



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Army edges past Air Force, wins gold in sitting volleyball

West Point, New York — In an edge-of-the-seat match, the Army Green team won the gold medal in the sitting volleyball championship game, June 18, during the 2014 U.S. Army Warrior Trails at the U.S. Military Academy, West Point, N.Y.

The Army Green team won two out of three sets to win the overall game against the Air Force team; it was a close match throughout, with each team winning a set by two points, and the final set going into overtime with a final score of 17-15. The Army also won the bronze medal for sitting volleyball, with the Army Black team beating the Marines team in both of their sets.

The victor in the match against the Air Force was not a given throughout most of the championship game; the Army Green team came out strong in the first set, but then lost some momentum in the second round.

“It was very tense. For a minute there we thought we lost it, but we stayed together, we kept talking to each other, moved around and pulled out the win,” said Spc. James Taylor, who helped bring the Army’s momentum back with a string of points from his serves. Taylor is assigned to the Warrior Transition Battalion, Fort Sam Houston, Texas.

The team stuck to Coach J.D. Malone’s execution plan for the game, which the players thought contributed to their victory.

“I think we won because we stuck to our game plan; when we weren’t getting our shots in we stayed composed and we worked on just doing what we had to do to win,” said Retired Sgt. Matthew Spang, Wisconsin Rapids, Wisconsin, one of the team’s power hitters.

Taylor said winning “felt even better because it was so close; it wasn’t just given to us.”

“It felt great. It felt like you were on top of the world,” said Spang.

Malone stressed, though, that while winning is a good accomplishment, playing in such a tight game helps his team improve future performances.

“It’s very telling when it’s very close; you learn what your weaknesses and your strong points are. We’ll definitely be prepared heading into Warrior Games to play at a much higher level than where we’re at now,” said Malone. The Warrior Trials help determine which Army athletes will compete at the 2014 Warrior Games this fall in Colorado Springs, Colo.

Air Force Coach Kari Miller, a sitting volleyball Paralympics winner herself, appreciated the talent shown in the game.

“It was an awesome game. Both teams fought their butts off, and I’m proud of both of them. Looking at this now, I know that it’s elevating my sport overall,” said Miller.

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CUTLINE: Retired Sgt. Sean Hook's power-driven spike contributes to an Army victory June 18, 2014, to take the gold during sitting volleyball finals against Air Force at the 2014 Army Warrior Trials, at the U.S. Military Academy, West Point, N.Y. Hook is from Summerville, South Carolina. More than 100 wounded, ill and injured service members and Veterans from across the United States congregated at West Point to train and compete in the Army Warrior Trials, June 15-19. The event is hosted by Warrior Command and includes athletes from the Army, Marines and Air Force facing off in archery, basketball, cycling, track and field, swimming, shooting, sitting volleyball and wheelchair basketball. Participants in the trials include athletes with spinal cord injuries, traumatic brain injuries, visual impairment, serious illnesses and amputations. Army Warrior Trials help determine which Army athletes will compete at the 2014 Warrior Games this fall in Colorado Springs, Colo. (U.S. Army photo by Gloria Montgomery)

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Warrior Transition Command (WTC) is a major subordinate command under the U.S. Army Medical Command (MEDCOM). WTC's mission is to develop, coordinate and integrate the Army's Warrior Care and Transition Program (WCTP) for wounded, ill and injured soldiers, veterans and their families. For more information on WTC, visit the new WTC website, www.WTC.army.mil, follow on Twitter at <http://twitter.com/armyWTC> or join Facebook at <http://facebook.com/armyWTC>.