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## Skyline Gets Two for the Price of One (Coach)

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**That's coach Jason on the far left, showing his medal after leading another team to an Open bid**

Jason Williams is no stranger to qualifying Open teams for the national championships. During his career, the Dallas Skyline coach has had teams in Open national qualifiers 12 times, and his teams have qualified 10 times. Last week, however, he added an accomplishment that has rarely, if ever, been accomplished in Texas.

Williams was on the bench at the Northern Lights national qualifier last weekend when Skyline Roshambo Black qualified in 15 Open for this summer's national championships. It was the second team he had coached this season to an Open bid . . . in the same age group.

Williams' primary team is Dallas Skyline's top 15 team, 15 RoShamBo Royal, which is one of the nation's best and earned an Open bid at Colorado Crossroads last month. He was called into action last weekend, however, when the coach of Skyline's #2 15s team, RoShamBo Black, had to resign for family reasons. Skyline quickly needed a 15s coach and... "The choice ended up being between myself and (club co-director/coach) Jon Rye. And since (Jon) did not know them as well as I did, it was going to be better for me to coach them," said Williams, who has never had one of his Open qualified teams finish lower than 11th at the national championships.

Another reason Williams was a good choice was that in his four previous trips to Minneapolis, his teams had qualified each time. So as he prepped the 15 Black team for last weekend's qualifier, Williams gave

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his players a clear goal:

"This is a basically a top team and we treat them that way so I set the expectation that we were going to get to the Gold pool on Sunday," said Williams. "With two potential trickle downs in the field, (the players) understood that if they could get into Gold and put together a couple of good matches they would have a chance for a bid."

And with OH **Ashley Morgan** playing every point of the tournament, passing every rotation, and delivering crucial kills, OH **Natalie Fazio**, dominating on the block and exploding on key kills, and libero **Alex Silver** coming up huge in big matches, that's exactly what they did.

Skyline opened the tournament by breezing through their first round pool, dropping just one set.

Saturday's pool came down to a showdown with North Texas rival Dallas Premier. A win would guarantee Skyline no worse than second place and a berth in Sunday's Gold pools.

Skyline survived, 25-22, 20-25, 15-12, and even though they closed out the day with a loss to KC Power, they were still alive in the chase for a bid.

Sunday's task was clear: Skyline, one of only six teams still in Gold, was in a three-team pool with Northern Lights and MAVS Blue. Both of those teams already had Open bids, so if Skyline was able to finish no worse than second in the pool, they would be guaranteed a bid.

The day started with a loss to Northern Lights. That set up a must-win battle with MAVS. Thanks to terrific serve-receive, Skyline swept MAVS 25-21, 25-22. And after MAVS fell to Northern Lights, the North Texans had their bid.

Skyline would eventually fall to Colorado Juniors, 25-19, 25-17, in the third place match, but by then it was "mission accomplished."

Williams says that even though both teams are now Open-qualified teams, that's where the similarities end.

"The personality of the teams are definitely different," he said. "The 15 Black team likes to have fun and plays better when they are loose. The 15 Royal is more focused and determined."

Williams will return to focusing on the 15 Royals now that Landon Carpenter has been lined up to take over the 15 Black. But Williams won't completely abandon his second qualified team.

"I will be on the bench when I can," he said. "I am very proud of how 15 Black accepted my coaching style and the discipline I instilled in a very short time. I also feel very fortunate to being a part of qualifying two Open teams in one season."

Which leaves only one question.

If he had to coach both teams against each other, who would win?

"That is a loaded question," he says, "but since Royal has already won two matches against Black, I'll leave it at that."

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