

Blog Entry JVDA VolleyTots Tour

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Day 2

Site: Xavier University

Club Host: Team Z and Rich

After a long day and successful day of travel on day 1 we got right back on track on day 2. The alarm went off at 6:00 am after just a few hours of sleep, with the goal of leaving at the hotel at 7:00 am. We all met for breakfast and engaged in conversation about the Badger Region Volley Tots clinic. We went over highlights, fun moments, and learning curves that we had all experienced. Denise and I had a hard time making our waffles in the waffle machines and made quite a mess, but must admit was very comical. With full stomachs we packed the van with our bags like we had been doing it for years and off we went with Xavier University in Cincinnati, Ohio in our sites.

The next 7 hours were spent driving with stops almost every two hours. It was a very fun ride from start to finish. Whether it was Denise's witty jokes, Reggie's sarcasm, or John drawing hilarious cartoon sketches of us at lunch, smiles were plentiful. I can't forget to mention the interesting detours through the cornfields that the GPS brought us on. We had stopped for lunch at Burger joint, but little did we know that when we had gotten off the highway, there was only an off ramp and no on ramp. Once we discovered this, the GPS was already "Calculating a new route". The route consisted of a couple of miles of dirt/gravel roads through the cornfields to gain access to the highway. After having the feeling that the GPS was messing with us and we were about to enter a horror movie situation, the highway appeared through the stocks of corn and on we went. Overall from start to finish the drive was very entertaining and fun.

We finally arrived at Xavier University after traveling through 4 states and met with Rich Z. from Team Z. We arrived with just enough time to set up. After a little bit of inexperience on the first night we were able to set up within 15 minutes and started right on time!!! Although the numbers weren't as great at Xavier as Milwaukee, the enthusiasm was equal to anything we had experienced. The kids were very enthusiastic and were having a blast. Overall I believe we had over 20 kids participate along with 10 coaches and numerous parents.

The clinic on day two was a much easier day in my mind. I was much more confident as was Denise even though it was only our second "on the road" clinic. It is a credit to the organization of the Volley Tots program that with a positive attitude and a little bit of enthusiasm how successful you can be within this program. Not to mention how fun it is not only for the kids but for the coaches as

well. Once again we covered topics such as passing platform, arm swing, approach and blocking footwork, while letting them engage in other sports as well as fun conditioning.

Highlights:

- Charlotte, who had started the day off very slowly and quit timidly, by the third time through the obstacle course was trying to find ways to go through multiple times when allowed.
- Molly and Lily had perfected their passing form within just a few short minutes of bean bag tosses. They showcased their talents when we started to toss balls to them to pass and they made several great passes to the target.
- Reggie's group was quite talented and were mastering the retract and attack drill with ease. One of the kids hit a ball so hard it smashed off another chest. Thanks to the soft molten balls, there was nothing but laughs.
- Denise and I, with only one "on the road" clinic under our belt felt more confident and adjusted drills towards the skill level of our kids.
- The kids loved sharing high fives, and screaming "mine" as loud as they can so they can be known as the loudest yellers in the gym.

In conclusion we met in small groups with our kids and all were very enthusiastic about what they had just experienced. Parents and coaches that were supposed to be helping a bit were busy writing notes and observing the clinic going on. The parent's feedback, once again, was great and some are looking to start ASAP. We were able to pack up all the materials in appropriate boxes, store them in the van, clean up the venue, and take a picture in less than twenty minutes. Reggie and I were comparing our quickness with that of a traveling circus. He notes that maybe we were that far off.

The kids are really associating having fun and playing volleyball, which is extremely important. For them it is being able to remember not only what happened but that they have FUN!! If you ask them what drills they did, they may not know, but if you ask them if they had fun, they all scream yes with a smile. They associate volleyball now with fun as they would with such favorite things such as snacks. Volley Tots for them can be just as fun or as important as their favorite cookie.

We would like to extend a thank you to Rich Z. and Team Z Volleyball for the hospitality and all other coaches that helped us at Xavier University. Your efforts made it possible and we greatly appreciate it. Also, I would like to thank Reggie and Denise who unfortunately had to depart for prior commitments from our tour. They were both vital to the success we shared in the first two cities. I look forward to the next two TAV coaches, Amanda Martin and Laura Alford for the next stop!