



Introducing The Real America's Team

The USA National Women's Volleyball Team



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The USA National Women's Volleyball Team, the first permanent amateur sports team in America, is preparing to compete for the Olympic gold. The team is coached by Arie Selinger, a former Israeli commando, who has led the team since its formation in 1975. The team trains intensively, practicing, playing, and thinking about volleyball to the exclusion of virtually everything else in their lives. Despite the rigorous training schedule and lack of financial reward, the team members are dedicated and disciplined, driven by the goal of winning an Olympic gold medal for the U.S. in women's volleyball.

This article discusses the journey of the American women's volleyball team, their struggles, and their progress over the years. The team, under the guidance of coach Arie Selinger, has faced numerous challenges, including financial constraints and lack of visibility. Despite these hurdles, the team has managed to make significant strides in the sport, even coming close to winning major championships. The article also highlights the team's unique playing style, which combines power and defense, and their ability to compete against top international teams. The team's success has helped to boost the popularity of volleyball in the U.S., with a growing number of colleges offering volleyball programs. However, the article also points out that the U.S. still lags behind countries like Japan, China, and Cuba, where volleyball is a major sport.

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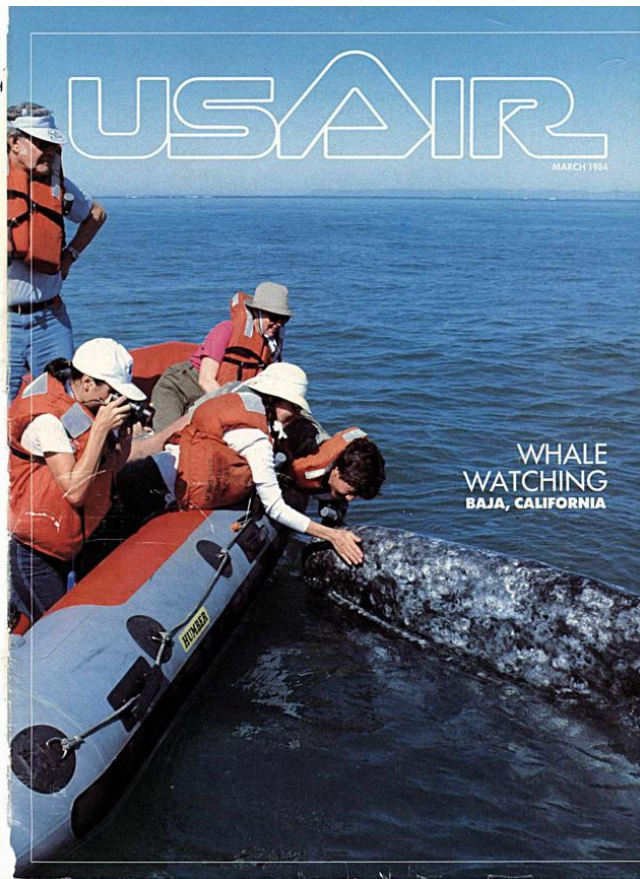
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Below find a reprint of the 14 relevant pages of the article "Introducing The Real America's Team" in "USAIR":



INTRODUCING THE REAL AMERICA'S TEAM

The USA National Women's Volleyball Team is the first permanent amateur sports team ever formed in America, and this year they intend to prove they've earned that support by challenging for the Olympic gold

By Barry Tarshis



Top row, left to right: Michael Orendueff (asst. coach), Arie Selinger (coach), Denise Corlett, Tauna Vandeweghe, Flo Hyman, Julie Vollerisen, Sherry Moore, John Corbelli (asst. coach), Marlon Sano (asst. coach). Middle row: Susan Varga (manager), Laurie Flachmeier, Rose Magers, Sue Woodstra, Linda Chisholm, Robert McCarthy (public relations). Bottom row: Paula Weishoff, Carolyn Becker, Debbie Green, Rita Crockett. Not shown: Jeanne Beanproy, Kim Ruddins.

The women practice, play, and think volleyball to the exclusion of virtually everything else

A few months ago, Arie Selinger, the 46-year-old former Israeli commando who coaches the USA Women's National Volleyball Team—the team that will represent the U.S. in women's volleyball this summer in Los Angeles—got wind of a scouting report that had been gathered on his team by somebody connected with the Women's National Volleyball Team of Japan. Selinger wasn't surprised. Japan, after all, has been a perennial power in women's volleyball since the early 1960s, and the Japanese approach to building championship volleyball teams reflects no less devotion to detail than does their approach to building, say, automobiles, cameras, and computers. They like to plan years in advance and leave little to chance.

What did give Selinger pause, however, was the depth of detail in the report. For not only had the Japanese charted the strengths and weaknesses of every young woman currently playing on the USA National Team, they'd scouted the top collegiate talent as well, and even got the book on a handful of talented juniors—anybody, in other words, who stood even an outside chance of representing the U.S. in next summer's Olympic women's volleyball competition. "One thing about the Japanese," Selinger says, less in anger than in bemusement and admiration. "When they're committed to something, they don't fool around."

Ah so. Then again, Arie Selinger doesn't fool around, either. For whatever commitment may be fueling the National Women's Volleyball Team of Japan as it prepares for the 1984 Olympics and, while we're on the subject, whatever commitment may be driving some of the other powerhouse international women's volleyball teams like the Soviet Union, China, Korea, Cuba, and Peru—it is hard to imagine it exceeding the commitment, the resolve, and the dedication that currently binds together the 12 remarkable young women who will represent the United States this summer.

Ever since 1975, when the USA National Women's Volleyball Team was originally put together and thus became the first permanent national team ever formed in American amateur sports, the women who have played for the team (not to mention Selinger himself) have practiced, played, and thought about volleyball to the exclusion of virtually everything else in their lives. They have spent an average of five months in each of the past five years traveling throughout Europe, Asia, South America, and within the United States on barnstorming tours in which it has not been unusual for them to play as many as 28 matches in 28 consecutive days. When they are not traveling, they train eight hours a day, six days a week (okay, they only train for half a day on Saturday) and they do so with a dervish-like intensity. And because they are "amateurs," in an "amateur" sport, they receive no salaries as such—only room, board, and a modest sum for expenses each month to cover such luxuries as personal clothing, suntan lotion, and long-distance phone calls to families and boyfriends. Nobody on the team, in other words, is here for the money, and because most Americans don't even know we have a national women's volleyball team they are certainly not on the team for personal glory. They're on the team for one basic reason: to win an Olympic gold medal for the U.S. in women's volleyball.

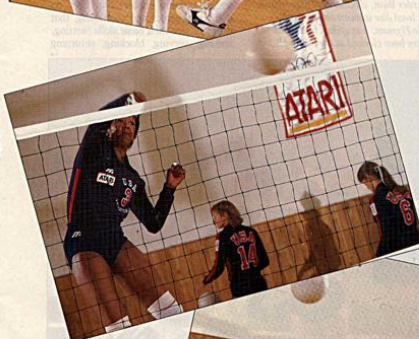
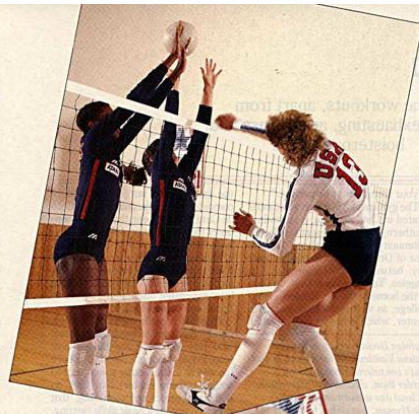
Now had there not been the Olympic boycott in 1980 (which Selinger and the rest of the USA Women's National Team, by the way, bitterly opposed), it is conceivable that the team might have achieved its goal three and a half years ago in Moscow, but let us not dwell on the past, which isn't especially bright where U.S. women's volleyball is concerned, anyway. For it wasn't very long ago, said to say, that United States women's volleyball teams didn't even qualify for the Olympics, let alone think about winning a gold medal. Indeed, it wasn't very long

ago that the Japanese would never have even considered a scouting mission in the U.S. Would you expect them to steal the plans for the Edsel?

"Nobody used to take the U.S. volleyball teams very seriously," Selinger is explaining to me one recent morning, as we stand in the corner of the small gymnasium in which the American team practices during the seven months of the year when the team is not touring. "What used to happen is that whenever it was an Olympic year or there was a national championship, the United States Volleyball Association would wait until the national championships were over and then pick an 'all star' team, which would practice a few weeks and then get embarrassed anytime they had to play a team with any sort of national program, like Japan or the Soviet Union."

Selinger is a solidly built, impressive looking man of medium height who has chiseled features and striking blue eyes, and who usually carries with him the vaguely reflective, slightly pained expression of a person who is walking around with far too many things on his mind. No wonder. Coaching a women's volleyball team that travels five months a year and trains almost daily the rest of the time is every bit as technically demanding as coaching a professional basketball team, except that Selinger has to do it with a skeleton of an administrative staff—the manager, Susan Varga, doubles as the trainer. It wasn't until earlier this year that the team had anybody working full time on promotion or publicity—and it operates with a total yearly budget that wouldn't be enough to pay the salary of a single player on most professional basketball teams.

That's under normal circumstances. The intense concentration on the face of Rita Crockett (bottom two photos) reflects the dedication of the team members to their sport. Top photo, Denise Corlett practices spiking.



stances. On this particular morning, Selinger has even more on his mind than usual. In two days, about half the team will fly to Caracas, Venezuela, to prepare for the Pan Am Games, but Selinger and seven of the women are leaving the next day for Bulgaria for a small tournament that just precedes the Pan Am competition. Forget the predictable passport and visa hassles: that's routine. Mosquitoes on a camping trip. Of more concern to Selinger is the fact that one of his most reliable veterans, Patty Dowdell, has had to quit the team because of some personal problems at home, and that two of his better players are nursing injuries a little more serious than the usual sprains and strains.

To Selinger's credit, he allows none of these preoccupations to divert his attention from what is happening at this moment on the gymnasium floor. There, dressed in long-sleeved red jerseys, white knee socks, blue shorts, and sneakers (and in the case of most of the women a variety of elbow wraps, leg wraps, and bandages), the 12 women who play for the team (and a couple of extras) are being led through a spiking drill by assistant coach John Corbelli, and the walls of the gym are echoing with a cacophony of explosive sounds: sneakers squeaking against the shellacked floor; balls bouncing off of fists, the floor, and the walls; and boisterous yelps and claps erupting from the women themselves, whose enthusiasm, for some reason, takes my mind back to the Little League baseball my son used to play.

At this moment I am watching six-foot, five-inch Flo Hyman—who will turn 30 right about the time the Olympics start, and is considered by some volleyball sages to be the best woman volleyball player in the world—take two or three quick stutter steps, leap well above the seven-foot, four-inch net, and in a move that looks uncannily similar to a slam dunk, spike a ball that has been set up for her by five-foot, four-inch Debbie Green, the shortest

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The workouts, apart from being exhausting, are intense and boisterous affairs

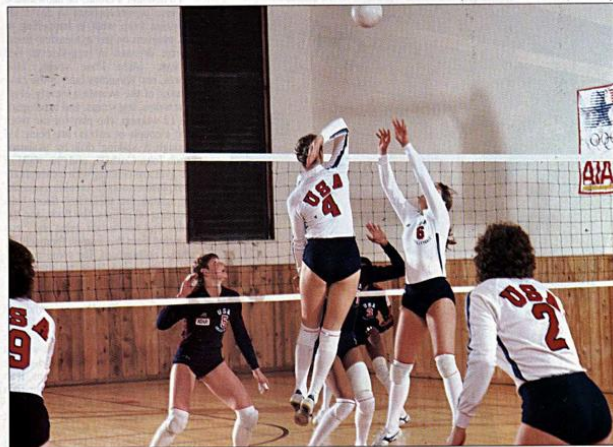
member on the team and only one of two who is under six feet tall. The balls that Flo Hyman spikes have been clocked in excess of 80 miles per hour, and a direct hit to your head would probably rearrange your cerebral hemispheres. This particular ball caroms off the floor with an angry smack, bounces against the back wall, and then, losing steam, finally sails back over the net again, freeing Flo from the responsibility—not to mention the danger—of having to retrieve the ball while everybody else is spiking. "Spiking is even harder to do than a slam dunk," Selinger tells me, when I mention the similarity. "When you're dunking a ball, the basket is stationary. In this case, the ball is moving before you hit,

so your timing has to be perfect." The gymnasium in which we stand is located in Coto de Caza, a sprawling, Southern California resort/residential community in the Trabuco Canyon area of Orange County, roughly midway between San Diego and Los Angeles. You may know Coto de Caza as the home of the Vic Braden Tennis College, as well as the Coto Research Center, which is run by Gideon Ariel,

Carolyn Becker sets up teammate Tauna Vandeweghe for a spike, a shot that's considered similar to, but harder than, a basketball slam dunk. At least one woman on the team, Flo Hyman, has spiked balls that have been clocked at over 80 mph.

the guru of the burgeoning field of computerized biomechanics. But Coto de Caza has also been the training center of the USA National Women's Volleyball Team since 1980, and it is one of the many ironies surrounding this team that none of the women can afford to live here. They live, instead, in less expensive apartments closer to Irvine and Laguna Beach.

Not that it really matters, because for all intents and purposes the women who play volleyball for the national team live in this gymnasium. It is here (as well as in the nearby computerized weight-training center) that they do their calisthenics and stretching, that they practice their basic skills (setting, spiking, serving, blocking, returning



The players would spike their way across the Sahara if coach Selinger thought it a good idea

serve), that they run through plays (yes, there are plays in volleyball), talk strategy, scrimmage, work with weights, do wind sprints—all part of a training regimen so precise that Selinger could have told me that morning what specific drill the players would be working on at this particular moment three months hence.

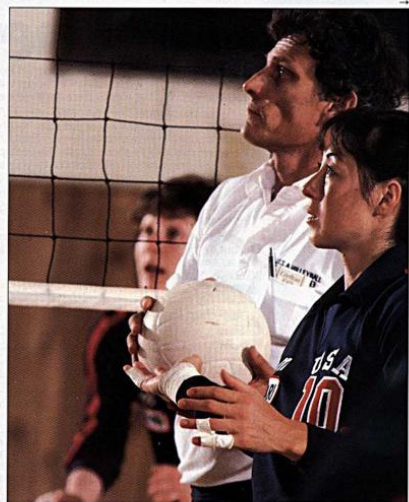
The workouts themselves, apart from being exhausting, are intense, boisterous affairs, what with the yelling and the high-fives and the constant shouts of encouragement the women are always heaping upon one another. Invariably, passersby are drawn to the doorway, where most of them watch for a moment or two (often having to duck a ball that comes flying toward their heads in bewilderment. "They do this all day," twangs a middle-aged woman with frosted hair, an expensive Ellesse tennis dress, and a Prince racquet. "I can't believe it. I'd collapse in five minutes."

Such wonderment is not confined to people unfamiliar with the team. Damian Woolee, who has been the team's Director of Media Relations for the past five years and has worked with athletes in several different sports, says he has yet to come across any group of athletes, men or women, as dedicated and as disciplined as the women who play volleyball on the National Women's Team. "What constantly impresses me," he says, "is the way they can maintain their enthusiasm and intensity day in and day out. And it's not phony. It's real."

At Vic Braden, who has long been one of the team's most zealous supporters (when a recent pre-Olympic tournament in Long Beach, California, was in jeopardy because no sponsor could be found, Braden put up a large chunk of his own money as a guarantee so that the tournament could go on), characterizes the USA National Women's Volleyball Team as a phenomenon unlike any in American sport. "You can understand a young tennis player put-

ting in the kind of hours these women put in day in and day out," says Braden, "because there's the possibility of big cash payoff some day. But here you have women giving up the most important years of their lives for no reward other than to represent their country in the Olympics. And outside of their families, nobody in this country even knows about it."

The team is held together by Arnie Selinger, a fiercely dedicated coach who is known as a brilliant motivator as well as a resourceful administrator.



It should be pointed out, I suppose, that not everyone views the team in the same unqualified admiring light. A few members of the amateur volleyball establishment question the elitist aspect of the program and wonder, too, if the women are perhaps paying too high a price for the honor of playing for a national team that is competitive with the best teams in the world. It is often pointed out to Selinger, for instance, that the USA National Men's Volleyball Team, which is based in nearby Mission Viejo, has become internationally competitive in recent years

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The women are here for one reason: to win a gold medal. There's no cash payoff down the road

with a training schedule that is far less rigorous or demanding as that of the women and enables men to hold down part-time jobs and live a reasonably "normal" life.

Selinger, however, is unmoved by such arguments. While he is generous in his praise for the men's program, he points out that the U.S. is the only country with a national men's team in volleyball (other countries field "all star" teams in men's international competition, the way the United States used to), whereas in women's volleyball, by contrast, several countries—Japan, China, the Japanese, the Soviet Union, and Cuba—have national women's teams that train even more extensively than the Americans. "We have to train as much as we do," Selinger insists, "just to keep up with the competition."

Selinger also goes on to explain—and few volleyball experts would argue with him—that women's volleyball is a more complex, somewhat more sophisticated game than men's volleyball. "Because the men are taller and stronger than the women," he points out, "the emphasis in the men's game is pretty much on power alone. The

women's game relies more on precision, specific skills, tactics, and teamwork. All of that takes a long time to develop. In Japan, the kids start out when they're six years old."

And if you're still not convinced, Selinger will point out to you that unlike many sports that consist primarily of one skill—most track and field events, for instance—volleyball obliges you to master a number of different skills: serving, returning serve, spiking, blocking, digging balls out on defense, diving and rolling without killing yourself, not to mention quickness, conditioning, and the team aspect of play.

Whether or not the team members themselves agree with Selinger is hard to say, for most prefer to dwell as little as possible on the reasons for their dedication and commitment. It isn't that they're difficult or overly sensitive or anything like that—to the contrary, the women are as pleasant a group as you are likely to meet anywhere. It's more the fact that anyone who would

Among the institutions helping out the team is Gideon Ariel's Coto de Caza Research Center, where the women work out with computerized weights.



have to ask them *why* they play for the team probably wouldn't understand the answer, anyway. "I'm here," says Flo Hyman, "because I want to win a gold medal in the Olympics." Next question.

Then, too, you don't get the feeling when you talk with any of these young women individually that they perceive what they're doing as a "sacrifice." None of them, to be sure, sees playing volleyball as being particularly glamorous—there isn't much glamour in having to wrap your fingers in tape each day—and there isn't a woman on the team who wouldn't like a little more time off now and then, but whatever grumbling they do about their training regimen and travel schedule is invariably good-humored. When I asked 23-year-old Tauna Vandeweghe (whose family tree, by the way, includes her father, Ernie, famous athlete in the 1950s; her brother, Kiki, of the Denver Nuggets; and her mother, Colleen, a former Miss America) how long she'd been with the team, she answered, "About a year and a half." And when I asked how long it took her to adjust to being on the team, she gave me a smile straight from the gallows and said, "About a year and a half." Ask other team members what they like to do in their spare time, and the majority look at you as if you had asked the silliest question imaginable. "What else?" is the usual answer. "Sleep."

What you clearly *don't* sense when you talk to any of the women is any sense of bitterness or regret. "Nobody is here against her will," says Laurie Flachmeier, a steady, likable 26-year-old from Garland, Texas, who is one of four players on the team who has played here more than four years. "I don't feel as if I'm making all that much of a sacrifice. This is what I want to be doing with my life right now, and I wouldn't trade the experiences I'm having on this team for anything."

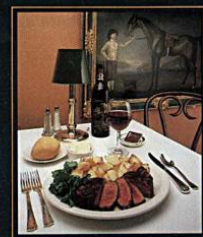
That it is an unusually close team goes without saying, never mind that (continued on page 74)

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(continued from page 53)
 new blood is occasionally filtering in as players leave because of injuries and other considerations. They exult together in victory and are not ashamed to hold hands and cry together when they've lost a big match, as was the case last year in the World Championships in Peru when they upset the favorite, China, and then lost in the finals to a weaker but inspired Peruvian team. And it's worth noting, I think, that the four black women on the team—Flo Hyman, Rita Crockett, Sherry Moore, and Rose Magars—neither live together nor room together on the road. "We'll make jokes sometimes," says Laurie Flachmeier, "about Flo, Rita, Sherry, and Rose riding in the back of the bus, but really nobody even thinks about whatever differences we might have. We've been through too much together."

Yes, there are squabbles now and then. "You can't help it," says Carolyn Becker, a 26-year-old Californian whose specialty is serving and returning serve and who has been with the team since its inception. "Every once in a while, somebody gets on somebody else's nerves—especially if you've been on the road for a long time. But as long as you're working hard, nobody ever stays mad at you for very long. The only girls who have trouble fitting in are girls who have been the stars of their college teams and then come here and can't adjust to the fact that they're just one of the group. There's no room here for prima donnas."

Room for prima donnas, maybe not, but plenty of room for talent, that's for sure. Granted, the American women have yet to win the top prize in a major championship, but they did come within an eyelash of winning last year's World Championships, and went on after I visited them to take a Silver Medal at the Pan Am games in Caracas, beating Peru but losing in the finals to the same Cuban team they defeated earlier in the round robin. "We were disappointed at the Pan Am Games," Selinger would say, "but the girls played well, and we're on our schedule for the Olympics. That's still the priority."

Disappointment in a second place finish is, in itself, a significant sign of progress for the American women's team. For it was scarcely five years

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ago that the U.S. volleyball establishment was doing cartwheels over the fact that the National Women's Team, then only three years old, had actually placed *fifth* in the World Championships, and for a good reason: The U.S. performance in the World Championships that year marked one of the first times ever that the Americans were even competitive in a major international competition. Over the next two years, as the Selinger system (which relies, in part, on computerized analysis of individual hitting styles) began to take hold, the women became more than competitive, knocking off teams from the Soviet Union, Japan, China, and Korea, and as their stature grew, the team found itself being invited to more and more important competitions and able, too, to induce the better international teams to come here to compete on our turf. "The better teams," Selinger explains, "had traditionally played one of two styles: power, which was the way the Soviets played it, and defense, the way the Japanese played. We were the first team to field players who were tall enough to play the power game but agile and quick enough to play good defense."

How well the American women would have fared in Moscow in 1980 is open to conjecture: Selinger concedes that because of the crowd support (and, alas, the officiating) the Soviet Union women's team would have been extremely difficult to beat on its own turf. But the American team seems to have put the boycott experience pretty well behind it, just as it has put behind it any number of unpleasant experiences that come with the territory when you play in a sport that doesn't have all that much visibility. From 1975 to 1977, for instance, the team was based in Pasadena, Texas, a sub-

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the U.S. Volleyball Association, personally guarantees Selinger's salary. "A Pasadena team had won the national championships in 1974, and the mayor thought it would be a great idea if Pasadena would become the first home of the Women's National Volleyball Team. But there were a lot of politics going on between the mayor and other people connected with volleyball, and with the money problems there just wasn't enough to give the girls the support they really needed. It was very sad."

The team's move in 1978 to the U.S. Olympic Training Center in Colorado Springs, where the lodging and food are free to all Olympic athletes, solved the problem of musical furniture, but because most of the women on the team are Californians who prefer the beach to the Rockies, the team was never happy in Colorado. So, after the 1980 boycott, as if to eradicate the memory of it, they moved into their current home at Coto de Caza.

Since this last move, happily, the team has finally been able to settle into a reasonably comfortable groove. A growing number of sponsors—chief among them, Atari, the Mizuno Corporation (a sporting goods company in

urb of Houston, invited there by no less than the mayor himself, and sometimes, when the women would return from a tour, they would find that all of their belongings had been removed from their apartments and that the apartments had been rented to somebody willing to pay higher rent.

"It was very tough finding enough money to run the team," recalls Robert L. Lindsay, a Texas businessman and volleyball aficionado, who, in addition to being the current president of →

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said, "and you're over."

"How do you know you didn't make a mistake?" Selinger replied, aware that the luggage at that very moment was probably buried in the plane's cargo pit. "Why don't we bring it up and we'll check it again."

Game, match to the USA.

You've just heard one of what Vic Braden, Selinger's good friend, likes to call "Arie stories." There are dozens of such stories, all of them painting pretty much the same picture of Selinger—that of an obviously complex but certainly decent and often charming man, who, as a volleyball coach, is unmistakably resourceful and a brilliant motivator as well. But he can also be, on occasion, a good deal less than tactful and understanding, particularly when it comes to issues that, in his view, affect the welfare of his team. The women on the national team, not surprisingly, would probably walk across the Sahara (and practice spiking on the way) if Arie thought it would be a good idea to do so, but Selinger is somewhat less than revered in the bureaucratic circles of the United States Volleyball Association. Several college volleyball coaches will never forgive Selinger for having re-

Japan), Michelob Light, and the Ford Motor Company—has enabled Selinger to at last assemble a small support staff, which means he can spend a little less time thinking about visas and hotel reservations and more time thinking about volleyball. Still, the team doesn't have nearly the budget nor the personnel needed to run a national program on a scale similar to that of, say, Japan, where volleyball may be the second most popular sport, next to baseball. And the constant financial pressure has forced Selinger to be as creative off the volleyball court as he is on the court.

Last year, for example, when the team was on its way home from Peru, the airline clerk who had confirmed the tickets and checked in the luggage announced to Selinger that the team had gone over its weighed limit and owed the airline \$800.

Damian Wooles, who was there, recalls that he nearly choked, but that Selinger never blinked an eyelash. "It's impossible," he said calmly.

The clerk was insistent. "We weighed everything carefully," he →

cruited their top players, and there are more than a few association members who feel that Selinger and his team receive too large a share of the organization's attention and limited financial resources. Never mind that the team is largely self-supporting (through outside sponsorships and ticket sales of their matches) and never mind that the stature of the USA National Women's Team has helped spur the growth of competitive volleyball throughout the U.S. (at last count, according to the USVBA, some 1,000 colleges had women's volleyball programs, offering some 12,000 scholarships).

Selinger could probably help his cause enormously if he would be a little more tactful in his dealings with the USVBA, and if he would quit reminding them that, as good as the American team is today, our national program is still lagging well behind that of Japan, China, and Cuba, where volleyball enjoys the status of a major sport. ("A typical Chinese high school team," Selinger sadly notes, "could beat any of our better college teams.") But Selinger's closest friends concede that →

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while he is more diplomatic than he used to be, his talents will never lie in diplomacy, and nobody even bothers to apologize anymore when Selinger says something that doesn't sit well in the volleyball establishment. What's more, some people suggest Selinger's "weaknesses" as a person are the very strengths that make him a great coach. "If Arie wasn't Arie," says Al Monaco, the executive director of the United States Volleyball Association, "he couldn't have done the job he's done."

And why is Arie Arie? What explains the singlemindedness that has ruled his life for the past eight years? Se-

I look, and what I see on the court is Paula Weishoff, a spirited 21-year-old from California, leaping high but not quite high enough to block a spike by Rita Crockett, who is only five feet, eight inches tall, but who can still dunk a basketball with room to spare and, like Flo Hyman, is a member of the All World Cup team—this same Rita Crockett who only moments before was standing outside the gym, doubled over in near exhaustion. I then see, in the same breath, Sue Woodstra, the team's captain, dive, kamikaze style, and intercept the ball with her outstretched fists about two inches from the ground. The ball, miraculously, →

linger doesn't answer the question directly, other than to say that he loves volleyball (he played it and coached it in Israel) and that he relishes the challenge of creating "something where there was nothing." But some people who know Selinger well suggest that part of the answer behind his iron will is to be found in the horrors of his boyhood—to the fact that when he was five years old, his father was sent to Auschwitz (where he would later be executed) and Arie and his mother were shipped to Bergen Belsen concentration camp, where they spent three nightmarish years before being shipped out on a "death train" that broke down before it reached its extermination site and thus spared its doomed and emaciated cargo the gas chamber. How much of a connection there is between that boyhood ordeal and Arie's day-to-day life today is probably something no one will ever know, but it's worth noting that unlike many concentration camp survivors, Selinger doesn't hesitate to talk about the experience, and once, in fact, during one of the team's European tours, he took the team on a grim homecoming visit to the Belsen site.

"You know what's funny?" Arie is saying later that afternoon as the two of us watch the final scrimmage of the day. "People in the beginning used to say over and over to me that you could never put together an American team that had the same intensity, discipline, and dedication as the Japanese. They kept saying that the Americans were different, that you couldn't get them to work hard, just for the sake of their country. Imagine: being defeated even before you start. And look . . ."

rises again, and is set up by Julie Vollersten, a Nebraskan and the only woman on the team who isn't from either Texas or California. Then, after a *fake* spike by Paula, the ball is dinked off to the side by Laurie Flachmeier, in the direction of Linda Chisholm, who earlier that day had told me that being a member of the USA Women's National Volleyball Team had been a dream of hers within a year or two after she started playing competitive volleyball in Van Nuys, California. Linda makes a gallant dive, too, her padded elbows pounding the floor like the wheels of an executive jet on a landing runway, but the ball squirts off her fists into the side wall.

On the other side of the court, as if Sue Woodstra's dive and Laurie Flachmeier's heady dink had won the match and not simply another point, there was a quick flurry of noisy congratulations and high-fives, but, lo and behold, there was a similar ritual taking place on Linda Chisholm's side of the court, even though they had just *lost* the point.

I wish I could tell who eventually won that scrimmage, but I had to leave before it was over, and I doubt if either Selinger or any of the players remember. Practice games tend to become a little blurry in your mind when you've been playing volleyball matches almost daily for seven years. And besides, Selinger and the young women who play for the USA National Women's Volleyball Team have a lot of things on their minds these days.

Like Los Angeles, this summer. □

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