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**JAWAI SHINES BUT BOOMERS FALL SHORT IN CHINA**

This article is courtesy of Bill Baxter, Basketball Australia.

Despite a fourth quarter comeback that saw Australia's men's basketball team within striking distance of victory, China defeated the Boomers 74-61 in the second of two international friendly matches in China.

Trailing by sixteen points at three-quarter time the Boomers rode the broad shoulders and loud, large and angry presence of the Bamaga Behemoth Nathan Jawai to get back into the match.

Jawai threw down three huge dunks under heavy pressure in the fourth quarter as the Boomers hammered away at the lead until it was reduced to just five points when less than two minutes remained.

But after an Oscar Foreman pass was stolen, China nailed a dagger three pointer and Australia's desperation shots failed to fall as the experienced Chinese team iced the game from the foul line to win by thirteen points.

208cm Jawai had a monster game in his second match for Australia and connected on 11-of-12 shots to finish with 28 points and 11 rebounds while poor perimeter shooting restricted the remainder of the side to single digits.

China's first NBA player Wang Zhizhi top scored for the host nation with 13 points. "I'm extremely proud of these guys for clawing out of the significant hole we dug ourselves in the first quarter and the emergence of Nathan Jawai was a huge positive," Boomers Head Coach Brett Brown said.

"Nathan's been dominant in both games here and he's a legitimate low post threat that demanded double teams.

"When you think about his continued development alongside three quality bigs like Matthew Nielsen, Andrew Bogut and David Andersen it's exciting and there will be a lot less pressure on him with those guys alongside him than he got tonight.

"We shot the ball poorly from the perimeter and Nathan was our shining light in the post offensively and we used him.



China, on the other hand, shot very well but overall I'm extremely proud of this young group."

After winning the opening match in Beilun 84-78, China was on the front foot from the outset of the second match in Benxi, leading 26-10 after one quarter and 36-20 at half time.

But the inexperienced Boomers side stayed toe-to-toe in hostile territory with a Chinese outfit boasting eight Beijing Olympians for 20 minutes across the second and third quarters and Australia was not done yet as the game entered its final quarter with the score, 54-38.

That was before Jawai's outstanding effort and the hustle of a Boomers side that could not brag of a single World Championship or Olympic Games cap among them.

The team will arrive back in Sydney on Qantas flight QF130 at 8:30am on Thursday morning and enjoy a twenty day break before an extended squad undergoes a six day training camp in Sydney from July 21-27. A touring side is then selected to depart for tournaments in Argentina and Brazil (July 27 – August 10) before a pre-FIBA Oceania Championship training camp in Sydney from August 18-22.

The Boomers then face New Zealand at the State Sports Centre at Olympic Park on Sunday 22 August in the first of a two game series to decide bragging rights as well as 2010 FIBA World Championship seedings, with the second match played in Auckland on August 25.

Quarter by quarter:

1. CHN 26 AUS 10
2. CHN 36 AUS 20 (10-10)
3. CHN 54 AUS 38 (18-18)
4. CHN 74 AUS 61 (20-23)

**CHINA 74** (Wang Zhizhi 13, Li 12, Fy Zhu 8) bt **AUSTRALIA 61** (Nathan Jawai 28, Steven Weigh 6, James Harvey 5, Oscar Foreman 5)  
in Benxi, China  
China wins series 2-0

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