

Iowa Rockets made volleyball history

Written by Tom Fruehling

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The Iowa City-based Iowa Rockets club volleyball team finished second in a prestigious national tournament in July, and five of the 10 members of that elite squad reunited in the Marion High School gym Saturday.

Four of the girls were playing on three different teams in the eight-team invitational meet. Another teammate came to watch.

Also on hand was Iowa Rockets assistant coach Darwin Sents, also the head coach of highly rated Grundy Center.

The Rockets 16-and-under team, coached by David Rodgers of Iowa City, was runnerup in the open division of the USA Volleyball championships in Dallas, losing to a team from Kansas City.

Sents said the squad compiled an 8-3 record in the meet and defeated the No.1 seed from Texas along the way. They finished the season ranked third nationally in their division.

"It's the first time a team from Iowa has earned a medal in the open division," Sents noted. "It was really a big deal."

Team members on hand Saturday in Marion were Sents' daughter, Riley, of Grundy Center, Xavier's Kayla Torson and Marion's Amanda Sahm and Abby Phillips. Morgan Melchert of Mount Vernon showed up as a friend and fan.

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Also on the roster were Solon's Jordan Runge and Jordan Smith, Madison Russell of West Branch, Laynie Whitehead of Iowa City West and Mikaela Foecke of Holy Trinity Catholic.

All of the girls are currently juniors.