

Cambridge v Worcester 25/01/2017

By Cristina Gómez

Location: University of Worcester Arena

Final Score: 57-53 (Worcester)

The Blues' Top Scorers: Claire Ratican (13), Léonie de Jonge (11), Jess Hunt (10), Mie Monti (8),
Emily Lees (4)

Overall Free Throw Accuracy: 42%

The first game of 2017 saw the Blues loose against Worcester by only 4 points, after a hard fought match in which both teams struggled to score. In the end, the hosts took the victory as Cambridge failed to defend three point shots and struggled against very aggressive defensive pressure in the final minutes of the encounter.

After a slow start with only 6 points in 7 minutes compared to Worcester's 8, the Blues managed to find their rhythm and close the first quarter down by 2 (14-12) after a steal by Mie Monti and a quick fast break converted successfully by Jess Hunt.

The energy gained from the end of the first period carried on through the second and the Blues achieved an 8-0 partial which put them in the lead. However, in the final 4 minutes of the quarter, Worcester managed to slow down the Blues with three three-point shots and two field shots in quick succession. Mie Monti's defensive skills were again vital, causing two turnovers that Cambridge converted, closing the first half of the game 27-24 to Worcester.

Knowing how important the third period would be, the Blues stepped into the court with renewed energies and determined to get ahead. Their efforts paid off and they dominated the quarter from the first minute. Having found a weakness in Worcester's post defence, captain Claire Ratican capitalised on her advantage underneath the basket, adding 9 points to the Blues score. The relentless drives to the basket resulted in Worcester reaching team fouls early on in the quarter, but Cambridge failed to take the opportunity to widen their lead, missing 5 out of 10 free throws. The third quarter also saw the best play of the game, in which the Blues managed to break a full court press and finish with an easy basket without taking a single dribble. A true teamwork master class.



The Blues opened the final quarter with their biggest lead yet, at 35-43 and managed to stay ahead until the 7th minute. However, Worcester switched to a very aggressive full court pressure in the final minutes of the game, which Cambridge was not able to break. A number of turnovers punished by the hosts resulted in them getting ahead 52-49 with two minutes left on the clock. Despite Léonie de Jonge's spectacular three-pointer in the final seconds of the game, the Blues did not manage to reclaim their previous advantage and finished the encounter 4 down, 57-53.

Although disappointed by the loss, captain Claire was proud of the team and took the game as good practice for the Varsity match against Oxford, coming up next month.