



COVID-19 Brings AIC Volleyball Closer Together

Anthony Del Trecco, Staff Writer

Like many of us, the AIC volleyball team thought that spring break was going to be normal. However, a routine spring break trip to Puerto Rico took a turn when COVID-19 disrupted the remainder of the school year. With the change of plans, they had to think on the fly, much like they do on the court. Everyone stepped in to do their part with a little help from head coach Matthew Cribbin and the AIC athletic department.

Some teammates opened their doors to help international students, who were now stranded. The players often think of themselves as sisters, and these are incredible acts to make sure nobody is left behind with nowhere to go.

First-year Naomi Eckert-Rivera, from Toa Baja, Puerto Rico, took in second-year Ada Guilera Martinez when she was not able to get back to Barcelona, Spain.

Second-year Giulia Alves Machado welcomed third-year Andjela Public and fourth-year Jana Potic to her home in Tampa, Florida. Public and Potic are both Serbians, and are unable to return home. The pair stayed with Alves Machado for about a month before returning to Springfield. AIC still maintains one residence hall for students who are in need of emergency accommodations, like international students whose countries are currently under a travel ban.

BONUS: Hear Public interview Potic about how COVID-19 has affected Potic's plans for after graduation

Through all of this, the team is finding ways to keep busy, let others know that they are okay, and lift some spirits. Coach Cribbin and the athletic department are working together to put out fun and lighthearted content on the AIC Volleyball Instagram and Facebook pages (@AICVB).

It all began with a video of a basic volleyball exercise called salt and pepper, a drill to practice keeping the ball from hitting the ground. Cribbin started off the drill and hit the ball at the camera. Through the magic of video editing, it looked as though the players from all over the world are receiving the pass and sending it along to the next player. The ball goes to



Lyanne Hernandez

Members of the AIC Volleyball Team pose with their pups to keep spirits high

Puerto Rico, Florida, Chicago, Arizona, and California. The song playing in the background, "Dance Monkey," by Tones and I, is a team favorite.

The most recent interactive video is a workout chain done by the players as they attempt to keep the chain moving, much like the first video. The team invites alumni to join in and to keep it going.

Members of the team have also shared personal messages and images of their pets as a way to make people smile with everything going on in the world. The athletic department continues to put up "get to know" the player posts, filled with interesting and fun facts about each member on the team. No matter the circumstance, the team is working hard to make sure they all have support.



Andrea Serra Members of the AIC Volleyball Team pose with their pups to keep spirits high

Follow AICVB on Instagram and Facebook to keep with the team and see how they are doing, and maybe you'll get a good laugh with what you see. Make sure you give AIC athletics a like and follow too while you're at it.

From all of us at AIC athletics, we're thinking of all our teammates and our AIC family. Stay safe, and we hope to see you soon.