

29th July, 2009

NSW TEAM REPRESENTATIVES DOMINATE FOR ROLLERS IN WIN OVER CANADA

Australia's Men's Wheelchair Basketball team, the Rollers, have opened the Rollers World Challenge with a 66-37 trouncing of Paralympic rivals Canada at Sydney Olympic Park tonight.

New South Wales team representatives, Canberra born but now Wollongong player, Tristan Knowles, and Coffs Harbour born and Wentworthville representative, Bill Latham, top-scored for the Rollers off the bench with 13 points apiece while Justin Eveson added 12 points. Canada's Adam Lancia led all scorers with 16 points.

A gold medal was not on the line tonight but the Rollers proved that their Paralympic Games title in Beijing was no fluke with their clinical performance.

With nine Paralympians suiting up in the green and gold the Australians came into the game as favourites and delivered for their home crowd.

"Canada are rebuilding, they still have some quality guys; Adam Lancia and Richard Peter, and Dave Durepos are quality athletes. They were tough but twelve guys will outdo three any day," Ettridge said.

Ettridge praised Jeremy Doyle, Nick Taylor and Michael Hartnett in particular.

"We've got nine professional athletes here and we had a bit of a target in the second half, we wanted to bury them and they did it."

The Australians turned the game on its head after halftime when they had been leading by six points to blitz the Canadians by 29 at the final buzzer.

Rollers Captain Brad Ness was the first on the scoreboard but the Canadians quickly forged ahead to a four point lead as the Australians missed their target in the early stages.

Rollers big man Latham came off the bench to ignite the Australian offence with a quick three point play and the Rollers hard-hitting defence started to pay dividends, grabbing three steals in the term to snatch back the lead and take a one point advantage at the first break, 11-10.

The Rollers worked their game plan in the second quarter to fire in the ball to Knowles and Brett Stibners, from the Wollongong Rollerhawks, under the basket who happily converted for a 4-0 run at the start of the second quarter.

Canadian Peter was doing all the hard work for his team, picking up a steal and taking his chances under the basket and kept Canada in the contest. Nick Taylor threw away a pass but redeemed himself with a sweet long-range two pointer, Australia's first basket in nearly three minutes.

With Canada still holding on Rollers Head Coach Ben Ettridge called his team to the bench with 2:10 left on the clock but only extended their lead by two points.

Lancia was causing problems for the Aussies as the Beijing Paralympian yelled instructions to his teammates and steered them to halftime with 10 points and seven rebounds but the Rollers still extended their lead to 28-22 at halftime.

The signs were good for Australia early in the third term as Eveson streamed down the wing to drain a basket under pressure and nailed the bonus. The Rollers raised their voices with plenty of talk in defence and shut down the Canadian penetration.

Canadian Coach Jerry Tonello had had enough and called a timeout his team when had not scored in over seven minutes and the margin was out to 15 points. The Canadians came out and matched the Aussies for the rest of the quarter as Lancia and five-time Australian Paralympian Troy Sachs went basket for basket. The Rollers held on to a 14 point lead at the last break, 43-29.

With pride on the line the Australians put on a display for their home crowd in the fourth quarter and pushed out the margin to take the game by 29 points.

Japan and Canada contest the second match at 8.00pm AEST.

Ettridge said he would experiment with the Rollers lineup against the Japanese tomorrow.

"We're rotating our lineup in the next game, we've got that luxury because we've got fourteen here, it's a great opportunity," Ettridge said.

"Japan are improving, Reo Fujimoto is an outstanding big man, Hiroaki Kozai has added some other aspects to his game. We can't underestimate any opposition," Ettridge said.

The Rollers tackle Japan at 11.00am while Great Britain and Canada clash at 1.00pm tomorrow in the second day of the Rollers World Challenge.

You can follow the Rollers World Challenge live at the venue, on [ABC2](#), [LIVESTATS](#) or the official [Rollers World Challenge Website](#).

Quarter by quarter:

1: AUS 11 CAN 10
H: AUS 28 CAN 22 (17-12)
3: AUS 43 CAN 29 (15-7)
F: AUS 66 CAN 37 (23-8)

AUSTRALIA 66 (Bill Latham 13, Tristan Knowles 13, Justin Eveson 12) bt
CANADA 37 (Adam Lancia 16, Richard Peter 8, Robert Hedges 5)
At Sydney Olympic Park Sports Centre

For more information please contact:
Andrew Tilley
Marketing & Communications Manager
Basketball New South Wales
T: 8765 8555
E: andrew_tilley@nswbasketball.net.au

