

Wednesday July 7, 2010
Day 1 – USA to Amsterdam
By Kelsey Chambers
Northern Lights 16-1

Our first day in Europe was definitely interesting! We started off by flying into Amsterdam at seven in the morning in Amsterdam or midnight back at home! We were all so tired throughout the day but were able to manage going into the actual city of Amsterdam. The first thing we did when we arrived in Amsterdam is we went to a Village and got to see some gift shops and just the way things worked around there. It was the first time we actual got to see some of the food that they have around there and got to smell the different smells of a new country we weren't and still aren't used to yet. The people in Amsterdam were very friendly along with the Chinese tourists that were there also. Haley and I actually had our five minutes of fame when a bunch of Chinese tourists came and took a lot of pictures with us.

After that experience we went to our hotel. The hotel is really nice and pretty similar to U.S. hotels. Right away we went out to eat lunch at the sport restaurant I would like to call it? We had cheeseburgers and fries. That was our first meal and was definitely not what I would like to call amazing. I think that all of us found the burger to not be the best one we ever had. We definitely have no idea what it was made of but really don't want to know either. But hey! The French fries were pretty good! After that we all went back to our hotel and took an hour nap before we went on our next adventure.

Next thing I knew, we were taking a walk to our tram to head into the city of Amsterdam! Let's just say that was a way different experience than I was ready for at the time! We met our tour guide and then were off to tour downtown Amsterdam. The first place we went to was a place called the "Red Light" district which was a place that no photography was allowed which was definitely understandable when we found out we were walking through the place where most of the legal prostitution was happening at!!!! They were either in the windows or standing in the door crack half naked waiting for the "customers" to arrive. If the shade was closed that meant they were busy. When our guide was talking to us about the prostitution this guy completely high stood in our group and starting questioning the guide and making a complete scene but thankfully he left right away. It was pretty funny but creepy at the same time. After that we walked past that and right by a coffee shop where people were smoking marijuana legally! I got it blown right in my face. Terrible timing for me to be walking I guess! I guess it's only legal in coffee shops but if cops saw you doing it you probably would get in much trouble for

it. Another thing is that alcohol is aloud for sixteen year olds! But no worries parents we aren't drinking at all over here! Trust me!

After that we went to eat dinner at a pancake place. Their pancake is basically just flat tortilla with any topping you would like. They seriously had anything! It was okay I guess. For the most part today was okay but I'm hoping tomorrow will be better with the Anne frank house and SHOPPING!!!!!!! So that was our first day in Europe! And we will keep you updated!

Kelsey

Thursday July 8, 2010

Day 2 –Amsterdam

By Leigh Pudwill

Northern Lights 16-1

Day 2!

Today was a fun day! We woke up and had breakfast at around 9:15. After breakfast we got ready for the Anne Frank house. We waited in line for like a half hour but it went by fast. When we got in there we watched a couple videos about how she was in hiding and about her family and we also got to see the actual diary that she wrote, that was pretty neat!

After the Anne Frank house we got to go SHOPPINGGGG!!!! We were let loose in Amsterdam for four hours and we shopped till we dropped! Literally! Me Ash and Monica really wanted a smoothie so we saw a shop that said fruit smoothies so we thought we would try some! Turns out the smoothies were just juice and we paid like 4 bucks for some OJ :(very disappointing! Then we went out to dinner at an Argentinean Steak house and we had some delish chicken and potatoes/French fries. Everybody wanted ice cream after so we were let loose again to do some more shopping and get some fresh Amsterdam gelato!

We got back to the hotel around 9-ish and wrote our fams then went to bed! Although our feet killed and legs were wobbly we still had a great time!!! We all miss you parents and send our love!!

See you again soon!

Leigh Pudwill

Friday July 9, 2010
Day 3 –Amsterdam to Papendal
By Abby Wolpern
Northern Lights 16-1

Hello! This morning we ate breakfast at the hotel, and then we took a bus from Amsterdam to a small town in Holland, where Papendal, the Dutch Olympic Training Center, is located.

When we got to the hotel, we quickly noticed that there was no A/C. ☹ We had lunch right away, most of us had chicken nuggets ☺, and then walked to the gym to practice. Practice was pretty basic, serve/pass and a little 4 on 4. This was also our first meeting with the Dutch team. They were very nice and liked our accents as much as we liked theirs.

After practice, everyone dripping in sweat (no A/C in the gym either), we headed back to the hotel for some rest. We played the Dutch team that night and went 1-4 with them, didn't play our best.

After the match, we had supper with them at their cafeteria. We didn't sit together so it was a little awkward, but we still got to talk to the girls in line and after supper. The girl Claire, Ashley, and I talked to was telling us what she knew about Americans and American high schools: We all have the newest cell phones, our high schools have "groups" (cliques), and new music in Holland are the hits from one year ago in the U.S.

After supper, we wasted no time getting back to the hotel to go to bed. Everyone was pretty tired! We're having lots of fun and heading to Germany tomorrow!

Abby

Saturday July 10, 2010
Day 4 – Papendal & then to Muenster
By Monica Turner
Northern Lights 16-1

Hi, it's Monica! Today we woke up at Van Der Valk (the hotel in Papendal) at around 9:00. We ate breakfast at the hotel. Most people had cereal and bread, lots of carbs. Then we were going to go into town but most everyone didn't sleep well

because it was sooo hot in our room, (most of the hotels in Europe don't have AC) so we stayed at the hotel and took a nap and/or repacked.

At noon we ate lunch at the hotel. We weren't aloud to get the same food as the day before because most people got chicken nuggets yesterday and they wanted us to experience the food. Almost everyone ended up getting the filet of chicken, but some people (like me) were adventurous and had a club sandwich or ribs. We also got ice cream in cute little cow cups.

We then headed over to the Dutch Olympic Training Center to play the Dutch National team. We ended up beating them in 5. The first game we won 25-22. The second and third game we lost 21-25 both. The fourth and fifth game we won 25-16 and 15-9. By the end of the game everyone was dripping in sweat (except for Kelsey, she doesn't sweat, she glistens) because again no AC. We all showered in the locker room which was a new experience for many of us. But we were so sweaty we didn't care.

Then we headed back to the hotel and grabbed our suitcases. We loaded on to the bus and headed to Munster. On the bus ride we found out that Marlon was 75% Finnish. Good to know!

We made it safely to Munster and to our hotel. Which wasn't as nice as many wanted. It ended up being a youth hostel with two sets of bunk beds in each room, no air conditioning and very very hot!

We then headed out on the town. We went out to eat for supper. We got different types of pizza and TALL drinks, very refreshing! While we were eating we had two wedding parties come through. The first one was the bride and she was selling muffins. The groom came later on and they had a game. You got to shoot at the groom (who was protected by a plastic shield) 3 time trying to knock a duck off. Most the team tried but no one knocked the duck off. Marlon decided to aim for some thing else which wasn't protected.

Then we went back to our hotel/dorm room and tried to sleep.

Sunday July 11, 2010
Day 5 –Muenster Germany
By Lauren Schlobohm
Northern Lights 16-1

Today when we woke up we went to breakfast on the main level of the hostel. After that we went upstairs for a couple of hours to get ready for the day. We left around 11 in the morning to go walk around Munster. We were looking around the town for about two hours.

When we met back by the church we found out that Curt, Adam, Marlon, and Cory had made up a scavenger hunt that ended up with all the girls running around town. When we finished we went back to the hostel again to relax before dinner. When we were at dinner we had to add up points for who had the pictures of the right objects. We still don't know who won but I think that Kelsey and me finished last 😊

When we were done with dinner we went and had ice cream before we went back to the hostel for the night. That's what happened today 😊

Lauren

Monday July 12, 2010
Day 6 –Muenster to Paris
By Lauren Schlobohm
Northern Lights 16-1

Today we woke up and had breakfast at 7:15 this morning. After that we went up to the rooms and got our luggage so that we could carry it to the bus. When we started driving everyone fell asleep either on seats or in the aisle. After that we stopped at our first rest stop which was on the border of Belgium and Germany. We got our lunch there before we got back on the bus. When we got on the bus it was raining out. When we got back on the road we were eating our food and playing word games and sleeping again 😊

By the time we got to Paris we had been on the bus for 9 ½ hours. We got settled into our rooms at the Ibis Hotel. We left to go to the Artist Square and walked up about 150 steps. After we looked around for a couple minutes we ate at a restaurant in the square. We had the choice of eating chicken, steak, or pasta. After that we got a ½ hour to walk around the little shops. Our meeting place was at the cathedral on top of the hill, and you could see the Eiffel Tower from there. On the way back down we walked down all the stairs again 😊. On the way back we

stopped by the adult street and went to see the Moulin Rouge. When we left we came back to the hotel and started loving the air conditioning.

Lauren

Tuesday July 13, 2010

Day 7 – Paris

By Haley Bodway

Northern Lights 16-1

Today we went on a tour of Paris. It was a lot of fun! We saw many different things here that you would never see back home. There is so much beautiful scenery here. There are statues with gold paint on them, I have never seen so much gold in my life.

Also on this tour we went to the Eiffel tower. After that we were walking along a river and tree packed boats of army people floated on by. They were here because tomorrow they are having a parade. The square is going to be packed full of people there to watch. After we walked along the river we took many pictures on the way to the Notre Dom. We passed along this bridge where people would buy locks and write or carve their initials into it and lock it on the bridge. When they locked it they would through the key into the river. This showed that they were locked together forever.

Notre Dom was cool. It amazing all the detailed work people put in to everything here. The more interesting part about this tour was that the Eiffel tower and Notre Dom were supposed to be ripped down because people thought they were hideous.

The Eiffel tower was built in only two years, and it takes five years to paint it. Once they finish painting they have to star from the bottom again. The Eiffel tower was to represent how high the French could make their building and it was going to be taken down, but the French army took over it. Notre Dom had to use lasers cleaned because of how old a precious the sculptures were. It took many years to restore this building. Notre Dom was supposed to be taken down because they only liked the old looks of the church, and the people thought the old way was the only way for a church.

Playing the French was really fun. We were in the fight the whole time we played four games against them today. They were pretty close games we stayed in there.

After we played them we hung out for a few minutes before we had to eat. We had liver for dinner. I personally didn't like the taste but everyone has their own preference on what's good and what's not. The rice we had was amazing though and we also had bread and we all had different desserts. Today was a lot of fun! Can't wait to do it again tomorrow.

Wednesday July 14, 2010 Bastille Day

Day 8 – Paris

By : Claire Sames

Northern Lights 16-1

Hello everyone! The morning started off by eating a delicious breakfast at our hotel, and then we took the subway to Versailles. When we arrived in Versailles it started to pour, so therefore everyone had to buy either a poncho or umbrella. (I was upset at the fact that I had to buy a poncho because I forgot my umbrella in my bag in the hotel). The reason we went to Versailles was to see a beautiful palace. This was where the monarchy lived before the revolution. The palace was magnificent; every room looked as though it took weeks to decorate and design. The paintings on the walls and ceilings were priceless!

After we toured the palace we had to hurry and eat lunch, otherwise we would be late to play the French team. Our lunch consisted of the classic McDonald's (because we were so short on time). When we got back to our hotel we quickly changed into our jerseys and hurried out the door to the subway. We played the French team for the second time. The games were closer than they were the first time we played them; our record was 1 and 3. After the game we showered at their training facility, and were back on the subway again.

Later that night we had the option to go to the Eiffel Tower and watch fireworks. The reason there were fireworks was because it was the French's Independence Day. They were absolutely beautiful! Everyone said that they were the best they've ever seen. One reason I liked them so much was that they had music playing the whole time, and the fireworks went with the mood of the song.

The downside to watching the fireworks was that there were also a lot of people there watching them with us. That meant that it was not fun trying to get out of there. The line to the subway was extremely long, which left us one option...to walk all the way home. This did not sound so bad in the beginning, but after an hour and a half of walking, no body liked the idea anymore. When the sight of the

hotel came into view everyone screamed with joy. The beds never felt so good before. Overall it was a very busy, yet very fun day.

Love Claire 😊

Thursday July 15, 2010

Day 9 – Paris

By: Kelsey Chambers

Northern Lights 16-1

Hey ya'll!!,

Its day 9 of our Europe trip and our last day in Paris or even France for that matter!! It's gone by so fast and has been such a blast!!

Today we went shopping at Champs de Elysee in Paris!! It was definitely a ton of fun but hard to find any low prices or normal prices! It was a very expensive shopping area but probably the most famous shopping street in the World!!!! Claire, Monica, Abby, Leigh, and I all went into Louis Viutton just to see stuff and a key chain was 250 euros!!! After that since we all didn't buy a lot we went to this street market close to our hotel and went shopping. Ppeople bought a lot of cute clothes, jewelry, and other stuff as well.

The next thing we did was we went back to the hotel to just relax for about an hour until we went over to play the French Youth National team one last time before leaving for London. We didn't beat them but we played a lot better then the other two days and it was a great experience to have.

After we took our showers we walked over to diner with them at their cafeteria kind of and ate with them actually this time! They were so cool and fun to talk too. It was a ton of fun looking at the "Wolf pack leader" 😊 and just laughing about it with them. It was also hilarious seeing there initial reaction when Camille dropped her waterproof camera in the jug of water! They were so freaked out but then became almost obsessed with it. After getting some pictures taken 😊 and getting pine cones and sticks thrown at us, we walked back to the Vans and then took the train back to the hotel!

We packed and talked for a bit before heading straight to bed only to wake up at like 5 to get to our train to London! I'm so excited! Miss you all and see you in a few days!!

Kelsey

Friday July 16, 2010
Day 10 – Paris to Sheffield
By: Anna Schlaak
Northern Lights 16-1

Hello people,

Today we woke up at around 5 in the morning to ride a train to London. We left the London hotel at 5:45, we were headed for the train station. There were slight problems with the big bags we all had gotten for the trip on the packed metro, but we survived.

We had to pass through security both French and British. We were all very tired from the morning, so majority of us were sleeping before we even left the station. The train we took was called Eurostar and it went at amazing speeds, almost too fast for us to see the scenery of France and England. We went into a long tunnel that took us right under the English Channel. We arrived at London and had two hours to wait before our train left to Sheffield where we play the British team.

Sheffield is quite cold and rainy, glad to have warm clothes from MN. We arrived and two nice girls helped us find our way; both were on the British team. We are all snuggled in to our hotel right across from the gym where we play the British. We lost all 5 games, but its okay we are having fun. Most of the girls on the team are quite old. I think they are ages from 23 to 31. We are younger and quicker and they have a few tricks every now and then.

After a defeat we all sat down for a good hearty meal at our hotel, with no showers before hand. Our waiter must have loved us! Curt was nice enough to pay for our meals. Following the dinner we went upstairs and relaxed and got ready for our last day of volleyball together for awhile. And might I add, I never took a shower after the meal!

I did when I woke up from a ten minute nap.

We'll see you all when we get back to Minnesota!

Saturday July 17, 2010

Day 11 – Sheffield, England

By: Camille Benson

Northern Lights 16-1

It was a fun filled day here in Sheffield, England. The breakfast this morning was especially good because we all got to sleep in till 9:30. After going back up to our rooms to get ready for the day we split into two groups...one who went a little ways to a small shop loaded with many deals and the other group who went to see Shrek in 3D.

We later joined up at the bowling alley where we had two lanes with all of us cheering for each other...the intensity was just as if it was one of our volleyball matches. The bowling alley must've made a fortune on all the food we consumed and the good times just kept rollin'. We all stopped by subway for a quick lunch before going to play the British volleyball team.

We played five sets of amazing volleyball. Although the youngest player they have is 19 and the oldest is 31 we stuck with them every step of the way and a lot of the times had a lead on them. The first four sets were extremely close but they were able to come back and win them. We would not give up.

Our determination had helped us pull out a win in the fifth set. Maybe it was the incentive Curt had offered us—being able to have a three course meal at the hotel which turned out to be amazing—that had helped or possibly the fact that it had sunk in that this was our last set we would play together as the Northern Lights 16-1's.

We later returned to the hotel and got our reward...a three course meal that had the taste of success. And now, before we go to bed, we are all doing team bonding and being the girls we are, applying fake nails in celebration of a good season and talking about how the actor from Twilight (Robert Pattinson/Edward) is here in the UK and planning on how to find him. We couldn't be happier.

Sunday July 18, 2010

Day 12 – Sheffield to London

By: Curt Glesmann
Northern Lights Club Director

Today we got up around 7:30am for an 8:00am full English Breakfast. It's a good thing we are doing so much walking or else Curt, Marlon & Adam would be about 20 lbs heavier from this trip.

We left the hotel after breakfast and walked to the Tram Station and took it to the Sheffield train station. We did so well in getting to the first Tram stop, we ended up at the train station about 1.25 hours early. We just hung around in the waiting area until our train came at 10:26. We hopped on quickly and stowed our bags and found our seats. The train was empty at Sheffield, but as we headed toward London it kept getting fuller until it was standing room only. Fortunately we had reserved seats.

Most of the girls slept during the trip, but a few stayed awake. I was sitting in a table arrangement with Ashley and Claire and we worked on a couple more of the word games I brought. They did a good job on knowing many of the answers, and on the ones they didn't know Adam & I helped them out. They are very inquisitive. Claire and I also watched the movie UP which I had on my computer.

When we got to London we had to take the London Underground (Tube) to our hotel. I originally told everyone it was on the Victoria Line, but then about ½ down to the trains I changed it to the Piccadilly Line and shouted it back to everyone. The 5 behind me heard it and followed me. The other 5 along with Adam & Marlon didn't hear it and when we got separated in the ticket turnstiles (it tried to eat Kelsey's luggage) my group didn't know it and we just kept going right along. We got on the Tube, and the girls said that Adam and his group were right behind us in another car. It was so crowded there was no way to see that, so we just went to the hotel stop and got out expecting to see Adam and his group also getting out of another car on the same train. Wrong...no Adam or Marlon or 5 of the girls. It turns out they went to the wrong line, but Adam having been here before realized it and got them back on track to the correct line. They showed up about 15 minutes later.

We checked into the hotel, and everyone got some food around the area we are staying in. We then headed back into London for their first surprise at about 3:45. We took them to the London Eye, which is the big permanent Ferris wheel that is over 400' high and has air-conditioned compartments that hold 25 people. It takes 30 minutes to go around and it's on the river overlooking most of the major

things in London. A few were a little worried about the height (Marlon was one of them) but everyone ended up getting comfortable by the end of the “flight” as they call it. The views are spectacular and the team really enjoyed it.

After the London Eye visit we walked along the South Bank of the Thames River where they have a park area with lots of street performers. We then crossed over the river and hopped into the Tube for a quick trip to Piccadilly Circus where we got off and walked to Leicester Square. This is the area of London where many of the theatres are located and it’s called the West End. We went there because it has a ton of souvenir shops where the girls can buy T-shirts and sweatshirts. We let them shop for 2 hours, and Curt, Marlon, & Adam went to scope out a restaurant for the evening and also to sit back and relax and have something to drink while we watched all of the people in the Leicester Square area.

The girls were back promptly at 8:00 and we walked over to the restaurant we had picked out. It was an Italian place that had a big variety of food. 8 of them had Pizza, 2 had chicken. The adults were more adventurous and had various other pastas.

After dinner we walked back towards the Piccadilly Tube station and on the way back stopped at the ice cream shop Adam & I had found earlier.

Tonight at dinner we told them our plans for tomorrow, which was to visit the Houses of Parliament, Big Ben, Westminster Abby, Buckingham Palace, take a short boat ride down the Thames to the Tower Bridge and visit the Tower of London where all of the crown jewels are kept and much of the beheading went on. I also told them that for their final night on this trip we were going to have dinner back at Leicester Square area followed by the musical play Mama Mia....they got pretty excited.

So tomorrow will be a big final day for the team.

Monday July 19, 2010

Day 13 –London

By: Curt Glesmann

Northern Lights Club Director

We woke up to another beautiful sunny day. Temperature about 65 and going to be a high of 77 today. We had our breakfast in the hotel and then met the Schlaak family in the lobby and together we went off to tour London.

We met our guide Justin at Westminster and from there we had a walking tour that went from The Houses of Parliament, to Westminster Abby, to Buckingham Palace, then on a river boat from Westminster to the Tower of London where we toured that. This was the 2nd year in a row I had used this same guide, and he does an excellent job explaining stuff to the team without going into too much detail.

There are too many things to cover in this summary about each of these stops. It was an overwhelming day.

We finished our tour about 3:45 and we went back to the hotel so the girls could change their clothes into something nicer for the theatre tonight. They really did look very nice. We left for dinner and the theatre about 5:15, got to the restaurant at 5:45 and got seated fairly quickly. Unfortunately that was the only part of the dinner that was quick. We ordered at 6:20 and at 7:00pm we still had no food. By this time we had complained to the manager and gave him a 3 minute deadline before we were walking out. The food finally showed up and we inhaled it so we could get to the show by 7:30. The only good part about the meal being so late was that he gave us a 50% discount on it.

We made it to the show (Mama Mia) on time and within 5 minutes the girls were glued to the stage. It was an awesome show with the girls clapping, singing, and at the end dancing with the rest of the audience. It was also interesting because in front of us was a school group of kids about age 10-12 and they knew all the words to the songs...amazing considering the ABBA songs are now over 30 years old!

I would venture a guess that this show was probably one of the highlights of their trip. I know for me, I have seen the show now 4 times and I love hearing the music each time.

Overall this has been an excellent trip. We have played 2 Youth National Teams and 1 National team. The volleyball has been awesome. We have visited 3 of the major cities in Europe...Amsterdam, Paris, London. We have had special treats in both Paris (fireworks at Eiffel Tower) and London (Mama Mia show).

The girls have been on time virtually every day. They have been together now for almost 4 weeks and they are holding up nicely and still getting along. We haven't had any cat fights that Adam, Curt or Marlon have heard about! They've been a fun group to travel with.

I couldn't ask for a better way to end the Northern Lights 6th Summer European Tour. I'm looking forward to a new adventure next summer with our 7th summer tour.