

# SULTANS OF THE NET

# ROAD TO GLORY

APRIL 2025



- EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW WITH THE CAPTAIN
- RISE OF A LEGENDARY TEAM
- HOW TÜRKİYE CONQUERED THE WORLD STAGE



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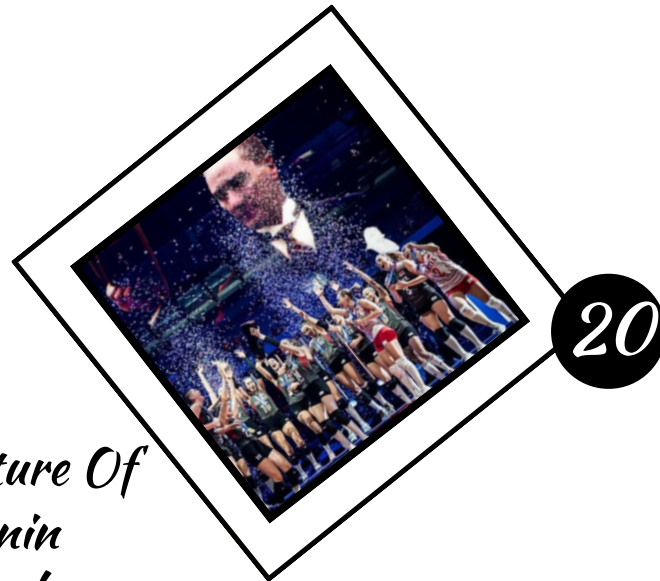
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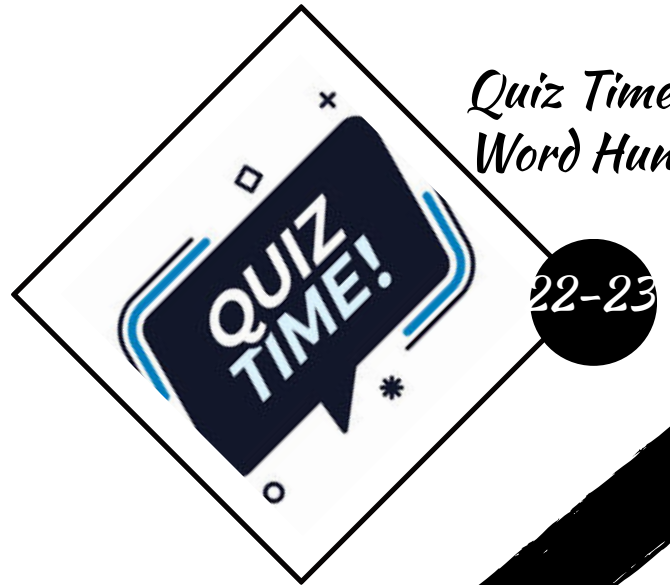
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# INTRODUCTION



*The Turkish Women's National Volleyball Team, "Filenin Sultanları," has become one of the most iconic symbols not only in volleyball but also in Turkish sports.*

*This team has won admiration not only through their victories on the court but also through the emotional triumphs they've achieved in the hearts of fans.*

*This magazine invites you to discover the outstanding performances and the inner strength that made these achievements possible.*

*For Filenin Sultanları, volleyball is not just a sport—it's a way of life.*

*With every match, they grow stronger and continue to make Turkey proud on both national and international stages.*

*Now, we invite you to get to know this team more closely.*

*The story of Filenin Sultanları goes beyond sports—it is a journey of determination, passion, and the power of unity.*





# VOLLEYBALL

The Turkish national team will face the Italian national team in the 2011 European Championship.



## The Early Years

Turkish women's volleyball began developing in the 1950s and 60s, but the national team was not a major competitor on the international stage. In the following decades, volleyball became more popular in Turkey, and the national team started participating in international tournaments. However, it wasn't until the 2003 European Championship that Turkey made a significant breakthrough. That year, the team won the silver medal, marking its first major success in an international competition.

## HISTORY OF FILENİN SULTANLARI

The history of the "Sultans of the Net" is symbolic of the rise of Turkish volleyball. Although the team started to gain recognition internationally in 2012, their recent victories on the global stage have elevated them to new heights. Particularly, the year 2024 was unforgettable for the team. Their victory in the 2024 European Volleyball Championship marked another milestone in their legacy, showcasing their technical and mental strength.



Turkish national team, 2015 European Games

With Melissa Vargas, Zehra Güneş, and Hande Baladın leading the new generation, the team has continued its success, winning the 2023 European Championship and qualifying for the Paris 2024 Olympics as one of the strongest teams.

# CHAMPIONS OF PASSION AND POWER!

## Meet the Stars of the Turkish Women's National Volleyball Team

The Turkish Women's National Volleyball Team, also known as "Filenin Sultanları", is home to some of the most talented and inspiring athletes in the world. Each player brings unique skills, determination, and passion to the court, making Turkey a powerhouse in international volleyball. Let's take a closer look at some of the key players who have helped shape the team's success.



### Eda Erdem– The Legendary Captain

Eda Erdem is more than just a volleyball player—she is the heart and soul of the Turkish national team. As the team captain, her leadership, experience, and never-give-up attitude inspire both her teammates and fans. Playing as a middle blocker, Eda is known for her strong blocks, powerful spikes, and strategic game sense. She has been a part of the national team for over a decade, leading Turkey to many international victories. Off the court, she is admired for her humility, dedication, and the special bond she shares with her teammates. Her number 14 jersey has become a symbol of resilience and passion in Turkish volleyball.



### Melissa Vargas – The Unstoppable Power

Originally from Cuba, Melissa Vargas became a Turkish citizen and quickly became one of the team's most dominant players. Playing as an opposite hitter, she is known for her explosive attacks, powerful serves, and incredible jumping ability. With her ability to score from almost anywhere on the court, she is one of the most feared spikers in the world.

Vargas played a key role in Turkey's victory in the 2023 Nations League, where she was named MVP (Most Valuable Player). Off the court, she is a humble and hardworking athlete who is constantly pushing herself to improve.



# Passion, Power, Personality!



## Ebrar Karakurt – The Passionate Warrior

Known for her bold personality and fearless playing style, Ebrar Karakurt is one of Turkey's most energetic and charismatic players. As an opposite hitter, she brings raw power, emotional intensity, and an aggressive attacking style to the team.

Ebrar's expressive nature and love for the game make her a true entertainer on the court. Whether she's celebrating a powerful spike or motivating her teammates, her energy is contagious. She is also known for her love of music and movies, often sharing her favorites with fans.

## Hande Baladın – The Versatile Star

Hande Baladın is one of the most dynamic and versatile players on the team. Playing as an outside hitter, she can both attack and defend with great skill. Known for her agility, smart plays, and powerful spikes, she is a key player in Turkey's offensive strategy.

Hande started her volleyball journey at a young age and quickly became one of Turkey's rising stars. Her passion for the game and energetic personality make her a fan favorite. She also enjoys spending time with her teammates, sharing fun moments off the court.



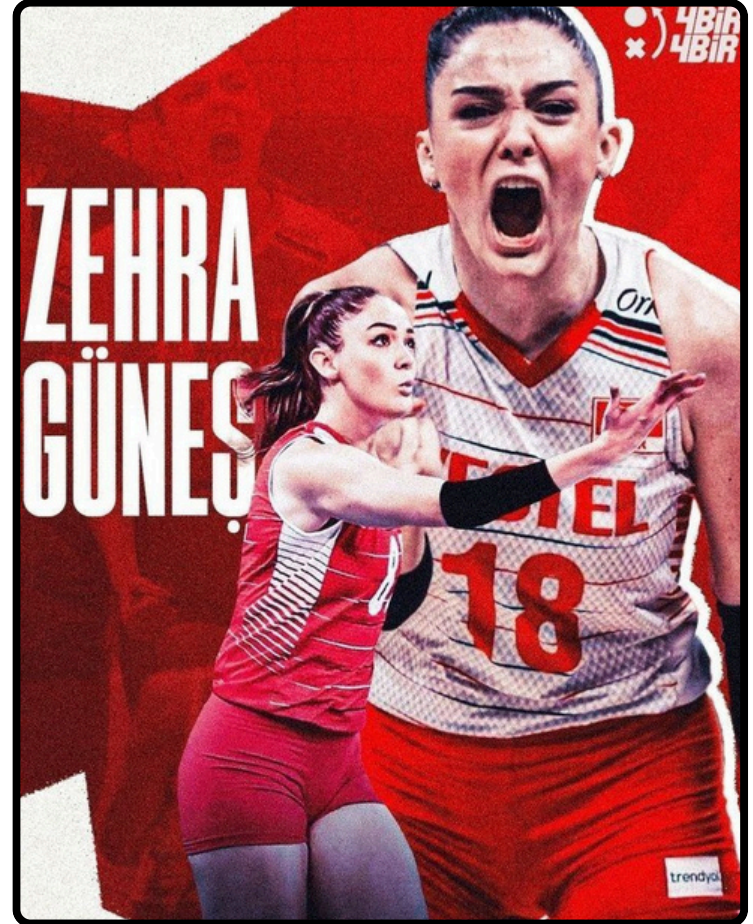


- 🌟 Zehra was scouted for volleyball at age 13 due to her height and agility. She also appeared in several fashion magazines and brand campaigns, becoming a sports style icon!
- 📖 Simge has a strong interest in psychology and reads about how mental strength affects athletes' performance. She often helps motivate her teammates with this knowledge

## Zehra Güneş – The Towering Blocker

Standing at 1.97 meters, Zehra Güneş is a dominant force at the net. As a middle blocker, she is famous for her fast reactions, strong blocks, and precise attacks. Her height and technique make her one of the best blockers in international volleyball.

Apart from volleyball, Zehra has gained popularity for her charismatic personality and fashion sense. She is active on social media, where she shares moments from both her professional and personal life. Despite her fame, she remains focused on improving her skills and helping her team achieve greater success.



## Simge Aköz – The Defensive Wall

Every great team needs a solid defense, and Simge Aköz is the backbone of Turkey's back row. As a libero, her job is to make impossible saves, receive powerful serves, and keep the ball in play. Her quick reflexes, fearless dives, and leadership in defense make her one of the best liberos in the world.

Simge's calm and collected attitude helps her team stay composed during intense matches. Off the court, she loves to travel and explore new places, always finding ways to relax before big tournaments.



# LEGENDARY MATCHES



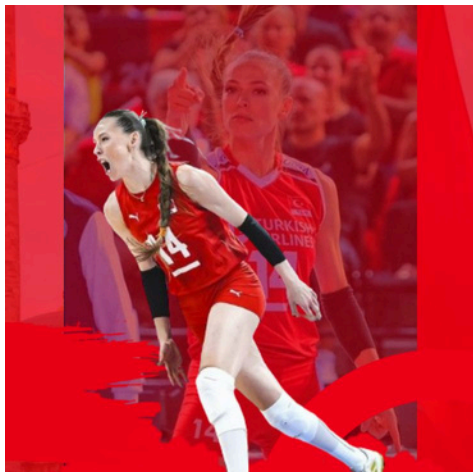
## From the Court A Look at the Last Battle

On July 16, 2024, the Turkish Women's National Volleyball Team faced China in the final of the FIVB Volleyball Nations League (VNL) in Bangkok, Thailand. With millions watching around the world, Filenin Sultanları once again proved why they are at the top of global volleyball.

The match was intense from the first serve. Melissa Vargas delivered powerful spikes, Zehra Güneş blocked like a wall, and captain Eda Erdem led with calm determination. After five thrilling sets, Turkey defeated China 3-2, claiming their second consecutive VNL title!

This victory not only showed the team's skill, but also their heart. It was a symbol of unity, passion, and endless fight. Fans flooded social media with messages of pride and joy, calling the team "Queens of the Court."

The emotions were high, the energy unforgettable. And now, the Sultanlar are preparing to carry this momentum into the 2025 season, ready to shine once again.



### **Captain Eda: The Calm in the Storm**

*In the heart of the final against China, Eda Erdem once again proved why she is the soul of this team. With her leadership, she kept the team focused during the most intense moments of the match. Her powerful serves and smart plays at the net came at critical times, especially in the fifth set when every point felt like a final.*

*But more than her statistics, it was Eda's calm energy, fierce determination, and unshakable spirit that carried the team forward. While younger players looked to her for confidence, she responded with strength and grace.*

*After the final whistle, her emotional celebration showed what this victory truly meant — not just another medal, but a reward for years of dedication and heart. Eda wasn't just the captain on paper — she was the heartbeat of the final.*



# *From Battle to Glory*



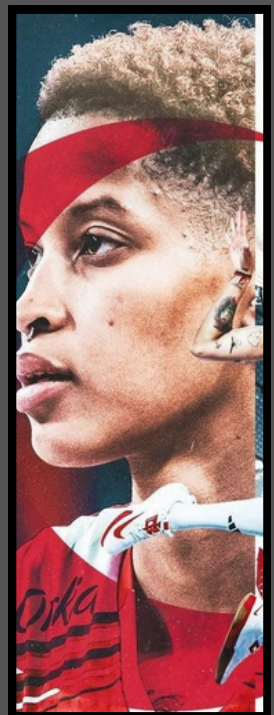
## The Night We Conquered Europe

On September 3, 2023, Filenin Sultanları wrote history by defeating Serbia in the CEV Women's European Volleyball Championship final. It was more than just a match — it was a night of power, strategy, and national pride.

In a breathtaking five-set battle, Türkiye triumphed 3-2, showing incredible resilience and team spirit. Melissa Vargas delivered a phenomenal performance, scoring 41 points and dominating the court with her powerful spikes. Zehra Güneş and Eda Erdem's blocks were unstoppable, while the entire team played with heart and harmony.

This victory marked Türkiye's first-ever European Championship title, and millions celebrated the team's achievement across the country. It wasn't just a win — it was the rise of a golden generation in Turkish volleyball.

The 2023 final wasn't just a game; it was a turning point that proved to the world that Türkiye is a volleyball powerhouse. This match will always be remembered as the night Filenin Sultanları became legends.





# The Power Behind Every Point

What makes the Turkish Women's National Volleyball Team so special isn't just their skill, power, or victories—it's their unbreakable bond. Every time they step onto the court, they do it not as individuals, but as one heartbeat. From high-fives after each rally to the way they lift each other up after a mistake, the chemistry is undeniable.

During timeouts, you'll see laughter, support, and fierce focus all at once. That's not just strategy—it's sisterhood. Whether it's Vargas celebrating a spike, Simge diving for an impossible save, or Eda's calm leadership guiding the way, this team wins because they trust each other completely.

They fight for every point not just for the scoreboard, but for each other. And that, more than any medal, is what makes them champions in the hearts of fans.





# INTERVIEWS WITH THE PLAYERS

## EDA ERDEM

**Q: Eda, you've been the captain of the "Sultans of the Net" for many years. How do you feel about the responsibilities of being a team leader?**

**E:** Being the captain is both a huge responsibility and a great honor. Every player on the team has a unique role, but I must always lead by example and maintain a positive attitude. Leadership doesn't only start on the court; it begins in training and continues in the locker room. Everyone on this team values each other, and I do my best to support that unity.

**Q: What is the secret behind the team's success?**

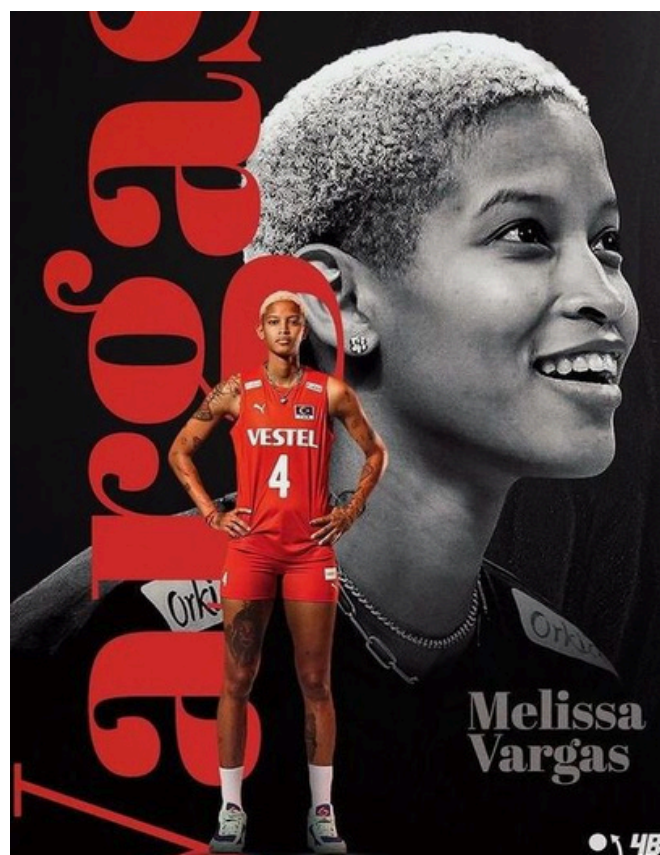
**E:** The biggest secret to our success is team spirit. Each player fights not just for herself but for her teammates. The stronger we are as a team, the better the results we get. Of course, our individual talents matter, but our real strength comes from the trust and support we give one another.

**Q: You've gained global recognition with your recent performances. How did you reach this level?**

**E:** Above all, we worked very hard, and we're now seeing the results. Training is crucial, but building mental resilience has also played a big part. We've been through tough matches, but we always managed to stay strong. The bond within the team is one of the cornerstones of our success.



"WE ARE NOT JUST A TEAM WE ARE A FAMILY"



## MELISSA VARGAS

**Q: Melissa, when you joined the Sultans of the Net, it was a major transition. What was the biggest factor in your decision?**

**M:** When I first came to Turkey and saw the team, I felt like I was home. This team isn't just full of talented players—it has an amazing family atmosphere. We share the same goals, and that makes being here so meaningful. Plus, I was truly impressed by how passionate Turkish fans are about volleyball.

**Q: What have been the biggest challenges in your volleyball career, and how did you overcome them?**

**M:** I've always tried to play at the highest level. One of the biggest challenges was adapting to a new culture and overcoming the language barrier. But with the team's support and the guidance of our coaches, I managed to get through it. Being able to adapt my playing style was a major achievement for me.



# THE INTELLIGENCE BEHIND THE GAME

The Turkish Women's National Volleyball Team skillfully applies dynamic systems of modern volleyball such as “quick middle” plays and “back-row attacks.” In addition, opponent analyses are conducted before matches, and specific tactics are determined in advance. These tactics can be updated with instant decisions during the game. This flexibility is one of the key elements that elevate the team from an ordinary squad to a world-class contender.

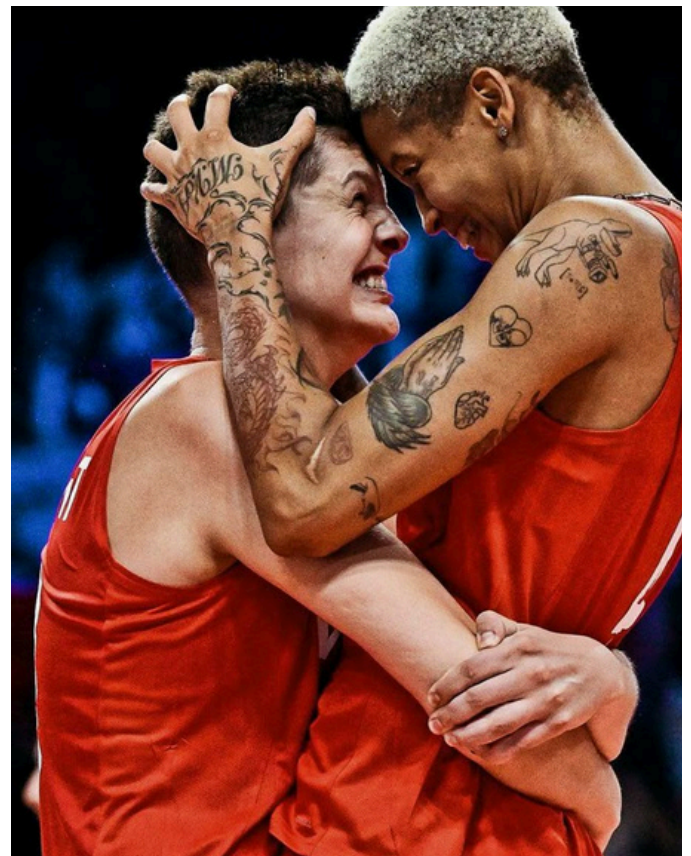
As the captain, Eda Erdem plays a guiding role on the court, helping maintain the team's rhythm. Meanwhile, young players learn this system and begin making strategic decisions on the court themselves—ensuring the sustainability of the team's success. The game of the Sultans of the Net is not just about physical strength; it is the product of a mentally strong, disciplined, and determined system.

The success of the Sultans of the Net is built not only on physical strength but also on smartly designed game plans and tactical discipline. Every training session is filled with tactical scenarios tailored to different opponents.

In offense, the harmony between the powerful spiker Melissa Vargas and the setter is crucial, while in defense, Zehra Güneş's timing in blocking increases the team's resilience.



*Every block is  
the height of  
your thinking."*



**"RISING  
HIGHER,  
PLAYING  
STRONGER**





# Unforgettable Moments

## The Iconic Highlights of Filenin Sultanlari



Sports are remembered not just by scores, but by emotions, unforgettable moments, and the scenes that stay in our minds forever. Over the years, Filenin Sultanlari have gifted us not only victories, but countless legendary moments that touched our hearts.

When they defeated the USA in the 2023 Nations League final and became champions, the moment Vargas scored the final point and the entire team embraced each other in tears was more than just a win —

it was the peak of a remarkable success story. As thousands of Turkish flags waved in the stands, millions felt the same pride from their homes.

### Did You Know?

- ♥ Melissa Vargas's spike in the 2023 European Championship final was recorded at 120 km/h! At that speed, not only the net but even the commentators could barely follow it. Someone in the crowd might've even asked, "Was that a plane?" 🛩️
- ♥ After Eda Erdem's crucial block in the final match, the crowd erupted in applause! Some fans described the sound of that block as "the slap of volleyball." 🏐



- ♥ In 2024, Zehra Güneş made 7 consecutive blocks in a single match — a European record!

At that point, the court really needed a sign saying: "Welcome to the Zehra Wall!"

- ♥ After a dramatic 5-set win, the team turned the celebration into a dance party.

# *FROM THE STANDS TO THE COURT*

## **The Power of the Fans**

A match isn't won by players alone — it's won with the crowd. While the Turkish Women's National Volleyball Team fights on the court, one of their greatest sources of strength is the unwavering support from their fans. Their energy, their voices, and their belief become an invisible force that fuels every point.

Before the match even begins, the echo of chants, the sea of flags in the stands, and the sound of applause send a clear message to the team: you are not alone. Especially in critical moments, the rising cheer can boost morale, reignite focus, and even change the momentum of the game.

Part of the reason for the team's global success is this powerful connection. Even in matches played thousands of kilometers away, Turkish fans make their presence felt. From messages of support flooding social media to millions watching late into the night, this team is more than just a sports squad — it's a symbol of national pride.

Fans aren't just spectators. They feel every point, they lift the team with their spirit, and they become part of the journey. They are the unseen but essential players in every victory.

*"They're not in  
the game, but  
they're always in  
the fight"*





# *Volleyball and Women's Sports*

## **"To the Top with the Power of Women"**



Their success on the court in the 2024 European Championship showed the power of women in sports. This victory has contributed to the increasing visibility of women's sports globally. The "Sultans of the Net" are role models for young girls everywhere, demonstrating that with hard work and determination, there are no limits to what women can achieve. This success extends beyond volleyball, inspiring change in the sports world and beyond.



# A SYMBOL OF STRENGTH

The players of the "Sultans of the Net" are known for their contributions to society outside the court as well. They play an active role in various social responsibility projects and initiatives. Eda Erdem, for example, is deeply involved in promoting sports for women and girls. Melissa Vargas works with youth organizations to encourage children to engage in sports, while Zehra Güneş uses her influence to inspire young girls to pursue their athletic dreams. These players are not just champions on the court but are also dedicated to making a positive impact on society. Their involvement in community projects is an essential part of their legacy as athletes.



Eda Erdem, the legendary captain of the Turkish Women's National Volleyball Team, has not only won the hearts of sports fans with her powerful serves and unshakable leadership, but also become a true inspiration for young girls across the country. Her influence reached a whole new level when a statue of her was unveiled at Burhan Felek Sports Complex in Istanbul — a rare honor for a female athlete in Turkey.

The statue stands tall, just like Eda does on the court, symbolizing courage, determination, and the endless possibilities for girls in sports. It's more than just a tribute to her career; it's a message. A message that says: "You can do it too."

Eda Erdem has always used her voice to encourage young girls to follow their dreams. Whether through interviews, social media, or personal interactions, she constantly reminds them that hard work, discipline, and believing in yourself can take you far. She often speaks about the importance of team spirit and supporting each other, both on and off the court.

With this statue, Eda isn't just being remembered — she's continuing to lead. Not just for today's athletes, but for the next generation of "Sultans of the Net."

**BURHAN FELEK SPORTS COMPLEX**





# *UNITED AS ONE*

## ***“THE UNBREAKABLE SPIRIT OF FİLENİN SULTANLARI”***

What makes Filenin Sultanlari truly special goes beyond skills or medals—it's their unshakable team spirit. From the youngest rising stars to the most experienced veterans, every player carries the same fire, the same belief: together, they are stronger.

In every huddle, every celebration, and even in moments of defeat, their bond shines through. This isn't just a group of athletes—this is a sisterhood built on trust, respect, and shared dreams. They lift each other up, both on and off the court, showing that real power comes from unity.



Whether it's an intense five-set thriller or a moment of silence before a crucial serve, Filenin Sultanlari show the heart of a team that plays not just for victory but for each other.

Their unity is their strength, and it's what turns every challenge into a triumph.

*"More  
than a  
team  
the pride  
of a  
nation."*





# *THE FUTURE OF FILENIN SULTANLARI*

“FROM NOW TO NEXT UNSOIPPABLE

AND UNITE D”



The future of the "Sultans of the Net" looks incredibly promising. With the incredible success of the 2024 European Championship and the rising stars like Zehra Güneş, the team is poised to continue their dominance in international volleyball. The young players are rapidly developing, and the veterans are continuing to lead the team to greater heights. This combination of experience and youthful energy will ensure that the "Sultans of the Net" remain one of the best teams in the world. Their future is bright, and we can expect many more successes in the years to come.

# *Beyond the Net*

*A Legacy*

*That Never*

*Fades*

**The "Sultans of the Net" are more than just a volleyball team; they are a symbol of excellence in Turkish sports. Their success is not only due to their individual talents but also to their incredible teamwork and dedication. The 2024 victories were a significant step in their journey, but they are only the beginning. With young stars emerging and the continued leadership of players like Eda Erdem, the team is set to achieve even more in the future. The "Sultans of the Net" are not just champions on the court—they are champions of spirit, teamwork, and inspiration. The future of Turkish volleyball is in good hands, and the "Sultans of the Net" will continue to inspire generations to come.**





# Did You Know? Quiz

What is the highest spike height Melissa Vargas has reached in a match?

- A) 305 cm
- B) 315 cm
- C) 330 cm
- D) 325 cm

C

What is Zehra Güneş's jersey number?

- A) 7
- B) 18
- C) 3
- D) 99

B

In which year did the Turkish Women's Volleyball Team win the European Championship for the first time?

- A) 2021
- B) 2023
- C) 2019
- D) 2022

B

How many years has Eda Erdem been part of the national team?

- A) 10
- B) 15
- C) 18
- D) 12

C

During which tournament did the nickname "Filenin Sultanları" become widely used?

- A) 2003 Avrupa Şampiyonası
- B) 2008 Olimpiyat Elemeleri
- C) 2011 Dünya Grand Prix
- D) 2021 Milletler Ligi

A



# Word Hunt

V A R G A S K B T A P S  
 O K H D L R L H E G L  
 L I Z E H R A Y U X  
 L B E D A W A M D F  
 E L O C N U N P P S T  
 Y C H A M P I O N D Z  
 B L O C K I T R I Y H P  
 A S U L T A N S S X C  
 L W I N K C R V O T P  
 L Q T E A M W O R L B

● Can you  
 find all  
 the  
 hidden  
 volleyball  
 words  
 and  
 uncover  
 the  
 power  
 behind  
 the  
 Sultans of  
 the Net? ●

- *Nickname of the Turkish Women's Volleyball Team*
- *Famous middle blocker known for her blocks*
- *The title they earned after conquering Europe*
- *Powerful attack that hits the floor*
- *Stops the opponent's attack*
- *The team's powerful spiker*
- *The move that starts the game*





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Used for international match data and rankings.
  
- **TRT Sport & TRT Haber**  
<https://www.trtspor.com.tr>  
Used for national match reports and visual media.
  
- **Player Social Media Accounts (e.g., Instagram, Twitter)**  
Used for player quotes, behind-the-scenes moments, and inspirational content.
  
- **Spelling & Grammar Improvement Tool**  
**WebsitePlanet Spell Checker**  
Used for proofreading and improving English writing throughout the magazine