

# Potential Volleyball Club 16U girls win division in Calgary

By James McCarthy - April 8, 2019

It's the only Alberta Volleyball Premier Tournament the Potential Volleyball Club's 16U girls will play this season but they made it count.

The squad came out on top in Division 5 at the Premier 3 Tournament in Calgary on Sunday thanks to a straight sets win over the Canuck Stuff Volleyball Club from the host community, capping off a perfect weekend in the win column – six matches won out of six – and dropping just one set along the way to do it.

Head coach Darren Horn said even though it was a perfect weekend results-wise, it didn't mean they weren't pushed.

"The intensity level was really high," he said. "This is why we play the game and train so hard: to get to situations like this and play closely contested, exciting games. It's an exhilarating feeling. When the intensity rises, emotions peak and it's how the players react to those situations and feelings that builds character."

The girls started in the round-robin with three games against Canuck Stuff, Ace Volleyball Club from Calgary and Apex Ridge from Calgary, the latter of which went to three sets with Potential winning the decider in convincing fashion, 15-5.

From there, it was off to the quarter-final where they met the Brooks Rush Volleyball Club from Brooks, Alta., which ended in a straight-sets win. Their semifinal opponent was the Battle River Volleyball Club and it was another straight-sets win, although the scores were a lot tighter.

In the final, Horn said it was serving which saw the girls through to the top as they won both sets comfortably, 25-19 and 25-10.

Horn said it was the serving that provided the key to victory.

"We practice three times a week and serving is something we work on at each session, focusing on our trajectory, velocity and location," he said. "All of the players have improved tremendously and it was definitely a factor this past weekend. Our tough serving gave the other teams fits. If we didn't get an ace, the other team's passes were out-of-system for the most part, not giving them many attacking options and we were able to defend those fairly well."

To put into perspective just how well the girls served all weekend, they played a total of 13 sets and served up 77 aces for an average of roughly six per set, according to Horn. Compare that to the UBC Thunderbirds, which plays in the Canada West division of U Sports. Its ladies team led that division with around three aces per set.

Nearly three-quarters of those aces were provided by three players as Emily Carroll led the way serving-wise with 22 aces, followed by Katie Genge with 17 and Brianna Helyar with 13, said Horn.



*The Potential Volleyball Club's 16U girls squad is all smiles after winning gold in Division 5 at the Alberta Volleyball Premier 3 Tournament in Calgary on Sunday. They are, front row from left, Yazmin Macintosh, Emily Carroll, Iman Livingstone and Katie Genge; back row from left, assistant coach Mike Thompson, Katherine Smallwood, Brianna Helyar, Mali Straker, Pam Olimpo, Paige Kenney, assistant coach Branden Horn and head coach Darren Horn.  
photo courtesy of Natalie Bolleter*

Next up for the girls will be the Volleyball Canada National Championships next month in Regina but several of the girls will be lining up this weekend at a training camp at Sir John Franklin Gymnasium for the 2019 Western Canada Summer Games this coming August.

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**James McCarthy**

*<https://nnsf.com>*

After being a nomad around North America following my semi-debauched post-secondary days, I put down my roots in Yellowknife in 2006. I've been keeping this sports seat warm with NNSL for the better part of the last 10 years over two stints. I'm living the dream of everyone who said they would never get married and never have kids with the best wife you could ask for putting up with my crap for the past 11 years along with two daughters who are more beautiful than yours. Forever outnumbered when it comes to house choices, at least the dog has my back ... whenever I feed him.

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