

Wednesday, 17th February 2010

Volleyball

Valletta Mapei book their place in cup final

Last weekend, the volleyball matches at the Cottonera Sports Complex saw Valletta book their place in the final of the Fr T. Parnis National Cup after knocking out non-league Birkirkara VC in three straight sets.

Valletta were too strong for Birkirkara VC who were formed to take part in the National Cup.

The first set didn't last long as Valletta Mapei were superior in every aspect of the game and Birkirkara found it difficult to keep up with the tempo set by their opponents.

Silvan Gauci's move to switch Ryan Borg to setter had a positive effect on Birkirkara's performance in the other two sets but still, Robert Balzan and co. remained in control.

Valletta won the three sets 25-14, 25-20, 25-21 to ease into the final where they will face holders Aloysians in a best-of-three match.

In the women's second division, Flyers Depiro II tightened their grip on top spot with a fine win (25-18, 25-18, 25-13) over second-placed Paola Hibs U-18. The latter started the first set on a top note as Lara Caruana's services gave them a 4-0 lead but Flyers hit back to level at 7-7.

With Mariette Saliba in top form, Flyers gained the upperhand to seal the first set. Hibs recovered well in the second set and managed to keep the pace with their opponents until Cinzia Fenech used her services to give Flyers a clear edge.

The story was much the same in the third and final set.

Paola Hibs U-18 were 13-12 up at one point but their hopes of keeping the tie alive were ended by Fenech's deadly services.

Depiro's aggressiveness, especially at the net, gave them the necessary momentum to wrap up the win as Paola's youngsters lacked the experience to come through difficult moments during the game.

Nevertheless, Paola can still have their say in the play-offs which will be played at the end of the regular season.

In another match from the Division Two league, Birkirkara cruised to a comfortable 3-0 victory (25-8, 25-9, 25-8) over Mellieħa Bullets, who have yet to win a set this season.

Birkirkara took to this match in the right frame of mind. They relied on effective services to punish their opponents who found it very difficult to build any counter-attacks.

Thanks to their latest win, Birkirkara have closed the gap on second-placed Paola U-18 to one point but the latter have played a game more.

Mini-volley girls: Southend vs Paola 0-2.

Standings: Paola 21, Flyers 19, Playvolley 13, Southend 8, Fleur De Lys 6.