



MATCH REPORTS

SUPER 8 MEN

Saturday 3rd December 2011

Malory Eagles Vs London Lynx

Result: London Lynx won 2-3 (23-25, 25-27, 25-23, 25-18, 12-15)

Malory Eagles took on local rivals London Lynx at Ernest Bevin on Saturday 3rd December with Malory looking to re-start their league campaign after disappointing defeat away to Northumbria 2 weeks ago, Lynx too were looking to ignite a poor start to the season that has been blighted by an inability to take their first 6 onto court on a regular basis.

As has happened too many times this season Malory had a slow start with Trodden unable to use good ball to find Brown through the middle, heaping unnecessary pressure onto the passing unit. It was 6-0 to the opposition before Lord stopped the rot with a huge winner through 4. Given Malory's usual dominance through the middle it was strange to see a role reversal with Lynx scoring freely in this area through a combination of lack of service pressure and excellent gamesmanship from their setter. Despite this Malory forced their way back into the game and brought the game back to 17-18, however, the wheels fell off, service error from Isted followed mental errors by setter and hitters through the initiative back to Lynx who duly took the set 25-23.

Coach Jefferson highlighted the error count, and the lack of penetration from the Lynx attack, it was Malory letting themselves down, so back on court the same 6 went for set 2. Tempers flared in the set with strange calls coming from the referee favoring neither team, but stopping any momentum either team established. Good blocking kept Malory in the game with a subdued Pinter not scoring freely from the 2 slot. As the game got to the closing points the teams were locked together, but errors won the game for Lynx who went wild taking the set 26-24. A huge upset was on the cards, with no many people being able to remember the last time Malory lost to their nearest rivals.

Lynx should have taken momentum into the 3rd set, but fatigue was setting in, and with their setter being regularly (and harshly) called for lifting when setting the ball a new look faced Malory. Westphal came in to the middle to add some additional power, but with Trodden low on confidence the middle still saw no ball, but Lord and Setsofia had found their range. Malory took an early lead, and despite missing a number of set points eventually closed the game out to 23.

The loss of the 3rd took the wind out of Lynx who quickly fell to a 6 point deficit at the opening technical timeout, Malory knew this was the time to take advantage and punish the tiring opposition. The heat was getting to Lynx who had a player yellow carded for descent - and their coach given a red card for abuse towards to opposition. Malory kept focus, at least they did until they got to 20 points, when a series of 6 unanswered serves turned the momentum - Malory still cruised the set to 18, but could have kept Lynx under 10... and so the scene was set for a deciding set.

5th sets can often be won or lost in the opening stages, but neither team took the initiative - both sets of hitters were unable to make clean winners, and the game became scrambled. Lynx were 8-7 up at the turn, but the game changed at 9-9. Malory thought they'd won the point with both a perceived touch from the Lynx block and the ball landing very close to the line, the call went in favor of Lynx to a disappointed outburst from the Malory side. Malory had been given their final warning, so a yellow card was given to young libero Roberts, instead of 10-9 up, Malory were 11-9 down. Chances came for both sides to break serves, but eventually a block from middle and MVP Cailli on Lord won the game 15-13

Wild celebrations came from the Lynx team, while a despondent Malory reflected on another missed opportunity, and another mid-season loss. They will need to pick themselves up quickly as they head for the final game of the year travelling to a rejuvenated Sheffield side. As Jefferson pointed out after the game, nobody fears playing Malory anymore, but love beating them - making each game a cup final for their opposition.

Saturday 24th September 2011

Malory Eagles Vs Sheffield

Result: Malory Eagles won 3-0 (25-16, 25-18, 25-17)

Coach Jefferson Williams had little time to dwell on the Women's 3-1 defeat to Swiss Cottage in the morning as Malory Eagles Men kicked off their season; hosting former champions Sheffield in game one of the Super 8's.

The boy's from the steel city did the double over Eagles last year so the home side were fired up and hungry for revenge. Newcomer Will Roberts had an outstanding performance at Libero, and his passing gave setter Ashley Trodden the platform to accelerate the ball to the pumped up Malory hitters.

Luca Pinter and Darius Setsoafia are two of the Super 8's shortest outside hitters, but they are also amongst the most explosive and dynamic in the league. The pair were virtually unstoppable as Eagles tore Sheffield to pieces. Williams rotated his middle blockers, and Brown, Isted and Westpal all played their part in making the Sheffield attack look pretty ordinary. There was a welcome return from injury for James Cooper who seemed to enjoy playing a full match for the first time in nearly a year.

Eagles will face sterner tests in the coming weeks, but 3-0 was a job well done against a team they can expect to face again in the top four play offs.

MVP: Ashley Trodden.