

GB v JAPAN

Match 3 – 19th July 2011

GB 0 – 3 Japan (21-25, 16-25, 14-25)

GB arrived back at Earls Court ready to face two of the best teams in the world for the second day in succession.

The first set against Japan showed the capabilities of this GB team as they traded points and led the world's no.3 team for the majority of this set. GB started off with a superb kill block from Michel and quick slides from Carter and Michel. The belief in the GB players was evident and with the ever reliable passing unit, Wicks had the freedom to distribute exactly to game plan and get involved in the attack herself. GB led 8-7 at the first technical through clinical offence and superb passing and defending from Bertelli, Beattie and Taylor. The GB players grew in belief and pushed on from this stage with Beattie and Michel scoring from continued aggressive play showing the Japanese how much this team has improved. GB led 16-15 at the second technical. GB continued to believe in themselves and the passing unit held firm allowing them to continue scoring with their superb variation in attack. GB led 21-17 and without question had played some of their best volleyball against the third ranked team in the world. At 21-18 down, Japan made a double substitution bringing on their tenacious setter to serve which disrupted the GB serve receive unit and in turn the GB offence. Confidence grew in the Japanese team which allowed their offence to once again function, Ebata and Kano doing the damage with two kills each to see out the set. This is a set GB will look back and reflect on and take all the positives from as they outplayed the 3rd best team in the world for long periods.

Set two began again with GB on the front foot leading 8-5 at the first technical with more intelligent setting from Wicks and three more kills from Beattie. Japan however then came out fighting and as the GB players fatigued Japan's speed and style quickly paid dividends with Kimura and Yamamoto scoring regularly. GB continued to pass superbly and attack with venom but the Japanese defence just wouldn't let the ball hit the floor. Japan led 16-12 at the second and went on to win this set 25-16.

Set three allowed the Japan side to show the strength of their squad bringing in fresh new faces. Some of the GB players had now played 10 sets in less than 20 hours and this set was always going to be tough. GB showed great fight as always but could not score as easily as they had in the previous sets. The Japanese forced the GB players into errors and with the mental and physical fatigue increasing Japan closed out the match 3-0.

This match was a great benchmark for the GB Women's team; it allowed them to see how far they have come and how much they have improved. The standard of volleyball they showed was breathtaking and the squad showed that they have what it takes to compete with the best in the world, with the goal clearly to do it more consistently.

Key Stats:

Serve Receive:	Team: 2.28 (Taylor 2.40 from 25 balls; Palmer 2.27 from 11 balls)
Kills/Efficiency:	Team: 29 / 20.25% (Michel 8 / 50%, Carter 5 / 45%)
Blocks:	Team: 7 (Michel 3)
MVP:	Lucy Wicks

Squad:

2. Lucy Wicks, 4. Rachel Laybourne, 5. Rachel Newton, 6. Jenn Taylor, 7. Maria Bertelli (Libero), 10. Lynne Beattie (Captain), 12. Lizzie Reid, 14. Vicky Palmer, 15. Stacey O'Connor, 16. Meg Viggars, 18. Grace Carter, 19. Ciara Michel