



Leipzig Sitting Volleyball Tournament November 2016

Read on to discover Fi Brock's report on her experiences at the 10th LE Sitting Volleyball Cup in Leipzig.

Some may know Leipzig as the city where JS Bach was from, some may know it as the city that was central to the fall of communism in Eastern Europe and the eventual fall of the Berlin Wall nearly 100 miles away in 1989. Leipzig to me will be the city that was host to the 10th LE Sitting Volleyball Cup held on 26th and 27th November 2016.

Twelve teams from five countries, along with eight referees from four countries, descended on the city for two days and 42 matches. The international teams were in most cases their national team plus or minus a player. Steve Smith and I were two referees invited to referee on behalf of Volleyball England.

Competition was fierce, with some very fast play. Sitting volleyball is one of a few sports where disabled and able-bodied athletes are on a level playing field. The court is smaller, the net is lower, meaning the distance the ball travels is shorter, with the hits just as hard and ferocious as the indoor game. All of this adds up to a very fast game; one where as a referee you really can't blink, else you miss the crucial part of the rally.



Mixing with the highly experienced international and international candidate referees was an invaluable experience. We held our own and were both appointed as 1st referee on the semi finals on the Sunday: Kazakhstan's Atyrau vs Croatia's Zagreb and Germany's Bayer Leverkusen vs Leipzig 1. They were two very tightly fought matches, resulting in the final of Kazakhstan's Atyrau vs Leipzig 1, with the home team taking it narrowly, without the need of a decider.

It was a privilege to referee these matches, spend time learning and be welcomed with open arms by the international referee community. We're both hoping that similar competitions arise, where our Volleyball England international sitting volleyball referees Dee Wauchope, Glynn Archibald and Peter Parsons are otherwise engaged, and we have another opportunity to referee at this level as we both spent the weekend buzzing... followed by a day of culture and relaxation in the various Christmas markets around the city.