

Quarter-final booked for Edinburgh duo in Commonwealth Games beach volleyball

Edinburgh duo Melissa Coutts and Lynne Beattie booked their place in the quarter-finals of the Commonwealth Games beach volleyball tournament with a straight set victory over the Solomon Islands.

Coutts, aged 51, and Glasgow-born Beattie, aged 36, also claimed a quarter-final slot in the 2018 Games in the Gold Coast in Australia and they qualified for this event through gaining second spot at the EuroZone qualifer at Potrobello Beach last summer hosted by Scottish Volleyball, facing a tough Cypriot pair in the final.

The pair, who ranked 140 in the world, are members of the Edinburgh Beach Volleyball Club based at Portobello and they powered to a 21-6 win in the first set against their opponents in the packed, sun-kissed stadium at Smithfield in Birmingham.

They were the first team in the popular event, which is drawing big crowds, to move to 7-0 advantage before the first change and they increased that advantage to 11-0 before their opponents opened their account with a spike which hit the back line.

The closest they got to the Scots after that in the opening set was nine points, and Beattie and Coutts capitalised fully on the mistakes, some unforced, of their opponents from the South Pacific.

Their rivals upped their game in the second set to lead 6-3 and 10-7 after the best rally of the game, but the Scots kept their cool in front of a packed house which included members and staff of Scotland's women's hockey squad (pictured) who

have claimed a place in the fifth/sixth place play-off in their tournament.

Beattie and Coutts drew level at 13-13 and then edged 14-13 ahead, but their opponents dug deep to level again before a big mistake handed the initiative to the Scots.

The Solomon Islands pair held their head in their hands after a serve went long to move the Scots 15-14 ahead, but they collected themselves to be level again at 15-15.

The teams traded points but a spike into the net handed the Scots a 17-16 advantage thanks to another error from their rivals and they never looked back.

They went 18-16 in front when a long rally ended with a spike which hit the line and they took the set 21-16 before Coutts said: "It went to our game plan and that is us in the quarter-finals for the second Games running."