



Florida Region
of USA Volleyball



PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

TEAM FLORIDA ALL-STAR SITTING VOLLEYBALL TEAM SHINES AT NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS

The Team Florida All-Star Sitting Volleyball team took home the gold medal at their first-ever appearance at the 2015 USA Volleyball Adult Open National Championships. This 3rd annual event was held in Detroit, Michigan May 25th – 26th.

Eustis, FL – June 3rd, 2015 – The Florida Region of USA Volleyball is proud to announce that their Team Florida All-Star Sitting Volleyball team took home the gold medal at the 2015 USAV Adult National Championships! This was the first year that the Florida Region sent an all-star sitting volleyball team to compete in the annual event. They were also the only team in their division to be represented by a USA Volleyball region, and went undefeated in the tournament.

The team included athletes with a connection to Florida, including six current and past USA Volleyball National Sitting Team players:

Athletes

- Eric Duda**, Setter* (Ft. Myers, FL)
- Nicky Nieves**, MB* (Kissimmee, FL)
- Dan Regan**, MB* (Edmond, OK)
- Brent Rasmussen**, Setter** (Omaha, NE)
- Chris Seilkop**, MB** (Deland, FL)
- Jose Zabala**, Setter** (Orlando, FL)
- Erik Stordahl**, OH (Jacksonville, FL)
- Scott Trinler**, OH (St. Petersburg, FL)
- Steve Bishop**, OPP/MB (Eustis, FL)

Coaches

- Jose Zabala, Head Coach**
- Linda Gomez, Assoc. Head Coach

Staff

- Heather Belden, Team Manager
- Mary Andrew, Commissioner

- *Current National Team athletes
- **Past National Team Athletes

In addition to receiving the gold medal, Team Florida athletes Eric Duda and Steve Bishop were chosen for an All-Tournament Award. **Brent Rasmussen**, who currently serves on the USA Volleyball Board Paralympic Seat, was named All-Tournament MVP. He said he is grateful for the experience and the opportunity to play with such great sitting volleyball athletes. "It was great to see sitting volleyball be played at such a high level," said Rasmussen. "Throughout my 12 years of being around the US team and developmental tournaments, I have never seen such a strong tournament. I know this tournament is going to be referred back to as one that will change the look of sitting volleyball teams in the US. Thanks the leadership of the Florida Region and USA Volleyball, US Opens will be forever changed by seeing sitting volleyball grown in the country."

Rasmussen also commented that it truly was an honor to receive an all-tournament award as MVP. "Volleyball is a team sport and without my team winning would not have been possible," said Rasmussen. "We not only had a great bunch of athletes, but also a well cohesive group that made the tournament that much more fun. We had some ups and downs and that is what makes the best teams wins is not making the highs so high and the lows so low. This truly was a team win and I am honored to be a part of it. Seeing the top of the podium and all-tournament team was just the icing on the cake! I am already looking forward to next year to the competition and to see the sport grow each and every year!"

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Steve Bishop, Executive Director and President of the Florida Region of USA Volleyball, as well as a Team Florida Sitting Volleyball athlete, commented on Team Florida winning the gold medal at their very first appearance in a National Championship. "This has been an exciting first year for our new sitting volleyball program, winning a gold medal and the national championship title," Bishop said. "We started this initiative back in the fall of 2014 under the leadership of our Commissioner, Mary Andrew, with a press conference in Jacksonville followed by a series of clinics and exhibition matches across the state of Florida to introduce as many people as possible to this action packed version of volleyball. What an amazing group of coaches, athletes, and staff that worked tirelessly to pull it all together and win the 10-team tournament in Detroit with an undefeated record of 7-0. I want to especially thank ROX Volleyball for agreeing to outfit the team and for helping us bring this project to fruition. This initiative proves that when people pull together in the same direction that great things can happen. We look forward to expanding our program next year and hosting the 4th Annual Sitting Volleyball National Championships in Orlando."

The Florida Region launched an initiative late last year to bring sitting volleyball to the state of Florida. The goal was to grow the game and to reach out to volleyball enthusiasts with physical limitations, as well as those without. Multiple sitting volleyball open houses and clinics took place across Florida to introduce and enhance the sport. These events raised awareness of the need for adaptive sports programs in our communities. They also provided a chance for everyone in attendance to play a game of sitting volleyball.

For more information on the Florida Region Sitting Volleyball initiative, please visit <http://www.floridavolleyball.org/sitting-vb.html>.

About USA Sitting Volleyball:

USA Volleyball is the National Governing Body (NGB) for the sport of sitting volleyball in the United States and is recognized by World ParaVolley and U.S. Paralympics (a division of the United States Olympic Committee - USOC). Additional information on USA Sitting Volleyball can be found at: www.USAVolleyball.org.

About Florida Region of USA Volleyball:

The Florida Region of USA Volleyball is a 501c3 non-profit that began operations in the 1960's and was officially incorporated in 1982 to promote the sport of volleyball and to create competitive playing opportunities for volleyball enthusiasts of all ages throughout the State of Florida. The Florida Region is one of the 40 regional volleyball associations under the umbrella of USA Volleyball and currently serves over 13,000 members. Indoor and outdoor programming is available for adults, juniors, coaches and officials. The Florida Region of USA Volleyball headquarters is located in Eustis, FL. Additional information on the Florida Region can be found at: www.FloridaVolleyball.org.

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