



National Cup

Round 2

London Docklands vs Flaming Six Aces

Result: 25-17 27-26 25-16 (3-0)

London Docklands began their National KO Cup campaign against non-league Flaming Six Aces in a potential banana skin of a match for the NVL team. Although FSA do not play in the national league they are the current London Premier League champions and their squad includes several NVL level players. They arrived at Bacon's College no doubt sensing a chance to do some giant-killing.

Docklands, the double KO Cup champions, started in generous mood, giving FSA three serving errors in the first rotation. But Docklands' attack and block were functioning at a high level with setter Nicolò d'Elia keeping the FSA block guessing where the next ball would go. Docklands' middle blockers Mark Baechli and Slawek Omlyski put up solid walls to consistently thwart FSA's attacks and Raul Sanchez Galan was out ranging his opposite number on the wing. In the end a run of five serves from Baechli slightly flattered the score in Docklands' favour as they took the first set 25-17.

FSA made a much better start to set two with Rob Jenkins causing problems from the service line. Docklands coach Andy Hopper was forced to call his first time-out 4-0 down. The home side recovered their composure and were back to within two points by the first technical time-out. FSA managed to hold onto their slender lead with ex-Docklands player Peter Dyakiewicz providing the majority of his side's points and it looked as though FSA had made the decisive break when they took a 22-19 lead. But Docklands didn't panic and after a kill by Sanchez Galan, an ace by Baechli followed by a FSA error the scores were tied at 22-22. The momentum was all with Docklands and although it took them a couple of goes they closed out the set 27-25.

Docklands opened up an early lead in the third set and were in no mood to relinquish their stranglehold on the match. Blocks by Tom Wenzel and Platon Vogiatzoglou kept the momentum with Docklands and with Marc Schaepertoens self-assuredly running the offence, FSA had no answer. Docklands bulldozed their way to the finish line with a six point run on Christoph Datler's serve to seal a 25-16 third set win.

The victory sets up a mouth watering tie against London Polonia in the third round. Docklands will look forward to testing themselves against the 2011 Super8 champions and last year's cup runners up. However, before that Docklands have a crucial league fixture against Tendring on Saturday 17th November at Bacon's College.

National Cup
Semi Final
London Polonia vs LeAf Academy
Result: 20-25 23-25 22-25 (0-3)

Chevau, Pipes, Hunter, Clare, Clayton, Lasocki and Batt lined up for the first set. It started well for both teams as they served tough and sided out efficiently. The Wessex passing unit, with Hunter and Clare leading, held up well against Polonia's deep float serving. Consistent passing allowed Chevau to use all the options, in particular Pipes through the back court position. Excellent float serving from Hunter and Chevau kept the pressure on the home team and allowed Wessex to pull away and take the first set 25-20.

After the change around, Wessex pulled away from Polonia to the first technical time out. Wessex exploited a poor Polonia block, with Clayton and Lasocki both having joy against the Polonia middle blockers. Pipes was again blocking efficiently, shutting out the Polonia outside attackers and Batt and Hunter defended strongly on the back court. Espinoza and Butcher came into the mix at the end of the set for Pipes and Chevau to give 3 front court attackers, however the home team fought back to 23-23. A jump serve into the net meant Wessex were 2-0 up.

The third set saw an improved Polonia performance, keeping Wessex in their sights throughout the set. The partisan supporters were doing everything in their power to put off the Wessex servers, using air horns and terrible dancing to distract players. This did not deter the away side but only gave them more reason to win, the Wessex players thriving from the noise and atmosphere. Matt Hunter again came on as a serving sub, putting the reception unit under pressure. After one final push, Wessex sided out and took the set 25-22. The side were visibly ecstatic.

Dan Hunter, Captain "A fantastic result, in a noisy atmosphere, against a quality opposition. The team performance was good, tactical and meant we were able to control the game"