**NYAC Takes US Open Crown**

By Kendall Dacey

From July 22nd through July 24th, the NYAC women's water polo team competed in one of the biggest tournaments of the year - the US Open National Championships held in Moraga, California. The 16 team national championships included some of the fiercest competition the US and abroad has to offer spanning teams from Stanford University, Santa Barbara, SET, Mexican National Team, Olympic Club, UC Berkeley and LA Water Polo.  As the only club to qualify two teams, NYAC coaches Mike Judge and Peter Felvegi, as well as accompanying Team Chairman Thomas Lynch and governor member Maura Gorman, had high expectations going into the start of the tournament.

The NYAC A team, led by US national team veterans Lauren Silver, Emily Feher, Tanya Gandy and Anne Belden, gave little hope to opposing teams after convincing wins against American River 17-4 and Olympic Club 17-6 in the first two rounds of competition.  However, things got a little bit more difficult in the third round against Santa Barbara.  By the 4th quarter, the game was tied 7-7 with a minute to go.  With valuable time ticking away, 2-meter defender Juliet Moss, also a current US national team member, knew she had to play smart and clear the ball to the offense for another scoring opportunity.  Seconds away from the final buzzer, Tanya Gandy put the ball away to win the game in dramatic fashion further securing NYAC A team's chances to play for the title.

From here on out, NYAC A team never looked back.  2011 World University Games members Grace Reynolds, Leah Robertson and Stephanie Schnugg led the charge as NYAC A team cruised by Lakes 12-4 and Stanford 9-5 to cement their appearance in the championship final against Santa Barbara.  Having already played a close game, NYAC A team was uninterested in having another game go down to the wire.  Coming out with pistons firing, NYAC A team dominated the game from start to finish, winning 13-6.  With the championship title in hand, the accolades kept coming with Emily Feher winning MVP of the tournament as well as Lauren Silver and Anne Belden garnering first team recognition.

NYAC B team also played aggressively throughout the weekend, even upsetting SET 12-8 and Olympic Club 12-9.  Led by NYAC captain Paige Lorenz and long time NYAC member Adele McCarthy-Beauvais, the NYAC B team showed a solid offense throughout the tournament.  Displaying dominance defensively, goalie Danielle Ingram and 2-meter defender Robyn Gordin kept our defense tight against the Mexican National Team in a close 10-9 win. Yet, with hard fought losses against Stanford 7-11, SC Valley 6-11 and LA Water Polo 9-15, NYAC B team finished a strong 10th place in the national championships.

Flying back to the New York Athletic Club with the 2011 national championship title is only the beginning for this talented team.  With the World University Games around the corner in Shenzhen, China from August 11th to 23rd, NYAC members Reynolds, Robertson, and Schnugg will switch from wearing the winged foot to don red, white and blue. Hopefully the momentum gained this past weekend will propel the US team to victory in China.  And with the London Olympics only a year away, NYAC water polo players are poised to make a splash.