



St. Philips Volleyball Club (SPVC / Pips) Newsletter 3: May 2025



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Club Chair's Notes

by Mitesh Patel

Season 2024-25 indoor season has been one of the most exciting seasons to be part of the club. The Cambridge Volleyball Association (CVA) set up two men's divisions and kept the one women's division. With this opportunity, we entered a men's team per division and one women's team. This encouraged the executive committee to reach their new key goal, which was focussing on commitment from our members at training and representing our club teams in the county leagues. I can proudly state that the majority of our gold membership commitment was between 65% - 93%, with the majority of the match attendance being 77%-100% for Men's 1, 75% - 100% for Men's 2 and 86%-100% for Women's matches. Next season we aim to bridge the gap further with higher training attendance and match commitments.

Club highlights included:

- All team members were inducted by Carrie Hodgson on 6-2 formation at the start of the season. This was the start of the team's enthusiasm to start their training, gelling with the team and preparation for matches.
- Both Men's teams entered the Cup for the first time and though we lost both matches this season, I am hopeful that the next time we're in the Cup we perform a lot better.
- **Men's 1 team** challenged top opposing teams where former National Volleyball League (NVL) players played, and we almost got a set against them in the 3rd set.
- **Men's 2 team**, which was made up of almost all new participants, challenged teams to the point where against Bury Bobcats 2 and CVC All Stars, they pushed them to a 5th set, almost winning.
- **Women's team** challenged strong oppositions, having a few 4-set matches and, the cherry on top, winning their first match ever after a 5th set battle.
- **Carrie Hodgson** completing and passing her Grade 4 Referee course.

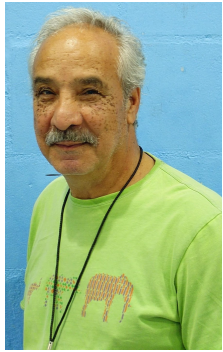
Success stories achieved by committee initiatives:

- **Website:** spvc-cambs.co.uk launched at the start of the season, which is picking up on visitors and the query form is being used a lot more.
- **Instagram:** Live match feeds started from the first match, though slight technical issues meant that particular match couldn't be viewed. However, every match thereafter was streamed and saved for general viewing. During the live streams we had up to 10 viewers. We aim to improve the use of this digital platform and have more viewers watching our matches next season.
- **Finance system:** This was improved, by tracking finances & fee installments easier, as well as having a card reader for event transactions.
- **Spond:** Feedback loop improved from training & matches, with suggestions implemented at future training sessions.

As can be seen, a lot has been achieved this season and all this due to the hard work done by the executive committee and its sub-committee volunteers. So I would like to give a big thank you to my fellow executive committee members, Carrie Hodgson & Hamid Sanami, also the sub-committee member volunteers, Nicole Mak and Maike Steindel, who helped improve our digital platform profile.

A huge appreciation and thank you goes out to all our club volunteers (training assistance, scorers, line referees & match supporters), guests, friends and family members turning up to support our teams playing at matches. You all being present helped boost morale and increase confidence for the team to perform their best on match days.

Finally, I would like to congratulate all who played in the teams. Aside from some of our experienced players from last season who continued to this season, the majority started new in the club and you showed amazing determination and gusto during training and matches. You've raised the club's profile, making opponents know we're a team that can challenge. Look forward to seeing you all in 2025-26, for our next installment! Go Pips!



Coach's Notes

by Hamid Sanami

St. Philips Volleyball Club, as you have all gathered and heard from me, was established in 1978 and is the oldest official club in Cambridge. All other clubs in Cambridge are offshoots of this club. And as you all know this club never turns away any player whatever their ability – a policy of which I am very proud.

To round up the last season I would like to say it has been a great pleasure to be around your wonderful smiling faces at our training and matches. I have really enjoyed being alongside you coaching, although I am sure I have confused you all at some point during the training drills. But your expressions and reactions to my direction have been great.

Looking back at the whole season you all did great, as most of us had started at the bottom and needed to work hard, step by step, to enjoy the matches. Watching your progress and the effort you all put into playing, it was as if in every match you were climbing up a ladder in your mind - especially the ladies, who played as a pack.

With regard to the men's teams, it was a bit hit and miss, as we did not manage to get some of the regular players attending each match. Their performance was great in some matches and not so great in others. The dedication from some of the players in the men's team was a bit lacking, and in some matches I found it very frustrating. I am not taking anything away from the effort some of the men showed – it wasn't their fault, but it was just unfortunate some often couldn't attend because of other commitments. However, I was very proud of the ladies' commitment, especially when some stepped in when numbers were short on the men's teams.

Summarising the above:

Women's team

I have to give the ladies team 100% for their effort and commitment. You have all been great and looking out for each other at each match. You all should be very proud - I love you all, and I am not going to single out any one player because you each use your ability in different ways.

Men's teams

Despite it being a very mixed input, I have to say to each one of you that when you played it was with full commitment. The vital area where we let ourselves down was not having enough players regularly available for each match. This was the main reason for the lack of success.

Committee members

We had a very smooth path with regard to the matches and all the rest of the hard work which went on behind the scenes. I know how hard it is as I have done this prior to the last few years. I would like to say many thanks to Mitesh Patel and Carrie Hodgson for the hard work they put in to keep the club going. You two are a blessing and I really appreciate what you do.

Finally, good players with a passion for the sport can become great if they take their skills and share them with others in our club. They can build a good team around themselves, which can be a great help to their fellow volleyball players.

My thoughts are with you all as listed above for each individual group, and I hope to see you all next season.

League Table: Mens D1 2024-25										
Team	Pd	W	L	SF	SA	PF	PA	Pts	FF	SS
Newmarket	10	8	2	25	9	748	646	42	(-1)	
BuryBob1M	10	7	3	24	15	889	804	41		
Rhinos 1M	10	6	4	23	17	883	718	39		
CVC 1M	10	5	5	21	17	800	785	36		
Stowmkt	10	4	6	15	20	709	801	29		
St Pip 1M	10	0	10	0	30	454	729	10		

League Table: Mens D2 2024-25										
Team	Pd	W	L	SF	SA	PF	PA	Pts	FF	SS
CVC 2M	12	10	2	34	9	1020	764	56		
Rhinos 2M	12	10	2	31	13	1028	846	53		
CVC 3M	12	9	3	30	16	1008	922	51		
CVC Ace M	12	5	7	20	25	914	935	37		
BuryBob2M	12	4	8	19	29	965	1028	35		
Rhinos 3M	12	4	8	17	27	862	986	32	(-1)	
St Pip 2M	12	0	12	4	36	668	984	16		

League Table: Womens 2024-25										
Team	Pd	W	L	SF	SA	PF	PA	Pts	FF	SS
CVC1W Tig	12	12	0	36	3	962	593	60		
Rhi2W Bla	12	9	3	31	9	925	725	52		
Rhi1W Rhi	12	7	5	22	20	877	887	41		
BuryBob1W	12	5	7	18	22	858	817	35		
CVC JnrMx	12	5	7	18	23	878	939	35		
CVC2W Pan	12	3	9	10	28	697	876	25		
St Pip 1W	12	1	11	5	35	621	981	18		

All teams improved as the season progressed and members had the chance to gel within each team. Our performances in matches enabled us to score more points and more sets than in previous years, and the women's team achieved their first win! So well done all, and I look forward to next season where we can further improve on these statistics.



Fixtures Secretary's Notes

by Carrie Hodgson

The 2024/2025 season was a big one for St. Philips as we entered three teams for the first time – two men's teams and a women's team. Also, for the first time, there were sufficient men's teams to merit having two leagues, so St. Philips entered one men's team in each.

This meant more games to confirm, more scoresheets to submit and more matches to ensure we had referees for – this all made for a very busy second year for me as Fixtures Secretary.

I want to thank everyone who signed up for matches thereby reducing the number of players that I had to chase. I'm also happy to report that due to members being flexible and stepping in when we didn't have sufficient numbers for matches, we didn't need to forfeit a single one.



Social Media Notes

by Nicole Mak

It's been a pleasure to watch and help capture the dedication and determination of all three St. Philips teams this season. A standout highlight was the support for the teams - whether from those cheering courtside or joining through Instagram livestreams. There's no doubt that St. Philips is set for another great season ahead!

Captain's Log: Men's Team 1

This year we had a number of Captains who wanted to share their comments and experiences.

Win	0	Loss	10
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Comments by Martin Weber

This year all players have grown in experience and performance, to the point where we are able to win sets - and eventually matches in the near future, I am sure! I remember several matches where a positive attitude in the face of strong opposition (like Newmarket and Bury) helped a lot, and we were much better than we thought we could be.

Unfortunately, there were other times when we lost too many points in a row and seemed resigned to that, mentally - as we get more experience this will surely improve. Both teams are getting more used to playing together and it helps to keep on learning the correct 'instincts' for how to move/react in training, so we do the correct moves without having to think too much about this during matches. If everyone puts in the 'best I can be' attitude into the training sessions (as we do for the matches), we will continue to develop faster - and have more fun playing too.

Both teams are very well organised and a huge thanks for the dedication (and time spent!) goes out to Hamid Sanami, Mitesh Patel and Carrie Hodgson but also to Pedro Portugal for coaching help and several of the women's team players for your constant help with our matches! I am looking forward to next season!

Comments by Sheffin Joseph

This was my first full season playing volleyball with Pips, and I can honestly say I've thoroughly enjoyed myself. The people are not only lovely and encouraging, but they also create a friendly, welcoming atmosphere that makes being part of the club a great experience. I really appreciate how everyone shares the same passion for playing and continuously improving in the sport.

Over the season, I've noticed several changes - particularly in how training sessions have been structured to be more specific to match environments. I have found this shift to be very helpful and I feel it's translated well into actual game situations, allowing us to apply what we've practiced more effectively during matches. Another big improvement has been in our communication and teamwork on the court. As the season has gone on, we've become much more connected as a team, which has made a real difference in our overall performance and confidence during matches.

Looking ahead, I'm excited to continue growing together and building even stronger chemistry. We're already giving some tough teams a real challenge, and I'd love to see us maintain and build on the momentum we've created this season.

Finally, I want to say a big thank you to Mitesh Patel, Carrie Hodgson, Hamid Sanami and the other members of the committee for all the hard work they've put into making this club what it is. Their effort and dedication behind the scenes make a huge difference, and it's truly appreciated.

Captain's Log: Men's Team 2

This year we had a number of Captains who wanted to share their comments and experiences.

Win	0	Loss	12
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Comments by Oscar Barr

I only started at St. Philips Volleyball Club in September, but in that short time I've already seen our team go from being 6 individuals trying to do their own thing to a real team playing the same game! If we can keep this up we'll definitely be taking games soon - we just need to keep working on our skills and our confidence to use them (and help our teammates to use them) to the max!

Comments by James Yu

It was a great pleasure playing with the men's team. Everyone was trying their best to get a win, even though we all knew the odds were heavily stacked against us, and the team kept it together until the end. Given that many of us have only just started playing competitive volleyball this year, and the fact that some of us are actually new to the sport, we managed to put up some great games - in fact, there were some close matches where we could have won. The team started out like a typical makeshift team where we lacked individual skill and team coordination. Despite losing each game, we kept our heads high, still turned up for training week after week, and by the end of the season everyone had improved both as an individual and as a team. Also would like to give a big thanks to Hamid Sanami, Mitesh Patel and Carrie Hodgson for supporting us new joiners to the team, especially for being patient with the shenanigans we were doing, and still do while learning all the techniques and team tactics. Finally a big shout out to the other club members that came to cheer us on during the matches, we needed that extra morale boost to keep us going. Hopefully we keep the same positive vibe for next season, and grab a few wins in the bag.



Captain's Log: Women's

by Carrie Hodgson

Win	1	Loss	11
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Being captain of the women's team this season has been a huge privilege, and I am very grateful to have been assigned this role.

This season saw four returning members from last year's team – myself, Sana Rashid, Rogie De Leon and Beatrice Kpaku – and three new additions – Maike Steindel, Pinelopi Papanastasiou and Silvia Glont. And what a team that turned out to be! Everyone was so supportive of each other and the team quickly gelled. Yes, we wanted to win but collectively as a team and we strived towards that goal together.


Thanks must go to our head coach Hamid Sanami and our assistant coach Mitesh Patel for their coaching and support at training and on match days.

I would also like to thank Nozomi Takahashi, Elizabeth Wright and Vasiliki (aka Vassia) Fakitsa for playing in those matches where we didn't have enough of our regular team members available. All three did an amazing job and fitted in so well – we would love it if you decided to join us on the team permanently next season!

My final thanks go to the wonderful members of the Pip's women's team. You showed up, you worked hard on improving technique, you embraced the on-court strategies, and it paid off. We were a stronger opposition this year, we got our first win and what a celebration that was! I'm so proud of you all and can't wait to play alongside you again next season. Until then, Go Pips!!



Other Highlights

<h3>Executive Committee Role Vacancies</h3> <p>If you're interested in applying for one of the roles below, please contact committee.spvc@gmail.com.</p> <p>Treasurer</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Looking after the club finances (including overseeing transactions and invoicing members) Attending Executive Committee meetings <p>Assistant Chair</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shadowing Chair and learning their role Attending Executive Committee meetings 	<h3>Sub-Committee Role Vacancies</h3> <p>If you're interested in applying for one of the roles below, please contact committee.spvc@gmail.com.</p> <p>Social Marketing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Taking opportunities for any media updates, and maintaining Instagram account Reporting to Executive committee <p>Website</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain club website Reporting to Executive Committee
<h3>Season 2023-24 Prizes</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Overall Player of the Match (Men) - Joel Henderson Overall Player of the Match (Women) - Rogie De Leon Most Improved Junior - Owen Varley Most Improved Player (Men) - Ashley Sawle Most Improved Player (Women) - Sofia Obolenski Coach's Choice Award - Carrie Hodgson Men's Team - Anthony Akum-Nyemi, Ashley Sawle, Callum Lawson, Dominic Foong, Haran Sivapalan, Jacob Templeman, Jeremy Lee, Joel Henson, Kai Jie Chow, Martin Weber, Matthew East, Mitesh Patel, Oleksandr Kuzmiuk, Pedro Portugal, Ramiro Jorna, Samuel Murphy, Sheffin Joseph Women's Team - Beatrice Kpaku, Carrie Hodgson, Dijle Timurtas, Jenny Lui, Maria Ntemourtsidou, Nozomi Takahashi, Rogie De Leon, Sana Rashid, Sara Leitman, Sofia Obolenski Awards for other Supporters/Volunteers - Simon Konig, Patrick Frost 	<h3>Club Chair Memories...</h3> <p>It was the end of the pandemic and I was determined to start sports again. My default sport at the time was Badminton, but after seeing a post on my company's intranet mentioning St. Philips Volleyball Club were looking for players, I figured why not?</p> <p>On my first day I got a warm welcome from head coach, Hamid Sanami, and got acquainted with the club very quickly and understanding the routine. However I noticed some slight processes missing. I offered my expertise to help out by joining the committee and implementing changes to the admin, finance and signup process.</p> <p>From that day the club has been flourishing, from barely getting 12 participants regularly during training to an average of 25. Also, we barely got a team together on match days and the head coach had to call individuals; now we have a full team of club members competing and winning sets and games. I know there is much more that the club can reach and one day we will.</p>
<h3>Sponsorships and Donations</h3>  <p>Join our easyfundraising page:</p> <p>https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/spvc</p> <p>Interested to sponsor or donate to our club? Please contact us on committee.spvc@gmail.com.</p>	<h3>Assistant Coach Pass</h3> <p>Congratulations to Mitesh Patel who completed and passed the assistant coach award. He can now be appointed as a registered assistant coach and help out as assistant coach during training and matches.</p> <h3>Player Highlights (Past and Present)</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Congratulations to Sofia and Simon on their marriage. <p>If you have any highlights to share for future newsletters, please let us know at committee.spvc@gmail.com.</p>

Pictures: Season 2024/25

