

In the first game of the newly joined team Zabbar St. Patrick's had to face the 5 year veteran Mgarr Volley. Mgarr Volley being coached by Mr. Marvic Micallef and led by the captain Ms. Estelle Gatt Baberi while Zabbar St. Patrick's were being coached by Mr. Chris Gatt and led by captain Caroline Bugeja. In the first points of the first set, Mgarr Volley and Zabbar St. Patrick's were on each other back winning a point each in a seesaw action till the teams were 7-7. At this point Mgarr Volley took a 4 point lead but Zabbar St. Patrick's managed to decrease the advantage to 1 point forcing Mgarr Volley to take their first time out. The time out served to help Mgarr to get a little breath and to get for a two point lead but Zabbar St. Patrick managed to put enough pressure to take the lead over Mgarr Volley by one point. The pressure on Mgarr Volley players was being felt resulting into a number of mistakes to favour their opponents and give them a 4 point lead to Zabbar St. Patrick (14-18). Zabbar St. Patrick's 4 point lead was easily lost especially with service of Ms. Shana Farrugia which forced coach Gatt to call for a time out at 18-18. The time out called by coach Gatt resulted positively as Zabbar St. Patrick's took a 3 point lead again. Coach Micallef was forced to take the second time out at 19-23. The time out was effective as Mgarr Volley recovered the ball by a good spike of Ilaine Terribile. During a rally Ms. Kim Grech Grech for Zabbar St. Patrick got injured and had to be replaced. Despite the time-out and the injury Zabbar St. Patrick's managed to win the first set for season 2017-18 with the score of 25-21.

In the second set, no changes were noted also seeing the previously injured Grech of Zabbar St. Patrick's with the starting 6. From the first points of the second set, it could be seen that Mgarr Volley players were determined to win the set as they took a 4 point lead with the services of Ms. Ilaine Terribile and the spikes of Ms. Shana Bugeja. With a five point lead for Mgarr Volley, a good spike by Kimberly Grech of Zabbar St. Patrick was an attempt to start reducing the distance between the two teams but with some mistakes from the Zabbar players, Mgarr Volley were leading comfortably at a 7 point lead forcing coach Gatt to take the first time out of this set. (4-11). Mgarr Volley were now on a different gear with the services of Ms. Shana Farrugia reaching the 10 point lead. It took one mistake by Mgarr and the players in the black start to crawl back in the game reducing the lead from Mgarr Volley to 6 point forcing Coach Micallef to ask for the first time of the second set at 14-8. Safe service by Ms. Lisa Placi helped Zabbar players to continue reducing the gap till 13-14. Both teams were fighting for every ball until the distance between the team was nil. After a 10 point comeback by Zabbar St. Patrick's Mgarr players forced the players in black to make mistakes to gain a 3 point lead but unfortunately with 3 consecutive mistakes by Mgarr players helped the Zabbar players to make the score 17-17. A long rally has started so one of the teams would take the lead again and in the end it was Mgarr Volley that prevailed to have the score reading 18-17. An invasion by the setter Caroline Bugeja was done and this gave another point to Mgarr Volley and at this time coach Gatt took the second time out. Mgarr Volley managed to gain a 3 point lead before giving a gift point to the opponents which these they did not capitalize. With no time outs left for Zabbar St. Patrick's and Mgarr Volley with 4 points lead, the pressure was all the Zabbarian players result in Mgarr winning the second set at 25-19.

Starting the third set with both teams have a set won each, the rest of the game is promising to be quite interesting as both teams want to go home with a victory in their pockets. On the contrary of what was expected the teams committed a lot of errors during the first 10 points of the third set resulting the teams going up 1 point each till 5-5. At this point Zabbar St. Patrick's took a two point lead to which Mgarr equalized and took a two point lead which subsequently Zabbar equalised to make the score 9-9. At 10-10 Zabbar Players committed 3 consecutive mistakes which favoured leaving Coach Gatt to call for the first time out of this set. Despite the Time out taken Zabbar Players were trapped in the same

rotation which resulted a 6 point lead to Mgarr Volley. Having this advantage, the Mgarr Players started to relax a bit giving hope to the players in black to equalize the score. In fact 3 consecutive mistakes by Mgarr players forced Coach Micallef to try to stop the momentum of Zabbar St. Patrick's by calling a time out at 18-15. This time out served well temporary as Mgarr gained a 4 point lead which was immediately lost due to a mistake in service Mgarr. Zabbar players now are being seen as not determined to equalize the score as consecutive mistakes are being committed making Coach Gatt taking the second time out of the set at 15-21. The latter part of the set saw both teams being tired and being less focus seeing both teams committing avoidable mistakes but in the end of the set Mgarr Volley prevailed with the score of 25-21.

The fourth set is crucial for both teams because Mgarr Volley require the victory of this set in order to home 3 points of the victory while Zabbar St. Patrick's have their hope placed in this set to force for the 5<sup>th</sup> and deciding set. With the stakes so high both teams were being cautious to avoid mistakes and saw the first part of set swinging from one side to another until Mgarr took a 3 point lead at which Coach Gatt called for the first time out of the 4<sup>th</sup> set. Signs of tiredness from the Zabbar players was becoming more evident and Mgarr Volley took advantage of the situation in order to have a 6 point lead with coach Gatt calling for the second timeout of the set at 8-14. Mgarr continued to comfortably administer the advantage and putting more pressure on the opponents and increasing their lead until they reached 23-8. Few hopes were present to Zabbar St. Patrick but these kept on playing but the effort was not sufficient to change the final result. Mgarr Volley won the set with 25-11.

Referee of Mr. Darren Bugeja .

Final Score Zabbar St. Patrick – Mgarr Volley :- 1 – 3 ( 25 – 21 ; 19 – 25 21 – 25 ; 11 – 25)

