

PSL: Round 9

Team Chichester – v – Exeter Diamonds

In the penultimate round of the PSL, Team Chichester (currently 4<sup>th</sup>) - looking for its third win on the trot, and 5<sup>th</sup> for the season - played Exeter Diamonds (currently in 3<sup>rd</sup> place). According to the PSL's Crystal Ball, only a 5.0 win could keep Chichester in with a shout of the play-offs. A 3.2. win either way could knock the other out of contention by the end of the night.

Making her home debut for Chichester, Nicolette Fernandes (World No.45), wasted no time in delighting the home crowd with a routine 3.0. win over Victoria Temple-Murray. The Exeter player competed well in many of the rallies but lacked the experience at the cutting edge and as the match wore on Victoria hit the tin more frequently. Nicolette won comfortably 11/6, 11/4, 11/2.

Meanwhile on the glass-back court Chichester's Tim Vail played Exeter's Peter Creed who, in January this year defended and retained his Welsh National Championship title. Vail looked generally in command throughout the match, with Creed retrieving but not taking control. The 3 games were tight but Vail had the variety and edge in most departments to run out a 3.0 winner.

2.0. to Chichester

The Chichester machine continued to roll on. Alex Gough, revitalised from his brilliant win over Joe Lee last week and, with another week's training, gave another sterling performance. Gough had far too much experience for Exeter's, Mike Gregory. Gregory competed well in many of the rallies and hit several of his trademark nicks but Gough's superior anticipation and movement proved a bridge too far. Gough did not waver and his 3.0 victory gave Team Chichester a winning margin.

3.0 and the match to Chichester.

Next on court the number one strings Max Lee (Chichester) and Campbell Grayson (Exeter) had a 'battle royale'. The match was very tight throughout with little to separate the players. Lee took the first game 11/7 before Grayson dug in and worked hard to take the next 2 games. Both players moved the ball to all quarters of the court and in the fourth Grayson built up a lead but Lee began to run down and retrieve everything to clinch it 11/8. It was now down to the wire and was nip and tuck all the way with Lee building an 8/7 lead before 2 unforced errors let Grayson back in. Grayson hung on and took the fifth 9/11 thus saving Exeter from a whitewash defeat.

Finally the number 2 strings got underway. Chichester's Olly Pett was looking to avenge his 3.0 defeat to Jonny Harford at Exeter at the beginning of the season. This time Pett was determined to get out quickly and pile on the pressure and subsequently he took Harford by surprise. Pett dominated from the outset and with very few unforced errors he came through a good 3.0 winner to give Chichester a 4.1 victory; a third win on the bounce and five wins out of nine this season.

The squad's final match is away to Bristol and Robbie Temple, who has done extremely well in the last 2 matches, will be replacing Alex Gough and Lauren Briggs is also set to return. Team Chichester will be looking for a final 3<sup>rd</sup> place position in the PSL southern division which, in recent seasons, is a major achievement.

Mike Phillips  
Team Manager