

Sunday July 12, 2009
Day 1 – USA to London
By Katie Habeck
Northern Lights 16-1

Everyone made it on the plane even though it was over booked. (Lexi almost got booted!!) We all mostly slept on the plane over to London because some of their movie screens didn't work and some were super tired. We all got to sit together in a big group in the middle of the plane. The plane ride seemed short for some but super long for the people who couldn't sleep. All of our luggage made the trip!

First we made a trip on the subway to our hotel. It is really small but very cute! Me, Tay, and Hallie finally got to room together!!! ☺ Sam got her own room. Kelsey, Macey, and Lexi are rooming together. And Lisa, Ashley, and Ellen are the last three rooming together. We then ate our first meal in London at a small café a couple blocks down from our hotel. We then rode the busy subway to the London Eye. It was a beautiful view of Big Ben and other places like Buckingham Palace. It started to rain for a little while. When we got off we went down this street filled with street performers. One guy posed our team into manikins, we all decided that it was Hallie's calling. ☺

Next we walked more around London, the weather was getting warmer. We looked at St. Paul's Cathedral. We went inside and it was beautiful! We then walked around for a little bit more and stopped to get dinner at Pizza Express. Curt generously bought us all our own pizzas and they were delicious! After pizza we to Piccadilly's Square and looked in souvenir shops. Most of us got cool London sweatshirts! For dessert, Curt, once again, generously bought us all gelato!! Then we walked to the subway, went back to the hotel, and are looking forward to a nice long rest to begin tomorrow fresh and energetic!

Monday July 13, 2009
Day 2 –London
By Kelsey Schile
Northern Lights 16-1

Today was a busy day here in London with a lot of site seeing with Justin. Justin was the tour guide that we had led us around all these wonderful sites. The very first thing we saw was Big Ben, this year in September is Big Ben's 150th anniversary from when it was built. Big Ben is actually not the clock it is the bells beneath the clock. There was a man striking outside the parliament building since 2002. The reason for

his strike is the war in Iraq. He hasn't left his post unless he has to go to court under charges by parliament.

There were statues all over London of everyone from old kings to new leaders like Winston Churchill, which was the first statue we saw. Winston Churchill was a British politician that was recognized for his leadership during World War II. We learned a lot about "naughty" people who were tried and punished in the house of parliament. We also learned that some of the heads were chopped off and stuck on spikes of London Bridge.

Next was the West Minister Abbey, which was a tomb for numerous famous historic people. Almost all monarchs were buried in the West Minister Abbey. Some of the people who were buried are the Kings and Queens of the past, scientists, poets, and great writers such as Charles Dickens. There were also monuments of some people such as William Shakespeare, Mary Shelly who wrote Frankenstein.

We also saw all the guards walking down the street to the Queens house, Buckingham Palace. Walking with the guards was quite fun. When the British band and soldiers got to the palace then the Irish guards started to march in. Even though we couldn't get close to guards we got a few pictures with them standing behind us. They were standing in fenced areas.

After the guards we walked to Trafalgar Square, which were more statues. Statues of lions, which we climbed on and got pictures of. After we were done climbing on the lions statues we went down to the food area and had lunch, which was Subway, sushi and sea food, and a chicken place. Then we met after lunch for more sight seeing.

We went on a boat after lunch to look at the sites on the river. Some of the sites were the London Eye, the Globe Theater, we went under the 5th London Bridge, we went by Queen Elizabeth old yacht, and we also went by a retired battleship then ended up at the London Bridge. We also toured the London Bridge.

The London Bridge was fascinating, there were all different kinds of towers the prisoners stayed in, such as the Bloody Tower, the Beach Court Tower. There were also soldiers that lived in the London Tower. There tower was called the White Tower. There were many tortures and murders going on such as the two little boys were murdered by there uncle, Richard. The two little boys were Henry and Edward.

There were ravens "protecting" the London Bridge from outside people who weren't in prison or that weren't supposed to be there. The soldiers there fed the ravens big chunks of meat which the seagulls loved as well; they tried to steal from the ravens.

We went to see all the crowned jewels, with the largest diamond in the world which had 530 carets. Also all the crowns that were given to the previous Kings and Queens. There was also the coronation robe. After we saw the crowned jewels we went off to the torture chamber, which was all the different ways of slowly killing there prisoners.

After the torture chamber we went off to meet together again and headed back to the hotel and went off to dinner at a little sandwich bakery café. After dinner we went to the hotel to get ready to go see the Broadway version of Hairspray. The show was phenomenal! Everyone on the team had a blast and was very excited to go! Tomorrow we wake up at 6 in the morning to head off to Croatia, Which should be very exciting!

Tuesday July 14, 2009

Day 3 –London to Dubrovnik

By Macey Finizio

Northern Lights 16-1

This was an early morning for us. We were up by 6 and out of the hotel by 6:30! We took the train to the Gatwick airport which was about half hour away. The airport had many fancy shops after security. We ate breakfast at a small café and headed to our gate.

Our plane departed at 9:50, but it was raining so we got delayed a little bit. The flight was only three hours, which seemed like a breeze compared to our flight from the US. Kelsey and I sat next to this guy from London and he was very intrigued that we were all the way in Europe to play volleyball and he asked a lot of questions. Within the first hour of the flight, everybody was sound asleep!

We arrived in Dubrovnik and when we got off the plane, we were surrounded by these huge mountains!! We snapped a few pictures, and then moved on. After we got our luggage we met Cory who had a bus ready for us to take back to our hotel. Cory is our guide who will be with us for the rest of our trip.

We were all so amazed at how beautiful the town was. The setting is so much different than what we are used to. Mountains surrounding us everywhere we looked, little houses that matched in color, and looking out to see the sea that never ends. We arrived at our hotel and ate delicious pizza then headed off to the beach! The weather was absolutely perfect for the beach! Not a cloud in the sky! The beaches here are very different. Instead of sand, they have rocks and the water is so clear that you can see everything beneath you!

After the beach, we got all dressed up and headed downtown for some sight seeing. It got very hot as we walked around the whole city! Dubrovnik is a walled-in city because of the past wars. It was like a small Great Wall of China that we walked around! After touring the city we got some free time to walk around and go in the shops.

After shopping we went out for a nice dinner at an Italian place which was delicious! We had enough room for dessert so we went out for ice cream! The lady at the ice cream place gave us a huge discount because we played volleyball, it was very nice!

After ice cream we headed back to our hotel to pack and go to bed. We have a big day ahead of us tomorrow! We are leaving early in the morning on a bus to Pula to meet the team that we are training with!

P.S. HI MOM, STEVE, AND MAX!!!!

Wednesday July 15, 2009

Day 4 –Dubrovnik to Bar, Montenegro

By Samantha Johnson

Northern Lights 16-1

Dear everyone....well day 4 started off very interesting. We woke up and packed to head off to Montenegro and had a little breakfast and after me having a close call with an oncoming car we set off.

The bus ride to Montenegro took us about 2 ½ hours and we safely got across the border. A couple of us had an interesting time trying to go to the bathroom when we first got to Montenegro. It seems that money is needed for that and the guy at the bathroom was not very happy when they under paid him.

After arriving in Montenegro we all ate lunch, rested for a bit, and then we went swimming with some of the girls from the other team here. The communication barrier was a bit of a problem but we managed to learn a lot from them. I now know a whole 4 words of their language.

We spent a couple of hours swimming and then they bought us coffee and lemonade. The beach wasn't nearly as nice as in Dubrovnik but it still felt great to get out of the heat.

When we got back to the hotel we had a few hours to relax and sleep and then later we played a match against the other team. They were pretty good but we did win the match. Our jerseys were pretty sweaty after that match because their gym wasn't air conditioned.

We went back to the hotel, ate dinner (we were welcomed into the dining room by a nice bunch of basketball players), and then we went and showered and washed our sweaty clothes.

Katie and I agree that we have the worst best room ever. The room is kind of yucky but on the up side we have the nice basketball boys on our floor. They came and introduced themselves and really seemed to like the "American girls".

Bed time came way too fast but we had to get our rest for another day of fun and sight seeing. We are all having tons of fun here but some of us are looking forward to returning to American food.

Thursday July 16, 2009
Day 5 – Bar, Montenegro
By Hallie Enderle
Northern Lights 16-1

Well, today was our first full day in Montenegro. Kari woke us up at a very early, seven in the morning. Taylor was supposed to wake Ellen and me up because I don't know how to work my alarm. But Taylor didn't, she's a hooligan. So we went to breakfast at the hotel and apparently they think that breakfast is lunch here. There were hot dogs, grey eggs, salami, and lots of cheese. I thought it was cream cheese, but Ellen promptly informed me that it wasn't. And last but not least there were little deserts and tomatoes. I just want a pancake. Anyway, we ate, and on the way out there were the all too familiar doughnut. We all devoured them.

It's becoming quite obvious that if you are exactly on time, you're actually early. So we left at 8:15 rather than 8. I'm not complaining because I'm always late. We boarded an about 15 seated coach bus and headed out to the old town of Bar. The old ruins were basically still intact, and we all got some great pictures.

Then we quickly visited a sacred olive tree that was approximately...I can't remember how old, but it was older than my Dad.

After that we went to a bathroom at a hotel which turned out to be part of a museum, didn't see that one coming. We only stayed for awhile because we were going on a boat ride to a beach.

The boat was kind of like the one we road in London except we couldn't understand the person that stood up and talked. It seemed like the boat ride was never going to end and we were nowhere near a beach. Suddenly we came to a stop, and we all looked at each other wondering where the beach was. Then we heard a splash, we looked over to see a boy, about 12, was swimming away from the boat. Now that was weird. It took us awhile to realize that there was no beach, we were swimming here. We got to jump off in pairs of two in the front of the boat which was higher than the sides. Sam actually made like the locals and dived off the boat. She did quite well, so Katie decided to give it a shot. It's the effort that counts.

On the boat ride back we talked to the girl from the team we played the night before. Her name was either Iena or Idea, she was 19 years old and last night was her first time playing with that group of girls. We also found out that she was the one with the nasty jump serve.

After lunch at the hotel (some form of meat and potatoes) we had the afternoon to ourselves until we had to play at 7. We played cards for awhile and then broke off to take naps. I missed snack time because I was sleeping. Kari heard Ellen yelling at me, but I don't remember hearing a thing.

Instead of warming up for a billion years like they were used to, we taught them queens. They caught on right away and we were soon playing intensely. You'd think it would be difficult to play along side someone you didn't understand or didn't understand you, but it wasn't. We spoke through high fives, clapping, and cheering. They were extremely nice and very talented, but we still had to play them.

We took it to four, but won yet again. Adam does a really great job of creating equal playing time and putting people on the court that mesh. We have traveled so far to play with girls we had never met and we don't even speak the same language. But somehow, we understand each other. We love and miss you.

Sincerely,
Northern Lights 16-1's (technically just Hallie...HI ALYSON!!!)

Friday July 17, 2009
Day 5 – Bar, Montenegro
By Lisa Atkinson

Northern Lights 16-1

Today started off with Kari waking us all up at 7am but really I got up at like 7:15am because I just couldn't get up. Then we all went to breakfast which was sausage, eggs, meats, and my favorite BREAD! Next we all got our swimsuits and clothes and headed off on our air conditioned bus to the old town in Kotor which was about 1 hour and 30 min drive and I don't mind how long because there is beautiful scenery.

There our tour guide Helen told us all about the history of the town such as they built huge walls back then like a fortress to protect them from the predators at the sea. Kotor walls were very high up and to get there you would have to walk 1300 steps to get to the top. And since we were not crazy all 10 of us girls didn't go but Kari and Curt went about half way up and Adam and Cory went the whole WAY they and crazy!

While they were climbing the ridiculously high steps we went shopping and learned a little bit more history about the churches in the old town of Kotor. I bought a really cute bracelet! ☺ When all the adults came back from the hike they were dripping sweat!

Next we left Kotor and set off for Budva which is known for its great beaches and night life. We ate our lunches then we headed straight for the beach. It was really nice because it had a dock that we could jump off of plus there were plenty of hot guys there! ☺ But once again it was really hard to walk on the beach because of all the rocks. We left there all tired from the sun and swimming and headed back to our hotel.

Once back to the hotel we all took a nap. At about 5:30 Kari came in our rooms telling us that she had snacks for us to eat before we play. After we were done eating we got ready to leave. At 7pm we left the hotel to the volleyball place. First we played 4 on 4 which was really fun because we got to interact and play with the other girls. After that we played 3 games to 25 and we lost the first two and won the last one. Also the best part for me was that I got to play outside hitter, it was so much fun! When we got back to the hotel we went to go eat supper which was some spaghetti, chicken, and fries. Later as we were getting packed and ready for bed Kelsey Macey, and I all heard a loud scream and we ran into the room and Ashley was screaming on the top of her lungs running around her room because there was a cockroach. We eventually killed it but it was a long funny process. Around 11pm we all headed to bed for the night.

Saturday July 18, 2009

Day 7 – Bar, Montenegro to Split, Croatia

By: Taylor Voss

Northern Lights 16-1

We had an early start to our day with breakfast at seven in the morning. It was the first morning we really started to miss the waffles! After our quick breakfast we grabbed our bags and headed out to board the bus with the Montenegro team. Unfortunately for Ellen the hotel maid had just mopped the floor. She slipped and bounced down a floor of stairs on her butt. Don't worry she is just fine with the exception of a VERY large bruise on her butt!

Once everybody made it on to the bus we were off to Split, Croatia. We made the seven hour bus ride just fine. Nothing eventful happened on the ride since the team used the time to catch up on some sleep! About three hours into the ride we made a quick stop for lunch in Bosnia. Finishing up the lunch with ice cream which was on Curt we once again boarded the bus and traveled another four hours to Split.

Ready to move around after a long day of sitting both the teams were excited to go down town and shop! Each of us paired up with a Montenegrin girl and found something to eat which for the majority of the groups it turned out the food of choice was pizza. After everyone got filled up we got to explore the shops. Most of the girls bought bracelets that matched with their Montenegrin partner! At 8:30 we made our way back to hotel where we traded our shirts with the girls on the other team. This was really cool to get some of their volleyball shirts, and to get rid of our old shirts in exchange.

By the time the shirt trading was done bed time was welcomed to get ready for another long bus ride tomorrow. We miss you everyday and send our love from Croatia!

Sunday July 19, 2009

Day 7 –Split to Pula, Croatia

By: Taylor Voss

Northern Lights 16-1

Another early start for the team with breakfast at seven in which we quickly ate so we could again board the bus and start our ride to Pula. Thankfully we left that hotel with no more falling down the stair accidents! Just as we had yesterday we all used the bus ride to get some more sleep, and we also watched National Treasure which was in English, but it had subtitles so our friends could understand the movie too.

We stopped only once to get snacks which were mini croissants! Then back on the bus to finish the ride up to Pula. After we had arrived we went right down to lunch. We decided the food here is looking very promising after we all filled up on pasta. Once we all had a chance to eat we had some free time to check out the pool before the ceremonies started. Also Katie decided to experiment with the lock on the bathroom door and locked me (Taylor) in there and then couldn't get it back open for ten minutes!

Before we left for the opening ceremonies we ate another good dinner, and then took a short bus ride down to the town. Before they started we had a little time to walk around and shop. For the ceremonies native dancers put on a short show for us then each team was called up to the front and got their picture taken. It didn't last very long at all. Once it was done all the teams had more time to look around the shops. Our team spent our time getting tattoos ... don't worry I am talking about hennas! At nine thirty we left for the hotel to get a good night sleep, and be ready for a full day of playing tomorrow.

We love you guys and can't wait to talk to you more!

Monday July 20, 2009

Day 9 – Pula, Croatia Global Challenge

By: Ellen Fox

Northern Lights 16-1

So today we woke up pretty early again, around 7. For breakfast there were hot dogs again, surprise surprise! But there was also some pretty good cereal. They also have a coffee machine that I would love for my room (Mom you should get me one). We left the hotel around 8 to go play our first match against Croatia. We ended up winning in three. In this tournament, the third game is played to 25 instead of 15 which worked to our advantage because we had a comeback at the end.

After our first match we went outside and had some fruit, and then watched an American team play a Romanian team. After that, we headed back to the gym to play our second match against Italy. We lost in two, but they were a good team. Then we walked back up to our hotel and had lunch.

We didn't play until 5:30, so some of us went down to the pool and others slept. Hallie and I slept for about two hours and it was one of the best naps ever. Kari

always wakes us up and it's like the knock of death on the door, we always want to sleep longer!

After we were all refreshed we went back to the gym to play against our friends, OK Galeb. During the game, Taylor was defiantly beasting it up at the net! She had three blocks and two dumps that went straight down, one of them with her left hand! After she blocked a ball Hallie told Adam that if she gets a stuff block she does a silly little dance, and then literally the play right after that she got a stuff block and did her dance! It was hilarious. We lost that game in two, and went back to the hotel to eat dinner.

Now we are resting and will either go down to the pool or lay around and watch TV. Oh and by the way my butt is getting better!

Tuesday July 21, 2009

Day 10 – Pula, Croatia Global Challenge Day 2

By: Hallie Enderle

Northern Lights 16-1

For starters, we had to wake up, because you can't do much if you're still asleep. Breakfast was at roughly seven-thirty a.m. I was so glad to see the breakfast lay out again this morning to be a familiar cereal, eggs, and bread. The only problem is that the milk tastes like eggs.

This morning we played the Romanian's, who beat us. Then we were off a match and waited to play the team Pula, they also beat us. After that we didn't play until 5 that evening so we were free, after eating lunch at the hotel, to do as we pleased. Ashley, Lisa, Kelsey, and Macy ventured off to the pool to lay-out (their parents won't recognize there nationality when they get home), Katie, Vossy, and Lexi had a nap, and Sam, myself, and Ellen made a 3 minute walk to the beach.

The beach here in Pula is mainly little cliffs and lots of rocks. The water is the clearest blue I have ever seen in my entire life. Right away we found a sea urchin. Ever since Ellen saw the dead sea urchin that Lisa found she's been dying to get one for herself. Sam and I had to keep her from grabbing it with her hands (for some reason we thought that wouldn't be the best idea). When we finally got her away she insisted on leaving it in the sun so it would be dead by the time we got back. We swam and jumped off of rocks for about an hour and then decided to head in, Ellen's urchin was no where to be found.

That evening we played the Slovenian's, the last of the European teams. Alas, yet again, we failed to achieve 25 before our opponents. I really think that on this trip we didn't want to come all this way and show off our mad skills. We all have mentally agreed that it wouldn't be nice to flaunt our superiority to our European adversaries (how did you like that big word?! :D). If we dominated them like we know we could it may start another World War. So by losing we are actually saving the planet.

After a long day of playing we went over to our back packs to take off our stuff. But when we grabbed the back packs to take them away, they were caught in the net that was hanging down from the ceiling. Not just a few people, everyone! It was Curt, now he thinks he's a pretty sly fellow. Oh Uncle Curtis.

Then we went home and went to sleep. KIDDING!! Curt totally surprised us with tickets to a midnight showing of HARRY POTTER AND THE HALF BLOOD PRINCE! Not only that, but it was IN THE COLOSEUM!

We didn't leave until nine and when we got there, another independent film was playing. When we found seats, not the movie theater chairs, we watched it. It was good apart from the weird plot line, random deaths, crazy war vets, and the English subtitles. The cool part was that the cast from the movie we had just watched came on stage after. But that didn't matter, the sixth Harry Potter movie was minutes away.

It was amazing. We got home around three, and went straight to sleep because we had to wake up at seven the next morning to play.

Can't wait to see you!!!

Love,
Northern Light's 16-1's (in the voice of Hallie)...I miss my little sister!!!

Wednesday July 22, 2009
Day 11 – Pula, Croatia Global Challenge
By: Ashley Murtha
Northern Lights 16-1

After getting back from Harry Potter last night at 3 am we went straight to bed and woke up at seven to play more volleyball. We played Pula and lost in 3 games.

When we were done playing we came back to the hotel and slept! After that we ate lunch, and swam at the pool and relaxed. Then we all got ready and went to the coliseum and took lots of pictures, and went to some shops downtown.

After a hot day of being outside we came back to the hotel ate dinner and now are just relaxing and going to bed early because we had a really late night last night.

Editor's note: This really was a short, non active day with not much to write about.

Thursday July 23, 2009

Day 12 – Pula, Croatia Global Challenge Day 4

By: Katie Habeck

Northern Lights 16-1

Today was a pretty relaxing day. We started off playing our last match at 9 this morning. We lost but played well against the very experienced Northern California High Performance team. We then came back to the hotel. Most of the team went down to the pool to relax and tan. Me, Tay, and some other players stayed in the hotel and slept. Later, we went to the championship game, BIP vs. Slovenia. It was an exciting game to watch, BIP won! After the game, there was the award ceremony. I got all-tournament! We then went back to the hotel and ate dinner, which was very busy. We are all getting ready for the pool party tonight! We can't wait, it's going to be a lot of fun!

Friday July 24, 2009

Day 13 – Venice, Italy

By: Alexa Rinde

Northern Lights 16-1

Around eightish we all managed to drag ourselves out of bed. I think we were all very grateful that we were leaving Pula at nine instead of some ungodly hour like six (which had been known to happen on previous adventures). We ate our breakfast buffet hurriedly especially since there was some more packing to do because why would we pack the day before? We said our last goodbyes to all our new friends then headed off to Venice in our mini coach bus. We all finally got our own seats which was a nice break from being cramped together when it was over 30 degrees Celsius.

The bus ride was nice and short (about 3 hours) and we finally reached our hotel. It was really nice even though we were sleeping five girls to a room. We set off to lunch a block or two away from our hotel. Tim, one of the coordinators, told us not to expect

much from the pizza we were about to have and he was right. After our microwave tasting pizza we went back to the hotel to get ready to venture out to Venice.

When we got there we were given free rein of the city and left to our own devices to find the square somewhere in the maze of alleys and streets and jumbled street signs. The shops were filled with all sorts of wonders. Masks were displayed almost everywhere you turned; some stores were dedicated to the crafting of their masks and others sold them at tourist stands. The hunt was on to find the cheapest masks in the city.

The next most common item to find was Italian glass. They made everything from quills to figurines to picture frames. The varieties and colors were astounding and beautiful to look at. All the beautiful items tempted us into buying more than we bought anywhere else, despite only being there for one day. Ashley, Lisa, Macey, and Kelsey went for a ride on a gondola through the canals in Venice while the rest of us stuck to the shops.

After much difficulty in navigating the winding streets through Venice we all made it to St. Marco's Square. For dinner we ended up going to a small Italian restaurant where we ate Italian classics like pasta and pizza. Finally we made the long trek back to the buses but not without stopping for one last Gelato run. ☺ By the time we finally made it to the bus stop our legs were dying. It seemed like the walking from the entire trip finally caught up with us.

The bus finally came after waiting for over a half hour. Back at the hotel some of us packed and went straight to bed. Other stayed up till two and three in the morning savoring our last night together. Well there it is, Northern Lights 16-1's European Adventure, hope you guys enjoyed reading our journals as much as we enjoyed experiencing them ☺. We miss you all and can't wait to get back home!!