

2011 US Junior National Championships - Day 3

Mizuno Northern Lights 14-1, 15-1, 15-2, 16-1, 16-2, 16-B, 17-1, 17-2

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The 14-1 team had already been playing for the last 3 days in the 14 National Division by the time I had arrived. They were 3-0 day 1 and 1-1 day 2. This gave them 2nd in their first round pool and put them in a 3 team pool for today with the #1 seed Iowa Rockets. They played their first match in the 3 team pool against St Louis CYC and won pretty easily in 2 straight sets. They then had to play Iowa Rockets right away. The 14-1's played very well in that match, and it was fun to watch them play. They won the match in two sets and that put them in a golden position as seed #1 in the tournament. They had to play a challenge match in the afternoon, but as seed #1 they were matched up against seed #14 a team from Pennsylvania. Unfortunately in the Challenge match, the 14-1's played very poorly and lost the match in two sets and the opportunity to win the National Championship. They will now play in the Silver division for 9th place on Tuesday morning.

The 15-1's started their tournament today in the 15 Open Division. They are in a pool of 8 teams and only played 3 of the possible 7 matches today. Their first match was against Texas Tornadoes and they lost the first set 21-25. They then came back and crushed them 25-8, and 15-5 in the 2nd and 3rd sets to win the match. Their second match of the day was against City Beach, and they started out winning the first set 25-19, then losing the 2nd set 18-25, and losing the 3rd set 12-15. Their 3rd match of the day was against Alliance who they played and lost against in Orlando. This time the 15-1's won the match in 2 sets 25-22, 25-21. They ended up 2-1 on the day and will continue their pool play on Tuesday afternoon with their first match against Skyline at 3pm. Once again in this tournament the 15-1 team is playing the afternoon everyday....this is not good as it makes for a hard time with meals and sleeping.

The 15-2 team started their tournament today in the 15 National Division. They are in a pool of 6 teams and played 3 of the possible 5 matches today. They lost their first match to Team Dynasty (out of KC area) in two straight sets. The second set was close at 28-26, but still a lose. Their second match was against Texas Image and the 15-2's played very well winning that match in two straight sets both of them 25-19. Their third match of the day was against Circle City, a very physical team....and the 15-2's could not keep up with them. They lost that match 25-13, 25-16. They finished their day with a 1-2 record. If they want to advance toward the Gold they will probably need to win both of their matches tomorrow. They are also on an afternoon

play schedule, but theirs is even worse.....their first match doesn't start until 6pm on Tuesday, and with delays it is likely it won't start till around 7pm!

2011 US Junior National Championships - Day 4

Mizuno Northern Lights 14-1, 15-1, 15-2, 16-1, 16-2, 16-B, 17-1, 17-2

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Mizuno Northern Lights 14-1's place 9th in the 14 National Division

The 14-1 team was playing in the Silver bracket today for 9th place. They started off pretty slow, losing the first set of the first match to Extec 27-29, but they came back and won the next set 25-17 and a very close third set 16-14. This put them in the semi finals of the Silver bracket. They played Royal Tigers next and pretty much controlled both sets winning 25-15, 25-20. Their final match of the tournament and their 14's Junior season was against Toledo VBC. The match was somewhat close, but the 14-1's were mostly in control of it and won 25-22, 25-22. They officially finished 9th in the National Division, and they received a plaque. Other than the minor problem yesterday, this has been a good tournament for the 14-1 team and a great season. Good luck to all the players in their upcoming high school seasons.

The 15-1's are in the 2nd day of their tournament. They started the day by playing Skyline from Texas. They have played this team before and beat them, and this time it was the same outcome. The 15-1's won 25-22 in close game and then crushed them 25-12 in the second set. Their next match was against Laguna Beach. This match we played very well in. We won the first set 25-20 pulling away at the end. The second set we were in control the entire time and won it 25-14. We had a ref assignment after the Laguna Beach match, but the tournament was running so far behind that after about 30 minutes they relieved our kids from the ref assignment so we could go play our final match against Surf City. Surf City looked like a team that was going to be a challenge....and it was. We however were playing pretty well, and we beat them in two straight sets 25-22 in both. We now have on final match in the pool on Wednesday against MAVA. We really need to win it to assure advancing into the Gold Challenge matches....if we don't win it, our fate will be in the hands of another team and how many sets they win or lose in their match. I have no pictures of the 15-1's because I am sitting on the bench helping Walt with the logistics. Sorry 15-1's....it's either pictures or keeping us from trying to sub too much or take too many timeouts, and those are mistakes we don't want to make.

The 15-2 team had a long day off before they played this evening. First, we need to thank them for coming over and watching and supporting the 14-1 team in their Silver Bracket matches. When they finally got to play it was after 6pm, and they were playing against Miami Elite. This was a close match, we lost the first set 25-18, but then had a very exciting 2nd set that went to 29-27....unfortunately Miami won it. With this loss the 15-2's had no hope of advancing out of their pool toward the gold, so with the pressure off they played their last match of the pool against Sky High. They easily won that match 25-18, 25-16, and finished up ranked 5th in the pool....exactly where they were originally seeded. They will play on Wednesday evening again in a 3 team pool followed by a crossover match.

2011 US Junior National Championships - Day 5

Mizuno Northern Lights 14-1, 15-1, 15-2, 16-1, 16-2, 16-B, 17-1, 17-2

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The 15-1's are in the 3rd day of their tournament, and they are doing very well. The day started off not so well when we played MAVA. This was match that we really wanted to win to make sure we had a shot at the Gold. However we lost that match in two straight sets 25-23, 25-22. However at the same time Alliance was playing Surf City, and I was pretty sure that if Alliance won just one set then it didn't matter if we won or lost the match. Just as we were about to lose the first set with MAVA, Alliance won their first set. So in the end, even though we lost our match against MAVA and Alliance won their match we ended up with a higher match win percentage and we advanced out of the pool into the Gold Challenge matches. The first Gold Challenge match was at 6pm against Cleveland Academy. Unfortunately I could not be there because I had to take the 172 team out for their AAU Championship dinner, but according to Walt the 15's performed superbly. They won the match in two relatively easy sets 25-17, 25-17. This put us in the final 8 and in our last Challenge match against Delta Valley from Northern California. Delta Valley played some incredible defense and had some incredible shot placements. But the 15-1's went out and played hard and won the match in two straight sets...25-12, 27-25. This put the 15-1's in the Gold Championship bracket of 4 teams. Because of this they will medal with at least a 3rd place finish. We have two matches on Thursday, the first semi final match at 10am against City Beach the team we lost to the first day of the tournament. If we win that we play in the finals at 3pm. Good luck to the 15-1 team on Thursday!

The 15-2 team had an down and then up day. They lost the first two matches of the day. The first one was against Westbend Power and we went 3 sets with them losing 15-13 in the third. The second match was against Centex from Texas and we lost that one in two straight sets 25-16, 25-15.....not a great performance on our part according to Kari & Marlon. The last match of the day was against Xtreme and we won that one in two straight sets 25-19, 25-19. I watched the last set, and even though the 15-2's are playing for about 40th they were still having fun and playing hard. I've always, we don't care if you lose....just as long as you are having fun and playing hard, which is exactly what the 15-2's were doing. After they got back to hotel the 15-2's had a long and tearful year end meeting with Kari and Marlon.

The 17-1's started their tournament today. They are in an 8 team pool that everyone in the 17's division has named the pool of death. They have the 1st, 2nd, & 3rd place finishers from AAU's plus two other teams who won qualifiers in their pool, while some of the other pools have pretty much nothing. The 17-1's first match was against Woodlands Wave, and we won that match in two straight sets 25-18, 25-17. Their second match was against Nebraska Jrs the #2 seed in the tournament, we took it to three sets and even had match point in the 2nd set, but we could convert and we lost 15-7 in the 3rd set. The third match was against TAV who were 2nd at AAU's, it was a great match with huge hitting and awesome defense, but we lost 25-19, 25-19. The 17-1's finished 1-2 on the day, and although they are not "out of it" yet, they are going to have to win all of their matches on Thursday to have a shot at the Gold. They will play 3 more of their pool matches on Thursday morning against Sky High, Invasion, & TCA. The pool of death is waiting to chew up those who don't play well.

The 17-2 team started their tournament today. They are in a pool of 6 teams and played 3 of the matches today. Their first match of the day was against Kaepa Krush, and the 17-2's pretty easily crushed them 25-17, 25-12. Their second match of the day was different story. They played San Antonio Jrs and the match was a very close one. We won the first set in a come from behind 19-24 to 27-25 win. The second set we got into the same position at 19-24 and started to come back, but lost 25-22. The third set we trailed behind the entire set until about 12-12 when we finally took the lead eventually winning 15-13. We snatched that one away from San Antonio somehow. In the 3rd set it was all Northern Lights. Even though the scores were 25-20 in both sets, it seemed like the 17-2's were firmly in control of the match and we won it in two. After they finished playing the 17-2's went back and cleaned up and put on some nice dresses and Curt took them out for their AAU Championship Dinner at Maggiano's. It was a great meal, and Jackie even gave in and let them have dessert! The 17-2's will continue with the last two matches of their pool play on Thursday evening.

2011 US Junior National Championships - Day 6

Mizuno Northern Lights 14-1, 15-1, 15-2, 16-1, 16-2, 16-B, 17-1, 17-2

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Mizuno Northern Lights 15-1's win National Championship in the 15 Open Division

Today was the 15-1's day. They were in the Gold Championship Bracket of 4 teams. Their first match of the day was against City Beach, a team that we lost to on day one of the tournament. This time the outcome was considerably different. The 15-1's were on a mission, and they rolled over City Beach in two quick sets 25-14, 25-13. This put them into the Championship match against TAV who had won the AAU National Championship a week ago. The match was at 3pm in the afternoon, so we went back to the hotel for a while, had lunch, played a few games, and came back to the Championship court for our match. I was tossing warm ups for the team, and I noticed a distinct difference in their play, they were crushing the ball....something we hadn't really done in any of the the previous warm-ups in this tournament. When we got done, I told Walt that this was probably our best warm up we ever had and he agreed they were on their mission to win it all. The match started out with the first set being fairly close all the way up until about 20 when we broke away, but TAV made a come back and brought the score up to 23-23. The 15-1's however weren't to be denied, and they won the next two points and set one 25-23. The second set was pretty much all Northern Lights. Our incredibly tough serving never let them get into system, and when they did attack it we played some great defense and then had some superb setting and hitting to put the ball away. We led all the way until the very end, and at 24-15 TAV launched a ball into the bleachers and our teamed piled out onto the floor in excitement only to have a phantom touch called against us. So we unplied, and came back off the court. TAV scored the next point making it 24-16. TAV then served the final point into the net and Northern Lights 15-1's were the 2011 15 Open National Champions. Kylee Zumach & Abby Monson were named to the All tournament team, and Lydia Dimke was named All Tournament MVP. This was Northern Lights 2nd USJNC National Championship, our 10th overall National Championship, and it capped a highly successful year for the 15-1's who won two National Qualifiers, and the USJNC National Championships. Congratulations to the team members Lydia, Sydney, Mackenzie, Brittany, Abby, Alyssa, Taylor, Rachel, Shelby, & Kylee. Also congratulations to the coaching staff of Walt Weaver and Steve Getchell who trained and guided these girls for the past 8 months. Steve wasn't able to be at the USJNC's due to an illness, but the team had a stuffed bear they named Steve who was on the

bench every match, was their inspiration, and who was presented with a Gold medal also.

The 15-2 team was in their last day of the tournament day. They were in the Flight 6 bracket and played their first and only match of the day at 9am. The reason it was their only match of the day was because they lost the match to Crescent City in two close sets 25-22, 26-24. This ended their tournament and brought their 15's Jr season to a close. They officially ended up 43rd in the tournament. Even though this was not one the team's better performances, they were still very upbeat, positive and supportive of each other. The 15-2's should be proud of what they accomplished this season. Congratulations to them for a wonderful year. Thanks to the 15-2's for coming over to watch the 15-1's finals match, your support was appreciated.

The 17-1's were in day 2 of their tournament. They really needed to win all 3 of their matches today to assure a spot in the Gold Challenge matches, but that did not happen. What did happen was that they won 2 and lost 1. This doesn't completely eliminate them from the Gold, but it does mean they have to win on Friday and then a bunch of other things have to go the right way in order for us to advance. The 17-1's first match of the day was against Sky High, the team which won the AAU Nationals a week ago. The 17-1's won that match in 3 sets losing the first set big 15-25, winning the second set big 25-17, and then winning the 3rd set close 15-13. Their second match of the day was against Invasion and this match also went 3 sets. NL won the first set 25-19, lost the 2nd set 20-25, and then lost the 3rd set 14-16. I had a chance to watch most of the 3rd set, and it was a very well played game, we just plain got beaten. In their 3rd match of the day the 17-1's fairly easily defeated TCA in two straight sets 25-21, 25-19. Thanks to the 17-1's for coming over to watch the 15's finals match, your support was appreciated. Hopefully things will fall their way on Friday and they can make it to the Gold Challenge rounds.

The 17-2 team played their last two matches of the first round of pool play today in the evening. Their first match was against Jammers and they won that match in two straight sets 25-13 and then a close 27-25. This left them with one final match in the pool against Triangle, the #1 seed in the tournament, and the only other team in the pool that was undefeated. This match was played on the championship court, which was neat experience for the players. It was a very close match. The 17-2's won the first set 25-22, then lost the second set 22-25. In the third set they couldn't quite make it happen and they lost 10-15. This gave them 2nd place in the pool, and they are still advancing toward the Gold. They will play in a 3 team pool on Friday against Iowa Rockets & OP2. After that pool if they are 1st or 2nd they will have to win two challenge matches to get into the final Gold Bracket. Hopefully the 17-2's will make it happen.

2011 US Junior National Championships - Day 7

Mizuno Northern Lights 14-1, 15-1, 15-2, 16-1, 16-2, 16-B, 17-1, 17-2

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The 17-1's were in day 3 of their tournament, and had one final match in their pool of 8 teams. They played Coast 17-1's from Southern California. The match went 3 very close sets. NL won the first set 25-23, then lost 21-25, and then won the third set 15-13 to win the match. There was some awesome play happening on both sides of the net. This gave NL a 4-3 record in the pool and were tied with 3 other teams with the same record. However in these large pools the ties are broken based first on Set win %, and NL had the lowest win % so we ended up 6th in the pool and were out of contention for the Gold. (Our win over Coast also knocked them out of the Gold as they ended up 5th.) Our final match of the day was then against Michigan Elite the same team which we lost to in Chicago 4 weeks ago. This time the outcome was different with the 17-1's pretty much crushing them 25-13, 25-20. Tomorrow's final day of competition for the 17-1's will have them playing for 21st in a bracket of 4 teams.

The 17-2 team started the day with a 3 team pool with the #2 seed Iowa Rockets and #20 seed OP Smack. The first match was against OP Smack, and the 17-2's pretty much handled them without too much drama winning in two straight sets 25-18, 25-22. The second match was against Iowa Rockets and that match had some drama. NL won the first set 25-17 fairly easily but then dropped the second set 22-25. This meant that we needed to win the third set in order to get a better draw for the Challenge match. The 3rd set against Iowa Rockets was a close one but Kelsey was on fire and we won it 15-12. This win gave the 17-2's the #2 seed in the tournament, and put them up against New Mexico Jrs in their Challenge match. New Mexico had two big girls that were substantial at the net, but the 17-2's won the match in two straight set 25-21, 25-21. They are now in the final 8 team Gold Bracket! They will be playing for the National Championship on Saturday. Their first match is against Premier out of Nebraska. If they win that match they will be in the final 4 and will medal. It could be another very exciting day for Northern Lights.

The 16-1's started their tournament today. They are in an 8 team pool that will play out over the next 3 days. Today they played three matches. Their first match against Orange County was a good warm up match. We won it in two straight sets 25-23, 25-16. The second match was against Skyline and we defeated them also in two straight

sets 25-16, 25-20. Their third match of the day was against Willowbrook from Texas. This was a much tougher team with a couple of very physical kids. We lost the first set 19-25. The second set was going along well until somehow either the scorekeepers messed up or Willowbrook messed up with their subs, and they had to stop the match and fix things. Then Willowbrook protested it and the protest committee had to be called over to resolve the issue. 20 minutes later we were playing again. The 16-1's won the 2nd set 25-19. The third set was close up to the side change at 8 which Willowbrook got to first. But after that the 16-1's dominated the rest of the set and won 15-11. They are 3-0 in their pool right now and will continue with 3 more matches on Saturday against Sunshine, East Coast Jrs, and Front Range (the team we beat in Orlando).

The 16-2's started their tournament today in the 16 National Division. However they played in the afternoon so in the morning they went to the World of Coke. They enjoyed it and got to taste all the different kinds of Coke from around the world. Kristen did however limit them on their caffeine/sugar intake so we wouldn't have a team that was all charged up and then come crashing down. In their first match against TAV they could have used some of that charging up. We got crushed 11-25. However the second set was a very well played game. The 16-2's even had set point twice, but couldn't convert and we ended up losing 27-25. The second match of the day for them was against Michigan Elite and the 16-2's were ready to win one. They took the match to 3 sets losing the first set 20-25, then winning 25-13, and winning 15-13 in the 3rd. This put them at 1-1 and they had one match left for the day. In their final match against MVA the 16-2's must have drunk an entire 6 pack of Coke, because they came out and just crushed that team 25-6, 25-4. Andy wants to know how he can get them to play like that all the time. They ended up 2-1 for the day and will play the final 2 matches of their 6 team pool tomorrow.

The 16-Black team also started their tournament today in a 6 team pool. They are in the American Division, so Andy doesn't have to worry about a rematch! The 16-Black team didn't have their first match until 6pm, so they spent the day at the Georgia Aquarium. They said it was really a great place to go. When they did start playing volleyball, they were matched up against Brazos Valley from Texas. The first set was very close and we had lots of mistakes, but we managed to pull it out 28-26. The second set was almost a carbon copy of the first set but we lost this one 24-26. The third set was an exciting one with the 16-Black team pulling it out in the end to win 15-12. Their second match of the day was against Colorado Performance, a team they had played and beaten in Denver earlier this year. It didn't make any difference, the 16's came out and won that match in two straight sets 25-22, 25-18. As they told me later, we beat them in Denver and we beat them here. These were the only two

matches the 16-Black team played today. They will play 3 matches tomorrow to finish out their 6 team pool.

2011 US Junior National Championships - Day 8

Mizuno Northern Lights 14-1, 15-1, 15-2, 16-1, 16-2, 16-B, 17-1, 17-2

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Mizuno Northern Lights 17-2's place 2nd in the 17 National Division

Today was all about that wonderful little machine we call the 17-2's. They started off the day with the top 8 teams in the Gold Bracket. Their first match was against Premier from Nebraska. Premier never even knew what hit them in the first set. It was over quickly with the 17-2's winning it 25-10. The second set started out a little differently with Premier taking a few point lead, but the 17-2's came back and were soon back in control of the match and won the second set 25-20. This put them in the Semi Finals and guaranteed them of at least a 3rd place finish and a medal. Their semi final match was against Iowa Rockets, a team we had played earlier and beaten in 3 tough sets. This match turned out to be even more exciting than the first time we played them. In the first set Iowa Rockets jumped out to a big lead and NL had to play catch up. We got to 20-24 and Iowa Rockets stalled and we had a chance to win it. We scored the next 3 points to bring it to 23-24...and then we served the ball out of bounds and lost the set 25-23. The next set was also equally exciting and in the end the same server who served the ball out for the first set point, served an Ace for the 2nd set final point. This evened the match up at 1-1 each. The third set started out slowly for NL with Iowa taking a quick lead of about 4-1. But the 17-2's battled back and at the 8 point side change it was 8-7 with Iowa Rockets leading. The rest of the 3rd set was an incredible display of volleyball by both teams. One team would score a point, and the other team would answer right back again. At about 13-13 both teams started having the opportunity to win the match, but nobody could convert two straight points. The defense and offense on both sides was awesome. Finally at 20-20, NL scored point 21 and then Iowa Rockets hit the last ball wide to give NL the victory 22-20 in the 3rd set. There were a lot of parents (and the club director) who thought they were going to need cardiac care....but in the end, the little machine won. This win put them into the Finals against a team from Southern California called Orange County. The finals were held on the championship court and were webcast. Orange County 17's were probably an upper level open team that never played together in a Qualifier, so they were in the National Division. They were very good and in the first

set against them they pretty much handed it to us winning 25-18. The second set was much closer and NL 17-2's played hard but in the end Orange County was just too good and they won 25-22. So the Northern Lights 17-2 team which won the AAU National Club Championship a week ago, placed 2nd at the USAV National Division Championships. We had 3 players named to the All Tournament team, Maren Loe, Kelsey Chambers, & Brianne Stamer. This team really loved playing with each other and were a joy to watch. Congratulations to the players Allison, Kelsey, Ashley, Emilee, Maren, Janelle, Claire, Lauren, Brianne, Kelley, & Eliza, and the two coaches Jackie & Maggie for a pretty remarkable season.

The 17-1's were playing in Flight 3 today and had two matches. Unfortunately the time of their matches was at same times as the 17-2 Finals were, so I was unable to watch them. Their first match they won against Washington Volleyball Academy in two straight sets 25-20, 26-24. Their second and final match of the tournament was against Louisiana VBC and we lost that one in 3 sets 25-22, 18-25, 14-16. Their official finish for this tournament is 22nd in the 17 Open Division. This team also had a good season and was just a 1 point away from finishing in the top 12 of this tournament. Congratulations to the players for a great year, and thanks to the coaches who spent the last 8 months of their lives with them.

The 16-1's were in their second day of their pool play. Once again due to the 17-2's being in the Gold bracket I was unable to see any of their play. They finished the day with 3 more match wins and no match losses. They are currently 6-0 and have one match left in their pool for Sunday morning. They defeated Sunshine, East Coast, and Front Range all in two straight sets. They will play OVA on Sunday morning for 1st place in the pool. If they win, it will be an easier route to the Gold having to only play one Challenge match on Sunday afternoon.

The 16-2's finished their 6 team pool this afternoon. As Andy put it, we played very well and very hard today, we were just out muscled. They lost their first match to a team from Hawaii 25-19, 25-20. Their second match of the day they also lost but it was pretty close in the 2nd set 26-24 against Synergy. These two losses gave them an overall pool record of 2-3 and they finished 5th in their pool. This knocked them out of contention for the Gold. On Sunday they will play in a 3 team pool followed by a single challenge match to put them into their final brackets for Monday.

The 16-Black team had to play the last 3 matches of their pool today. They won their first match against New Mexico Jrs fairly easily 25-19, 25-16. Their second match was against SW Illinois and we lost that one in 3 sets 25-18, 25-27, and 13-15. Their last match of the day was against San Gabriel who is a very good team. Both teams played an excellent match with lots of hitting and defense on both sides of the net. Unfortunately for the 16-Black team, San Gabriel had a couple of big physical kids

who we could stop all the time and they won the match in two sets....but they were very well played sets. This put the 16's at a record of 3-2 in the pool which got them 3rd place and they are still in contention for the Gold. They will play in a 3 team pool on Sunday and if they do well they will have a challenge match to get them into the final 8 team Gold Bracket. On a side note, the parents probably shouldn't take up dancing or animal imitations as a profession.

2011 US Junior National Championships - Day 9

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The 16-1's finished their pool play today by playing OVA for the 4th time this year. We won the first set 25-21. The second set OVA won 27-25, so once again it came down to the 3rd set. NL played well, but OVA once again pulled out a win 15-13. This put the NL 161 team in 2nd place in their pool and they had to play 2 more Challenge matches to get into the final 4 Gold Bracket. The first Challenge match was against TAV, the team that knocked us out of the tournament in Orlando. The 16-1's played very well against them, and won the first set surprisingly easy 25-17. But the second set was a different story. Both teams played hard but NL managed to always keep 1-2 points ahead of them and in the end we won 25-23. This put the 16-1's in the top 8, and they had to play Invasion in the last challenge match to get into the final 4 Gold Bracket. Invasion is the same team that the 16-1's lost to in the finals last year as 15's. The match started out in our favor with the 16-1's quickly pulling ahead by about 3 points. We managed to keep that margin until around 15 when we pulled ahead even further and won the set 25-17. The second set started off badly for NL. In just a few minutes we were down 1-5. But we got a few good hits and some great defensive plays and we were right back in it again tied at 7-7. From that point on the 16-1's took control and inched ahead by 1-2 points. At one point Sarah hit a ball almost straight down and if the setter from Invasion hadn't had her hand up in front of her head she would have been knocked over. We finished the second set winning 25-17. This puts the 16-1 team in the Final 4 Gold Bracket. They have already guaranteed themselves of at least a 3rd place finish and medal. Tomorrow they will play St. Louis CYC at 9am in the semi's to get into the Championship match.

The 16-2's went 2-0 today in their 3 team pool. The first match they pretty much rocked LVC 25-8, 25-7. Their second match was a bit more challenging against NFVA who had a couple of big kids. We won that match, but it took 3 sets. We won

set 1 25-21, lost set 2 20-25, and then won a close and exciting 3rd set 15-13. The team played very well. They then had a challenge match to determine what their final bracket would be on Monday. The Challenge match was against VolleyFX and we won that one in two straight sets...the first one 25-21 a bit more challenging, and then the second one was all NL at 25-13. They are now in Flight 2 for Monday and will be playing for 25th place. Their first match will be against HPSTL from the St. Louis area at noon. If they win they will play their last match of the season at 2pm. The 16-2 team has also been very busy while in Atlanta. They have seen the World of Coke and Georgia Aquarium. It's been a great trip for them.

The 16-Black team was in a 3 team pool today with two fairly decent teams. The first team they played was Mintonette out of Ohio. We lost that match 25-21, 25-18. The second match of their pool was against Top Select out of Florida. They lost the first set pretty badly 25-11, but in the second set they played really well and pushed a good team to their limits. However in the end we lost the second set also 25-20. They then had a final challenge match to determine which bracket they would be in on Monday. The challenge match was against Synergy. They lost the first set narrowly 22-25, and then came back to win the second set even closer 27-25. The third set they control and won 15-10. This put them in the Bronze Division playing for 17th place, which is really very good. They will play USA South at 9am Monday morning. This team has gotten a lot of attention the last few days from other clubs....they are just shocked that a "3's" team is so good. Our players should be very proud of that.

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All of the pictures taken this year are posted on our new photo website by [CrossCourt Images](#)

Mizuno Northern Lights 16-1's place 2nd in the 16 Open Division

The 16-1's were in the Final 4 Gold Championship Bracket today! They had to ref at 8am, and played their first match at 9am. Their first match was against St. Louis CYC. This is the same team that we played as 15's last year, and barely squeaked by. This year was no different. We lost the first set 20-25. St. Louis has a big team that is very aggressive. They had come out swinging and they were very successful. The second set NL took more control right from the start and we won 25-21. This left set 3....which was another heart stopper. It was neck and neck all the way to about 11-11 when we broke away to take a 1-2 point lead. We ended up winning 15-12 and

advancing into the 16 Open National Championship match. The finals were against Long Beach on the championship court and was webcast. We started off set one very slowly, in fact it was 1-10 before we finally started to score. We battled back with some awesome defense and attacking, and pretty soon it was 23-23. We got point 24 on a big block, and then converted point 25 to win set 1. Set two we never really in it....we were behind almost from the start. We ended up losing 25-17. This brought us to the final set of the season, set 3. It was a tight set and we went up 8-7 at the side change. We kept the lead until about 12-10 when Long Beach scored a big point. We then couldn't get it together again. We sided them out once at 12-12, but then they won the serve back at 13-13. 13-13 they hit a good shot and it was 13-14. They served match point, and we had a miscommunication on the court and the ball dropped for match point. Other than the last point of the entire match, this was a very good match. The 16-1's should be very proud of their accomplishment in this very difficult tournament. The best teams in the nation were playing, and Northern Lights took 2nd in the 16 Open Division! [Alyssa Goehner, Samantha Swenson, and Sarah Wilhite](#) were named to the All Tournament team. Congratulations to Kara, Haley, Alyssa, Nora, Samantha, Calleigh, Jessica, Jazzmyn, Sarah, & Jocelyn.

The 16-2's were playing in Flight 2 today. They had their first match at noon. Unfortunately it also was their last match of the tournament. They played High Performance out of St Louis, and lost the match in two sets 19-25, 21-25. They officially finished 27th in the 16 National Division. This tournament caps off a good season for this team. They played some extremely tough teams in Qualifiers and here at the National Championships. They were only out of it by a few points on many of the matches. Congratulations to the 16-2 team for representing NL well again this year.

The 16-Black team was playing in the Bronze Bracket today. They won their first match against USA South in 3 sets. 25-21, 19-25, 15-5. This put them into the finals of the Bronze division. They played KC Extreme in that match and it also went 3 sets. We won the first set 25-21, then lost set 2 17-25, and lost the third set 11-15. They officially finished 18th. This is an extremely good finish for the 16-Black team. We are very proud of how this performed this entire year, placing 2nd at 2 Qualifiers and making it to the National Championships. Congratulations girls.

Overall Northern Lights medaled 3 teams at the 2011 US Junior National Championships, with one National Championship for the 15-1 team, and a 2nd place finish for the 17-2 and 16-1 teams. We also medaled 4 teams at the AAU National Championship with one National Championship for the 17-2 team and 3rd place finishes for the 12-1's, 16-1's, & 17-1's. Its been a great year!