

11th Pan-American USA Maccabi Indoor Volleyball Write-up

December 23rd, 2007: We arrived in Buenos Aires, Argentina, to compete, and represent the USA in the Pan-American Maccabi games. True to form, the games were an amazing combination of cultural, athletic, and religious energies. On the night of opening ceremonies all the athletes gathered in one stadium conversing in their respective languages when suddenly they began to play the Hatikva (Israeli National Anthem). It was amazing to see all the Brazilians, Mexicans, Argentineans, Israelis, Columbians, Americans, Canadians, South Africans, Chileans, Australians, and Britt's all begin singing in unified Hebrew. A chill went down my spine, as I felt connected to thousands of Jewish athletes from across the globe. It reminded us why we love being a part of the Maccabi games and why they touch us as Jews, volleyball players, and Americans. The Maccabi games are an amazing opportunity to be an ambassador of goodwill for Americans and the sport of volleyball: spreading good energy for all aspects of our identity as American Jewish volleyball players and coaches.

The tournament began smoothly with the indoor men's team beating Colombia 3-0. The US men followed up the win with another efficient performance, beating the Argentina C team 3-0. The USA men finally hit a roadblock against Argentina B, losing a five game heartbreaker 15-11 in the fifth. This put the USA men up against a formidable Argentina A squad in the semis. The USA men put up a valiant battle but ultimately could not match Argentina A, who went on to win 3-0. This left the US men's team in a rematch with Argentina B for the bronze medal. The US team came out on fire and avenged their previous loss in an emotional 3-0 sweep that earned them a spot on the medal stand.

The indoor women's team also started out well, easily beating Columbia 3-0. The women went on to defeat a solid Mexico team 3-0 and then in a hotly contested match against a tough Brazilian squad the USA emerged victorious with a 3-1 win. The victory against Brazil guaranteed the US women a matchup against Argentina in the finals. The USA women put forth a valiant effort but ultimately fell to the Argentine team 3-0 to earn the silver medal.

Overall, it was a great tournament for USA volleyball with regards to competition, making new friends, sportsmanship, and the spreading of good will. We were proud to come away with some well-earned hardware but, more importantly, we were proud to leave Argentina knowing that we represented the United States with dignity and class.

-Sam Shweisky (UNLV Assistant Volleyball Coach)

11th Pan-American USA Maccabi Women's Indoor Volleyball Team:

Head of Delegation: Mike Spector

Head Coach: Greg Spector

Assistant Coach: Sam Shweisky

Jamie Cooperstein
Mara Finkleman
Abigail Goetsch
Kim Karper
Shana Kaye
Aleeza Miller
Rachel Ostroff
Sarah Susson
Abigail Tufts
Ali Waller
Pam Zuckerman
Emily Zuckerman

USA v Columbia Win (3-0)
USA v Mexico Win (3-0)
USA v Brazil Win (3-1)
USA v Argentina Lose (0-3)
Finals: USA v Argentina Lose (0-3)
→ **Silver Medal**

11th Pan-American USA Maccabi Men's Indoor Volleyball Team:

Head of Delegation: Mike Spector

Head Coach: JT Wenger

Assistant Coach: Charles Michlin

Jon Aharoni
Andrew Cassius
Sandy Kleinberg
Jeffery Kotalik
Charles Michlin
Sam Moyerman
Brandon Quinn
Sam Shweisky
Max Sloves
Greg Spector
Matt Susson
JT Wenger

USA v Columbia Win (3-0)
USA v Argentina C Win (3-0)
USA v Argentina B Lose (2-3)
USA v Argentina A Lose (0-3)
Third Place: USA v Argentina B Win (3-0)
→ **Bronze Medal**

11th Pan American Maccabi Games – USA Beach Volleyball Write-up

As a proud American, I think anytime you can represent the United States in international competition it is nothing less than an honor and a privilege. At the 2007 Pan American Maccabi games in Buenos Aires, Argentina, the men's and women's beach volleyball teams from the U.S. delegation played exceptional volleyball. Not only did we bring home the men's gold medal and the women's silver medal, but we proudly upheld the tradition of American beach volleyball by playing with passion, skill, and demonstrating the good sportsmanship that is the hallmark of the Maccabi Games. Playing against teams from Argentina, Brazil, Mexico, Chile, Australia, and Israel, we had the unique opportunity to enjoy a wonderful week of competition while making friends with Jewish volleyball players from around the world.

The USA Women's B Team of Doris Trachtman and Sarah Susson were the clear fan favorites in the women's bracket. Underestimated by some of their taller opponents, Doris and Sarah shocked the rest of the field in pool play with their tenacious defense and consistent play, earning their way to the semifinals and a shot at the bronze medal. Unfortunately, in the bronze medal match they had to play against their good friend and neighbor from the "Can-Am" team, Team USA member Melody Khadavi. It was certainly bittersweet to see Americans play each other with a medal on the line, but it's difficult to think of someone more deserving of a medal than Melody.

USA Women's A Team: One of the top teams in the tournament, Aleeza Miller and Stacey Gould dominated pool play to earn their way into the gold medal match against the Argentina A team. Aleeza (known amongst the other players as "The Hebrew Hammer") and Stacy played some of their best volleyball in the finals. Unfortunately it wasn't enough to beat an Argentine team that played an absolutely flawless match.

USA Men's B Team: The Bad News Bears of the beach volleyball squad, Matt Susson and Max Sloves just missed the medal round after losing two closely contested matches – both in three games – to Australia A and the eventual bronze medalists, Brazil A.

USA Men's A Team: USA's A team of Jon Aharoni and JT Wenger made it to the finals and off against the Mexico's A team of Solomon Sarfati and Danny Swarcz. Both teams played inspired volleyball and the match went to a decisive game three. While Danny and Sol played brilliant ball throughout the match, they were ultimately bested by JT's amazing athleticism and Jon's impeccable execution. In an emotional finish to a fantastic tournament, Jon and JT won the gold.

To meet and compete with other Jewish athletes from around the nation and from around the world is unlike any other experience. We had an amazing group of people on the beach and indoor volleyball teams and I know that all of us came home with irreplaceable memories and new friendships that are only bound to get stronger with time. The Pan Am Maccabi games were a huge success and I hope that we will all see each other again in Israel in 2009... if not sooner.

- Max Sloves

USA Rosters & Finishes:

USA Women's A Team: Aleeza Miller and Stacey Gould – **Silver Medal**

USA Women's B Team: Doris Trachtman and Sarah Susson

USA Men's A Team: Jon Aharoni (beach chairman) and JT Wenger – **Gold Medal**

USA Men's B Team: Matt Susson and Max Sloves