

Another encounter between the two contenders of the first division league championship 2016-17 was set to begin Swieqi Phoenix led by Coach Leonard Zammit Munro and captained by Marianna Zammit Munro were ready to face their past rivals Sliema Wanderers coached by Coach Melissa Cheviron and captained by Linda Margetiakova

From the beginning of the set, Sliema took immediately a two point lead. The young ones in black were struggling to reduce the gap of 2 points off their opponents. A spike by Tamara Kenkovski from Swieqi was carried out in order to reduce the gap. The gap between the teams has now reached 4 points in favour of Sliema. A solid defence by Swieqi Phoenix players did not allow Melissa Cheviron to gain point easily but her experience served well after constant attacks. With 5 points difference Coach Zammit Munro requested the first time out of the set to regroup his girls at 5-10. Melissa Cheviron managed to pass through the double block of Zammit Munro and Sophie Ann Busuttill to put her teammates in further advantage. Sliema players were looking more focus especially in the attacking part. A spike out by the players in blue gave a breather to the girls in black but quickly the Sliema players regained possession of the ball. A shifting of points started from one side to another but the gap of 6 points was present. A spike by Monica Zammit Munro reduced the gap but Melissa Cheviron replied back with a spike of her own to maintain the previous advantage. The Swieqi Phoenix girls were feeling the pressure and continued to give more points to Sliema and at 18-8 in favour of Sliema, Coach Zammit Munro was forced to call for the second time out. The said girls were looking discouraged and Sliema players continued to gain advantage. A spike by Tamara Kenkovski allowed Phoenix to regain the right to serve. At this point the girls of Zammit Munro started to fight for every ball possible and clinched some points to reach the 12-21. Sliema regain the service with spike by Jolanta Szubert. A tip behind the block by Tamara Kenkovski made the score to 13-24 but in the end Sliema won 25-13.

The second set started with a different attitude by the players in black. In fact these already took advantage of 4 points off Sliema. At the score 5-0 in favour of Swieqi Phoenix Coach Cheviron requested the first time out of the set. The rallies started to get longer as Phoenix defence was becoming more consistent and thus putting pressure on Sliema Players as to commit mistakes on the attack. The first mistake by Phoenix players arrive at 6-0 up. With Melissa Cheviron serving, Swieqi Phoenix suffered a bit and conceded 4 consecutive points. The gap between both teams was now of one point but a service mistake from Sliema allowed their opponents to have a two point lead. After a long rally it was Sophie Anne Busuttill which closed the rally with a tremendous spike to help her teammates to increase the gap. It was a matter of lack of concentration by Phoenix players and Sliema players equalized the score and at 8-8. Coach Zammit Munro requested the first time out at this score. Sliema Wanderers took the lead but Swieqi Phoenix quickly equalized the score. Both teams were using their arsenal of attacks to take the lead. At 10-10, it was Tamara Kenkovski, who spiked a ball from the middle, to put her team in the lead again. Another strong spike by the same player, which was blocked out by Antonella Spiteri gave a two point lead to Swieqi. After temporary gaining the service, Sliema lost again another point due to attack by Tamara Kenkovski. This time Melissa chevron started to use her strong spikes in order to allow her teammates to take the lead at 15-14. The young ones of phoenix tried to fight back valiantly but Cheviron experience paid off to give the girls in blue a 4 point lead. The 4 point lead was stopped by a block of Chani Mae Campbell, thus giving her team mates hope to reach Sliema. Once again Cheviron stopped the plans of Swieqi Phoenix but only temporarily. A couple of points shifted from one side to another and at 21-17 it was the turn of Abigail Camilleri Pearson to find the hole in Sliema court and take a point home for her teammates. Antonella Spiteri repaid back Tamara Kenkovski with a spike

which was brushed out by the latter and therefore another point was won by Sliema. A spike from position 3 to position 5 by Tamara Kenkovski again gave another point to Swieqi. After gaining the service by a tip from Linda Margetakova, again Tamara Kenkovski again score another point for the Swieqi players. At 24-20 a service mistake by Phoenix player gave the win to Sliema at 25-20.

With 2 sets under the Swieqi Phoenix players have to take out more than their best to equalize the set score and get the opportunity to the topple the final score in the their favour. With the services of Mariana Zammit Munro, Sliema players had a difficult task to maintain the rhythm with their opponents. After gaining the service at the score the 2-0 under, Sliema lost the opportunity to equalize the score, due to a a tip by Chami Mae Campbell. It took a back court spike by Melissa Cheviron to get the ball back on the blue side but Abigail Camilleri Pearson took again another point home for her teammates A miscommunication between the Zammit Munro players allowed Sliema to equalize and subsequently take the lead with a tip by Captain Margetiakova. A long rally was been initiated and the players in blue continue to increase the lead. The net intercepted a back court spike by Melissa giving the opportunity to players in black to reduce the gap. It was a matter of time, where Sliema took again the right to serve and started to inflict points to their opponents. The lead was now 6 points in favour for Sliema. At 5-12 under Coach Zammit Munro requested the first time out of the set in order to help his players to regroup and eventually get their head back into the game. Another service by Jolanta Szubert was enough to increase the gap further. Swieqi phoenix gained the right to serve and after a long rally player Cheviron scored another point in favour of her team. From the stands it looked like that the players in black were tired especially when the gap between the two teams was 11 points. A service mistake by Sliema, a good service by Tamara Kenkovski and a long rally in favour of the ladies in black, gave three points to the Zammit Munro girls. After some points shifting from one side to another the score was 19-10 for Sliema but after a long really Swieqi regained the possession of the ball. Swieqi Player Chami Mae Campbell used a tip to gain another point for her team mates. At 13-20 it was Sliema's time to gain another point for them. Sweiqi regain ball possession with a spike by Tamara Kenkovski , and again after a long fought rally, Tamara Kenkovski closed the rally by blocking Jolanta Szubert. At 15-23 under, Coach Zammit Munro requested the second timeout of the set. The opportunity to equalize the score were minimal for the Zammit Munro girls. It was the turn of Melissa Cheviron to inflict more damage to her opponents and the set was won by Sliema at 25-15.

The final score was Swieqi Phoenix – Sliema :- 0 – 3 (13 – 25 ; 20 – 25 ; 15 – 25). Referee of the match Ms. Cinzia Fenech

