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PRESS RELEASE

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TRIANGLE 15 BLACK EARNS TRIANGLE'S FIRST-EVER 15 OPEN BID TO THE JUNIOR OLYMPIC VOLLEYBALL NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS

BALTIMORE, MD: *Triangle 15 Black*, undefeated in Carolina Region tournament play, recently competed in the Northeast National Qualifier in Baltimore, MD. Seeded 12th overall in the OPEN division, *15 Black* went to Baltimore seeking one of three OPEN bids to nationals. Against tough competition and an intense tie-break situation *Triangle 15 Black* emerged victorious to capture an OPEN bid to the Girl's Junior Olympic National Championships, the first-ever by a 15's team in the state of North Carolina.

The Northeast Qualifier (NEQ) is the only east coast national qualifying event for the Girl's Junior Olympic National Championships (JOVC) and one of only nine such events held throughout the USA. Two competitive divisions exist at national qualifying events such as NEQ: OPEN division (highly selective admission) and CLUB division (unlimited teams in a particular age group seeded by record).

NEQ is a three-day tournament consisting of both pool play and playoffs to determine place finishes. On the first day of pool play *15 Black* finished 2-1 earning a second place finish overall with the following match record (2-0 (25-4, 25-11); 2-0 (26-24, 25-20); 0-2 (20-25, 20-25). Day two proved more challenging with *15 Black* finishing tied for 2nd place in the second round of pool play. To remain in the run for the bid *15 Black* would need to win a tie-break set (one game to 25 points) against NORCO (Colorado). *Triangle* won the playoff 25-19 to remain in the gold level round and in contention for the open bid. In the third gold round of pool play, Cleveland Volleyball Club (CVC) beat *15 Black* in two straight sets (13-25, 17-25). A second pool play loss to Texas powerhouse Mad Frog and a 3 set win over Monument City Classic spoiler Fredericksburg Juniors (FJVC) (25-19, 22-25, 15-12) left *15 Black* 1-2 in the third round pool play and a surprising three way tie for second place. With bid hopes still alive *15 Black* would need to prevail in 25 point tie break sets against both CVC and FJVC to earn a bid and a top four finish. CVC had confidence on their side as the first tie-break match began having easily beaten *Triangle* the night before in two straight sets. High drama with bid allocations on the table commenced with *Triangle* emerging victorious over CVC winning the tie-breaker 25-19. Next up was FJVC who was looking for revenge after losing a three set match to *Triangle* earlier that day. The winner of this tie-break was guaranteed the OPEN bid; the loser would walk away empty handed. Despite a late game rally by FJVC, *Triangle 15 Black* won the playoff and the OPEN bid 25-20.

Never before in the history of the Carolina region has a 15's team qualified in the OPEN division for JOVC. This also represents only the third time in region history that a team has qualified for OPEN nationals. **15 Black's** qualifying effort makes the second time a *Triangle* team has qualified for OPEN nationals (18 Black in 2006). The Girl's Junior Olympic Volleyball National Championships will be held June 26-July 5th in Dallas, Texas. This is the premier national championship tournament for junior girl's club volleyball.

The team roster for **15 Black** is included below:

Triangle 15 Black

- Madison Bugg..... Apex, St. Mary Magdalene's Middle School
- Ashleigh Crutcher Raleigh, Cary Academy
- Ginny Eckstine Wake Forest, Cardinal Gibbons High School
- Colby Gabel Mebane, Eastern Alamance High School
- Kristen Harris Apex, Apex High School
- Jennifer Hines Apex, Apex High School
- Lauren Hubbard..... Durham, Trinity School
- Alston Kearns..... Apex, Apex High School
- Karson Ratliff Wake Forest, Wake Forest-Rolesville High School
- Hannah Thompson..... Henderson, Northern Vance High School

Triangle Volleyball Club, a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, was founded in 2002 and is dedicated to the education of student-athletes through excellence in the sport of volleyball. *Triangle* is equally committed to growing volleyball in North Carolina and has expanded its programs and offerings, leading the way for NC junior volleyball. *Triangle Volleyball Club* is a member of the Carolina Region of USA Volleyball, the national volleyball organization of the U.S. Olympic program.

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