



MATCH REPORTS

DIVISION ONE WOMEN

Saturday 3rd March

Loughborough Dolphins Vs Salford

Result: Loughborough Dolphins 1:3 (15-25, 25-19, 21-25, 18-25)

Dolphins knew that this match was going to be a high quality match with some text book play, as Salford have won all their games this season. The hall was available a little before the warm up time and Salford started their warm up straight away, dolphins soon after Set 1 Salford started chalking up the points on their first rotation and 8 points on their no 5 serve, the score was suddenly 7:14. Even though Dolphins forced Salford to side out towards the end of the set it was too late to make any difference Set 2 Again both teams continued to side out for the first half of the set, until Karen served 6 points and disrupted Salford's momentum, making a difference to the score line of 20:14. Effectively then both sides fought to hold their serve and set was concluded 25:19 Set 3 With the line up for both teams remaining the same, set 3 started like the other two, 6:7 after the first full rotation. Deputy coach, Jason, called a time out at 9:13 hoping to settle the team. It had some effect as the score was closed to 17:19 on Michele's service time. Tactical hitting from Emma towards the end of the set and the win could have gone both ways. Salford's no 7 added some pressure to Dolphin's service reception which won them the set. Salford started with a new line up in the fourth set and for a change made 2 subs throughout the set, Dolphins made one sub. Salford started with the more positive attitude and made headway on the score with no 2 serving 5, then 3 and 3 and 3 more to Dolphins 1, 1, and 1 more. the score line looked very different at 10:17. With Jason calling a time out at 16:21 was a little too late, set and match finished in 1 hour 45 minutes

Well done to Lisa for being awarded MVP

Saturday 28th January

Loughborough Dolphins Vs Newcastle Staffs

Result: Loughborough Dolphins 3:0 (25-15, 25-23, 25-20)

Following an incident on the M1, Dolphins were concerned that some of the players, and even the refs, could be late. But with just 10 minutes to warm up time all had arrived and started to prepare for the match. Both teams settled into the game quite quickly but Dolphins were the first to get a run of points taking them into a comfortable lead. This caused NS to call a time out at 11:6 down. The middle of the set saw both teams just trading points until Karen served another valuable 6 points taking Dolphins to 21:13 up. One more rotation and the set was all over

The second set started with Dolphins just gaining one point at each side out, which showed in an early score deficit of 6:10. Fortunately Michele then served for 5 points putting them 11:10 up. This also saw a rise in the confidence of the team, but that was not enough to upset NS balance and the score remained even through to 21:20 and 22:21. Coach Henryk called a valuable TO at 24:23, all Dolphins had to do was to side out to clinch the set, which they did

With some strong hitting from Lucie and consistent serving through 3 rotations Dolphins took an early advantage of 10:5. NS coach called a TO to motivate and stimulate the team. Each side then simply sided out. Coach Henryk was not satisfied with this and called for a TO at 20:16. With the Dolphins continuing to side out the set could have turned making the final server concentrate to ensure that crucial points were not given to the opposition. Final set finished after 23 minutes, and Dolphins took the match.

Saturday 21st January

Newcastle (Staffs) Vs Salford City

Result: Salford City Won 3:0 (25-23, 25-22, 25-13)

Despite being disappointed by the 3-0 score line, Castle with a starting 6 including five under 18s can be reasonably proud of their performance.

Salford travelled with a big squad and showed many of their qualities that have left them so far undefeated this season.

Both teams traded points in a high quality first set but it was Salford who would show composure over the key final point to win 25-23. Castle's first pass deserted them at the start of the second leaving them trailing 14-6 by their second time out. The team however responded to a flurry of substitutions to get within 2 points of their opponents. Once again Salford remained composed with setter Petra Tulpoca finding her hitters well to hold on 25-22.

Unfortunately the young Castle team ran out of steam and Salford took the 3rd set and the match 25-13.

With CJ now playing for Team South Wales and Meg Viggars being forced to leave the club to keep her Olympic hopes alive, Castle are quickly running out of swing hitter options and will again need to re-organise their line up.

Sunday 15th January

Salford City Vs Leeds VC

Result: Salford City Won 3:0 (25-17, 25-21, 25-15)

Salford came into their first match of 2012 looking to extend their unbeaten run, whilst Leeds having taken a set in their previous encounter was looking to put some daylight between themselves and the bottom of the table. To do so Leeds had brought in a couple of experienced ex Super 8's players to bolster their team.

Both teams started slowly, Leeds having to come to terms with a new formation and Salford looking like the Christmas indulgences were still having an effect. Points were being traded without anybody grabbing the game and though Salford maintained a comfort of a 5 point lead the attack was a little laboured. Kirsty Lamb saw much of the ball through the outside and continued to pound the ball, whilst Maike Werdecker put pressure on the Leeds outside hitters with some effective blocking. Overall, however Salford seemed to be stuck in 2nd gear. Middles, Aggy Nemeth and Barbara Kurzak looked to cause the Leeds defence problems running slide attacks. A time-out to Leeds at 18-13 acted as a wakeup call to the Salford girls and substitutions of Keeley Guest into middle and Lyndsey Hulme to opposite caused no drop in aggression, as with a devastating period Salford won the next few points to take the first set 25-17.

The 2nd set followed the example of the 1st with Salford looking in control of the game and opening up a safety margin of 8 points. Jo Zefron showed that the trip back from the US had caused no problems to her performance and good changes of tempo from short dinks to power hits forced Leeds to concede points. Petra Tulpova started to take control of the game and the distribution of the pass from libero Lesa Hegarty, started to look a lot sharper. Salford cruising to the mid-set mark maintaining their advantage suddenly wobbled and put themselves under pressure by losing 5 points in a row and the score quickly became a 1 point lead at 21-20. With the girls giving themselves a good talking to, Salford shook off the lethargy and powered through the rest of the set, taking it 25-21.

With Salford looking like they had finally shaken the cobwebs from their play and Leeds looking short on confidence, Salford started the 3rd set with purpose, racing into a 12-4 lead. A shoulder injury to captain Meg Hopkins saw the re-introduction of Jo Zefron. Salford looked to put on the style and in front of the home crowd continued to pound Leeds from all areas of the court, taking the set 25-15.

A satisfactory 3-0 win that lifted the team two places to 2nd in Division 1 however, the team needed a shake-up and can't afford to rest on its laurels if they are to maintain their momentum.

Salford MVP: Maike Werdecker

Saturday 10th December

Newcastle (Staffs) Vs Reading

Result: Devon Won 3:0 (25-14, 25-19, 25-17)

Castle Ladies welcomed Reading to Keele Sports Centre in good form, despite losing their previous game against an impressive Devon. Although their opponents had not started the season well, Castle were taking no chances and continued their routine of training on the morning of the game.

Castle had the best possible start racing to an 8-0 lead with CJ causing the Reading reception unit big problems. As expected Reading did recover, but with Copestake passing effectively and Amor leading offence the set was never in doubt, with Castle winning 25-14.

Reading started set 2 much stronger and with a string of errors from the home team led 11-7, causing NSVC to call a time-out. After strong words from the bench, Castle battled back with several big blocks from Stuart, Gurgul and Viggars. Setter Bellamy once again began to find her hitters with rhythm, and the set was sealed 25-19 with kill hits from Chadwick and CJ.

Castle went onto dominate set 3 from the start despite making several changes. Roberts took over setting duties, whilst valuable court time was given to Millican, Franco and Haritou. The set and match was won 25-17

The team were very happy with their win and can feel relatively happy with their start to the season. But with several probable changes to the team in the New Year, the squad will still target avoiding relegation as their No.1 goal.

Newcastle Staffs Ladies 3 Reading 0 – 25-14, 25-19, 25-17

Saturday 10th December

Loughborough Dolphins Vs Devon

Result: Devon Won 2:3 (25-20, 20-25, 19-25, 25-22, 14-16)

Dolphins were ready and warming up when Devon arrived, a little after the due warm up time, although that didn't affect their playing ability as Dolphins found themselves 11:2 early in the 1st set. With steady playing and Lisa notching up a few points on her serve Dolphins were back in the game at 12:14. The set continued in this vein until Emma served the set out

Dolphins lost their 1st serve, but quickly recovered when Celia served 6 points, forcing Devon to call an early Time Out at 6:1. Coach Henryk swapped Charlotte for Lucie, at 6:1 and then called a TO at 12:8 in an attempt to disrupt Devon serve. Each side traded points and side outs until Devon closed the set out at 20:25 with a quick succession of serves from their number 2 Angelini

Loughborough Dolphins then lost the 3rd set much like the 2nd. And although Henryk tried a new rotation swapping Charlotte for Celia at 12:19 it did not affect the balance of play. Devon TO at 19:16 and Dolphins at 19:23, which was perhaps a little too late in hindsight

Set 4 turned out to be a long set, almost 30 minutes of play, but rotations were similar to the first few sets. With Charlotte starting on first 6 she clocked up a nice 8 points on her serve so the scoreboard looked well at 9:1. The side outs worked similarly for the next 6 rotations 13:8, and 20:19. Dolphins had to keep focused on their play to stay in the game and the match and set was concluded at 25:22

With a short 14 minute 5th set and all square at 6:6, the match could easily go either way. Dolphins fought hard to get an 11:8 lead but with Devon seeming to want the win more cracks were showing in Dolphins defence. At 13:13 Devon stepped up then to 14:14 and continued to win the set.

Dolphins were devastated at the result when a good win was in sight. Devon only having lost a couple of matches this season the alternative result would have been a huge advantage for Dolphins

Devon nominated Charlotte as MVP for her strength of serve.

Saturday 3rd December

City of Salford Vs Portsmouth

Result: Salford Won 3:1 (25-14, 25-16, 21-25, 25-11)

Salford hosted Portsmouth this Saturday and with both teams undefeated it was set to be a real 'top of the table' clash. Both teams were aware that the match would have a significant impact on their season.

Salford won the serve and hit their straps, racing into a 6point lead on the back of great serving from Meg Hopkins and power hitting from Kirsty Lamb. Salford's serve receive controlled the Portsmouth attack and allowed Petra Tulpova to vary the attack through great distribution to all her hitters. Portsmouth took a timeout to try and regroup at 19-11, but Salford powered through to take the first set 25-14.

The second set continued the Salford domination; with Maike Werdecker snuffing out Portsmouth's big outside hitters and easing the backcourt defensive duties. Swapping of points between the two teams had continued until Petra Tulpova took control of the serve and a quick 6 points went Salford's way, on the back of a big blocking and hitting performance from middle hitter, Rosie Kirk.

With the game slipping from their grasp, Portsmouth knew they had to break the Salford stranglehold and they started the third set with purpose. Points were hard to come by and though Salford's backcourt still continued to dominate the serve, Portsmouth's backcourt started to pick up the Salford attack and took a two point lead. Consistent attacking from Keeley Guest and Lyndsey Hulme kept Salford in the game; however the team fell just short and lost the set 25-21.

Salford knew that they had to take the next set and with wise words from coach Jane Curley still ringing in their ears, Salford regained the discipline of the first two sets and took control of the set, racing to a 10-3 lead. Lesa Hegarty continued to prowl the backcourt, dominating the Portsmouth hits and turning defence into attack and provide the platform for Basia Kurzak to hit the kills. Portsmouth were starting to look beaten and Salford finished dominated to the end running out 25-11 winners.

MVP: Lesa Hegarty

Sunday 27th November

South Hants Vs Portsmouth

Result: Portsmouth Won 0:3 (11-25, 12-25, 22-25)

This match saw undefeated Portsmouth travel 10 miles up the road to visit local rivals South Hants, a team struggling to find their form this season. Portsmouth started the match determined not to let South Hants get any sort of foothold and so it proved as they raced into an 8-1 lead by the first technical timeout. Portsmouth's Jayne Sharpe was in excellent form and her powerful hitting and dominant net play made life easy for the rest of her team. Portsmouth ran out easy winners of the set 25-11.

Despite some strategic changes by South Hants the second set began in exactly the same way as the first set and once again they found themselves too far behind to make any impact. Another easy set win for Portsmouth 25-12.

The Portsmouth coach took the opportunity to play some of his less experienced players in the third set which made for a far more competitive game. Shell shocked South Hants slowly began to find some confidence with great blocking by Jila Hegan and Helen Mosely causing Portsmouth to make some unforced errors but it was all too little too late and Portsmouth ran out deserved winners 25 – 22.

The match was played in good spirit, was well reffed with excellent line judges and scorers and despite the one sided nature of the first two sets it was a great advert for volleyball, enjoyed by another good sized crowd of supporters.

Sunday 20th November

Newcastle (Staffs) Vs Devon

Result: Devon Won: 0:3 (24-26, 16-25, 25-27)

NSVC went into the game against Devon looking forward to a tough test against their more experienced multi national opponents.

Castle started strongly, but soon became aware of the tough task ahead as Devon matched them in all departments. With both teams siding out confidently, points scored on serve were at a premium. Captain Mankee was in good form setting steadily as the scores progressed to 22-22. After a big kill block on serve by Viggars, the first set point fell to Castle. Despite a poor first pass from Devon, the ball was scrambled over the net and poor court coverage by Castle let their opponents survive. This would prove very costly as Devon's confidence then soared and they took the set 26-24.

The young Castle side started set 2 visually disappointed and were soon 6-1 down after a run of errors. The gap would only increase as Devon now began attacking with venom, with Sirova particularly causing problems. Substitutions saw Bellamy, Millican and Roberts introduced with reasonable success. Despite halting the Devon flow the set was still lost 25-16.

Castle were aware that victory against such consistent opponents would now be a difficult task, but started set 3 with some determined attack and defensive play. James in particular hit winner after winner and was well backed up by wing hitting partner Amor. Middle players Gurgal and Stuart both hit winners as the teams traded point for point. After another high quality set for the crowd to enjoy the scores would again be locked from the 20pt mark onwards. Devon now then edged ahead despite getting hands on the ball in blocks, 2 consecutive deflections gave the points and match to Devon 27-25.

The coaching team, despite being disappointed with the result were full of praise for the performance. Despite losing 3-0, many of the teams' followers agreed that this was probably some of the best volleyball produced by a Castle Ladies team. The players acknowledged that they were beaten by a well organised and importantly experienced Devon side, who remained calm to play the crucial points better.

Castle will now hope to build upon this performance in their next game at home against Reading at Keele University Sports Centre on December 10th – 2.30 start

Newcastle Staffs Ladies 0 Devon 3 – 24-26, 16-25, 25-27

Saturday 19th November

Loughborough Dolphins Vs Leeds

Result: Loughborough Dolphins Won 3:2 (23-25, 21-25, 25-6, 25-13, 15-7)

Set 1

Both teams arrived in good time to feel relaxed before the match started, and for the first rotations both sides notched up points pretty much like-for-like. Then Leeds No 2 served for 8 points giving a depressing scoreline of 14:3. Dolphins raised a few queries with the ref but had to settle down quickly before they threw away more points. Coach Henryk used his only substitution at 11:17 to serve for Diana who was having problems with a shoulder injury. Although Lisa & Karen scored 5 points on both of their service it improved the scoreline, but not enough

Set 2

The next 6 rotations were (like the first set) trading points like-for-like. With a few more questions raised with the ref, a few anxious players and a couple of yellow cards awarded to Dolphins they found themselves lagging by 6 points 13:19. Although they picked up some points of strong hits and good defensive positions the gap did not close enough

Set 3

Well, Coach Henryk realised that something had to be done to effect change, so front and back court were swapped. Let the set begin...

In a complete contrast to the first 2 sets, and with Celia causing Leeds havoc on her serve Dolphins earned a valuable 14:0 lead. A further 5 points scored on Michele's serve raised the scoreline to 20:5. This had knocked the confidence of the away team

Set 4

with the change effect working Coach Henryk had no reason to ponder further change, so leaving the rotation as set 3 Dolphins set to work. At 17:8 Leeds found themselves in a daunting position trying to salvage their deficit. The set was won 25:13

Set 5

With Dolphins really believing they had found the winning formula went into the fifth set with confidence. Scoring 3 & 4 points on the first two rotations the score was 8:5 when they swapped ends. Emma then served 5 points and at 11:5 Leeds time-out did little to help and Dolphins concluded the set 15:7. Another thankful win

Well done Celia for receiving MVP from Leeds

8th & 9th October 2011

Double Header Portsmouth Vs Tameside South Hants Vs Tameside

Result: Portsmouth won 3:0 (26-24, 32-30, 28-26)

Result: Tameside won 1:3 (26-24, 16-25, 19-25, 21-25)

Recently relegated from the Super 8s, Tameside made the long journey South for a double header weekend against Portsmouth and South Hants with a large squad of experienced players. Having lost a highly competitive match 3:0 to Portsmouth on the Saturday they needed to pick themselves up for their match against South Hants the following day.

The first set was close fought with South Hants setter Julie Cokes highly influential by varying the attack supported by some excellent blocking by Jila Williams. South Hants won the set 26 – 24 and Tameside knew that there must have sensed there was to be a repeat of their match the previous day. However, South Hants struggled to maintain their excellent start and errors began to creep into their game which Tameside were able to take advantage of. The Tameside setter worked well with the outside hitters and they won the next three sets 25 – 16, 25 – 19, and 25 – 21, winning the match by 3 sets to 1.

Saturday 1st October 2011

Newcastle (Staffs) Vs Loughborough Dolphins

Venue: Madeley High School

Result: Newcastle (Staffs) won 3:1 (25-16, 25-20, 21-25, 25-20)

Castle Ladies entertained Loughborough Dolphins, bolstered by the welcome short-term return of Meg Viggars to the line-up. Setter Isobel Fumagalli also made her season debut along with 17 year old Marina Haritou who made her first appearance in the Castle colours.

Castle started the game strongly with the serve reception unit giving Fumagalli good balls to distribute to her attackers. Loughborough playing their first game of the season started slowly and Castle soon capitalised to clinch the first set 25-16.

The second set started with Haritou and Gurgul replacing Rogers and Chadwick. Whilst the Castle first ball remained stable, Loughborough began to defend well behind the block and started to cause the Castle defence problems. After many exciting long rallies the Castle's net dominance just about did enough to take the set 25-20.

Despite being 2-0 down, Loughborough were clearly still determined to get something out of the game and started set 3 the stronger. Despite a change of setter, with the introduction of Bellamy, Castle's attack was becoming too predictable. A further string of substitutions failed to distract Loughborough, who always maintained a slender lead to take the set 21-25.

With Chadwick and Fumagalli returning to the starting 6 at the start of the 4th set, Castle managed to find another burst of energy with Gurgul and Stewart battling hard against the tall Loughborough middle net attackers. At 8-10 down Preston replaced Stewart as Castle tried to vary their attack with Viggars now playing middle for 2 rotations and Preston and James attacking effectively down the line through the wing. The Loughborough defence finally succumbed as Castle finished the set with a kill block by Rogers, to take the match 25-20.

The coaching staff were delighted to get their first win of the season and happy in the fact that all 12 selected players contributed in the win. This will hopefully give the squad a confidence boost after a difficult start to the season.

Sunday 25th September 2011

South Hants Vs Reading

Venue:

Result: South Hants won 3-1 (23-25, 25-23, 25-19, 25-18)

Reading travelled to South Hants for their first match in Division 1 after gaining promotion from Division 2. From the start it was apparent that Reading meant business and by the time South Hants realised what was happening the score was 12 – 2 to Reading. Determined not to panic, South Hants steadily clawed their way back and the final score of 25 – 23 to Reading was a reflection of South Hants intentions for the remainder of the match.

As South Hants found their rhythm, they grew in confidence and with the whole team lifting their game Reading heads began to drop, their constant chanting began to fade and they struggled to cope with the superior attacking play of South Hants.

Superb hitting by Pam Haley (player of the match for the 2nd match in succession), together with some consistent serving by Helen Mosely and a good all-round team performance led to South Hants winning by 3 sets to 1 with scores of 23 – 25, 25 – 23, 25 – 19, 25 – 18.

The match was played in front of an enthusiastic crowd of 20 followers who appreciated the way that South Hants fought back and dominated the game.

Sunday 18th September 2011

South Hants Vs Devon

Venue:

Result: Devon won 1-3 (19-25, 25-21, 18-25, 16-25)

Once again South Hants played host to Devon for the opening match of the season. South Hants had their preparations disrupted leading up to the match as their training facility, Purbrook School was closed due to being too dangerous, leaving them under-prepared and short of practice.

Matches between these teams are always competitive and this one was no exception. South Hants had the height advantage but this was matched by the teamwork and team spirit of Devon. The first set saw South Hants struggle to find any rhythm and Devon won the set 19 – 25 with a determination to chase down everything and to keep the pressure on their opponents.

At the beginning of the 2nd set Bev Cooper, the South Hants coach, made some changes to the line-up and thanks to some powerful hitting from player of the match Pam Haley the team responded by winning the set 25 – 21.

The game looked all set to be a five set thriller but South Hants gradually ran out of steam and Devon, led by their player of the match C. Babbage, deservedly won the match by three sets to one.

The match was played in excellent spirit and was a very good advertisement for the sport of volleyball.

Saturday 16th September 2011

Newcastle Staffs Vs Tameside

Venue:

Result: Tameside won 0-3 (16-25, 17-25, 22-25)

NSVC Ladies started their division 1 campaign with the difficult task of trying to overcome one of the league favourites – Tameside. It was a greatly changed 1st 6 from the previous season that took to the court, both Paige Nelmes and Meg Viggars having moved onto pastures new in Malory and Pollux (Holland) as they look to progress their international careers. The team was captained by the returning Rosie Mankee after 2 years away and also Hannah Millican making her NVL debut on the bench. From the start it was evident that the Tameside serve would put the Castle reception unit of James, Roberts and Preston under severe pressure. With too many free balls going over the net, Tameside were quick to exert a strong attack with wing hitter Krawczyk particularly dominant. The first set went comfortably to Tameside 25-16.

Despite changes in the Castle line up with Bellamy replacing Mankee as setter and Rogers coming in at off-setter, the pattern of the game in the first set continued into the 2nd with middle hitters Gurgul and Stewart frozen out with the first pass falling short of the 3m line. Despite Castle battling on, Tameside held firm to take the 2nd set 25-17.

NSVC began the 3rd set more determined with Chadwick, Preston and James all beginning to hit winners and Castle finally started to exert some pressure on the Tameside defence. As expected Tameside came back strongly with Krawczyk again causing the Castle right sided defence all sorts of problems. At 21-17 up, a back court substitution that had worked well previously for NSVC seemed to upset the reception unit significantly, this was all the opportunity Tameside needed as swooped to take the set and match 25-22.

Castle must take heart that their young side did manage to give their opponents a reasonable game but must go away and work hard on several aspects of their game. With Charlotte James now departing to Cardiff University, the team will hope to add a few more signings to their squad as they look to build on this performance in the coming weeks.

MVP - Rosie Mankee.