

★ The Premier Star ★

By Melissa Kucirek – 16 Gold Coach
and Michelle Gyhra

COLORADO CROSSROADS – NOT JUST A CHANCE TO GET OUT OF SCHOOL FOR A FEW DAYS

By Melissa Kucirek - The first time I went to Colorado Crossroads it actually was in Colorado. Back in my sophomore year of high school, I loaded a huge charter bus at 7:00 a.m. for a seven-hour drive to Denver. There I was, my first time going to the Rocky Mountains, my first big tournament and most importantly, the first time away from my parents.

Plus, I got out of school for two whole days!

Along the way we stopped at the famous Olie's Restaurant. For those of you who haven't visited this establishment, it's a taxidermist's dream. The original owner, Olie had an obsession with hunting wild game. And we're not talking pheasants here. We're talking polar bears and giraffes.

With three teams and some parents packed in the bus, we watched movies, swapped magazines and flipped through photo albums. Before we knew it, we were in Denver.

Hello traffic.

An hour later we threw our bags into the hotel room and of course ran around the hotel.

Note to players: don't stay up until midnight the night before you have to play—you will hurt. I guarantee it.

So, playing at 8:00 a.m. isn't fun any ways, and it certainly isn't when you're not used to sleeping in a freezing hotel. But, that's another story because my roommate and I were dumb and couldn't figure out how to turn on the heat.

The morning competition came and went and learning to play on the Sports Courts surface proved to be a good experience. I remember being very nervous for the first game. Yeah, like a volleyball is a different size and shape in states like Texas and Kansas! Remember, I was a dumb sophomore.

My point is, it's still volleyball, they still play the same way we do in Omaha!

To make a long story short, I would like to offer a few words of advice to the teams going to Kansas City (or any other national qualifier).

1. Don't bring your homework. You know you're not going to do it. Seriously. Don't even bother because you won't read it on the way home either. You will be exhausted or want to talk about Joe's Crab Shack the entire time in the back of the mini van. Not to mention, you won't

do it on the way there because you will be too excited. Leave it at home.

2. Don't run in the hotel halls. Remember that Premier Volleyball isn't renting out the entire hotel. There are other guests who will surely be thanking their lucky stars that they decided to stay in Kansas City the same weekend as thousands of volleyball players. And 8 of them are screaming in the next room.
3. Don't lose your water bottle at the convention center or hall (not hotel hallway, see number 2!). Water is quite costly. Keep your bottle and just keep filling it up at the fountain or restroom.
4. Buy a t-shirt on the first day. It's insane. That's all you need to know.
5. If you don't know when or where you play, ask or stick with the group. It's very easy to get lost in the convention area and it's important to know that when you aren't playing you let someone know where you are going. Coaches aren't the babysitters, but they still need to know that the players are either with another player or a parent.
6. Do not throw, push, toss, shove, set in motion, or trip a coach into the hotel pool. Any parent or player found guilty of doing this will answer to Barry.
7. Eat when there is time and drink lots and lots of fluids. You will be playing for three days straight. Help your body out!
8. No matter how tired you are at night, take a hot shower. It will help the soreness.
9. Have fun on the team outings! This is a phenomenal opportunity to have!
10. Play hard on the court. College coaches could be watching and more importantly, you've worked hard all season and it's a chance to show just how far the team has improved.

STAR QUOTES

"Life is a journey of integrity. Being an athlete of character prepares you for it."

-Unknown

"Don't pray for dreams equal to your powers; pray for powers equal to your dreams."

-Unknown

"Some people dream of success, while others wake up and work hard at it."

-Unknown

MARCH'S PREMIER STARS

Who is a Premier Star? The Premier Stars are players who have been selected by their coaches for their commitment to their teams. Players are chosen based not only on skill, but teamwork, hard work and dedication. Premier Stars are shining examples of the idea that their efforts have paid off in practice and in competition.



Premier Volleyball would like to recognize each and every one of our players, coaches, and parents. All of you have worked so hard to get to this exciting point of the season.

Keep shining!

This month's "Premier Stars" are:

Kari Dierks, 18 Gold – Kari is a quiet and steadily improving players for the 18's. I believe there is a real leader there inside and she will show that someday. Kari has played every position for us this year without question. In a recent tournament in Lincoln she actually played right side, outside and middle all in the same tournament and had a very good day!

She listens intently and learns quickly. She 's the kind of player, coaches look for when recruiting. A number of colleges have shown interest in Kari this year, including Wayne State, CSM and Briar Cliff. Keep up the hard work Kari!

Heather Lengfelder, 17 Gold – Heather plays setter for her high school team but switched positions for Premier and is playing outside hitter. She always gives 100% every match and more importantly every practice. She also provides the team with her great attitude!

Kendyl Riebold, 15 Black –Kendyl has worked hard every practice, wants to learn, changes things that we tell her to do, and is very encouraging to her teammates.

Emily Leeper, 13 Black – Emily, as a setter brings on the tough role of trying to make everything happen. She is a great athlete who listens and when is told how to do something better, she tries it. Emily is constantly trying to get the team up and pump them up, even when we are at the lowest points. I think she is a very great team member!

Congratulations to the four of you... You each serve as a positive role model for the Premier Volleyball club.

COLORADO CROSSROADS AROUND THE CORNER – WHAT TEAMS SHOULD EXPECT

To non-volleyball players, "March Madness" is centered around college basketball. To volleyball players, March means one thing: Colorado Crossroads is just around the corner.

This year's Crossroads tournament, which will be held April 4-6, is marking on paper to be another highly

competitive tourney. Premier Volleyball is in the mix, of course, this year having more teams participate than previous seasons.

Many of the players will be playing in a National Qualifier Tournament for the first time. Some of their expectations may be met, but most likely they might be surpassed.

Teams from as far as Hawaii and as close as Lincoln will have teams vieing to place a spot in the Junior Olympic National Tournament to be held in Atlanta in June. Teams are placed in two divisions: club or open. Premier is placed in the club division. Open division teams are often teams with NCAA Division I recruits, and often dominated by the larger select teams in the nation who travel to far away states more frequently.

What should these first-timers expect?

"Wow! It was amazing seeing that many courts, teams, girls and parents from all over," Theresa Baker, mother of 16 Gold's Cat Baker. "Seeing the number of courts for the first time can be pretty daunting and can cause some initial shock. So, if a player has never played there before, it may be a good idea to see the site before they play."

The courts Baker spoke of is quite a bit more than what the University of Nebraska at Omaha can handle at a Power Tournament. Imagine, Omaha's Civic Auditorium filled with Sports Courts Volleyball Courts. Got it? Now, double that. Now, throw in about a thousand more fans, 50 volleyballs flying everywhere, whistles from every direction.

Now, you're getting there.

"I think the convention center atmosphere is great for the kids," Premier Volleyball Club Director Rick Welch said. "You realize that this sport is really huge, popular and fun."

Welch said that in addition to keeping his team focused on the competition and season goals, utilizing the time off the court is also important.

"The largest challenge each year is trying to see that all of the players on our teams are having fun," Welch said.

In the past, teams have hit the shopping malls, movie theatres, hotel lobbies, hotel pool and restaurants. The most popular restaurant, it seems, is Joe's Crab Shack. Besides the tasty menu, patrons can enjoy animated wait staffers. Waiters or waitresses have been known to lead the group in the bunny hop, the train, or even sing to a few of the players.

On the court, players should expect solid volleyball.

"The competition is some of the best in the country," Welch said, adding that teams should take the time to watch some of the Open Division courts play.

Baker agreed that the competition is much like a Power Tournament and teams are playing at a much higher level.

"You still have your strong teams and your weak teams like any other tournament," she said.

While their daughters are spending time on the court and off the court bonding with their teammates, what are parents doing? Bonding too, said Baker.

"We try to stick together when we're watching the game," Baker said. "We also like to keep track of the girls during down time, so we do what do and have a meeting time."

Overall, Welch hoped that players take away from the experience more than a tournament t-shirt.

"I hope they take away from the experience (the same I have) passion for the game and lots of new friendships," Welch said.

YOU KNOW YOUR PARENTS TAKE VOLLEYBALL TOO SERIOUSLY WHEN...

your mom gets together with all the other volleyball parents and sits in their garages on their lawn chairs for 8 hours on the Sundays when they do not have a tournament and talk volleyball. *Lyssa Carnazzo, 12 Gold Mom*

your Dad uses hand signals to communicate his views on current performance at the 13 year old referee. *Dave Chalupa, 14 Gold Coach and 18 Gold Dad*

your parents are the team parents even though you didn't make the team. *Dave Chalupa, 14 Gold Coach and 18 Gold Dad*

your parents win the MVP award away from the 5 time champs from Grand IslandMost Vicious Parents. *Dave Chalupa, 14 Gold Coach and 18 Gold Dad*

your parents show admiration for the G.I. 141 parents! *Dave Chalupa, 14 Gold Coach and 18 Gold Dad*

your Dad "attempts" a cartwheel after a victory and it looks something like what Keith Kathol did. *Dave Chalupa, 14 Gold Coach and 18 Gold Dad*

they turn their corn cob hats into volleyball hats and wear them to all the tournaments!!! *Lisa Sossa, 12 Gold Mom*

for team sprit, they won't let you eat any meals with utensils after Friday night (the Luau). *Kelly Saafeld, 14 Gold Mom*

they look forward to getting up at 5:00am on Sunday mornings. *Paula Davis, 15 Red Player*

your Mom misses the Kentucky Derby to go to her daughter's last tournament. *Paula Bishop, 15 Black Mom*

they get complaints of dancing and cheering loud and being over zealous! *Mady Berg, 14 Gold Player*

they are willing to drive me to Omaha from Columbus every Fruday night and Sunday morning just for practice, let alone all of the tournaments we have to drive to. *Leigh Cerny, 15 Red Player*

their whole wardwrob are premier outfits. *Jamie Ruzicka, 14 Black Player*

they are more excited about the game then you are. *Jamie Ruzicka, 14 Black Player*

they invite the whole family to come watch the game, including anuts and uncles and cousients. *Jamie Ruzicka, 14 Black Player*

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they have their own fan club with an hefty membership price. *Ellen Sorentino, 13 Black Player*

they carry around the "Great Plains" rule book. *Jessica Vinduska, 14 Black Player*

they know the rules better than your coach. *Jessica Vinduska, 14 Black Player*

all the parents from your team get to together once a week to discuss how your team did this last week at the tournament. *Jessica Vinduska, 14 Black Player*

your dad starts wearing spandex and a replica of your jersey on game days. *Diane Steele, 15 Red Parent*

the moms are considering getting matching team volleyball tatoos!!!! *Cathy Hahn, 12 Gold Parent*

You know "Bill Rotert" takes volleyball too seriously when he buys out the nearest Wal-Mart store to feed not only the Premier 17 Gold girls but also their parents on a tournament day. *Audry Smith, 17 Gold Parent*

The highlight of your mom's Saturday night is making 18 VB fleece pillows. *15 Gold Players and Moms*

Your Mom parades around in your spandex and your dad tells her she looks hot. *15 Gold Players and Moms*

Your dad starts warming up the car on Sat. night for a Sunday morning tournament. Your parents name the family pets "Spike," "Setter," and "Libero." *15 Gold Players and Moms*

PREMIER WEBSITE

Calendar of Events – Check the website www.premiervolleyball.org for your team's schedule of events.

Guestbook – Leave your mark! Sign Premier's guestbook and communicate with your teammates.

Photos – Don't forget to send in your pictures throughout the year.

Tournaments – Watch the website for upcoming dates and times.

Links – Check out the "Links" page for access to other volleyball websites.

TOURNAMENT RESULTS

Sunday, March 31

16 Gold – 3rd in Gold Tournament (Waverly Tournament)

Sunday, March 23

18 Gold - tied for 39th out of 116 teams (Mideast Hoosier National Qualifier in Indianapolis)

16 Black - 3rd in Gold Tournament (Bellevue Jrs VB Jam)

15 Gold - 3rd in Silver Tournament (Bellevue Jrs VB Jam)

15 Black - 3rd in Gold Tournament (Bellevue Jrs VB Jam)

15 Red - 2nd in Gold Tournament (Bellevue Jrs VB Jam)

14 Black - no results yet (Bellevue Jrs VB Jam)

13 Black - no results yet (Bellevue Jrs VB Jam)

12 Gold - 3rd in Silver Tournament (Bellevue Jrs VB Jam)

Sunday, March 16

18 Gold - no results yet (POWER Tournament)

17 Gold - no results yet (POWER Tournament)

16 Gold - 2nd in Bronze Tournament (POWER Tournament)

16 Black - 3rd in Bronze Tournament (POWER Tournament)

15 Gold - 2nd in Copper Tournament (POWER Tournament)

15 Black - 3rd in Copper Tournament (POWER Tournament)

15 Red - 3rd in Bronze Tournament (POWER Tournament)

14 Gold - 3rd in Bronze Tournament (POWER Tournament)

14 Black - 5th in Bronze Tournament (POWER Tournament)

13 Gold - 1st in Bronze Tournament (3rd Degree 2-day Festival)

Sunday, March 9

17 Gold - 1st in Silver Tournament (Fremont Tournament)

16 Gold - 3rd in Gold Tournament (Reiver Junior Invite)

15 Red - 2nd in Silver Tournament (Fremont Tournament)

14 Gold - no results yet (Fremont Tournament)

13 Black - 1st in Silver Tournament (Fremont Tournament)

12 Gold - 2nd in Gold Tournament (Hastings Spring Spike)

Sunday, March 2

18 Gold - 2nd in Gold Tournament (Sunset March Mania)

16 Gold - 3rd in Silver 18U Tournament (Sunset March Mania)

16 Black - 3rd in Gold Tournament (Sunset March Mania)

15 Gold - 3rd in Gold Tournament (Sunset March Mania)

15 Black - 1st in Silver Tournament (Nebraska Wesleyan Spikefest)

14 Black - 1st in Silver Tournament (Sunset March Mania)

13 Black - 2nd in Silver Tournament (Nebraska Wesleyan Spikefest)

12 Gold - 2nd in Gold Tournament (Nebraska Wesleyan Spikefest)

UPCOMING DATES TO REMEMBER

March 20-23	Hoosier Mideast Jr National Qualifier
April 3-6	Colorado Crossroads Jr National Qualifier
April 12-13	Great Plains Jr Regionals
April 24-27	Northern Lights Jr National Qualifier
May 10	Great Strides Walk: Cystic Fibrosis Walk (more info to come)
May 10	"End of the Year" Premier Picnic

PREMIER VOLLEYBALL MARCH BIRTHDAYS

Cat Baker, <i>16 Gold</i>	March 6
Michaela Collins, <i>13 Gold</i>	March 6
Alex Le Guillou, <i>13 Gold Coach</i>	March 8
Katie Riibe, <i>18 Gold</i>	March 9
Brandi Bronson, <i>12 Gold</i>	March 10
Nicole Venditte, <i>15 Gold</i>	March 24
Jennie Hutt, <i>13 Black</i>	March 30



~ From Premier Volleyball!

SIMPLY BLIMPIE SUBS AND SALADS

Rockbrook Blimpie's owner Terry Ford has generously offered his support to Premier. What better way to grab a bite to eat after an early practice? How about getting a sandwich "to go" and bringing it to a Sunday tournament? Better yet, looking for a team outing? Before you hit AMC, stop at Blimpie's on the way! Not only can you have a fresh, delicious sub sandwich, you can spread the word of Premier to the Omaha community. Mr. Ford's generosity is a fine example of Premier's community partnerships. It may go without saying so, but when Premier players visit establishments, such as Blimpie's, Fazoli's and Hauff Sports, remind them again of the club's appreciation. You never know, if you're wearing your warm-up jacket, they may recognize you!

Rockbrook Village Blimpie Subs and Salads

Address: 10811 PRARIE BROOK RD, OMAHA, NE 68144

Phone: 402-926-4103



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