



PRESS RELEASE (for immediate publication)

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PAHC09/10

NOTTINGHAM ON COURSE FOR PLAYOFFS DESPITE DEFEAT

Salford Quays HC 26 – 24 University of Nottingham HC

The University of Nottingham Handball Club's Men's team staged a valiant fightback, but still lost out to Salford in Sunday's National Handball League match. A poor display in the first half saw the visitors facing a heavy defeat as Salford took an 8 goal lead. A strong comeback almost brought them level, but in the end the early deficit proved fatal.

After proving to be one of the strongest University teams in last week's National University Championships, it was back to league duty for Nottingham, seeking a place in the play-offs. Their rivals for one of the three available spots were the opponents this time, with both teams desperate for victory. While Nottingham took time to settle into the match, Salford showed much greater energy, pace and desire to take an early advantage. Nottingham fought to stay in the match, but mistakes in attack were punished by devastating fast breaks. The teams went into the break with Salford leading 16:8 and Nottingham desperately seeking a way back in.

A change of tactics in defence gave Nottingham a platform for a comeback. They started the second half with more belief and desire, defending strongly and, as the goals began to flow, the belief continued to grow. Nottingham scored 7 unanswered goals, to leave them one behind and make that heavy defeat look unlikely. In fact they continued to attack looking to go in front, but it was only a matter of time before they were pegged back. Salford's youth and energy began to show as they kept running and raced back into a 6 goal lead. Their inexperience, however, also began to tell as Nottingham once again began to eat away at the deficit. With seconds to go, they pulled the score back to within 2 goals of their opponents. In the end it proved too little too late and Nottingham slipped to a 4th defeat of the season.

Nottingham's goals were shared by Cedric Biguenet (6) Guillaume Bodet, Jon Mardaras (5 each) and Ali Karakiprik (3), while Salford relied on Aiden Woodall (10) for some impressive goals, with other scorers throughout the team.

The defeat means Nottingham must wait another week but still in with a good chance of securing a play-off spot. They face Liverpool Speke Garston on Sunday 7th March, 1pm at University Park Sports Centre. Nottingham will look for strong home support in the match, with the prize of the National play-offs, and 6 matches against the best of the South Division, up for grabs. For more information, see www.handballclub.co.uk

ENDS

Notes to Editors

The University of Nottingham Handball Club was established in February 1992 and is currently the only handball club in the East Midlands. The men's team are taking part in the National Division One North League in 2009/10. The club trains on Tuesdays (9-10:30pm) and Thursdays (8:30-10:30pm) at Nottingham University Park Sports Centre. Training is open to students and guests, male and female, of all levels from beginners up. More information is available from Ahmad Beltagui, University of Nottingham Handball Club communications officer, nottingham_handball@hotmail.com or online at www.handballclub.co.uk