

CUP FINALS



OFFICIAL PROGRAMME


**VOLLEYBALL
ENGLAND**

25TH AND 26TH APRIL

WELCOME TO CUP FINALS

It is with great pride and excitement that we welcome you all to this year's showcase event, hosted here at Loughborough University, our new home and a fitting stage for the pinnacle of our competition. Following our move from Kettering last August, it feels especially meaningful to gather here for the first time, bringing together the very best of our sport in an environment built for excellence.

To every player, coach, team official, and supporter: congratulations. Reaching the Cup Finals is no small feat. It is the culmination of months, indeed years of dedication, sacrifice, and relentless commitment. Early mornings, late nights, hard-fought training sessions and moments of adversity have all led to this stage. You have earned your place here, and that achievement alone deserves recognition.

This weekend will bring both the jubilation of victory and the agony of defeat, such is the nature of sport. Yet beyond the scorelines, we hope that every participant and spectator experiences something more enduring: a celebration of volleyball, of community and of shared passion. May this be a weekend filled with memorable performances, lasting friendships and moments that stay with you long after the final point is played.

This year also holds special significance as we celebrate the 70th Anniversary of our association. Since 1955, our sport has grown, evolved and inspired generations. Alongside the action on court, we are proud to host a 70th Anniversary Celebration event, where we will reflect on this remarkable journey from its earliest days to the modern game we see today. We are honoured to be joined by members of our community spanning those seven decades, whose stories and contributions have shaped the sport we love.

At the heart of that journey is something truly special: volleyball's enduring commitment to inclusivity. From the very beginning, it has been a sport that welcomes everyone, a space where individuals can be their authentic selves without compromise. That spirit remains as strong today as it was 70 years ago, and it is something we continue to champion both on and off the court.

Events like this would not be possible without the dedication of our officials and volunteers. We extend our sincere thanks to each and every one of you for giving your time, energy and expertise to make this weekend happen. Your contribution is invaluable. We also encourage all spectators to play their part, embrace the energy of the occasion, support the teams, and, in the spirit of our "Let The Players Play" campaign, create an atmosphere of positivity, respect and encouragement.

Finally, we invite you to support the Ann Jarvis Hardship Fund. This fund exists to provide financial assistance to members of our volleyball community who may be facing difficult circumstances, ensuring that hardship does not become a barrier to participation within our talent pathway. It is a reflection of the care and solidarity that defines our community. If you are able to contribute, please consider donating via the QR codes displayed around the venue. Every contribution, no matter the size, makes a meaningful difference.

Thank you for being part of this special occasion. Enjoy the weekend, celebrate the game, and let's make the 2026 Cup Finals one to remember!

Charlie Ford
Charlie Ford
Volleyball England CEO



SATURDAY SCHEDULE

COURT 1

JUNIOR
GRAND PRIX



11:00

U16 BOYS



URMSTON
GRAMMAR

V



LEEDS
GORSE

NATIONAL
SHIELD



13:30

WOMEN'S SHIELD



READING
ACES



CAMBRIDGE

NATIONAL
CUP



16:30

WOMEN'S CUP



MALORY
EAGLES

V



DURHAM
PALATINATES

NATIONAL
CUP



19:30

MEN'S CUP



MALORY
EAGLES

V



LONDON
GIANTS

SATURDAY SCHEDULE

COURT 2

SITTING
GRAND PRIX



11:00



HELP for HEROES
SITTING
VOLLEYBALL

SITTING GRAND PRIX

SITTING
BUCKS

HELP FOR
HEROES

13:00-13:45

SITTING SHOWCASE

JUNIOR
GRAND PRIX



15:30



RICHMOND
VOLLEYBALL

RICHMOND



SOUTH
BUCKS

U16 GIRLS

SUNDAY SCHEDULE

COURT 1

JUNIOR
GRAND PRIX



11:00

U18 GIRLS



THE BOSWELLS
SCHOOL



LEEDS
GORSE

NATIONAL
SHIELD



13:30

MEN'S SHIELD



LEGENDS



DARKSTAR
VOLLEYBALL

DARKSTAR
DERBYSHIRE

JUNIOR
GRAND PRIX



16:00

U18 BOYS



RICHMOND
VOLLEYBALL

RICHMOND



LEEDS
GORSE

SUNDAY SCHEDULE

COURT 2

JUNIOR
GRAND PRIX



11:00

U15 BOYS



RICHMOND
VOLLEYBALL

RICHMOND



URMSTON
GRAMMAR

JUNIOR
GRAND PRIX



13:30

U15 GIRLS



RICHMOND
VOLLEYBALL

RICHMOND



NEWCASTLE
STAFFS

REFEREEING 101



Service
Hand moves from serving team side to signal the start of a point



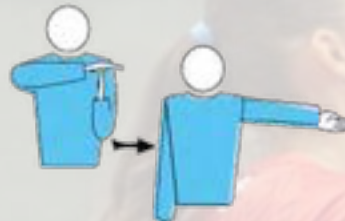
Ball Touched
The ball was touched before going dead



Ball Touched
The ball was touched before going dead



Ball Out
Flag raised vertically to signal ball landing out of court



Timeout
A team has called for a time out (30seconds)



Ball In
The ball landed in the area of play



Four Touches
Ball has been touched four times giving the other team a point



Net Touch
A player has touched the net during a point



Ball Out
The ball landed out of the area of play



Crossing Space Fault
The ball has touched an antenna, wall or other surface not in play



Double Touch
The player has touched the ball twice in a row



Rotation fault
Players are not in correct location at the time of service

VOLLEYBALL 101

A whistle-stop guide to the face-paced and thrilling game!

- A volleyball game consists of two teams of six players each, separated by a net. Volleyball positions are Setter, Middle, Outside, Opposite and Libero.
- Two teams will rally - or hit the ball back and forth over the net - until a fault occurs.
- There is a maximum of three touches per side (a block does not count as a touch).
- The objective is to score points by sending the ball over the net, and grounding it in the opponent's side of the court.
- Volleyball matches are made up of sets, typically three or five sets. All matches at Final 4 will be played as best of five.
- Each set is played to 25 points. Sets must be won by at least two clear points. Tie break sets (fifth set) are played to 15 points.

Quick guide rules

- Only six players on the floor at any given time: three in the front row and three in the back row.
- Players may not touch the ball twice in succession (a block is not considered a hit).
- A ball may be played off the net during a volley and on a serve.
- A ball hitting a boundary line is in.
- A ball is out if it hits an antenna, the floor completely outside the court, any of the net or cables outside the antennae, the referee stand or pole, or the ceiling above a non-playable area.
- It is legal to contact the ball with any part of a player's body.
- It is illegal to catch, hold or throw the ball.
- A player cannot block or attack a serve from on or inside the three-metre line.

SITTING VOLLEYBALL FINAL



HELP for HEROES
**SITTING
VOLLEYBALL**

SITTING
GRAND PRIX



HELP for HEROES
SITTING VOLLEYBALL

HC Charlie Walker

AC John Worrall



HC Stephen Smith

2	Frank Aveh	C
3	Daniel Kitcher	S
4	Carolayne Dufley	OH
5	Corie Mapp	UNI
6	Joachim Pierre	MB
7	C Francis Nduka	OH
8	Emmanuel Akor	OH
9	John Worrall	OH
10	Charlie Walker	MB
11	Christopher Anslow	OH

3	John Munro	S
2	Natalie Lewis	UNI
4	Aedrin Jayatilake	OH
5	Paul Jeffrey	OH
7	Colin Goodbrand	MB
8	Michael Knight	S
9	Daniel Bingley	MB
10	Kev Tann	S
20	Stephen Smith	UNI
14	Rob Richardson	L

SITTING BUCKS



Recent seasons have seen Sitting Bucks imperious in their dominance over the domestic sitting volleyball scene, helping them to four consecutive national championships on the Cup Finals stage.

However, this season they have shown some signs of vulnerability, sharing out the Grand Prix series and Final 4 wins with their final opponents, Help for Heroes, with three victories apiece.

Ominously, though, having finished second in the previous three Grand Prix to their rivals, they stepped it up to finish back on top at Final 4 when qualifying for their Loughborough date.

Injuries and unavailability have certainly played a part, but, as player Kev Tann admitted in the lead-up to Final 4, the Bucks had not always played as well and as consistently as previously, while H4H had raised their game.

Bucks have warmed up for this weekend by travelling out to Bosnia and Herzegovina to take on the cream of Europe in the ParaVolley Europe Golden EuroLeague, having taken a silver medal from the Silver EuroLeague in Nantes in January.

The Milton Keynes-based side have a number of GB squad players to call on, including Rob Richardson, who has captained the team since the London 2012 Paralympics, John Munro, Aedrin Jayatilake, Dan Bingley, Natalie Lewis and Tann, the latter who is also the new GB Men's Coach.

"We are proud to be competing on the national stage once more and it's a testament to the team that we have maintained our level," said Coach Steve Smith.

"Our biggest strength is presence at the net and attack options. We like to keep the opposition defence unbalanced if we can, but we can be quite self-critical and we need to celebrate harder when winning and keep positive when being challenged.

"Aedrin is our new not-so-secret weapon – no-one has a harder hit in the Grand Prix. Help For Heroes will be up for it more than ever. Honours are even between us this season, so they will fancy their chances."

HELP FOR HEROES



Could this be the year that Sitting Bucks are toppled? Help For Heroes would certainly like to think so.

Last April, the team sensed an opportunity to win at Cup Finals when level at 1-1 with their familiar rivals, but they could not quite push through to seal victory, eventually losing 3-1.

This year, though, H4H - whose players are dotted all around the country - have built solidly on that platform and now appear to be in a position to offer an even greater challenge to the status quo, which would secure them a first overall victory since 2020.

Certainly optimism is high in the Heroes camp, and Secretary and Player Carlyne Dufley said: "Getting to Cup Finals Weekend feels like a good reward for all the hard work that the players have put in over the season."

"Given the results throughout the course of the season, having beaten Sitting Bucks on three occasions, it proves that the hard work the team has put in this season has paid off.

"My favourite moments of the season have been watching the team overcome obstacles and work out how to do that, often coming back from sets behind to win matches.

"The players have listened to the coach and understanding what he is asking them to do and implementing that on court.

"Our biggest strength is the level of experience within the team... five of the team have been playing together for over 10 years now, with new players joining us along the way. A lack of consistency lets us down at times, however we are working on this by looking to stick to the basics of volleyball.

"We spend time watching back through matches and working out where the mistakes happened and then how to bring that back to the court so to not to make the same mistakes again.

"Frank Aveh is our main Setter and Francis Nduaka is a strong Outside Hitter. and are key players for us. We aim to play calm, controlled volleyball and hopefully that can get the job done."



**LET THE PLAYERS
PLAY**

SUPPORT. RESPECT. ENCOURAGE.

U16 BOYS' FINAL



JUNIOR
GRAND PRIX





HC	Nelson MURANGWA
AC	Pete MAKOWSKI
AC	Elaine BROWN
AC	Michael LEE
BP	Dave SPEERS



HC	Howard AINSWORTH
AC	Iain HINES
AC	Matthew GRUNDY

1	Finley Wake	C
2	Isaac Dinsdale	OH
3	Rihan Shaik	OH
4	Finlay Cleary	S
5	Roman Kurtiak	MB
8	Alex Thacker	OP
9	Theo Hirst	OP
10	Christian JUDE	OH
12	Alexander Polanski	OH
14	Treasure Idahosa	MB
15	Logan Clayforth	L
16	Elliot Trueman	L

7	Max Burnside	C
2	Archie Sutton	OP
3	Kairon Tait-Millward	OH
8	George Euston	MB
9	Muhau Ngonda	OH
20	Oscar Martis	S
27	Ivan Covali	MB
44	Samuel Khan	MB
42	Samuel Jury	MB
18	Joe Cowles	L

URMSTON GRAMMAR



Urmston Grammar U16 Boys return to the National Finals in confident mood, with Coach Ian Hines quick to highlight the squad's growing experience on the big stage.

For several players, this will be their third national final appearance, while others are reaching their fourth, underscoring a remarkable level of consistency for the programme.

Reaching the final once again is a significant achievement, particularly with every team having been aiming to dethrone the reigning champions.

Urmston have embraced that challenge throughout the season, none more so than during a standout performance at Grand Prix #3.

Preparation has centred on intensity and accountability, with players pushing each other in training to reach high standards.

On court, they combine. Intelligent attacking with strong defensive play, aiming to control matches through smart decision-making.

Their attacking strength is a key asset, though maintaining focus on their game plan, they say, will be crucial in high-pressure moments.

Experienced players Mahau and Kairon provide leadership and composure, adding to an already well-drilled squad.

Familiar opponents await in the shape of Leeds Gorse, a side Urmston have faced multiple times this season.

Recognising the Yorkshire club's quality and continued improvements, Urmston know they will need to be at their best in order to come out on top.

LEEDS GORSE



Leeds Gorse U16 Boys are heading into their first-ever Cup Final at this level, with Assistant Coach Pete Makowski and Head Coach Nelson Murangwa describing the moment as a mix of excitement, pride and disbelief.

For the team, reaching this stage represents a historic milestone and the biggest achievement in their journey so far, and comes as a result of rapid development and commitment throughout the season.

Their path to the final has been defined by resilience in high-pressure moments.

Standout performances came in the Last 6, where they secured dramatic tie-break victories, including beating The Boswells School 16-14 in the group stage before mounting a comeback to defeat Wessex 15-13 in the semi-final.

Those results gave the team belief and highlighted their determination to compete with the very best.

Preparation has been meticulous, combining technical development, tactical planning and mental readiness.

On court, Leeds Gorse brings disciplined and adaptable style, built on strong fundamentals and intelligent decision-making. Energy and fearlessness are key strengths, with the squad playing with enthusiasm and a willingness to learn.

With several U14 and U16 players involved, they continue to build experience and consistency at this level, where the team's strength lies in its chemistry, with every player contributing to a cohesive unit.

Aware of the threats posed by their opponents, particularly from the outside hitters, Leeds Gorse will focus on executing their own game plan.

With most players coming through The Gorse Academies Trust, the squad shares a strong connection on and off the court, making them united and exciting to watch.

kitround

back in the game

DONATE TODAY

De-clutter, do good

Donate your pre-gamed kit at
all Volleyball England events

 **VOLLEYBALL
ENGLAND**

WOMEN'S SHIELD FINAL



NATIONAL
SHIELD 



HC	Rauf Saatcioglu
AC	Rafaet Andres Suarez Tellez
BP	Anya Burtenshaw
BP	Harriet Lea
BP	Aleksandra Anna Paracka



HC	Lyes Sola
BP	Katie Fox

73 Rachel Noka **C**

3 Yue Qi **OH**

5 Lysa Soulsby **S**

6 Nathanielle Jones **MB**

7 Kinga Budzinska **OH**

9 Juliana Pallamin **S**

11 Aleksandra Bliznina **OP**

13 Hailey Morales **OH**

15 Haedyn Hicks **S**

16 Natalie CookMunoz **UNI**

27 Magdalena Klodows **MB**

29 Hannah Weidling **S**

1 Luisa Bronzini **L**

8 Annarita Ranco **L**

6 Magdalena Budzinska **C**

1 Lana Stent **OH**

2 Carmel Greenwood **OP**

3 Elisa Davini **S**

5 Michalina Laz **OH**

7 Lauryn Ankers **OP**

8 Diane Szmidt **MB**

10 Klaudia Karwowska **OH**

11 Gemma Dade **MB**

13 Anastasia Antipina **L**

14 Erin Chan **L**

CAMBRIDGE



It's been another excellent season for Cambridge after they won Division 2 East last season, but were unable to be promoted into Division 1 following their first team's relegation from Super League.

This time, the team have finished as runners-up in their league behind London Onyx, a title race that went right down to the final weeks of the season.

To make the final, Cambridge have already beaten East Grinstead Queens, Sussex Dolphins, University of Bristol, Lincoln Cannons and, in their semi-final Tamworth Spartans.

Captain Rachel Noka, who has been nominated for the Annual Awards in the Volunteer of the Year category, said: "Being at Cup Finals is so exciting! Most of our team has never played on a stage like this before so we are absolutely thrilled to get the opportunity.

"It was our main goal for this season as we are not allowed to get promoted, so it's been amazing to have something really worthwhile to aim for and actually achieve it.

"We started as a local league team in 2021, entered the NVL in 2022 and got promoted to Division 2 via playoffs in 2024 and then won Division 2 last season. We don't think the club has ever won a cup/shield final so it will be club history if we manage it."

Middle/Opposite Noka and Candace Qi have been there from the club's formation, while Jools Pallamin (Setter/Opposite) and Mags Klodowska (Middle) have joined the team this year as part of their 'retirement plan', having played in Super League last season.

The team's age range – two 15-year-olds and two 38-year-olds – is their most unusual feature and Nok admits they are partial to a 'lucky McMuffin' from McDonald's on the way to away games.

She rates their win at Sussex Dolphins as the most memorable in their Shield run and added: "The timings were tricky for us and we went there with depleted players and no coach (as his wife was having a baby that weekend!) having already lost to them in the league. It was a five-set thriller and I'm so proud of the team we pulled through."

READING ACES



NVL Division 2 West champions Reading have won the championship title by six points after losing just one of their 14 matches - their second consecutive league triumph after being unbeaten champions of Division Three South West in 24-25.

Now their target is to complete a league and Shield double, having reached the final by overcoming Ashcombe Dorking, Essex Ravens, Dartford Chargers and Farnborough Phoenix.

Player, captain and secretary Magdalena Budzinska said: "It's been a big season for us - we won the league and now we're in the Shield final, so these are two big achievements for the team.

"What we've achieved has gone further than we imagined, and we can all agree this is one of our best seasons so far.

"Our favourite moment was the final point in the Shield quarter-final (a 3-1 win against Dartford). Winning that game meant a lot to us, especially as that's where our journey in the Shield has ended in previous years.

This time, we pushed through and made it past that stage, which made it a really special and emotional moment for the team."

Influential captain Budzinska and setter Elisa Davini bring vital experience, leadership and energy to the team. She says their serve, defence and familiarity with each other are their biggest strengths.

Budzinska added: "We focus on the details in training and build our game plan based on what we know about the opposition. Everyone knows their role, and we make sure we're clear on what we want to do as a team.

"We played against Cambridge two years ago, and we know they've only improved since then. They're a strong side with a tall, solid block and consistent players, so we know we'll need to be sharp and disciplined to compete with them."

The Aces would like to thank sponsor PM Technical Services for their ongoing support.

U16 GIRLS' FINAL



**JUNIOR
GRAND PRIX**





HC Francesca Secchi

AC Tamako Hashimoto

2	Sno Dixon	OH
5	Annabelle Boost	S
7	Grace Owen-Crompton	MB
9	Defne Tuncer	MB
11	Reika Hashimoto	UNI
13	Lili Coen	UNI
14	Olivia Cross	S
15	Veronica Kornilova	OP
16	Nehir Akatlar	OH
19	Ayşe Morgul	OH
26	Melissie Ella Sutton	MB
6	Mikeighla Cabrejas	L
30	Harper Weber	L



HC Lukas Dorer

AC Lauren Tucker

4	Joss Bartram	MB
7	Skye Hopkins	S
8	Olivia Williams	UNI
9	Molly Meehan	MB
10	Kira Mirsalimova	OH
11	Evie Winspear	S
13	Teresa Debicka	OP
15	Phoebe Liew	UNI
16	Amber Burman	UNI
18	Maria Smolinska	OH
21	Izabela Sullivan	UNI
5	Lyla Amos-Yeo	L

RICHMOND



As national champions at U15 level, Richmond have had a target on their back all season moving up to U16 level – but coped pretty well with it!

Finishing top of the regular season rankings, they have been consistent performers throughout, which they carried from Grand Prix matches into the Last 6 competition.

They beat The Boswells School in their pool and then completed a morale-boosting triumph over this weekend's opponents South Bucks.

That was followed by another composed display in edging out Urmston Grammar, the side who had also accrued a joint-best 67 points during the regular season Grand Prix series.

Olivia Cross, Team Captain, said: "We're so excited to have this opportunity to play in the finals. The whole team has worked so hard to get here and we're very proud to have gotten this far.

"After winning U15 finals last year, we aim to replicate that success, if we can maintain our discipline.

"Since many of us play in different leagues, it was so fun to be able to play together, especially in the trainings in the run up to the Last 6."

Despite having defeated Bucks at Last 6, Richmond are well aware there is no room for complacency, particularly as they have players who are just returning from injury.

Cross added: "South Bucks scrap and fight for every ball, which pushes us to stay on our toes.

"All of our hitters have solid attacks, and our libs have consistent passing, so we will be making sure to utilise everyone's strengths.

"We are so grateful for our coach, Francesca, who has supported and been with us for five years and is the foundation of our team."

SOUTH BUCKS



South Bucks U16 Girls are heading into their first National Final with pride and excitement, with Assistant Coach Lauren Tucker, describing their journey as “10 years in the marking.”

The achievement is a landmark moment for the club, with the team celebrating not only their success on court, but also the growth of the players as individuals.

A standout moment in their run came in the semi-final against Wapping, where the team faced intense pressure and had to completely rethink their strategy mid-match.

Their ability to adapt, stay united and deliver under challenging circumstances highlighted the character within the squad.

Preparation has blended structure with individuality. While video analysis plays a role, matchday routines vary, from music to fun TikToks, before attention shifts fully to focused pre-game preparation with their coach.

On court, South Bucks promise unpredictability. Embracing their status as underdogs, they rely on collective effort rather than individual stars, with every player contributing to the team’s success.

Having faced their final opponents Richmond twice this season, winning once and losing once, they are under no illusions about the challenge ahead.

They describe Richmond as ‘disciplined, well-organised and formidable’, but approach the match with confidence and respect.

What truly defines South Bucks is their unity. Bringing together players from diverse backgrounds across South Buckinghamshire, the team is built on strong bonds, mutual support and shared passion.

Fierce yet compassionate, driven yet grounded, they now look to cap their remarkable journey with a memorable performance on the national stage.

WOMEN'S CUP FINAL



NATIONAL
CUP 



HC Paul Welsh

AC Ross Enfield

BP Elizabeth Schroeder

BP Molea Stanton



HC Jefferson Williams

AC Carol Gordon

AC Ian Legrand

BP Andrew Omoshebi

18 Alisa Ruffin **C**

1 Niara Hightower **MB**

3 Hannah Livermon **UNI**

5 Chloe Thomas **OP**

6 Sara Hall **MB**

10 Isabel Decker **OH**

14 Natasha Frost **OH**

17 Rayliene Joens **OH**

19 Elena Bullemer **S**

21 Marianna Payne **MB**

22 Kialah Jefferson **OH**

28 Maura Hayes **S**

2 True McCullough-Pinci **L**

23 Jenna Giambi **L**

1 Chloe Allen **C**

2 Gabriella Nóbrega
Grissi Cardoso **S**

6 Jaden Scott **MB**

7 Briana Domino **OH**

8 Emily Feller **S**

9 Mckenna McCool **OH**

11 Elizabeth Kellum **OP**

12 Johanna Kruise **OH**

15 Ava Kutilek **MB**

16 Verere Oyearone **MB**

15 Lina Paola Espejo Ramirez **S**

20 Aleah Rafat **OH**

3 Ariadne Sierra **L**

23 Patricia Co **L**

MALORY EAGLES



Last season's double winners have still had an excellent campaign this time around, albeit things have not gone quite as well as they would have liked by their high standards.

In Super League, they took it to the last week of the regular season before clinching their Final 4 spot, eventually pipping Team SideOut Polonia.

Once at Crystal Palace, the team were first defeated by today's opponents Durham Palatinates and then by Newcastle Knights in the Bronze Medal Match.

They will hope to make up for those disappointments this weekend, when they have the opportunity to ensure they still take some silverware from 25-26, even if their task against a Palatinates side, who have proven to be consistently strong, looks a tough one.

While the Eagles side has been shorn of the talents of last season's Player of the Season Grace Lazard (50 blocks, 144 kills at a hitting percentage of .379) and England setter Georgia McGovern, who has returned professionally to play overseas, other familiar faces endure.

Captain Chloe Allen remains an influential presence both in her points scoring and leadership and Ari Sierra a cornerstone of the Malory defence, while Jaden Scott and Claire Kellum – the latter new for 25-26 – have led the blocks count.

Assistant Coach and Team Secretary, Carol Gordon, said: "Our club has a strong history in this competition and we are thrilled to be back here once more.

"A final is always something to savour... and we have a new group compared to last year who will get new experiences out of this.

"Durham are a tall, well organised unit ...strong in serve and block game, but we have a mixed offence and fierce defence."

The Eagles will soon have their very own Malory baby to celebrate as long-serving player Steph Coroi (née Boyce) is expecting anytime soon.

DURHAM PALATINATES



Win their Cup Finals weekend match and Durham Palatinates will not only go unbeaten throughout the entire season, but they will win the BUCS, Super League and National Cup treble as well.

First, Paul Welsh's side won all 14 of their regular season games to top the MAAREE Women's Super League regular season table with ease and added the BUCS title by getting the better of Essex.

Next, at Final 4 two weekends ago, the North East side defeated today's opponents, Malory Eagles, 3-0 in the semi-final before overcoming Essex Rebels 3-1 in the Gold Medal Match, where they showed the tenacity to fight back after their opponents played some inspired stuff to win the second set.

Now, one goal remains – to lift the National Cup – which would represent a significant turnaround after last season, when the Palatinates languished in mid-table obscurity.

To this point, Durham have accounted for Loughborough Students, Bedminster, London Giants and Team SideOut Polonia, the latter seeing them completing a reverse sweep after being put under intense pressure by mark Kontopoulos' side.

As ever, the Palatinates' roster is dominated by North American scholars, led by Opposite Chloe Thomas, who has been in imperious form throughout the campaign. The former University of Nevada Las Vegas player made 141 kills during the regular season with a .282 hitting percentage and 38 blocks.

She has benefited from the setting skills of Elena Bullemer, who has delivered 227 team assists in addition to 76 digs and 13 aces, while Outside Hitter Izzy Decker has 110 kills, 17 aces and 12 blocks.

Durham last reached the National Cup Final in 23-24, when they were beaten 3-0 by Team SideOut Polonia, only to reverse the result in the Final 4 Gold medal match a week later, winning a five-set thriller.

Assistant Coach Ross Enfield said: "Having won the Cup a few times, this competition will always rank highly with us.

"Our goals at the start of every season are to win everything available to us. This weekend we have a chance to do that and achieve something very special."

MEN'S CUP FINAL



NATIONAL
CUP 



HC	Jefferson Williams
AC	Carol Gordon
AC	Ion Legrand
BP	Andrew Omoshebi
BP	Reuben Fernandes



HC	Mihail Stoev
BP	Çisel Ormanç
BP	Youssef Lehat
BP	Juan Esteban Urán Montoya
BP	Zahra Malik

8	Nathan Fullerton	C
1	Tai Yat Chau	OH
5	Benaya Kouame	OH
6	Joel Martinez	S
7	Soner Yashar	S
12	Olafs Matjusenoks	MB
15	Daniel Farrell	MB
16	Samuel Oshita	OH
17	David Butler	OP
18	Dylan Cohan	MB
22	Richard Uhlir	UNI
23	Ryan Dickson	OH
3	Filipi Rodrigues	L
20	Jack Bailey	L

8	Griffin Fieseler	C
1	Daniil Pyvovarenko	OP
2	Vaidas Audickas	MB
3	Hamza Ouyachi	MB
4	Diego Tamburini	S
11	Khadeem Mckoy	MB
12	Andrea Maggio	OP
19	Amadou Laye Samb	OH
23	Mihail Stoev	OH
29	Michele Mafriçi	OH
44	Dorian Poinç	OH
10	George Ivanov	L
14	Filip Denchev	L

MALORY EAGLES



Malory, arguably the most renowned club in the country, have been the nearly-men of the National Cup in the recent times, making the final, but missing out, in the last two seasons.

They are determined for that not to be an unwanted hat-trick in a final against London Giants that promises much excitement.

The Eagles finished the recent Final 4 just as they did 12 months ago – in third place – as they continue to hunt for an elusive league title, having last claimed it in 2009.

But the National Cup offers another route to end-of-season glory after previous rounds wins over London Lionhearts, Newcastle Staffs and a successful revenge mission against Essex Rebels, the side who beat them in last year's final.

Assistant Coach and Team Secretary Carol Gordon said: "Without sounding arrogant, being in the final is a familiar feeling... we have a strong club history.

"Every new season brings a new challenge, but legacy and traditions are important. For us, we will be preparing by meeting to discuss the game plan, confirming what we know, what we do and to control the controllable."

Like opponents Giants, Malory recognise the importance of captain Nathan Fullerton, someone who Gordon describes as 'our version of (France player Stéphen) Boyer' as well as setter Joel Martinez and Brazilian Filipi Rodrigues.

But the club also has a strong core of UK-based players supported by University of East London scholars and will certainly draw some confidence from their Super League encounters against the Giants this season, winning five sets to their opponents three.

After losing 3-2 at the Crystal Palace Sports Centre, they won the more recent return fixture at UEL SportsDock in straight sets.

Gordon added: "Eagles are birds of prey... and we are on the hunt for more titles!"

LONDON GIANTS



Having won the Super League title at the first time of asking following promotion from NVL Division 1, the Giants retained their position as the leading force in English volleyball with victory at Final 4 two weeks ago, beating Newcastle Knights in the final.

Now just one game stands in the way of them, facing a Malory Eagles side who finished two places and just one point behind them in the regular season table.

From a simple stature perspective, Giants are a formidable outfit, with the height of the likes of Amadou Samb, Daniil Pyvovarenko, Hamza Ouyachi and setter Griffin Fiesler, making them not just an incredibly strong blocking side, but also one that has finishing power in spades.

They will make the journey up the M1 keen to add to their growing trophy collection and, at the same time, keen to keep their growing band of supporters content.

The Londoners were beaten by eventual winners Essex Rebels in last season's competition in three straight but close sets (26-24, 26-24, 25-20), but have yet to drop a set this time around.

Ousting 23-24 winners Durham Palatinates in the Last 32, they have also beaten Onyx London, Wessex and Richmond Docklands in making serene progress towards their date at Loughborough University.

Head Coach Mihail Stoev said: "It is a fantastic achievement for the club... it's our first Cup Final as a club so we are very excited to be there! Every new success is more special than the previous ones and no-one guarantees you will have another one.

"We have played all our Cup fixtures away and we travelled all across the country, which has brought us opportunities to spend more time together and made the team bond even stronger.

Last season's DYNAMIK Men's Super League Player of the Season Nathan Fullerton has once again been a key component in the Eagles' success this term and the Giants know stopping him could be key.

Stoev added: "The biggest threat probably remains Nathan, even though it is hard to predict who will be starting since they have great depth in a few positions."

U15 GIRLS' FINAL



RICHMONDTM
VOLLEYBALL

**JUNIOR
GRAND PRIX**





HC Jessica Anne Keen

AC Will Roberts



HC Francesca Secchi

AC Catherine Zake

BP Roberto Borsotti

3	Isabella Bradshaw	OH
7	Isabelle Rose Roberts	OP
9	Mari Jones	MB
12	Charlotte Keen	S
15	Jessica Simpson	OH
16	Sofia Vitsynska	MB
20	Daisy Dalgarno	MB
22	Vivienne Burke	L
24	Evelyn Chadwick-Brown	L

1	Isabelle Harrison	S
2	Sno Dixon	OH
4	Giorgia Filiali	S
7	Lara Rutigliano	OP
9	Defne Tuncer	MB
13	Lola Bryant	OP
16	Nehir Akatlar	OH
17	Amber Wariebi	UNI
19	Ayse Morgul	OH
21	Grace Owen-Crompton	MB
11	Reika Hashimoto	L
14	Kimberley Cross	L

NEWCASTLE STAFFS



Newcastle Staffs U15 Girls A have worked hard to earn their place at Cup Finals, with Head Coach Will Roberts praising the girls' commitment throughout the season.

For many of the players, this marks their first national championship campaign at U15 level, making the achievement even more significant.

Whilst some have previously 'played up' in older age groups, reaching the final represents their highest milestone to date. The moment also carries historical importance for the club, which has not lifted a U15 national title for several years.

Among the season's standout performances was an incredibly disciplined display at the first Grand Prix, where the team conceded just three points in a match. Beyond the result, it was the players' composure, respect and sportmanship that stood out the most.

Preparation has been key to their success, where the girls' have developed a consistent tournament routine.

They arrive early, settling into their environment, and use skipping ropes as part of their warm-up to get match ready. On court, Newcastle Staffs aim to play a varied attacking game, utilising both front and back court options.

Strong serving has been a major asset, though the team continues to develop its overall fluency and decision-making.

Every player plays a vital role, with many targeting regional selection and some already involved in England Pathway sessions.

Facing a strong Richmond Falcons, Newcastle Staffs know the challenge ahead, but are determined to rise to the occasion.

RICHMOND



Richmond U15 Girls are aiming to defend their crown by building on last year's success, with captain Ayse Morgul describing their achievement of reaching the final as 'amazing' after a season on hard work from both players and coaches.

As reigning champions, the team enters with added expectation, but being one game away from retaining their title shows how well the players have coped with any added pressure..

A key highlight for them was in the Last 6, where the team delivered a perfect record, winning all three matches to secure their place at Cup Finals, showcasing their consistency and quality against strong opposition.

Preparation remains focused and disciplined, with structured warm-ups followed by team talks centred on tactics and mindset.

On court, spectators can expect an exciting and balanced style of play, combining strong defensive work, particularly from their liberos, with powerful attacking from their hitters.

Rather than relying on individuals, Richmond emphasise collective strength, with depth across positions, especially among their liberos and middle hitters.

Facing well-drilled opposition in the final, Richmond remain confident they can 'double up'.

A major advantage lies in that many players from last year's title-winning squad are still available at this level, and, with a few new additions, the team has retained a strong core and understanding, making them formidable contenders once again.

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U18 GIRLS' FINAL



JUNIOR
GRAND PRIX





HC	Elaine Brown
AC	Pete Makowski
BP	Penny Speers
BP	Dave Speers
BP	Jessica Djiegoue



HC	Darren Lewis
AC	Andrew Tuck
BP	Joshua Chapman

1	Folasade Aladese	MB
2	Charlotta Macinska	UNI
3	Evie Hague	OH
5	Liliana Kowalska	MB
6	Krystina Ngatcha	UNI
7	Layla Henry	OP
8	Lauren Thorn	S
9	Elizabeth Perfection Uwagboe Akuetiehme	UNI
10	Rejoice Eghianruwa	MB
11	Daniella Tchandev	UNI
13	Olivia Mcadoo	MB
13	Abigail Wong	L
14	Tamara Alahendrage Don	L

7	Yasmin Baptiste	C
1	Tilly Hutton	OH
3	Maisie Watson	UNI
4	Maisie Hornsby	UNI
5	Lily Frost	UNI
8	Amy bean	OP
9	Elisa Jarmon	OH
12	Harriet Lea	OP
10	Esther Adesiyan	MB
27	Harriet Lea	OP
13	Chloe Silvester	MB
6	Sarah Yuen	L
16	Cheryl Manfredini da Cruz	L

THE BOSWELLS SCHOOL



The Boswells School returns to the National Finals with confidence and experience, as Head Coach Darren Lewis highlights the occasion as 'the pinnacle of junior volleyball'.

Having enjoyed success at this level in previous years - winning the U18 title last year - the squad go into Cup Finals weekend with high expectations and a clear understanding of what it takes to compete on the big stage.

Their journey this season has been shaped by regular exposure to strong opposition in the Super Series, providing valuable preparation against top-tier teams week in and week out.

That competitive environment - where they have won three of the four rounds they have contested - has helped refine their approach, with a focus on continual self-improvement before turning attention to specific opponents.

On court, Boswells are known for their fast, exciting offence combined with a solid defensive foundation. Their greatest strengths lie in experience and adaptability, qualities that allow them to adjust to different match situations and maintain composure under pressure.

True to their team-first philosophy, Lewis is quick to emphasise that every player plays a key role, with no reliance on standout individuals. This collective mindset has been central to their sustained success.

Having already faced their opponents, Leeds, three times this season, the girls' are aware of the challenge ahead and the quality they will need to overcome.

This year marks Boswells' fourth consecutive appearance in the U18 National Finals, underlining their consistency at the highest level of junior competition.

With a proven track record and a deep understanding of this occasion, The Boswells School will once again be strong contenders for the title.

LEEDS GORSE



Leeds Gorse Orange U18 Girls arrive at Cup Finals weekend in high spirits, with head coach, Elaine Brown, describing the experience as 'wonderful' and a reflection of a season where they have stayed firmly on track.

Their journey to this stage has been built on steady progress, with the squad developing together and growing stronger as a unit throughout the competition.

For this group, the highlight of the season has been their collective improvement, with a clear focus on teamwork and cohesion. Preparation remains simple but effective, centred around consistent training and maintaining their rhythm as a group.

On court, the team will be aiming to deliver their best performance yet. While Brown keeps specific tactical details close to her chest, the emphasis is on playing as a team, with every player contributing rather than relying on individuals.

Having a collective identity is what Leeds feel is one of their defining strengths. The squad prides itself on unity, with strong relationships off the court translating into trust and understanding during their matches.

Having faced their final opponents' multiple times this season, they are familiar with the challenge ahead and know what will be required to compete.

In addition to their team containing a number of talented players, including those with Super League and international experience, the group is made up of genuine friends, a rarity in the women's game and a factor that underpins their chemistry.

With momentum, togetherness and belief, Leeds Gorse Orange U18 Girls will look to make their mark on Cup Finals Weekend.



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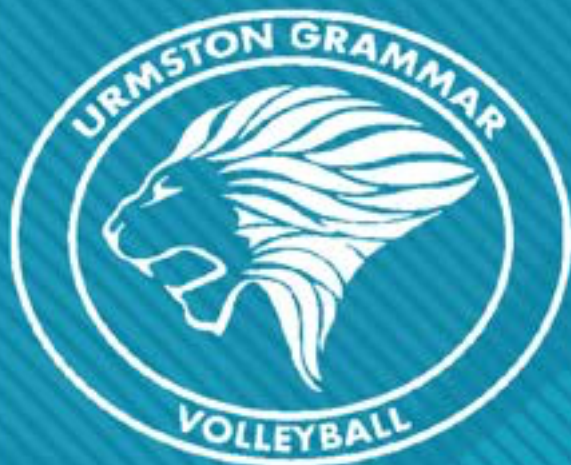
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U15 BOYS' FINAL



RICHMONDTM
VOLLEYBALL



**JUNIOR
GRAND PRIX**





HC	Reza Towfighi
AC	Ryan Murphy
AC	Przemek Soczewka
AC	Anton Kornilov
AC	Jean Max Sourmarié

28	Patrick Olivier	C
1	Matthew Reeves	OH
4	Alex Zamyslowski	OH
21	Filip Hryniewicz	OP
23	Sebastian McBirnie	OH
31	Monty Easton	OH
36	Patrick Towfighi	S
37	Oscar Pidduck	OP
41	Sebastiano Beroldo	MB
45	Maksymilian Koscianski	MB
78	Irity Saucedo Anez	MB
95	Alex Cox	L



HC	Howard Ainsworth
AC	Iain Hines
BP	Matthew Grundy
BP	Archie Sutton

44	Samuel Khan	C
13	Winston Nhyira	MB
17	Harry Ainsworth	MB
25	Akhil Datla	S
26	Alfie Chen	OH
28	Harry Sutton	MB
29	George Corrigan	MB
43	Tug Khos	OP
74	Alexander Balukiewicz	OH
27	Elsa Lees	L

RICHMOND FALCONS



Richmond Falcons have flown high all season and finished level on points at the top of the Grand Prix standings with Urmston Grammar, both sides notching 52 in total. It is fitting, then, that the two standout sides will go head-to-head at Cup Finals Weekend to see who is declared best in the country.

At the Last 6 competition, Richmond were comfortable victors over London Giants and The Boswells School in their pool to set up a semi-final against Wessex.

They faced some tough moments in that latter encounter but dug deep to eventually post a 25-21, 30-28 success, and seal their passage through to the final.

"There have been so many great moments this season but our semi-final win against a strong Wessex side really stands out," said Coach Reza Towfighi.

"The determination our team showed in that match was incredible, especially the way they fought back to take the second set. To keep our unbeaten run going – without dropping a single set all season – was absolutely amazing.

"What's made this journey even more special is how the boys have supported each other every step of the way. It's not just what they've done on the court but also the off-court moments – the team bonding, growing together and building that trust truly shows what this team is all about.

"We've taken the time to really study our opponents heading into the Cup Final. They're a talented team with great chemistry and plenty of experience in big matches.

"One of their biggest strengths is how well they perform under pressure, so, for us, it's all about staying focused, communicating clearly and being ready to adapt as the game unfolds.

"I would like to take a moment to say a huge thank you to everyone who has supported us on this journey to the final, with a special thank you to Rodrigo Voss, our Men and Boys Manager, for the incredible work he has done behind the scenes."

URMSTON GRAMMAR



Urmston Grammar's U15 Boys head into the Cup Finals full of excitement, with coach Ian Hines highlighting the opportunity as a reward in itself.

Competing at such a prestigious event marks a major milestone for the squad, particularly as this is their first year playing together in competition.

Despite their relative newness as a group, the team has already made significant strides.

Reaching the finals stands as their greatest achievement so far, underlining both their rapid development and enthusiasm for the sport.

A memorable moment on their journey came during a half-term trip to London, when the team travelled together in a single vehicle yet still delivered an outstanding performance, demonstrating their commitment and team spirit.

Preparation remains consistent, with regular training and competing against older age groups helping their cause. Urmston have built a strong foundation and approach, focusing on both performance and enjoyment.

Combined with strong organisation and balance across the team, the boys post a threat across all areas. Rather than relying on standout individuals, Urmston pride themselves on a unified squad where each player contributes.

All members of the team began their volleyball journey at the school, reinforcing their shared development pathway.

Facing a strong Richmond team in the final, Urmston are ready to test themselves against one of the best and see how they measure up.

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MEN'S SHIELD FINAL



DARKSTAR
VOLLEYBALL



LEGENDS VOLLEYBALL CLUB

**NATIONAL
SHIELD** 



HC Audrey Cooper

AC Maria Bertelli

1 Ilya Robbins **C**

4 Trafim Brokh **OH**

4 Oliver Fountain **OH**

7 Rares Virlan **OP**

9 Sam Williamson **MB**

10 Nahome Tewelde **OH**

12 Charlie Bradbury **S**

13 Jeremiah Zakhary **S**

16 Matthew Howe **OH**

21 Tim Riekeles **OP**

2 Joseph Spencer **L**

11 Sam Miller **L**



HC Rafal Lojewski

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3 Chester Searle **C**

1 Vincent Caleb Adjimani **MB**

4 Joshua Li **S**

5 Patryk Walczak **OH**

6 Bartosz Baran **S**

8 Marcin Pachowicz **OP**

10 Ben Lucas **OP**

11 Rafal Lojewski **OH**

14 Artur Zylinski **OH**

15 Adrian Fernandez Vazquez **OP**

16 Chun Hung Leung **UNI**

18 Navid Lam **UNI**

21 Lukasz Tokarzewski **MB**

33 Jose Puello **L**

LEGENDS



With England internationals Ben Lucas and Chester Searle among their number, and plenty of other players who have played to a good level in NVL or Super League, Legends were one of the favourites going into this season's National Shield, despite being a fledgling club.

Formed as recently as December 2024, the Oldham-based side are determined to go places and hope that winning this competition will push their claims to be included in the NVL next season.

Coach and Vice Chairman Rafal Lojewski has previously helped Stockport into the Super League and has recruited a team of experienced players who know how to win.

But he knows the job is not yet done, with the team starting their campaign back in September by beating the Isle of Man Falcons and subsequently overcoming Hull Thunder 2, Nottingham Rockets, Leeds Gorse 2 and London League Brazukas en route to this stage.

"It's definitely a great feeling to be in the final, but we're not getting carried away with excitement," said Lojewski.

"Most of our players have already had the opportunity to win this title, or even bigger ones in the past, so we know the most important match is still ahead of us, and our full focus is now on that game.

"So far we haven't had many opportunities to compete in events of this scale, but we hope this is just the beginning and that many more achievements will follow.

Alongside playing in the local Manchester League, Legends have also been arranging friendly matches to aid their preparation for the season finale.

Lojewski added: "We're focused on having the full squad available in training sessions leading up to the final, so we can build strong team chemistry.

"Our biggest strength is experience, we have a very intelligent team that knows how to control the game. The trade-off is mobility, but we make up for that with positioning, reading the game, and smart decision-making."

DARKSTAR DERBYSHIRE



Just like women's team Reading, Darkstar Derbyshire are also up for the double after securing the NVL Division 2 North title.

West Park Miners, Newcastle Panthers, Lincoln Cannons were deposed of in the early rounds, but an impressive statement of intent came in the quarter-finals with a 3-1 win over Division 2 Central champions Oxford Bulls followed by a straight sets triumph over The Army in the semis.

With support from the University of Derby and led by Olympians Maria Bertelli and Audrey Cooper, everything has come together nicely for the East Midlands this season – and victory would be the icing on the cake.

"It's a great achievement for us as a team and a club," said player and team secretary Joe Spencer. "We have come close in the past but never quite managed to get to the final.

As a team, this is definitely one of the greatest achievements we have had, alongside our recent winning of the league.

"I would say it's playing against teams that we have never played before and meeting some of the old friends has been a particular highlight.

Darkstar like to get the lowdown on their opposition and know that in Legends – for whom many of their team have Super League experience – will be tough final opponents.

Spencer added: "We study our opponents and practice the drills that would help us to have an edge in the match. If we don't have any intel on the opposition, then we would focus on our strengths instead/

"We are organised in defence and free flowing in offence. Our strengths are our organisation and team spirit, but we can be susceptible to losing focus at times during the match.

"They are a team full of very good experience players and we know this will be our toughest game of the season."

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U18 BOYS' FINAL



RICHMONDTM
VOLLEYBALL

**JUNIOR
GRAND PRIX**





HC	Nelson MURANGWA
AC	Pete MAKOWSKI
AC	Elaine BROWN
AC	Michael LEE
BP	Dave SPEERS

1	Maksymilian Makowski	C
2	Josh Cosgrove	S
3	Emmanuel Oretoye	OH
4	Gabriel Harrison	UNI
5	Essay Mulubrhan	OH
8	Oliver Furnell	OP
9	Finn Chalkley Beales	MB
10	Ioannis Dimitrakopoulos	MB
12	Jack Shorting	OP
14	Abdoul Gimma	MB
15	David Akeroyd	L
16	Dylan Parsons	L



HC	Nicholas Sampson
AC	Ryan Murphy
AC	Reza Towfighi
AC	Przemek Soczewka
AC	Anton Kornilov

28	Oliver Harrison	C
2	Levi Su'a	MB
3	Dan Sampson	S
5	Alexander Vince	UNI
6	Yasin Heidari Bahman Biglo	OH
8	Ely Hyman	MB
9	Albert Ruddick	S
18	Max Anley	MB
25	Alan Powirski	OP
48	Ryan Wartnaby	OH
52	Aadhil Hussain	OH
68	Jelani Conteh	OP
80	Tyler Sourmarié	L
81	Rei Marujo	L

RICHMOND FALCONS



While they have not won any of the U18 Super Series events this season, outright Richmond have been building nicely leading into Cup Finals.

At Last 6 at the back end of March, the South West London club confidently overcame Deep Dish Crystal Palace and Exeter Storm in their pool before beating last season's finalists Urmston Grammar in the semi-finals. In a high-quality match that could have gone either way, Richmond eventually took control in the decider after the first two sets had been shared (28-26, 24-26, 15-8).

Alongside that, the club has been boosted by their senior men's team survival in Super League following last weekend's 3-0 victory over Leeds Gorse at the NVL Play-offs. It is not without a sense of irony that the two clubs again meet on the big occasion, this time with the national U18 title at stake.

Captain Olli Harrison, who had represented England at junior level both indoors and on the beach, said: "It's a massively exciting event for the whole team.

"We're pretty fortunate to see the court of the finals often, so we're eager to go forth and prove our abilities again. The development of our team's cohesion throughout the season as we've taken on board many new players and made really good friends. Has been a real highlight.

"Our biggest strength has to be our ability to rebound, even after rough beginnings we strive in bringing determination which will help us in this finals. Our weaknesses are few but contain our unforced mistakes that happen in heat of the moment situations, like a hit out or a block unclosed.

Harrison picks out Setter Dan Sampson, Outsides Aadhil Hussain and Ryan Wartnaby, Libero Rei Marujo and Middles Levi Su'a and himself as players to watch, not to mention Opposite Jelani Conteh who has been picked up by NCAA Division 1 side California State University, Northridge (CSUN).

"Our team excels in bringing both focus and power on court as our play style accommodates high amounts of power as well as technique from all our players," added Harrison. "Leeds bring an unmatched level of quality and creativity to their work. They are very adaptive and have exceptional players. Our goal will be to match and exceed these qualities on the day."

LEEDS GORSE



This will be the fourth year running that this crop of Leeds Gorse players have played at Cup Finals Weekend moving up through the various age groups.

In making a defence of the U18 crown they won last season, the Yorkshire club have made a pretty good fist of things.

Contesting the Super Series across the season, they have won three of the four editions held, with only Exeter Storm briefly able to break their dominance.

Those assured performances continued into the end-of-season Last 6 tournament, where Cup Finals places were up for grabs, beating Urmston Grammar and The Boswell Schools in straight sets in their pool and then getting the better of Exeter in their semi-final match.

Ahead of their final match-up with Richmond, they have well and truly justified their number one ranking and remain the team to beat.

It feels amazing to be at Cup Finals... like all the hard work, setbacks, and effort finally paid off," said head coach Pete Makowski. "There's pride, excitement, and relief, but also added pressure, especially when you're defending the title, because it's not just about reaching the top, it's about staying there.

"It's a huge achievement that reflects continuous development, showing that the hard work, coaching, and growth at every level have paid off. Winning across all age groups proves the programme isn't just successful by chance; it's the result of consistent progress and dedication over time.

"You can expect a fast, dynamic style of play that combines speed with freedom. Every player is fully engaged what I like to call "six minds on court," similar to how Japan operates constantly reading, adapting, and supporting each other to create smart, fluid, and unpredictable play.

"Our key players are those who regularly compete in the Super League they bring experience, composure, and a high level of skill that raises the whole team's performance. Their exposure to top-level competition helps guide and inspire the rest of the squad."