

Storm volleyball clean up at national championships

By Jake Courtepatte

Aurora Storm Volleyball has gained quite a reputation since its inception in the fall of 1998, and the program doesn't seem to be showing any signs of slowing down.

It was hard to escape the Storm at last week's Volleyball Canada Championships in Calgary, as ten teams made the trip west to see how the competition stacked up nationally.

They proved to be just as dominant at the higher level, earning a total of nine medals to add to the program's growing list of 75 already won this season.

Kicking off the competition from the Storm was the U14 Blizzard girls, winning in straight sets in two different matches in the first morning of competition. Upon reaching the playoffs, it was a familiar sight in the first round as they faced Ontario's Halton Hurricanes, winning in a tight third set. They reached the final against a team from coastal British Columbia, settling for silver after losing in close straight sets.

The U15 Typhoon girls had similar luck, losing to Durham in the finals.

But first-place finishes were in the cards for both the U16 and U18 squads. Despite three losses in a row in round-robin play, the U16s came out to play on Championship Saturday and won all three games en-route to gold, defeating a team from Quebec in the final.

The U18 Bolts had similar mediocre luck in the round-robin, but lost only two sets in the playoffs to take home the Storm's second gold medal of the tournament.

On the boys side, the U14 and U15 squads also went through to the finals, eventually each taking home silver medals. A third-place finish from the U16's rounded out the medal count.

The Storm led a dominant outpouring of talent from Ontario in this year's Nationals. In some divisions, as many as six of the eight teams were from Ontario, culminating in a number of all-Ontario championship matches.

The five top-four finishes ties the Storm for the most out of any club in the country.

"I want to congratulate all the teams, athletes, coaches, and parents that went to Nationals," said Bruce Stafford, founder and president of Storm Volleyball. "It was a great weekend representing the Storm."

The Storm provide competitive volleyball programs for males and females age 11 to 18, as well as participation programs for athletes from 4 to 17.

For more information on the program, visit www.stormvolleyball.ca.