

NL 18-1 & 18-2 travel to Italy

The Northern Lights 18-1 & 18-2 teams will be traveling and competing in Italy from April 18-April 26. They will be spending the first few days sightseeing in Rome, Florence, and Venice. After that they will be competing in a tournament in Pordenone Italy (18-1) and Falconara (18-2) with Junior teams from around the world.

Tournament Link for Pordenone=<http://www.memorial-cornacchia.com>

No link available for Falconara

Day 1

April 18 - Arrival to Rome

By: Sara Schmidt

[Pictures from Day 1](#)

After a morning of playing in the Qualifier, both teams arrived at the airport with a long day ahead. Once on the plane, most of us (excluding those already asleep) were fed a dinner of either pasta or chicken. Most of us were able to sleep for the next six hours, and we were awoken to the scent of breakfast sandwiches. We soon landed in Amsterdam, with the local time being around one in the afternoon. With a quick transfer to our flight to Rome, there wasn't much time to rest. With most of us harboring swollen ankles (from the long flight), we boarded the flight for another two hour plane ride.

Many of us got another hour or so of sleep, but we arrived in Rome and headed down to luggage claim. All of us were met with our luggage except for one: Rachel. Unfortunately, while in Amsterdam, Rachel's luggage didn't get transferred to our plane to Rome. While the rest of us met up with our guide, Cory, Rachel went with Curt to figure out the luggage situation. They promised it would arrive at the hotel Tuesday evening, so she was lucky to have some in her carry-on. Meanwhile, the rest of the group headed to the bus with Cory. We were met by a red double-decker bus, which Cory drove us on to the hotel. Immediately, the Italian driving style became apparent to us; it was chaotic! There were motorcycles zooming wherever they pleased, and most cars were weaving in and out. We were able to safely arrive at our hotel: Hotel dei Mille.

After a great drive through the city to reach the hotel, we were given our room assignments. Most of us grouped in twos or threes, we were met with a small room. We quickly dropped off our luggage, some of us changing, and we were heading to the Trevi Fountain and the Spanish Steps. Soon, Cory informed us we would be riding the Metro: a subway system that runs under Rome. After a squishy ride and new experience, we arrived at our stop. The vendors were scoured about the street, some persistent to selling to us. One of the most annoying things we all discovered: the squeakers. With small devices in their mouths, some of the Italians would make a squeaking noise. It could be heard from a ways away and very quickly became obnoxious. As the sun was setting, we were able to see the Spanish steps. Since it is Holy Week, there seemed to be a large variety of people gathered in Rome. After some exploring and much picture taking, we were headed to the Trevi Fountain. The sun was now set, so the Trevi Fountain was lit up

beautifully. Containing numerous Mythological gods, the lit fountain was a popular place at night. There was, of course, an extensive amount of picture taking, but one of the most important things was yet to come: dinner.

Since most of us had been somewhat conscious for about 30 hours now, we were all excited to eat something besides airplane food. Upon arrival, we discovered that all the dishes in Italy come in family sizes. The first course being salad and bread, we were all eager to start eating, but that was just the beginning. About five courses later, including three pastas, chicken, spinach, and some pizza, we were filled to a decent amount. Laura and I, however, were not quite as filled. Each of us ate about a pizza and a good helping of all the pastas, and yet we were still hungry? Although we debated finding some gelato, we refrained and went back to the hotel. Now having been up for another three hours, we were ready for bed. We had arrived in this wonderful European place, and we were in need of rest in order to prepare for the rest of our long week.

Day 2

April 19 - Rome

By: Taylor Salisbury & Kelsey Sorensen

[Pictures from Day 2](#)

[Dale talks about the Coliseum](#)

Today we started out the day by eating breakfast in our Pajamas. To our surprise, every other person not associated with northern lights was dressed for the day, as Italians do, so that will not be happening again. After we had prettied ourselves, we left for the Coliseum. After this very extensive and interesting tour around the arena, we continued to the Paletino. We saw some amazing views of the city, as well as the ruins of Emperor Augustus' house.

We left for lunch after this. It was near the Parthenon in a small square called Navanarna. We got panini's and pizza for lunch, and went for a quick shopping run. At the end of our lunch break, we left for a quick stop at the Parthenon. After this, Curt, being the nice guy that he is, treated us to a taste of Gelato. It was very delicious!

Then we made our way back to the hotel, where we changed quick for the scrimmages we were playing that night. Both teams played VERY well. :P We appreciated how different they play from the teams in the US.

After the game, we sprinted to make the last train at the night, leaving at 10:03. Then we headed for some quick pizza, and went to bed. Overall today was successful!

Day 3

April 20 - Rome

By: Lexi Rinde

[Pictures from Day 3](#)

[Lauren talks about the Vatican](#)

[Melissa talks about the Italian match](#)

We started off bright and early and made our way towards the metro after a light breakfast at the hotel. We met our tour guide, Antonio, outside the walls of the Vatican. The line to enter the Vatican probably wrapped around the outside wall almost half a mile or more. Fortunately, with Antonio and his lovely connections, we got to skip the line and go straight into the Vatican.

As soon as we passed through the metal detectors, we made our way towards the museum. There were lots of pictures taken but I don't think any picture can really capture what's behind those walls. The highlight of our tour was the Sistine Chapel. We were given really strict rules upon entering, no talking and no photography! I was expecting to be able to look at Angelo's masterpiece in perfect silence, but unfortunately, most people must not have gotten the "no talking" memo because the murmur of the crowd filled the chapel and the guards there frequently yelled "Silencio."

After that our tour quickly ended and we found ourselves exiting the walls of the Vatican and heading towards St. Peter's square. Apparently, we had just missed mass by the Pope in St. Peter's square which would have been kinda cool to see. While waiting for the square to clear from mass, we split up and some of us went shopping and some of us went to tour the inside of St. Peter's Basilica (after losing Hal to a quest for an ATM). I think we could have spent more than four hours in there just standing in awe of the incredible architecture and artwork in the building. However, we had seen our fair share of artwork that day and left after less than a half hour to get some shopping done (and don't worry mom and dads, I'm pretty sure everyone bought some stuff for other people, not just ourselves).

After about two hours of free time we met back at the hotel and had a wonderful surprise of fruit waiting for us in the lobby. We're getting a little tired of pizza, pizza, and more pizza. And now here we are at the Italian Youth National Training Center ready to get our butts kicked by a team that makes even players like Hal feel small. We love you and miss you all and we can't wait to get back to America where we won't have to climb so many steps!!!

Day 4

April 21 - Rome to Pordenone

By: Sam Johnson - Birthday Girl

[Pictures from Day 4](#)

[Samantha talks about the day in Florence](#)

Hi Everybody back home!

So today was cool we got on a train to Florence in the morning and when we got there we all immediately ate and went shopping. I treated myself to some awesome clothes for my birthday and Dale went and spent every last bit of money in her name. Jess is turning out to be quite the bargainer and loves to haggle with the people at the shops and if they don't come down to the price she wants she just walks away saying that she "just can't swing it". I was really great to have a day to just walk around and shop and now we are on another train that definitely could do with some more baggage racks but no worries, we got creative. There isn't really much else to

say about the day since it was pretty laid back and uneventful but we are all having fun over here! We miss all of you and will see you soon!

Day 5

April 22 - Venice & Opening Ceremonies

By: Melissa Ratz

[Pictures from Day 5](#)

[Jessica talks about the day in Venice](#)

[Saying Goodbye to Venice](#)

[Opening Ceremonies March](#)

Ciao from Pordenone! It's been an awesome day- some of the girls think that it's been "the best day ever!" We started off today with a train ride to Venice, where we shopped A LOT. Everybody was happy with their buys- especially Hallie who got 2 dresses for under 20 euros. I broke a hanger at one of the little kiosks and a man just freaked out on me. He yelled "no touch!" Taylor and Jess keep giving me a hard time about that.

I went on a gondola ride with Taylor and Jess. It was a BLAST!!! Stefano was the one steering, and he was soooooo funny. He sang and asked us if we liked to eat "hamburgers and happy meals." He showed us where the movie "Tourist" was filmed with Angelina Jolie, and also where Marco Polo, the famous explorer, lived. The Grand Canal was absolutely gorgeous. He said that in Venice there are 420 different bridges and he knows where every single one is! Before the ride ended, I asked if we could get some pictures taken. He said, "For you, baby, anything. Maybe even a kiss, no?" We just giggled it off and then he said he was kidding.☺

Curt paid for lunch again. We all loved the pizza!

St. Marco Square was really cool to see. We took plenty of pictures.

The Opening Ceremony for the tournament was the most fun I've had this trip. It was really cool to see and meet other teams from all over the world. When we were called up and announced in front of all the teams the boys went wild. It was hilarious! I see why movie stars and music artists love the attention. We felt like stars because everywhere we went people were like, "Go U.S.A!" and "The U.S. is the best!" We met the best middle blocker in Bulgaria, too. His name is Vincint. I got a picture with him and his teammate, George. The girls were pretty hyped to be meeting all the boys. Some of them claim that they have found their husbands. We'll see what happens with that.

Tomorrow we play China, Germany, and an Italian team (there are many). WE ARE SO EXCITED!

Miss you all! Ciao for now!

Day 6

April 23 - Pordenone

By: Jessica Jerde

[Pictures from Day 6](#)

[Chinese Fire Drill](#)

[NL Wins a point](#)

Today, we got to sleep in at a reasonable hour, well at 8 in the morning. We started off with a bang literally when Curt ran our box like van into a tree. We all had a chuckle over that one. Had a little karaoke in the back seat with the tone deaf and vocalist styling of Dale, Taylor, and of course me. Then we played the Chinese, and boy was that different. Who woulda thought that cheering involved literally screeching and running in circles? Me I just found it rather annoying, but it was something I most certainly have not seen before.

Next, we headed off to the dining area to run into some boys and well food of course. Spiral noodles and decadent pasta sauce with pork and patted potatoes, and pani with salty salad. I still have yet to get sick of the food here, although I do miss my happy meals from McDonald's. I'd say this is a rather good substitute. After that we headed off the gym again, played Germany. The team of many words, literally, they sing while they play. Then they ended up having to call in the ambulance for a girl who moved her knee in a direction it definitely was not meant to go. Took about 20 hours, but the paramedics finally jaunted their way very slowly on the court, when the girl had been crying in horror on the court for the last century. Even a few tears on our team went out to the poor girl.

Now, were going to play to stay out of the dump of the tourney bracket. If we win the next three games against Italy we will come in second to Germany, who at this point lost one set to China and have one yet to play. Anyways, miss you all. Everything is eccellente here, especially the milk and nutella.

Day 7

April 24 - Pordenone - Easter Sunday

By: Ghost writer for the team

[Pictures from Day 7](#)

[Playing the Italian Team](#)

[Playing the Italian Team #2](#)

There is no player journal for today. They were all very busy planning what to wear for the player party. However here's a brief summary of what happened today as if written by one of the players.

Hey everyone Happy Easter!

We got to sleep late today and then we had another breakfast of hard rolls, corn flakes, jam, juice and milk. Do they have anything other than rolls in the country for breakfast?

Today we had to walk to the gym. It took 5 minutes and we were sweating by the time we got

there. I don't know why we didn't drive. The other team we played is from Italy somewhere. They have some big players and one of the almost hit Taylor in the face again.

We played really hard against the team but we lost in 3 games. I don't remember the scores, but they weren't very high. After the match Dave & Sean talked with us about playing hard, I wish they were the ones out there getting balls hit at their faces by Amazon women!

After the match we went to lunch and tried to find a boys team to sit next to, but all the good ones were taken. They had a giant TV playing a video and Lisa was on it 3 times. The guy who does the video likes us and he is going to be our DJ at the dance tonight. He's a cool dude.

In the afternoon we went to the hotel and all of us took a nap. The coaches told us 1 hour, but we all zonked out for almost 2. They will never know.

We went to our match tonight in a gym somewhere far away. Curt had to drive the van and listen to our music for 15 minutes. We thought he was going to die. He made a deal with us that if we won we could select the radio station, but if we lost he gets to select the station. We played a team from Croatia and we beat them the first 3 sets so we were done and ready to go back to the hotel and get ready for the dance. Curt drove us back so slowly, he doesn't realize we need time to get ready. But at least we got to listen to our radio station.

We showered and got ready for the dance and then went to dinner. When we got out of the van all the cute boys teams were cheering. Then we went to the dance and we danced with guys from Italy, Brazil, and Bulgaria....Jess had to fight off an old guy. The dance was so much fun, it was the best.

We love you all and miss you. See you in two days.☺

Day 8

April 25 - Pordenone 181 & Venice 182

By: Yet to be written

[Pictures from Day 7](#)

[We definitely aren't Basketball players](#)

[The Church Bells in San Marco Plaza](#)

[Liz & Rachel about the trip](#)