



IBB Polonia London

The Volleyball England Cup returns to IBB Polonia London

The pinnacle of the matches played on Saturday 1st April 2017 at the National Volleyball Centre in Kettering was the Cup Final between IBB Polonia London and Sheffield Hallam. The result was 3:1 (21:25; 25:21; 25:14; 25:22) in favour of the team from West London. Retaining the cup proved that after a good few barren years, that the cup really deserved its home at IBB Polonia London.

– Winning the trophy for the second consecutive year, is a dream come true. We are a team

with European aspirations, and so we have to prove our domination in our domestic competitions. I am also delighted with the approach by the opposition; a group of promising young Brits. I think that the work by the players, coaching staff and the support systems at The Club are working perfectly at the moment, and we can optimistically look forward at our plans for the future. We are building a powerhouse of volleyball in England and hope to inspire Great Britain to fall in love with volleyball. – commented IBB Polonia London President, Bartek Luszcz.

The level of the sport didn't disappoint the watching spectators. They certainly couldn't say there was no emotion! The game was of a very high standard and was appropriate for the Cup Final. Both teams played very well. The MVP of the match was Team Captain of IBB Polonia London, Marius Ciortea who caused huge problems to the opposition throughout the encounter.

– I am delighted my work was recognised and I was awarded MVP. – said Captain Marius Ciortea. – I am even more pleased that we were able to defend the title. The match wasn't the easiest as the opposition was tough and so our whole squad should be applauded. We have all worked very hard to defend the title. I want to thank the fans who have supported us this season and those who came to the match at the weekend.

The season has not finished yet. IBB Polonia London are waiting for the playoffs section of the season. Following on from the historical results in the CEV Challenge Cup, they still have the Super 8 title to fight for. The semi finals of the Super 8 will take place on 22-23 April at Brentford Fountain Leisure centre; London TW8 0HJ. They have already made press release about the reinforcements that are imminent, with the arrival of a current World Champion Krzysztof Ignaczak. **Tickets are available on www.polonia.eventbrite.co.uk**

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to play in the Super 8 Finals again

On the 22nd-23rd April, in the home venue of IBB Polonia London, the semifinals of the Super 8 division took place. The win was rewarded with a place in the finals of the most prestigious competition in the UK. In both matches, the visitors were outclassed by the home team. On Saturday Wessex lost in straight sets 3-0 (25:17, 25:23, 25:18). On Sunday, the team from Bournemouth managed to put up a little more fight winning the first set. However their efforts were short-lived, as the rest of the match went in favour of IBB Polonia London, with the home team winning 3-1 (18:25, 25:17, 25:19; 25:21).

- The weekend games were quite variable. On Saturday, Wessex approached the match in a very relaxed manner; this strategy clearly failed, as we beat them convincingly. As a consequence, our players became too unfocussed going into the Sunday game: and this gave Wessex the edge at the start. They even managed to win the first set, as it took us a while to get going properly. After the initial loss, tactically we stepped it up and the players performed at an appropriate level. I'm really pleased about how it went. I also want to congratulate the opposition who played their part in a great spectacle. Thanks also to our amazing official Supporters Club and the general public who were amazing. Thanks very much for your support. See you at the finals. - said Piotr Graban, Head Coach of IBB Polonia London.

Despite the London Marathon taking place, our fans didn't let us down. We counted approximately

800 spectators over the two days. The hall was full of emotion and the level of the game was high; the presence of the World Champion Krzysztof Ignaczak was spectacular and the donation of the beautiful cakes by our sponsor The Polish bakery (Wembley) was gratefully received by all. So we have one step left this season: the finals weekend. The winners of the Knockout Cup will not be resting on our laurels. Training starts again tonight and the next two weeks will be intense.

- We have in front of us the most important matches of the season. We have two weeks to prepare in training. We defended the Knockout Cup and we want to repeat this by defending our League title. - said Captain of IBB Polonia London, Marius Ciortea.

The finals of the English Super 8 Division take place on the 6th and 7th May at the National Volleyball Centre in Kettering. IBB Polonia London aim

to defend their title against Sheffield Hallam. The team from the north of England beat Team Northumbria in the golden set and secured their place in the finals as a result.

- We wish to invite all fans to Kettering. I am sure there will be some amazing volleyball to watch; lots of action and emotions on court! We guarantee the highest level of volleyball that is possible in the UK. The presence of Krzysztof Ignaczak, a current World Champion, is sure to bring hordes of volleyball aficionados to watch the legend in action. It will definitely be worth coming and joining in with our own loyal supporters to witness our journey to defend our title. - commented IBB Polonia London President, Bartek Luszc.

More information can be found relating to tickets and the finals themselves on www.volleyball-england.org and also our own IBB Polonia London Facebook page.



Krzysztof Ignaczak's plans for IBB Polonia London

IBB Polonia London never ceases to amaze this season. After the spectacular results in the CEV Challenge Cup, they would like to announce that the very popular "Iglia" has signed as a player for The Club. In English "The Needle" which is a corruption of his last name, reflects the accuracy with which he has always played during his career. The news of the spectacular transfer echoed around the world of sport. Krzysztof Ignaczak himself isn't concealing that he always dreamt of playing abroad. He writes about his role in the team, the supporters and his relationship with the English Super 8 league.

Is the transfer of such a legend of volleyball to IBB Polonia London and for such a short time, sufficient to help build English volleyball?

Polish people taught Italians how to play volleyball. We would also like to help English people to develop in the same direction. Both I and President Luszczyk would like the English league to progress and strengthen. Volleyball is still an amateur sport, but Brits want the best level of sport on a grand scale. Introducing one player isn't enough to transform things in such a manner, but it could be the catalyst. If we could bring a few stars of the sport, the level would improve. One visit to London is not enough, but I am sure there may be more. I anticipate being a regular traveller between Rzeszow and London.

So are we to anticipate a long-term relationship between yourself and the club?

I would like this to develop into a long-term relationship, but both sides must be in agreement. I like the openness with which President Luszczyk has been thinking and how he has been seeking a solution to improve the British perspective towards volleyball. The development of the sport is a very interesting project which I would like to add to my list of tasks. Our sport has a massive poten-



tial in the UK and we want to open the eyes of the population. I will eagerly share my knowledge, my experience, my ideas, and not only on court.

So this time, you will actually play as receiver, and not libber?

My position has not yet been finalised. It is all up for discussion with the coach, but we will see how it goes during training and where I can help. I am joining the team, but I don't want to take anybody's position on court.

Helping on court is one thing, but the club is also hoping for some PR work. Will you have time to meet the supporters, sponsors and leaders in the sport in the UK?

I will have some time in London between training and matches. I have agreed with the President and Coach that I am at their disposal. If they would like to organise some meetings, to introduce me to somebody, to show somebody how our sport works, they can count on me. It's one reason why I have come to London. I have already met the Consul General and the headquarters of the main sponsors IBB.

Will the home venue be full to the brim for the matches that you will play in?

I know what the aims are for the playoffs and I feel confident that it can be achieved. The fans are very interested with my arrival and the semi finals will be a great chance to fill the hall. The finals will be played in a bigger hall. I hope that with the help of the media promoting the events, Polish and British fans will come and support both teams.

In the English league, the number of fans is fewer than in Poland, but they are very loud. Are you counting on support from the stands?

Everything that the fans do is a massive help and I look forward to seeing and hearing what they do in London! I love the support. I became convinced of this over nine seasons in Rzeszow in Poland. Their spectators are one of the largest in number, not only in Poland, but in the World. I am sure the fans here will be just as vocal.

The semi finals of the playoffs in England between IBB Polonia London and Wessex take place over the 22/23rd of April 2017 at the Fountain Leisure Centre (TW8 0HJ) in Brentford. The team, with Krzysztof Ignaczak in the squad, will be competing for another National title. Last year, the team won everything there was on offer, including the Super 8 title and the National Cup. The importance of the matches will increase the numbers of spectators and the emotions in the sports-hall. Tickets are available from www.polonia.eventbrite.co.uk

Krzysztof Ignaczak was born in 1978; he is a reigning World Champion, ex-European Champion and winner of the Champions League. For most of his career he played as libero, but he will restart his volleyball career as receiver. He is one of the most popular sportspeople in Poland.