

## **Lajna Imaillah National Volleyball Tournament UK 2024**



Supporting yells, hopeful cheers, chants of encouragement and the thumping of volleyballs are just a few of the many sounds you would have heard echoing throughout the Baitul Futuh Mosque on the 17<sup>th</sup> of February.

These resonant sounds cannot be classified as just a soundtrack to Lajna members playing a game of volleyball, rather they present themselves as an exhibition of teamwork, comradery, and undeniable perseverance; all through the efforts of Lajna Imaillah UK.

This year, by the Grace of Allah the Almighty, Lajna Imaillah UK were granted the privilege of holding the 2024 National Volleyball Tournament. In previous years, Lajna Imaillah UK have been hosts to the International and European Volleyball Tournaments, however this time the game was brought closer to home.

The competing teams were divided region by region, with a place on the team only being allocated following a chain of trying practices and try outs. These had been taking place for weeks prior to the tournament in halls and spaces local to each region. A total of 11 teams were created and took part in the tournament, these are as follows: Ayesha, Baitul Futuh, Baitun Noor, East, Islamabad, London, Middlesex, Midlands, North East, North West, and South region.

The matchday begun with all players stood lined up in their respective teams which followed a recitation of The Holy Qur'an and a taking of the pledge, conducted by National Sadr Sahiba UK. Proceeding this, the rules and regulations of the game were shared, along with other housekeeping announcements. Finally, National Sadr Sahiba UK lead all members into a silent prayer which initiated the gameplay.

The first four teams to play (Baitun Noor, North East, Midlands and Middlesex) were given the opportunity to warm up before representing their regions. Spectators made their way to Court A in support of Baitun Noor versus North East, and Court B to observe Midlands versus Middlesex.

The squeaking of eager shoes marking their positions on the court, paired with a deafening thump of a volleyball against a well-trained hand marked the beginning of the tournament. Both teams battled through an intense engagement, heartily setting the tone for the remainder of the day. By the end of both matches, Baitun Noor had secured a 2:0 win, and so too did Middlesex.

The second game speedily came into frame with Court A accommodating Ayesha versus South region, and Court B hosting Baitul Futuh versus East region. By this point, the game energy had spread, and the crowd lulled loudly in support of their teams. A special mention should also be appointed to the referees of the game who were able to provide an accurate and fair outcome of

each game, and for those games mentioned above the outcomes are as follows: 2:0 was awarded to both Ayesha and Baitul Futuh region.

The final set of qualifying games were swiftly called onto the court with North West contending against Islamabad region on Court A, and Middlesex playing their second game of the day against London region on Court B. On this occasion, it was recorded that both Islamabad and London regions surfaced victorious with an identical score of 2:0.

This marked the end of all qualifying matches. All teams were given regular breaks before and after matches, and slots had been allocated for Namaz and lunch breaks. It should also be highlighted that accommodation had been prepared for those regions who had travelled from afar.

All qualified teams (London, Baitun Noor, Ayesha, and Baitul Futuh) took their final group huddles, discussed their final team tactics, and shared some final words of encouragement before the semi-finals begun.

The first semi-final match welcomed onto the court London region and Baitun Noor region for a place in the finals, with London region coming out on top. The second, and last, semi-final match introduced the Ayesha region and Baitul Futuh teams to each other for the first time that day- however Ayesha region impressively took the win.

11 teams had now been narrowed down to two: Ayesha region and London region, and the finals of the Lajna Imaillah National Volleyball Tournament UK was merely a whistle blow away. After a valiant effort from both teams, an astounding display of support from the crowds, and a thoughtful assessment from the referees, Ayesha region was declared the winner of Lajna Imaillah National Volleyball Tournament UK 2024. MashAllah!

Of course, a match for third place was also called for between Baitun Noor and Baitul Futuh, and for this Baitul Futuh emerged successful.

Yet, as is the beauty of our community, no grudges nor any dislike was held against any of the players and all teams came together to celebrate this eventful display of performance and co-operation. A prize ceremony was also held at the end of tournament to further reinforce this and celebrate the meaningful efforts of all players, duty holders, and spectators who participated in this year's tournament.

By now, the supporting yells had turned into heartfelt congratulations, the hopeful cheers now consisted of thoughtful reflections of the day, chants of encouragement transformed into goodbyes between distant regions, and the thumping of volleyballs had become silent, all packed away and ready for next year's tournament; InshAllah.

