FINAL 4













CRYSTAL PALACE NATIONAL SPORTS CENTRE 5th and 6th April 2025



WELCOME TO THE FINAL 4



Hello and welcome to the electrifying conclusion of the 2024-25 Super League season!

This weekend, the top four men's and women's teams take centre stage, battling it out in the semi-finals on Saturday before the gold and bronze medal matches on Sunday.

The stakes couldn't be higher, and the stories that have unfolded across the league over the last few months have set the stage for an unforgettable finalé.

This season has been nothing short of extraordinary. The drama, the rivalries, the rise of new contenders and the fight at both ends of the table have captivated fans like never before. This hasn't happened by chance, it's the result of our relentless efforts to professionalise the Super League, amplify its reach and bring to life the incredible journeys of the players, coaches and officials, not to mention the hard-working, passionate volunteers who are the heartbeat of our clubs.

Through short-form videos, weekend previews and reviews, highlight reels, in-depth stats and monthly awards, we've worked to showcase the league in all its glory. The level of engagement and interest has surged, proving that volleyball in England is on an unstoppable rise.

To the teams who have battled their way to the Final 4... congratulations! You've earned this moment, and we can't wait to see you leave it all on the court this weekend.

To the fans, friends, and families who have travelled to Crystal Palace National Sports Centre, or will be watching the live stream to get behind your teams, your passion and energy fuel the sport, and we are arateful for your incredible support.

A massive thank you also to the Crystal Palace staff for hosting us, London Giants for their invaluable contributions and the Hub team for their tireless efforts in organising this showcase event.

Enjoy every moment of this Final 4 Weekend, and thank you for being part of this incredible journey.

Charlie Ford Chief Executive Officer, Volleyball England

Charlis Ford

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FINAL 4

SCHEDULE

SATURDAY



WOMEN'S SEMI FINAL 1

11:00

MALORY EAGLES V LIONHEARTS VINARIUS





WOMEN'S SEMI FINAL 2

13:30
TEAM SIDEOUT POLONIA V ESSEX REBELS





MEN'S SEMI FINAL 1

16:00 SUPER LEAGUE CONTROL SUP





MEN'S SEMI FINAL 2

18:30
MALORY EAGLES V LONDON GIANTS



FINAL 4

SCHEDULE SUNDAY

LOSER SF1

WOMEN'S BRONZE MEDAL

9:30
LOSER OF SEMI 1 V LOSER OF SEMI 2

LOSER SF2

LOSER SF1

MEN'S BRONZE MEDAL

12:00

LOSER OF SEMI 1 V LOSER OF SEMI 2

LOSER SF2

winner SF1

WOMEN'S GOLD MEDAL

14:30
WINNER OF SEMI 1 V WINNER OF SEMI 2

WINNER SF2

WINNER SF1

MEN'S GOLD MEDAL

17:00
WINNER OF SEMI 1 V WINNER OF SEMI 2

WINNER SF2



OFFICIALS SATURDAY SUNDAY

SEMI-FINAL 1

WILLIAM PERUGINI

ANNA JUSTKOWSKA

SEMI-FINAL 2

CARL PADAYACHEE

GIORDANO MARCHI SECOND REFEREE

SEMI-FINAL 3

BRENDAN FOGARTY
FIRST REFEREE

SEBASTIAN WIDLARZ
SECOND REFEREE

SEMI-FINAL 4

GIORGIO SCATIGNA-GIANFAGNA FIRST REFEREE

KATARINA CEPINOVA SECOND REFEREE **WOMEN'S BRONZE**

GIORDANO MARCHI

FIRST REFEREE

GIORGIO SCATIGNA-GIANFAGNA SECOND REFEREE

MEN'S BRONZE

ANNA JUSTKOWSKA

BRENDAN FOGARTY

WOMEN'S GOLD

KATARINA CEPINOVA

CARL PADAYACHEE
SECOND REFEREE

MEN'S GOLD

SEBASTIAN WIDLARZ

FIRST REFEREE

WILLIAM PERUGINI
SECOND REFEREE

REFEREEING 101



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



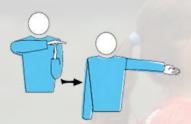
Ball Touched The ball was touched before going dead



Ball Touched The ball was touched before going dead



Flag raised vertically to signal ball landing out of court



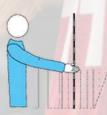
Timeout
A team has called for a time out (30seconds)



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.

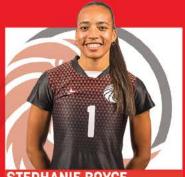
Quick guide rules

- 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.

MALORY EAGLES



CHLOE ALLEN Outside, Captain



STEPHANIE BOYCE Middle



SELENA BATISTE Universal



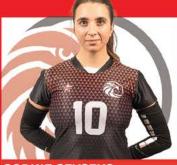
GRACE LAZARD Middle



JADEN SCOTT Middle



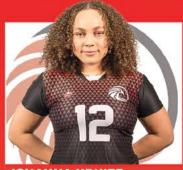
VERERE OYEARONE Middle



SOPHIE SZYSZKO **Outside**



ELIZABETH KELLUM Universal



JOHANNA KRUIZE Outside



EMICHIKA TOMOI Outside



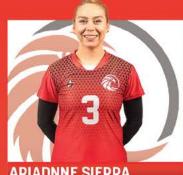
MICHELL DANIEL **Outside**



GEORGIA MCGOVERN Setter



PATRICIA CO Libero



ARIADNNE SIERRA Libero

JEFFERSON WILLIAMS BENCH PERSONNEL **Head Coach**

CAROL GORDON **Assistant Coach** IAN LEGRAND **Assistant Coach**

ANDREW OMOSHEBI Bench Personnel ZSOFIA PALANKAI-OMOSHEBI **Bench Personnel**



Having finished top of the regular season table in the MAAREE Women's Super League with an impressive 17-1 record, hopes are high that this could finally be the Eagles' year to end their long wait for a top-flight trophy.

While the club won the old Division 1 title five times in six seasons in the noughties, they have not been national league champions at the highest level since 2006-2007.

Assistant Coach Carol Gordon says the team have been "blessed" to be able to call on six or seven players who have been on the roster for several seasons, and believes the depth of the squad has been of key importance.

Buoyed by a first regular season win over long-time nemesis SideOut Polonia, Malory have a quiet confidence about them this season thanks to the continued excellence of the trio dubbed the Holy Trinity - Setter Georgia McGovern, Outside Chloe Allen and Libero Ari Sierra - not to mention Grace Lazard, one of the league's best Middle Blockers.

Gordon added: "There are a few times when this team have been down in games but then they say "We're not having this... we're going to go to five sets and get the win." The grit shown by this group is phenomenal.

"I would really like them to have something that acknowledges what they've done this season and the hard work that they've put in. It's there for the taking, but they've got to go hard, because it's not going to be an easy couple of games at all."

One to watch: Georgia McGovern. The talented England starting Setter has added an extra dimension to an already-dangerous Eagles offence since returning from playing as a professional overseas.

Most improved: Selena Batiste. The West Texas A&M University graduate has this season played in attacking positions other than her natural one as Setter, but has demonstrated her versatility with some excellent displays.

LIONHEARTS VINAIUS



GLORIA FRANCALANCI Middle, Captain



GABRIELLA CARDOSO Setter



DIANE EWANE Outside



ELENA VISILEAN Opposite



KERSTI SORRA Middle



ALEXANDRA SAFRYGHIN Outside



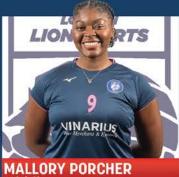
MARIA SVIRIDOVA Outside



Middle



Setter



Middle



Outside







DAVIDE TIBERTI Head Coach

BENCH PERSONNEL

HOI PUI LEUNG Assistant Coach TURBO KA BO CHEUNG **Assistant Coach**

CAMILLA DE TOMIN Bench Personnel

ANU MUNKHTUR Bench Personnel



Underdogs is a tag the Lionhearts Vinarius are happy to roll with going into Final 4, given they have already surprised a lot of people this season.

If things go according to plan, the club that has progressed from NVL newcomers in 2018 to Super League debutantes last season has one more big shock in store at Crystal Palace.

The Londoners were almost back in NVL Division 1 at the end of last season, but won their final two regular season games and then a play-off against Stockport to preserve their top-flight status.

And with the new season has come a new start, as new players have been added to a core group to make Lionhearts into a force to be reckoned with, finishing the season with a 12-6 record to claim fourth spot.

Italian Head Coach Davide Tiberti said: "12 months ago, we were pretty much dead and buried at this point... no one believed that we could actually stay in Super League.

"So we're very, very pleased to be up there this year. We did not start out the season aiming to be in the top four and we are happy to have exceeded expectations once again.

"It is not going to be easy against Malory in our semi because they are very strong and technically good... they haven't got many weaknesses, nor have the other teams.

"We know we will have to execute our game plan to perfection, but we only need to be better than the teams we play on the day. It's two single matches, and we can do it."

One to watch: Maria Sviridova. After being the MAAREE Women's Super League Player of the Season in 2023-24 with Polonia, the Russian has moved clubs and positions, from Middle Blocker to Outside, and been equally effective.

Most improved: Lyubomira Atanasova. A near ever-present in 2024-25, the Setter had not played any Super League or NVL volleyball until this season, but the Bulgarian has made the position her own after being plucked from the London League.

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TEAM SIDEOUT POLONIA





























MARK KONTOPOULOS Head Coach

BENCH PERSONNEL

KRYSTIAN KOWALSKI HAI-BINH LY Assistant Coach SAM SORSKY Assistant Coach

VLADISLAV POTEHIN Bench Personnel



Having been runners-up to Durham Palatinates in the past three seasons, Team SideOut Polonia believe that this year will be different.

Last season's National Cup winners – who will be back to defend that title against Malory Eagles later this month – have a steely determination to go one better this time, aided by a squad depth that is the envy of many.

Pipped to regular season top spot by the Eagles, SideOut have nevertheless been mightily impressive, putting together a 15-3 record.

Although having to cope with departures in last summer's break, and a season-ending ACL injury to Sydney Busa early in the campaign, the new players for 2024-25 have quickly bought into Head Coach Mark Kontopoulos' team ethic.

He said: "We know we have options to call on, very strong players in all positions, who are embracing the mentality and understanding that when they get their chance they think "this is my turn my time to shine, my time to step up".

"I th<mark>ink ou</mark>r average age must have dropped by about 10 years this season, maybe not literally, but pretty close. We've had a few players in their mid to late 30s retire and be replaced by people in their teens and early 20s.

"We're really excited that the event is in London. We last played at Crystal Palace in the 2010 Cup final, which we won against Leeds Carnegie.

"We've got Essex in the semi-final and we know they can do some serious damage if they're allowed to play their game. We need to focus on ourselves, play the way we know – and we've made a commitment that we will."

One to watch: Carla Mulli. After missing three months of the season with injury, the Outside, who hails from Luxembourg and has considerable experience of playing in the Netherlands, has returned to the fold in scintillating form.

Most improved: Alice Jagielska. The Opposite stepped up to the England Senior ranks for this year's Five Nations Championships, having previously helped the Junior squad to the second round of Euros qualifying, and is set to take up a scholarship in the US next season.

ESSEX REBELS



CHELSEA SIMMONS Setter, Captain



JULIA HAYNIE Middle



ALEXIS DIAZ-INDANTE Opposite



KATHEA SCHAMBLIN Outside



LAETITIA BRUNAT Middle



CATHERINE TOLLEY Middle



SASKIA SCHOFFEL Middle



EMILY PRIESTLEY Outside



LEA BOROVEC Outside



TARA KING Middle



ZYAIRE GARRIT Outside



MOLLIE LAWRENCE Setter



MADOKA WELDON Libero



VERONIKA RUBINOVA Libero

BENCH PERSONNEL

ALEX CHINERY Head Coach BENJAMIN MERRY Technical Analyst KATE FUNDAFUNDA Bench Personnel LILLA WHITTAKER Bench Personnel TRISTAN LANE Bench Personnel



Essex Rebels have already secured one piece of silverware this season – beating Durham in the BUCS final –and are now zeroing in on another.

The team finished third in the MAAREE Women's Super League regular season (14-4) but were a real threat in the second half of the campaign, winning nine of their last 10 matches.

The Rebels have found a potent mix of international scholars and homegrown players that have thrived under the guidance of Head Coach Alex Chinery.

The man who began coaching 15 years ago, after sustaining a bad injury as a teenager that prevented him from playing for a year, has been delighted with the progress made by his team as the season has wore on.

"We're really happy with where we got to in third place," he said. "It's the highest that we've ever finished as Rebels, and the highest that we have finished since 2019.

"We have a really good training environment, where athletes are going to get better over the course of the year, and I think the bottom end of our roster has just improved massively.

"We started the year without a huge amount of depth and it's ended with 12 to 13 athletes that are capable of coming in and performing.

"Since we lost in the National Cup quarter-final to Leeds, we've had five big games and we've been really good at executing our game plan.

"For us, it's about coming into this event and giving ourselves the best opportunity to win by putting in the best performances we can."

One to watch: Julia Haynie. The American Middle Blocker has been second in Super League in terms of attacking efficiency and blocks over the course of the season and is renowned for her ability to turn it on in big matches.

Most improved: Kathea Schamblin. Had not played indoor volleyball for four years before moving to Essex after leaving her NCAA programme, but has been a revelation for the Rebels, working hard to adapt to the European style of the game.

UNIVERSITY







DYMANIK

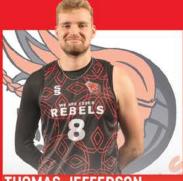
- Sports Flooring Acoustic Walling
- Track & Gym Maintenance & Protection

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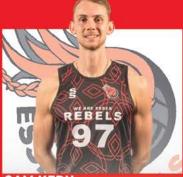
REBEL



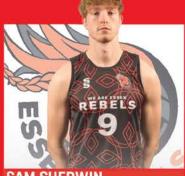
JACOB KERN Outside, Captain



THOMAS JEFFERSON Middle



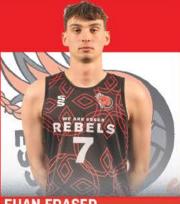
CAM KERN Setter



SAM SHERWIN Middle



THOMAS SHATIMEHIN **Outside**



EUAN FRASER Opposite



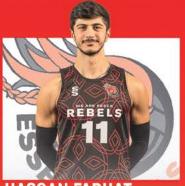
DAVEN PASCAL Middle



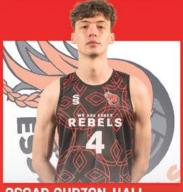
BEN OSBORNE Outside



NATHAN HALL Setter



HASSAN FARHAT **Outside**



OSCAR CURZON-HALL **Opposite**



ASHER MILLER Universal



LEFTERIS IOANNOU Libero



BEN BUTLER Libero

BENCH PERSONNEL

ALEX PORTER Head Coach

JACOB LLOYD-WILLIAMS JOSHUA HOLDSWORTH **Bench Personnel** TRISTAN LANE Bench Personnel

Bench Personnel **CALLUM BANKS Bench Personnel**



Having never previously finished a regular Super League season higher than fourth, the Rebels have found something extra this season to head up the regular season DYNAMIK Men's Super League.

Their mix of international scholars and talented British players has proven to be an irresistible force, with the ongoing quest for trophies balanced with a determination to establish a long-term development programme.

Essex have been a bastion of consistency, not only finishing with a 15-3 record in Super League, but also winning a much yearned-for BUCS title, beating UEL in the final.

Head Coach Alex Porter is looking forward to taking on Newcastle Knights in the semi-final, a team in the process of establishing a university programme similar to that of their own.

He said: "I think Newcastle are going to be a really good team in the future. I've got a lot of hopes for them in terms of their programme, but that doesn't mean to say they aren't a strong team now.

"They are a new-ish entity, which takes time to bed in. We went through that same process ourselves, so that's why it's why it's really exciting to be playing them. I think it's exciting because they're on the way up and that's what you want, isn't it?

"For me, if we were to win Fin<mark>al 4 it means that w</mark>e're doing the right things. We're not just investing in the athletes, we're also investing in the sport, and it would show what we're doing is working."

One to watch: Jacob Kern. One of the best all-round players in the league, the Canadian Outside is not only one of the most successful hitters, but also regularly contributes strongly with his serving, receiving, blocking and digging.

Most improved: Hassan Farhat. Expected to be a bench player this season, he stepped into the team when Jacob Kern broke his elbow in pre-season and excelled, continuing to be a reliable option whenever he gets court time.



NEWCASTLE KNIGHTS



Outside, Captain



ISAAC GIBBS Middle



KELECHI BELL Opposite



JAMES LEDBURY **Outside**



RYAN PEACE Middle



MATTHEW MILNE Outside



Opposite



Setter



Middle





JACK MCKELVEY Libero

SAM SHENTON **Head Coach**

BENCH PERSONNEL

JODIE AMOR RYAN WAUDBY Assistant Coach Statitics MARTINO COSTA DA SILVA **Statistics**



2024-25 has been a transformative season for the Newcastle Knights on a number of levels.

A new team name and base (they played as Team Sunderland last season), a new Head Coach (Sam Shenton) and a number of additions to their roster have been just a few of the changes made in a bid to make the club a long-term volleyball power.

And those moves have certainly paid off, with the team setting their stall out with an Opening Weekend triumph over Malory Eagles and sustaining it across the whole campaign to end on a creditable 10-8 record.

Shenton insists the team were looking downwards until the middle of January and only then geared up for a push to earn a place in the top four.

"It's been so tight this year," he said. "I think the league and competition as a whole has been awesome. Three teams getting relegated made it super-tense the whole year when normally, by November, you know who is probably going to go down.

"We had both starting Outsides go down in December, where we played Stockport twice and Richmond once and we came out of those games with wins. That was the biggest moment in terms of us thinking, "okay, now we can push on".

"I think Essex are the team to beat. They are the first seeds, and that's really well deserved. They have nailed the blend of British and North American talent this year.

"In terms of stats and data, we prob<mark>a</mark>bly are the un<mark>derd</mark>ogs, but it might suit us quite well as it's always easier to climb up the hill than stay on top."

One to watch: James Ledbury. The England Outside is a post-graduate student at Northumbria University who brings wealth of knowledge, experience and a keen competitive edge, having joined from NVL Division 1 side Black Country last summer.

Most improved: Jack McKelvey. Stats show the Knights' starting libero, a Scottish international, has improved his passing significantly this season, while he is also ranked in Super League's top five in terms of number of digs.

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MALORY EAGLES

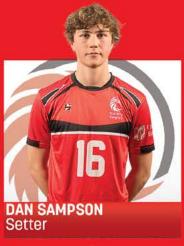






















Setter



Outside







JEFFERSON WILLIAMS Head Coach

ENCH PERSONNEL

CAROL GORDON **Assistant Coach** IAN LEGRAND

Assistant Coach

Bench Personnel REUBEN FERNANDES **Bench Personnel**



Last season's beaten National Cup Finalists have stepped it up another notch this campaign, finishing second in the DYMANIK Men's Super League table with a 14-4 regular season record.

Starting the season with a five-set defeat to Newcastle Knights at Opening Weekend that came as a surprise to many, the London side quickly turned around their fortunes by reeling off eight consecutive victories.

What the squad lacks in size in some positions, it has made up with a mix of ability, determination and dependability that has seen the team consistently find a way to win.

With a long and proud history of trophy success, Malory are determined to end a wait to be national champions for the first time since 2009-10, having finished second and third three times each during the intervening period.

"We've actually tried to rotate the squad based on how we want to try and play depending on the opposition," said Head Coach Jefferson Williams.

"We lost 3-0 to (semi-final opponents) Giants after seeing one match with their new players going into it, which wasn't all that much to go by. This deep in the season, after another few matches, we have a better understanding of what they do.

"I would like to think being close and missing out in the Cup Final and Final 4 last season will have given us some extra motivation.

"A lot of it comes to how the players manage the situation on any given day... the mental side of things. At the top level, where skills and physicalities are fairly even, then the game becomes 90% mental. It's about not allowing mistakes to drag you down."

One to watch: Nathan Fullerton. The experienced England Opposite has the most kills in the DYNAMIK Men's Super League this season – 286 – and is a formidable force on court with his physical strength, athleticism and ability to block.

Most improved: Joel Martinez. Likely to be the Eagles' starting Setter, he joined the club as an Outside with potential, but has really stepped up when called upon this season, earning praise from his coaching team.

LONDON GIANTS



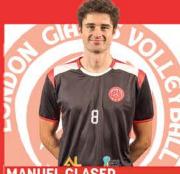
SETH CHEN Setter, Captain



Setter



BRANDON GABRIEL LOPEZ PIOS Middle



MANUEL GLASER **Outside**



NOAH LASSANDRO Middle



OWEN KERR Middle



BAISHAN KANALBEK **Outside**



ANDI MAQSUDOV **Opposite**



Outside



Outside



Outside



Outside



Libero



MIHAIL STOEV Head Coach

ENCH PERSONNEL

SIMON ROSCOE CISEL ORMANC Assistant Coach Bench personnel JUAN ESTEBAN URAN MONTOYA Bench personnel



For the first half of the season it seemed that London Giants' goal would be to simply stay in the DYNAMIK Men's Super League, but now they have designed on finishing as Final 4 champions.

Having been promoted through the play-offs by beating Newcastle Staffs at the end of the 2023-24 season, the Giants initially found life tough at the higher level in the lead-up to Christmas.

But the appointment of former IBB Polonia favourite Mihail Stoev as Head Coach prompted a sharp U-turn in fortunes as the club won eight of their last nine league matches.

That run – assisted by a raft of new signings – propelled them to an overall 11-7 record and a third place finish that seemed implausible at the turn of the year.

"I can't really comment what happened at the beginning of the season, because I wasn't here, but I got the call asking if I could lend my expertise," said Stoev.

"We came up with a plan on how we could recover, and the results showed that our assessment of what needed to be done and the actions we took were right.

"We've had to take some tough decisions and there's been a lot of sleepless nights, but everyone has been committed to the goals we have set up.

"We will prepare and watch the videos, but the most important thing is to sort our house and play our system. Volleyball is a game of errors, and if we make less we are probably going to win.

"In the Final 4, if you want to win, you have to beat everyone, so we're not too concerned who is against us."

One to watch: Noah Lassandro. The giant former Concordia University Irvine Middle Blocker has thrived under the club's new management, adding more to his offence in the second half of the season to go with his undoubted blocking abilities.

Most improved: Manuel Glaser. A young Swiss prospect who has impressed as an Outside for the Giants because of his composed demenaour and ability to get the job done for his team.