

Cambridge v Worcester 26/10/2016

By Cristina Gómez

Location: Cambridge Sports Centre

Final Result: 67-60 (Cambridge)

The Blues' Top Scorers: Léonie de Jonge (27), Paloma Navarro (11), Jess Hunt (10), Claire Ratican (7), Becky Illingworth (6)

Overall Free Throw Accuracy: 57%

The Cambridge Blues opened the season on Wednesday with a 67-60 win over the University of Worcester. The game saw rookies Jess Hunt, Emily Lees, and Stefania Mataragka debut with the Blues in an exiting game that kept both teams on their toes until the final whistle.

The Blues stepped on the court with strength and energy, overwhelming Worcester on offence and denying them the basket on defence. Guard Becky Illingworth and point-guard Paloma Navarro opened the score board with two buckets in the first two minutes, giving the hosts a head start from the beginning. Having set the pace, Cambridge did not slow down, relentlessly attacking the basket. Worcester could not respond, and reached 5 team fouls in the first 5 minutes of the game. The Blues closed this fantastic quarter with a healthy 8 point lead.

The second quarter however, saw the tables turn as Worcester came back with a strong zone defence which the Blues struggled to break. A number of turnovers lead to the visitors scoring 4 successive layups in fast break whilst the Blues failed to keep up the intensity of the previous quarter. A 3 pointer by Léonie de Jonge and a quick shot by Pia Hecher allowed Cambridge maintain their lead at the end of this period and enter the second half ahead, at 35-31.

After a 10 minute half-time break, the Blues were keen to get back their advantage, and captain Claire Ratican finally broke through Worcester's defence with a strong penetration which earned her a much needed 2+1. Her

example was followed by Navarro and de Jonge, who fought to widen Cambridge's lead to 9 points. However, a 3 pointer by Worcester got them back in the game and the Blues struggled once more through the last 5 minutes of the period, having reached team fouls half way through the quarter.

Determined to win the game, the Blues brought back to the final 10 minutes the strength and energy shown in the first quarter. De Jonge opened the period with a 3 pointer, lifting up the rest of the team. Jess Hunt rattled Worcester's defence with her unstoppable drives to the basket, while Navarro showed off her shooting from the 3 point line. With 2 minutes to go and an 8 point lead, Cambridge played smart, running the clock and trying to slow down the game. Despite the numerous fouls they received from Worcester, they managed to stay on top and keep control of the game, closing the score board 67-60.



Paloma Navarro scores a free throw