

## Volleyball Club Takes 11th at Phoenix Festival

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Brianna Gibbs/KMXT

The Kodiak Island Volleyball Club wrapped up its games at the Phoenix Volleyball Festival Thursday and nabbed a top-12 finish.

For four days the girls have been playing against some of the top club teams in the country, and came out as the highest ranked Alaska team in their division. Merissa Koller-Williams coached the girls and said they played a total of 11 games and took 11th place out of 35 teams.

She said Kodiak's club was unique because it consisted of members that will all be playing for the same high school team this upcoming school year.

"Almost every team there is able to pull girls from different high schools. Their teams represent general areas of their state. They can stack their team according to their needs and their level of play. So our girls represent the island, the high school team, essentially. So they had no idea how they were going to fit in to this tournament. So the first day they came in and won their first game, it was shaky — not the best volleyball they've played. And then they lost to the next two teams, but once they got comfortable on Tuesday they came out to win. They beat a couple of really good, really scrappy teams. They really wanted to be on that championship bracket. ."

Koller-Williams said the girls were playing in the Phoenix Convention Center, and the first floor alone had more than 40 volleyball nets. She said she is very proud of the girls and how they represented Kodiak.

“They really held their own. They are definitely fighters and it means really good things for our upcoming high school season. I am extremely proud of how they finished. You know being in the top third, coming from Alaska, is a pretty big feat.”

Summer McKechnie (Mc-kec-nee) is the team’s captain and said the whole experience was incredible.

“I think it was a really, really good experience for us. And we got to see people that we’re not going to see during high school season. It was like another season for us pretty much. We played three games a day, they each had three matches probably. Other clubs they were the best people from all around the region, and ours was just our high school team. So we did pretty good considering it wasn’t an all star team you know, it was just our high school team pretty much. So that’s pretty promising for the season coming up.”

The Kodiak High School volleyball season is set to start in August.