

Saturday 28th April 2012

A weekend of top quality volleyball was on show at the National Volleyball Centre, Kettering on the 28th and 29th April 2012, showcasing the highlight of the Volleyball England competition calendar.

Men's Shield Final Boathouse Dewsbury vs. Tendring

Tendring Won 0-3 (18-25, 25-27, 21-25)

The first set saw Tendring fly out of the blocks and dominate the opening moments taking an early 5-1 lead over Boathouse. However mid way through the opener Boathouse battled hard and managed to bring the score level at 11-11, from this moment the crowd knew that we were all in for a great competitive match. Unforced errors and fantastic defence play by Tendring earned them a 16-11 lead into the first technical time out as they once again stepped on the accelerator. Boathouse made a last minute surge saving a couple of set points at 18-24 down to keep their fight alive giving the glimmer of a comeback but a huge kill by Tendring's Alex Porter stopped Boathouse in their tracks to close out the first set 25-18.

Boathouse started bright in the second set as they gained the early lead of 4-1 with some excellent attacking play by their number eight, Adam Bell. Tendring tried to pull the score back, but Boathouse dug deep and extended the lead to 6-2 – it was the perfect start for Boathouse. However Tendring determined to stay in the set kept hot on the heels of Boathouse and bought the score back to 8-7. Coming out of the first technical time out Tendring it was Tendring who managed to turn the tables and regain the lead for the first time in the set 13-10. Following some resilient defensive play and strong attacks by Boathouse the lead switched again 16-14 to Boathouse. A fantastic kill by Anthony Hignett extended Boathouse's lead, as they looked to have gained the momentum at 18-15. Tension began to build for Boathouse as they approached the business end of the set and unforced errors allowed Tendring to overtake the lead and gain match point. Both teams fought hard, and another huge kill from Boathouse helped to keep them in the game but it wasn't enough as Tendring rallied to take their second match point and the set 27-25.

Boathouse again came out fighting as they once again took the early lead 5-2. This continued as a strong Boathouse block seemed to energise the team and their lead to 8-6 at the first technical time out. However Tendring as with the previous kept Boathouse in their sights and an impressive kill from Tendring Captain Sebastian Widlarz brought the score to 12-11. The teams traded point-for-point with scores locked in a tie at 13-13. Tendring edged in front at 16-15 to take the set into its second technical time-out. With the advantage and the winners medal in sight, Tendring managed to pull away from Boathouse with the set, match and championship 24-20, Boathouse dug deep to save one match point. However Tendring showed real determination and focus to keep cool and secure the victory with the 25-21, and crowned the 2012 Men's Shield Champions.

Congratulations to both teams for reaching the final and providing us with an epic game of volleyball.

Women's Shield Final Team South Wales vs. New Forest

Team South Wales set the early pace with a lead in the opening moments, New Forest looked nervous as they trailed 6-4. New Forest seemed as if they'd suddenly woken up and managed to claw back some vital points, to go into the first technical time out trailing by one point 8-7. After a great rally, Team South Wales win 3 points on the bounce, which took the score from 8-8 to a two point lead 11-8. Another long rally between both teams sees the score develop to 14-13 to Team South Wales. Heading in to the second technical time out of the first set, Team South Wales takes the lead 16-14. They continue to dominate the game leading 21-16. Developing into a match point lead to Team South Wales, which sees them win the first set. 25-17.

Moving into the second set Team South Wales take the lead, but not for long as New Forest equal the score out to 2-2. A time out is called as Team South Wales lead 6-2. New Forest fight back to try to bring the score back up, making it 8-6 as the set enters a technical time out. New forest continue to fight to stay in the set as Team South Wales leads 12-7, however their efforts are not quite enough as Team South Wales continue to take the lead, 16-10 into another technical time out. Great block by Carly Lane for New Forest, but Team South Wales further dominated the set, making the score 21-12. As Team South Wales approach match point, New Forest trail with 14 points. Pressure seems to get to Team South Wales as they allow New Forest to score the next 3 points, but not for long as the second set is won by Team South Wales. 25-17.

Becky Gymer for New Forest gets the set underway. Team South Wales take the lead with a 4-1, but are closely followed by New Forest as they bring the score to 5-3. An ace serve by Sofia Santos from Team South Wales brings the score to 8-3 and takes the set into a technical time out. Team South Wales continue to pull away with some consistent serving by their number four Charlotte James brought the score to 11-4. Set 3 is again dominated by Team South Wales, who were Shield finalists in 2010 but unfortunately lost, however the final this year appears to tell a very different story as Team South Wales lead 16-10 into the second technical time out of the set. As the third set enters match point Team South Wales lead 24-15. Charlotte James of Team South Wales serves which helps to keep New Forest in the game. The women's shield final is won by Team South Wales, 25-16. Congratulations to both, Team South Wales and New Forest.

Women's Cup Final Leeds Carnegie vs. Swiss Cottage

Leeds Carnegie took the early lead as Paula Scott dominated the early moments with clever attacking play 5-4. However Swiss Cottage did not let this faze them and galvanized their team to take the lead 8-6, as lead into the first technical time out. At the restart an ace serve by Carnegie's Savannah Noyes levelled the scores, but Swiss Cottage began to take control of the set with a 13-10 lead, forcing Carnegie's Simon Loftus to call for a time out. Some superb defensive play from Swiss Cottage helped to neutralise the Carnegie attack as Swiss Cottage extended the gap to 15-10. Swiss Cottage at this point had the momentum as they approached the business end 21-16. Leeds Carnegie desperately attempted to close the gap and pulled some vital points back to pressurise Swiss Cottage who found themselves at set point 18-24. Carnegie managed to save one set point but the determination of Swiss Cottage shone through to take the opening set 25-19.

Leeds Carnegie Captain Dori Kun got the second set underway with a fantastic serve that confused Swiss Cottage's defence. A blistering pace set by Carnegie sees the lead quickly extend to 6-2 in their favour. Great kill from Alexandra Vajdova energised Swiss cottage but Carnegie seemed determined having lost the first set and extend their lead to 13-7. As the set goes into its second technical time out the score is 16-9 to Leeds Carnegie. After the restart Swiss Cottage struggled to cope with Carnegie's injection of pace and the set began to fall away from them as they trailed 18-14. Eventually the Carnegie won the set 25-17 as they continue secure a set to defend their title as National Cup winners 2011.

With one set each, Leeds Carnegie took the early advantage after the restart with a clear 6-2 lead, and strong serving from Carnegie's Georgiana Angelhuta took the set to its first technical time out at 8-3. Swiss Cottage's Alexandra Vajdova outwitted the Carnegie defence to try and get her team back into the set. But it was Carnegie that remained in control to extend their lead to 13-6. Another ace serve by Carnegie's Georgiana Angelhuta helps to advance their lead to 19-8, whatever Simon Loftus had said at the start of this set seemed to have inspired his team. In the final stages Swiss Cottage seemed to let their heads drop as Leeds Carnegie went on to win their second set of the game with a comfortable 25-14 score.

In the early moments of this must win set for Swiss Cottage the pressure seemed all too much as Leeds advanced to 5-3, but this seemed to galvanise Swiss Cottage who quickly

pulled the score back to 5-4. An unsuccessful block by Swiss Cottage helped Carnegie to once again dominate the attack with an 8-5 lead into the first technical time out. Carnegie continued to work hard and opened up a five point gap of 18-12. As Carnegie began to relax as they steamed ahead Swiss Cottage made their final surge to save the set and championship and impressively pulled the score back to 22-19 after a fantastic rally. Swiss Cottage looking the stronger team continued to fight trailing just 21-23 in the final moments of the fourth set. However Carnegie clung on to reach set point first at 24-23, and closed out the set, match and Championship for the second year running 25-23.

Men's Cup Final

Leeds Carnegie vs. London Polonia

London Polonia set a blistering pace in the early moments of the game with some huge hits from their number five, Robert Rapi to lead into the first technical time out 8-3. Unforced errors by Polonia together with excellent attacking play by Carnegie's Justin Brubaker helped to keep Carnegie in touch with the set as they clawed back a string of points to trail by one point 15-16 as they headed into the second technical. An intense rally saw Carnegie win the point with a huge swing by their number four Chris Gregory which pushed them further into the lead. As Carnegie reached set point Polonia dug deep to save the set trailing 22-24 but Carnegie stay focused and eventually closed out the first set, 25-22.

Carnegie began the second set with the momentum and a huge hit by their number 6 Roland Herczeg sent out a warning message to Polonia as they took the lead 6-3. Carnegie continued to dominate the score board with some consistent serving by David Clayden, as they led into the first technical timeout 8-5. After the restart Polonia came out fighting and some well-placed hitting confuses the Carnegie defence who seemed to suffer from a lapse in concentration and the scores level 10-10. After a period of unrest in the Carnegie side they seemed to step on the accelerator to enter the second technical timeout with the lead of 16-13, outwitting the Polonia defence at the net. In the latter stages of this set Carnegie began to look unstoppable and extended their lead 19-14. Polonia clung on and made Carnegie work hard for the set point as the teams battled it out in a fantastic rally but Carnegie won the point, shortly followed by the set 25-15.

Trailing to Carnegie's two set advantage Polonia's Robert Rapi served first in what was a must win set for his team. The scores remained close as both teams traded point for point and headed into the first technical timeout with Polonia ahead 8-7. At this stage Polonia looked the better team and quickly began to open up a lead forcing Carnegie's Simon Loftus to call a timeout his side as trailed 7-10. The London side looked determined as they extended their lead 20-16 and closed in on the set. However some big hitting by Chris Gregory pulled back some vital points for Carnegie as they closed in on Polonia 18-20. Both teams traded point for point as Polonia approached set point at 24-21. Carnegie manage to save one set point but the London team soon fire home a winner to keep their championship alive and secure their first set of the game 25-22.

Into the fourth set both teams continued to play a very tight game of volleyball and headed in to the first technical timeout with the score 8-6 to Polonia. Polonia managed to keep up the pressure with a string of points and extended their lead 12-6 full of confidence from the previous set. London persisted to pull away with a seven point advantage 15-8. Some big hits and awesome determination by Polonia's Roman Mizerak caused trouble for the Carnegie defence as Polonia stormed into the lead 20-15. But a huge kill from Carnegie's Roland Herczeg galvanized his team who began to creep up on Polonia. Polonia finally reach match point at 24-21, and Carnegie made a desperate attempt to hold on to the set and saved one point. But Polonia made the killer blow and execute a fantastic comeback for the championship having trailed by two sets at the beginning 25-21.

Eager to make amends Carnegie set the early pace in the fifth and final set and led 6-3. Both teams battled hard in what was a fantastic display of volleyball, but Carnegie had the upper hand and led 8-3 into the first technical timeout. Polonia attempted a charge for the title and pulled back some crucial point but Carnegie still led the way 10-5. Following a timeout Polonia pulled back another point but Carnegie kept their cool and ground out a six point lead 12-6.

Carnegie finally reached championship point with the score at 14-7 and with the title in sight Carnegie delivered the hammer blow as the stands erupted and they secured victory as National Cup winners 2012.