

Spiking it for Easter Seals

Volleyball tournament brings fun for good cause

BY CATHERINE FRANCIS
 Special to the Town Crier

TEWKSBURY - Serve, spike, rotate. Serve, spike rotate. Anyone in a volleyball tournament knows what they need to accomplish in order to win. My team was playing in an Easter Seals Volleyball Tournament to raise money for a great cause last Friday night at Tewksbury Memorial High School. Easter Seals is a non-profit organization that provides education, service, and outreach to those with disabilities such as autism.

The eleven of us - Jamie Shepherd, Alyse Trevor, Jenn Trevor, Ron Levasseur, Alex Orphanos, Peter Levasseur, Diane Francis, Kyle Houston, Ryan Laprise, Chris Conway and I - knew how to simply play volleyball. However, other than Ron and Alex, it has been at least ten years since we even looked at a volleyball net.

"I haven't played since high school gym class," says Alyse, "so it took me a minute to remember everything. But after the first game everyone on our team got the swing of things and

played great!"

After signing my team in, we decided to warm up so as to not make fools of ourselves.

Some of us - cough, cough, me - needed the practice before we hit the court. I started holding the volleyball in attempt to at least reach the other side of the net. As I swung my arm and hit the ball, I realized this was going to be much harder than expected, for the ball went far to the left. Alex played volleyball in college, and Ron is a retired gym teacher from an elementary Lowell Public School, so right away, they showed me a few tricks that would help me in the game.

My mother, Diane, laughed every time she missed the ball. The few times when we were able to make it over the volleyball net was filled with cheers and high fives between the two of us. Kyle and Ryan had height on their side, both being over six feet tall. Jenn, Jamie, and I were the shortest of the bunch. After 45 minutes of warm up time, it was time to play. When I asked Peter if he was nervous, he shook

his head. "Not at all! I know it is going to be a lot of fun." And it was.

The first group was the most equally competitive. Besides us, there were three other teams. We got to play volleyball for a half hour before we switched and played a different team. Peter, Ron, and I sat out the first game, and later Jen, Jamie and Kyle sat out during the second. When we were playing the third team, all of them played.

Pete said that "having fun and playing volleyball at the same time raising money for a great organization."

After our final handshakes and "good games," we all agreed to enter the tournament next year. "It was fun; I liked it," Jamie claims as a smile comes across her face. "I would do it again. Very welcoming as opposed to competitive."

Ron enjoyed the competitive spirit.

"The tournament was competitive and fun! There was a spirit of camaraderie between the teams because of the common cause, which made the evening very enjoyable," says Ron.





One team ready to take on any challenge at the Easter Seals Volleyball Tournament held in the TMHS gym last week. Back row: Ron Levasseur, Alex Orphanos, Kyle Houston, Diane Francis, Ryan Laprise, Alyse Trevor. First Row: Catie Francis, Peter Levasseur, Jamie Shepherd, Jenn Trevor
Photo by Bruce Hilliard