

NORTH AMERICAN INDIGENOUS GAMES

Interview of the Akwesasne Screaming Eagles Volleyball Team

By: Janine Rourke

The North American Indigenous Games will see a calibre of young female athletes looking for a chance to bring home a Gold medal. They are called the Akwesasne Screaming Eagles: a 13-14 year old volleyball team, training for the 1995 North American Indigenous Games. Team members are:

Athletes

Danielle McDonald
Pamela Lazore
Patti Lazore
Samantha Lazore
Stacey Mitchell
Amy McDonald
Aleesha King
Ashley Thompson
Arlene Thomas
Lacey Francis

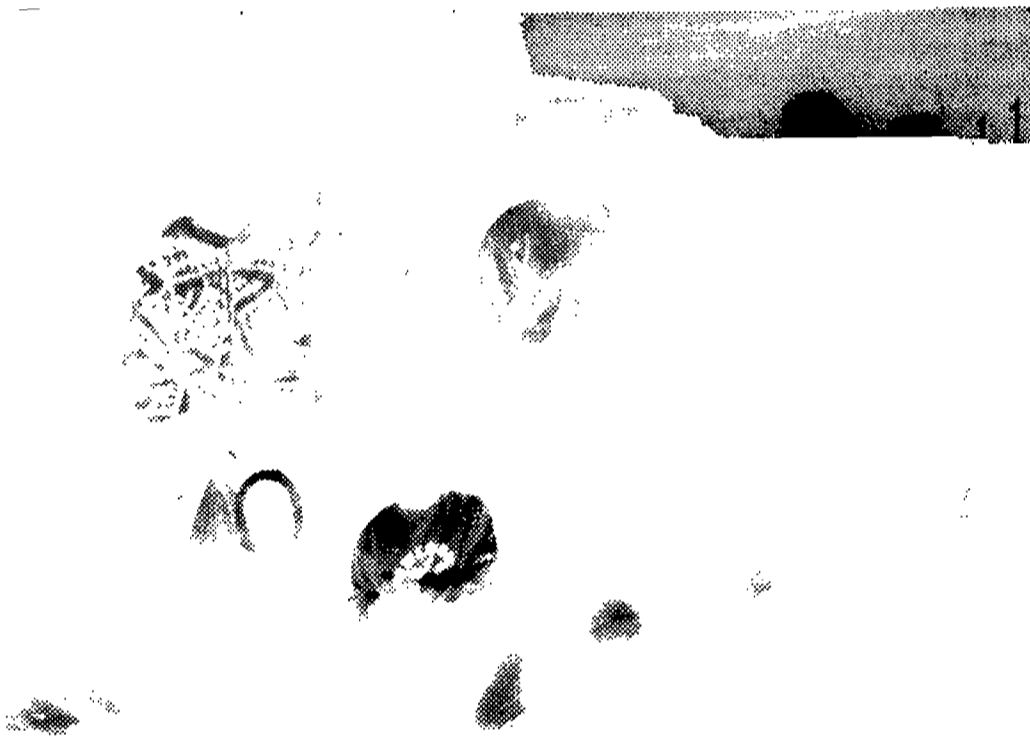
Winning Strategy

"Play Hard"
"Never Give Up"
"Make Akwesasne Proud"
"Be Proud"
"Be Proud"
"Be Proud"
"Bring It Home"
"Play as a Team"
"Make my Family Proud"
"Go over Plays in Your Mind"

Parents

Alex & Laura McDonald
Ronnie & Pauline Lazore
Clint & Lucy Jacobs
Roy Swamp & Peggy Lazore
Ray & Kathy Mitchell
Jackie McDonald
Hilda King
Darryl & Louise Thompson
Eileen Thomas
Cindy Francis

Coaches: Theresa Square, Connie Lazore, Curt Jacobs; **Trainer:** Steve Lazore;
Team Manager: Jeannine Lazore; **Special Team Support:** Eugene David



Akwesasne Screaming Eagles Volleyball Team training for the North American Indigenous Games. Pictured from Left to Right: Bottom Row: Lacey Francis, Pamela Lazore. 2nd Row: Arlene Thomas, Ashley Thompson, Patti Lazore, Samantha Lazore. 3rd Row: Team manager, Jeannine Lazore, Coach, Connie Lazore, Amy McDonald, Danielle McDonald, Aleesha King, Coach, Curt Jacobs, Trainer, Steve Lazore.

Since October 22, 1994, these young women have shown their determination, commitment and pride to represent themselves, their families and their community. For the past five months, they have relentlessly practiced at least twice a week at the Snye Recreation Center. They add another strength and fitness session at Fabian's Fitness Center. After school is out, they will add another practice time.

As reported by the athletes themselves, practices are not easy. But, they realize it's what they have to do to reach their goals.

It gives them the strength and stamina to be the best athletes in their division. It can also be fun, especially the scrimmages. "This is the best part"!!!

The coaches and trainer bring a variety of experience. This helps out with setting up a structured training program. A routine practice session breaks out with a half hour of stretching. Drills, for about 45 minutes, are geared to develop volleyball skills and physical endurance. The players report the drills are tough, but they welcome the improvements they've made in their spiking, sets,

Photo: Courtesy of Janine Rourke serves, drives, etc.

As coaches, they've offered more than just a name on a roster. They've made a certain personal investment into these girls' lives. Coaching is a partnership to genuine hard work and dedication. Theresa, Connie & Curt all bring valuable experience as players themselves. With a strong tradition of playing in competitive leagues for many years, they bring a healthy insight for play action. As trainer, Steve has made his own earmark for game preparation as a lacrosse player. His skill and personal demeanor

for making a drill productive, has been realized by the players. They feel more energetic for the game of volleyball.

Off court, as team manager, Jeannine reports another perspective of team development. Fundraising events are a major task of game preparation. It requires commitment and involvement from everyone: the players, the coaches, their families and the community as a whole. She recalls how players came in as individuals, but now they leave each practice session, tournament, fundraising and/or community event as a team. This is a spectacular evolving for such a young group.

Theresa adds that many of the players came in for the team with a basic foundation of volleyball skills. Skills were learned

through player participation in school sports or through community volleyball events, significantly common throughout the past 5 years. One of the coaching objectives was to fine-tune these skills into a teamed approach that supports each other in good times and the tough times. A simple smack to each others' hand encourages a winning, yet humble and supportive spirit. A significant accomplishment for the Screaming Eagles is their win in a Kahnawake volleyball tournament in March. As the youngest team entered, they finished a strong second. They've played in Onondaga and hope to make a tournament in Ottawa with other native youths.

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See Indigenous



The Akwesasne Screaming Eagles practice for the North American Indigenous Games.

Photo: Courtesy of Janine Rourke

