

This is the first encounter ever between Balzan Flyers and Birkirkara. Birkirkara being coached by Mr. Stefan Decelis and captained by Ms. Juliette Vella while Balzan Flyers are coached by Mr. Dalton Caruana and captained by Ms. Claudette Mifsud. Balzan Flyers field in for the match a number of young age players. Birkirkara players immediately dictated the pace of the game taking the lead to 7-1 in their favour. Balzan Flyers earned couple of points but when Birkirkara took the lead again Coach Caruana called for the first time out at 3-8. Birkirkara continued to put pressure on the opponents point after point especially with the services of Ms. Sarah Barberi The pressure on the players in blue was being felt as these could not react and did a lot of mistakes in defence allowing Birkirkara to take the lead to 16-3. At this stage Coach Caruana took the second time out to stop temporary, the avalanche of points coming from Birkirkara. Birkirkara kept their momentum till 20-4 where Balzan Flyers started to put some pressure on the players of Birkirkara where at 9-21 Coach Decelis requested the first time out. The time out, timely called allowed Birkirkara to regain control momentarily. Some points swung for one side to the other but in the end Birkirkara won the set 25-10. This is the first set Birkirkara won in the second game of the season.

Balzan Flyers were not happy with the result of the previous set and started attacking their opponents with good services by Ms. Claudette Mifsud but when these were 3-0 up Birkirkara started reacting until they equalized the score and took the lead as well. Strong and steady services by Ms. Jolanda Paolini continued to give Birkirkara more advantage over Balzan Flyers. Balzan Flyers reacted back with the services of Ms. Kelly Fenech and the attacks of Ms. Jana Krizhova to equalize the score to 6-6 but Birkirkara took again the lead. At 8-7 in favour of Balzan Flyers coach Decelis requested the first time out to make the players regroup as some mistakes which were being done and these could be easily avoided. Balzan Flyers increased their advantage with another point but Birkirkara focus was good enough to equalize and take the lead again. Both teams started to show some solid defence but Birkirkara persistence prevailed and forced coach Caruana to call a time out at 12-8. After a long rally Birkirkara managed to get another point in their favour but the next long rally was won by the players in blue. Balzan Flyers won 3 consecutive points but were not enough as Birkirkara players regained the control of the game. At 16-10 under, Coach Caruana called again for a time out. The time out effectively managed to allow Balzan Flyers to regain on a temporary basis the control of the game. Ms. Raycine Cassar started a streak of services of her own and together with the attacks Ms. Jolanda Paolini forced again coach Caruana to request a second time out at 20-13. The time out again served to give a breath of fresh air to Balzan Flyers but again this was only on a temporary basis. With 4 points away for the victory of the second set, Birkirkara players were looking confident, focused and in good covering position in the court. Balzan Flyers managed to regain the service and inflicted a consecutive 4 points damage to their opponents. At 24-16 Balzan Flyers refused to lose the set and took again 4 consecutive points but after another long rally Birkirkara won the second set at 25-20.

The girls in Blue have an uphill task with two sets down. Early in the set, both teams showed some fighting spirits in fact they took points each until 3-3 at which Birkirkara took the lead by 2 points and allowed Coach Caruana to take the first time out of the set. Both Coaches were giving instructions to their players in order to have a better performance. The curse of winning a one point only after the time out was broken by the players in Blue because this time they managed to equalize the score and take the lead temporarily. The score shifted from one side to another have either teams leading by one point and the other trying to equalize. With a 2 point disadvantage, Coach Dalton requested for the second time out. Balzan Flyers regained possession at 7-10 and started to close the gap with Birkirkara. The 2

point lead by Birkirkara was lost at 12-12 forcing coach Decelis to request his first time of the set. Balzan Flyers started to show more concentration and at 14-13 these were leading and put some pressure on their adversaries but Birkirkara managed to equalize the score at 15-15. With their Captain Ms. Juliette Vella and good covering positions Birkirkara took temporary the lead over the players in blues. The lead between the two teams swang from one side to another like a pendulum. Birkirkara players refused to allow Balzan flyers to come close to them again and took the lead by 3 points. With 5 points away from closing of the set Birkirkara started to put extra pressure on Balzan Flyers which resulted in an increase in the gap between them. A spike by Ms. Ilona Attard from Balzan flyers reduce the gap by one point but was not sufficient as Birkirkara continued to attack from their arsenal to increase the gap and getting closer and eventually win the set at 25-18.

Final Score Balzan Flyers – Birkirkara Volley :- 0 – 3(10-25;20-25;18-25)

Referee of the Match Mr. Mark Soler

