

Women's Super 8s Semi Final
Saturday 14th April



Team Northumbria Vs Malory Eagles (London)

Team Northumbria's women were up against Malory Eagles (London) who were surprise quarter-final winners against a Polonia IMKA team who finished 2nd in the league compared to their 5th. Malory once again turned the formbook on its head, as they surged into an early lead, with Team Northumbria unable to cope with Malory's pace. Natasha Brewer was on fire through the middle with numerous winners in both defence and attack.

Northumbria coach Dave Goodchild called an early timeout in an effort to try and regroup. The effect wasn't as big as hoped, as Malory continued to dominate at 18-13. Northumbria managed to close the gap to 4 points as the consistency in their play increased, however it proved to be too little too late as Malory took the first set 25-21 with yet another monster hit from Brewer, leaving the Eagles flying high.

Team Northumbria came out all guns blazing in the 2nd set in an attempt to level the match. An early 5-2 lead was wiped out as the Eagles clawed it back to 5-5. Some clever sets from the Northumbria setter caught the Eagles defence off guard, helping to gain some momentum and consistency in their play. Some good hits from Hannah Gary created a 3-point lead at 11-8. Malory coach Jefferson Williams called a time out that paid dividends as they closed the gap to one point. Malory tried to keep up the pressure, knowing they only had to stay close to be in with a shot of taking the 2nd end. Some great backcourt hitting from Nicole Parrish kept Malory within touching distance, however the Northumbria captain's strong serving pushed them forward to a 21-19 lead. Brewer was once again instrumental in levelling the scores at 23 all however an error gave Team Northumbria a set point. Some great hitting from Petra Jandova brought it back to 24-24. Magda Ropiak once again came through with a great back court spike to give Northumbria a 2nd set point, which they took to level the match.

The break between sets seemed to help Malory, as they came out with real intent and quickly gained a 3-0 lead. Nicole Parrish was once again causing damage with her big serves, keeping Malory ahead at 8-3. Errors started to creep in on the Northumbria side, creating a 6-point gap at 12-6, however some carefully placed serves from Team Northumbria halved the gap and forced a Malory timeout at 13-10. The momentum was now clearly with Northumbria, as they continued to rack up the points and turned the set on its head, racing through to 20-16. An ace from Ropiak extended the lead, as Northumbria closed out the set 25-12.

A scrappy start to the 4th set saw some frantic defence on both sides as each team looked to take the initiative. Consistent serving from Team Northumbria looked to be the difference as they opened up 12-6 lead in the must win set for Malory. Lindsay Johnson was starting to run the game for Northumbria, dictating the play and moving her sets around the front of the court to keep the Malory defence guessing. A 19-8 lead soon turned to 24-13, and an attacking error from Malory gave Northumbria the point they needed to secure a place in the final against Leeds Carnegie.

