

Sitting Volleyball Grand Prix Tier 2 Final
Saturday 15th April 2012

Essex Pirates V Portsmouth

The first game of the Super 8s Finals weekend saw Essex Pirates take on Portsmouth in the Tier 2 Sitting Grand Prix final. The two teams had met several times throughout the season, with only 4 points separating them in the final league standings. Essex Pirates went into this final with the edge, with Portsmouth hoping to prove a point.

The Pirates started the stronger, taking an early lead. Portsmouth mounted a comeback, rallying well and setting up their hitters at the net with some accurate sets. A time out saw Essex compose themselves and use their experience to their advantage. Some strong serves made in difficult for Portsmouth to get back into the game as the focus of their 3 touches went from playing to set up the spike to just getting it back over the net and into the rally, hoping for a mistake from the Pirates. All players showed extremely good mobility around the court, at points sliding well off court to retrieve a misplaced service return or block, however it was Essex who came through to win the opening set.

The 2nd set started in the same fashion as the first. Portsmouth were once again chasing the game which heaped more pressure on them. A time out at 13-6 to Pirates left Portsmouth hoping the momentum would swing back in their favour, but it wasn't to be as Essex captain Dave Gentry served out the set at 25-15.

Some strong serving from Paul Bohannon set the tone again for Essex in the crucial 3rd set. Some long exchanges saw Portsmouth play their way back into the set and, for the first time in the match, look like they had the ammunition to outplay Essex, however some good communication and teamwork from Essex took them ahead, opening up a 16-7 lead. Portsmouth's early promise in the set had fallen away as Essex cranked up the pressure, and saw out the set despite a mini come back from Portsmouth. Credit must be given to Portsmouth for their enthusiasm throughout the match, however it wasn't enough on the day to overcome the experience of the Pirates. Congratulations to Essex pirates who were the first winners of the day, becoming the 2012 Sitting Grand Prix Tier 2 Champions.