

Thursday December 29 – Friday Dec 30-Saturday Dec 32

Day 1 – USA to Amsterdam & Alkmaar

By Stephanie Barber & Macy Winter

Northern Lights 16-2

Hello from Alkmaar! Yesterday was a long day, but now that we're here, we know it was worth the trip. Our flight was eight hours long, and it was especially long because Maddie cried watching *The Notebook* next to Macy, and Aspen kept falling asleep on Steph's tray table. Once we landed, we walked for what seemed like miles until we found our bus. The bus took us directly to the Windmill Village, where we stayed for a few hours. We did a lot of fun things like climb to the top of a Windmill, got hot chocolate and get our picture taken in a giant yellow clog. There were a lot of beautiful windmills and lots of friendly sheep, goats and ducks. Kelley and Maddie chased the ducks around the square to get pictures of "Amsterdam ducks." We boarded the bus again which took us to our bed and breakfast in Alkmaar.

When we arrived, we went to our rooms and unpacked. In one case, the rooms were actually 3 small fake campers on turf as carpet with beds in them with 2 fake cows and a fake chicken that Steph put a clog on in the living room. Aspen dressed up the cow and made it look authentic with a stunning bonnet. After unpacking, we went out and walked around downtown Alkmaar. It was very beautiful especially with the Christmas lights, and we took a lot of pictures. When we were done exploring, we sat down and had a delicious mac n' cheese dinner and went to bed.

In the morning, we had an authentic European breakfast of meat, cheese and bread with hard boiled eggs and cereal. After eating, we all went back to our rooms, relaxed and got ready to go back downtown. We spent hours looking at the market, going in souvenir shops, and eating traditional Alkmaar food. In one of the shops, we met a friendly Dutchman, who enjoyed talking us "ignorant Americans." While describing the similarities between sports in our two countries, he told us about the intense rivalry between the two football teams. We asked if the rivalry was as strong as the Red Sox and the Yankees, but he laughed and said it was more like the Israelis and Palestinians. We bought our souvenirs and said goodbye to our new friend. Tonight we plan to celebrate the New Year!

Saturday & Sunday Dec 31 & Jan 1

Day 3 & 4 – Alkmaar & Amsterdam

By Kenna Orr & Mari Hinkle

Northern Lights 16-1

On New Years Eve we went to a Family's lettuce farm about fifteen minutes away from the Bed and breakfast. We then met the family that owned the farm, they had sons and daughters that also played volleyball. We learned about the lettuce they grow and how they grow it. After that we grilled different types of meats, such as chicken, steak, pork, ect. There was also salad fruit, vegetables and very good donut type things with powered sugar on them.

The family had a very large warehouse, with lots of games and we peppered, played volleyball, and listened to music. After lots of fun and games, we went inside to celebrate the new year, the younger boys went outside and lit the fireworks. Then we said goodbye and went back to the B&B.

On Sunday we got up around nine o'clock and had breakfast at 9:15 we left the B&B at 10:30. We walked $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile to get to the train station. The train ride was 30 minutes after we got off the train we walked to Dam square in Amsterdam which was the old town central. We explored the main shopping street of Dam square and had lunch. After our two hours of exploration was up we headed over to the Anne Frank house/museum. We sat in line for to get into the house, when we got in the house it was very nice. After we were done in there we went to a pancake house which was actually crepes. Then we went back to the B&B after the walking and train ride.

Monday Jan 2, 2017

Day 4 – Alkmaar

By Kelley Johnson & Jaidyn Spencer

Northern Lights 16-2

On Monday, the teams all went to have breakfast with the mayor and toured the city hall of Alkmaar. They were very welcoming and told us many amazing facts like how they have 10 parties of government as opposed to our two. It was very interesting to learn about how different their government is to ours. They have a king which I personally didn't know. Once we left the city hall we were walking back to the B & B, there was a man with a dog. Jaidyn asked if she could pet the dog because it was very cute. The man said "No." Then there was a man walking towards us who proceeded to yell at us in Dutch. When we asked the man with the dog what he had said, he replied with, "The man called you dirty Americans who take up the whole road."

When we got back to the B & B, we got ready to go and scrimmage two Netherland volleyball teams. Once the scrimmages were finished, we showered and headed to dinner. For dinner we had Italian food. Kelley and Maddie shared a margarita pizza

and spaghetti, while Jaidyn had the ravioli. After we gobbled up the food, we walked back to the B & B. Once we got there, there were cars waiting to bring us to the school where the other teams are staying. We had the opening ceremonies and video introductions, meeting all the teams. It was super cool to see all the different cultures and meet new people.

Once the opening ceremonies were over, we made our way back to the B & B. When we got back, we began to get ready to sleep. We did a little team bonding while playing spicy uno then got ready for bed. It was a long but fun day!!!!

Monday Jan 3, 2017

Day 5 – Alkmaar

By: Carsyn Mizensak & Kate Reimann

Northern Lights 16-2

Today was our first day of playing in the tournament. In Europe the playing style and rules are very different and unique compared to the United States. It took a little time for our team to adjust to these rules but eventually we got the hang of it. Some different rules here are: the libero is not allowed to serve, if a ball hits the ceiling it is counted as out and once you substitute in and out you are not allowed to enter the game again. Playing against European teams was quite different because they speak different languages and we couldn't understand anything they were saying.

On the first day of play we didn't do as well as we would've liked, going 2-3 on the day but the competition here was very difficult. Our teammate, Jaz, was unstoppable during our game against Dinto, crushing the ball on to the ten foot line multiple times during the match and getting a hand full of stuff blocks.

The tournament staff here happily provided us with sandwiches, fruit and soup every day for lunch. After playing we all showered and went to school where the rest of the teams are staying for their trip and we ate delicious lasagna, rice and bread dinner.

After dinner the tournament staff had a great surprise for the teams. They booked a place called "Escape Room Alkmaar" where we had to solve puzzles to escape the room. The staff split all the teams up so that we had to communicate and work with other cultures to solve the puzzles. After that we went back to our B and B, got some sleep and prepared for the next day.

Tuesday Jan 4, 2017

Day 6 – Alkmaar

By Rachel Kilkelly & Kyndra Hansen

Northern Lights 16-1

Tuesday we played four matches of volleyball. We won three of the two matches and one of them we tied. After long day of volleyball we made our way back to the bed and breakfast and showered. At 6:00 we had a wonderful chicken dinner and ice cream. After we finished getting ready we were picked up by our European friends and went to the school. We were only at the school for around ten minutes because we had to walk to a bowling alley nearby.

When we got to the bowling alley we went to get our bowling shoes which were difficult because they were in European sizes. We mingled with other girls that were all from different parts of Europe which was really fun. After about an hour we headed back to the school and shortly after we were driven back to the Bed and Breakfast. We were exhausted so we went to bed at 10:30 to end the day.