



IBB Polonia London

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The holiday break is nearing the end

Following an effective 2016/17 season, the players and members of IBB Polonia London enjoyed a well deserved rest over the summer. Despite the fact that Piotr Graban's players have been on a break since May, they have been finding the time to stay fit. Many of the players returned to the weights room to maintain their physical power; others enjoyed playing on the sand in a variety of Beach Volleyball events around England. The IBB Polonia London coach didn't rest on his laurels and during his vacation developed his own volleyball knowledge by taking part in a number of meetings with other coaches and trainers from around the world. He also ran a number of volleyball camps for young and emerging players.

- Following the most successful season in the history of the club; the staff and players enjoyed a well earned rest. Some players continued to enjoy their sport by playing in various beach volleyball competitions; others returned to their "day jobs" while others travelled the world taking in the sites and cuisines. - said Chris Hykiel, IBB Polonia London Sports Director.

The IBB Polonia London players will soon re-

turn to the training venue to start to prepare for the new season. The first gathering will be on the 14th August. The new season will bring a number of changes for the roster; a large number of the fans' favourites will remain, but some new faces will also be warmly welcomed.

- I am delighted to announce that Piotr Graban's contract has been extended and he will be back within the next week to start pre season try outs. A huge number of players have contacted IBB Polonia London to request a try-out for the 2017-18 season. The squad is definitely going to see some new recruits, as well as some of the fans' favourites from last season. - commented Chris Hykiel.

- There will be a number of new faces from Slovakia, Brazil and Poland. I currently have ten confirmed players for the season, and will also be testing some new athletes over there next few weeks. - said Head Coach Piotr Graban.

The 2017/18 season will be a new challenge for the double Champions of England. Last season it was evident that there was huge potential in the London based club. A good level of play and organisation allowed for the defence of the Super 8 title

and the English Cup. In addition the victories in the CEV Challenge Cup and the signing of Krzysztof Ignaczak sets the bar very high for the imminent season.

- IBB Polonia London's main aim of the season is to win the Club NEVZA competition. Following on from the huge successes in the CEV Challenge Cup last season, beating some of the top teams from Hungary and Holland, the club change their focus slightly and look to a different competition that will be of a very high standard indeed. - added Hykiel.

- The aim for the season is a similar one to last season. We want to show an entertaining and high level of volleyball. We want to work very hard and continue to develop The Club. I want to develop the players to a higher level and I hope to write a new page in the history of our club, Great Britain and Poland. - added Piotr Graban.

The first match of the 2017/18 will be at the start of October against the other contenders for the Super 8 title. More information about the make up of the 2017/18 roster, the schedule for the season and details about the NEVZA competition will be announced soon on the usual social media outlets.



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The first pre-season test

Two weeks ago, the players of IBB Polonia London started their pre-season training. Under the watchful eye of Head Coach Piotr Graban and Assistant Coach Patrik Selep, they returned to the gym after a long summer break. A series of test matches will take place in the near future to check the progress of the team and the abilities of the new recruits. Detailed analysis will take place based on the performance during these matches.

The current English Cup Champions will battle to win the London Cup on Sunday, 10th September, alongside four other teams (London Lynx, Malory Eagles, New Forest and Essex Blaze). The all day event will see an "all v all" format. This will be the second edition of this event; in 2016 the title was won by London Lynx who will be looking to defend their title. IBB Polonia London will compete in this tournament for the first time. There will be many matches taking place during the day before the eventual winners are decided; fans, who no doubt are desperate to watch some good volleyball, are warmly invited to come. The tournament is organised by Ashley Trodden (coach of Greenhouse Sports) with the support of The London Volleyball Association. Matches will take place at Ernest Bevin College, Beechcraft Rd, SW17 7DF, starting at

10.00 am. IBB Polonia warmly invite you to come along, dressed in red and white as usual, and support the team during the games. More information will appear on the event Facebook page.

- We decided to take part in the tournament because we want to check out the level of other teams from London and to see how we measure up against them. Thanks to this, we will be better prepared when the season starts. - commented Head Coach Piotr Graban. - We also have another event lined up outside of London, which will take place in the second half of September.

In September, the away trip will allow the club from the capital of England compete against another from the Super 8 Division.

To Lead to European competition

Piotr Graban has decided to agree to the extension of his contract for another year and to continue to develop volleyball in Great Britain for another year. In the interview he tells how he has been preparing for the imminent challenges and what convinced him to extend his stay in London.

How were your holidays? Did you manage to have a rest?

Piotr Graban: Of course I had a rest. I spent lots of time playing volleyball with friends on the beach and had lots of lovely conversations with friends.

Social media had lots of information about your holiday activities. You led some sports camps over the summer: were they your idea? What was your role during these camps?

P.G.: I took part in lots of coastal activities; which were my own initiative. I had a variety of roles. In Italy I coached 14-16 year old boys, which mimicked the School of Sporting Excellence. During the course of two weeks I had to teach them volleyball. It was a great experience, because they had no idea about any systems or tactics, but by the end, not only did they play an under 15 Italian team; they beat them! I was both pleased and proud. At the Polish camps, I was more of an assistant and helped with the sessions and sometimes took my own groups.

Did you learn anything yourself?

P.G.: Of course, every new experience is a chance to learn. I had the chance to learn during every session; how to teach. It is good to have a different approach to problems.

So you extended your contract, over the summer, with IBB Polonia London. What made you make that decision; to stay in the UK for another year?



P.G.: I had a few propositions from Poland, but decided the offer from IBB Polonia London was more attractive, because it is a longer term project. I want to build a very strong team, that will compete in Europe. I'm not only talking about IBB Polonia

London, but about the sport as a whole in the UK. For that reason, I am very motivated to work hard and to build the team.

What are your plans for the season? What must be improved in relation to last year?

P.G.: There is always room to improve. A number of experienced players will not be returning this year due to work commitments or offers from professional clubs. I am delighted that the majority of players

will be back for another year. This shows that they enjoyed the steps we took last year and that we are going to be taking this year. There is a lot of work in front of us if we want to become a professional club.

What goals have you set yourself this season seeing as you have won the Championship and Cup titles?

P.G.: I will repeat last year's goals. We are likely to be seeing some new potentially very good players who will join us and improve. We will see what outcomes happen as a result. I hope we can make history once again in England.

What are your wishes for the coming season?

P.G.: I hope Volleyball England can make some changes; that they can push our sport forwards and develop it.

Are there any indicators that the level will improve?

P.G.: I've heard rumours, but I don't like to guess. All the clubs will be keeping their cards close to their chests. Only once we start pre season friendlies, will we have some idea about other clubs and allow us to make predictions. We will focus on ourselves; at the end we will see who is the best.

Last season you started to develop the know how of other coaches in the UK. Will you continue with this idea? Do you have some new ideas that you would like to see take place in England?

P.G.: I have a few projects on the go. This was one of the reasons I decided to return. I am organising some coaching clinics and player development clinics in England and next year in Poland. I have also started two other volleyball projects, which will not come as a surprise. They are loosely based around development of coaches as well as male and female players in the UK and Poland. I will let you know more about this when I am ready!

Piotr Graban was born in Gdańsk and is 30 years old. In his first season as IBB Polonia London Head Coach, he won the national Title of England as well as the Cup of England. He also achieved a historic level of success in the CEV Challenge Cup. The previous 4 years, he spent as the assistant coach at PGE Atom Trefl Sopot. Piotr studied Physical Education in University of Physical Education in Gdansk and completed his Masters degree in volleyball. He has also worked with the youth teams Gedania Zukowo, Gedania Gdansk.

