains and the lake. When we got to the hotel we checked in, dropped our luggage and came back down to eat noodles and red sauce. It was pouring rain as we headed out for our friendly match, where we lost three out of the four sets. When we shook hands before the match started we received a goody basket filled with treats that was devoured.

Editor's note: Tatum had to go to bed, so I will complete the summary.

We went back to the hotel and had our usual salad, pasta with red sauce (sarah's favorite), and meat. We also had chocolate pudding tonight!
We then spent the rest of the evening talking, playing Pictionary, and doing puzzles.

Tomorrow is Easter and we get to start our official tournament.

Day 7 - 181

Pordenone

By: Ellie Veldman

Today we got up at 7:30 to eat breakfast. After breakfast, we went up and got ready to leave the hotel at 8:30. We then got in the vans and headed off to the gym.

We played an Italian team and lost in 3. They are the second best club in Italy and we played very hard. After that, we went to the dining hall and ate. We then came back to the hotel and took a little nap before having to go play again at 3.

We beat this team in 3 and played very well. After the match, we again went to the dining hall and ate some pizza and gelato. We then came back to the hotel and began to get ready to go to the party.

So far everything has been a blast!

Day 7 - 182

Falconara

By: Eric

We returned home from the closing ceremonies at 7:30 pm for a nice dinner at the hotel prepared just for us. The resort was deserted as all of the teams had packed and left.

We headed to Loreto for Easter mass from 9-10 and toured the city briefly. We headed to San Marino and arrived around noon. A lot of exploration and shopping for the day. It was nice to relax and enjoy each other after a long couple days of playing and stress. We returned to Numana Blu at 7:30 and are now enjoying our last dinner together here.

A very early train ride awaits tomorrow. We leave here at 5:45 am to catch the train to Bologna and then to Venice.