

31<sup>st</sup> July 2008

## **Opals and Boomers Tune up for Beijing with Victories**

The Opals and Boomers have both recorded impressive victories against highly rated opponents in the lead up to the Olympic Games.

The Opals have dominated World Number 4 Brazil in a two match series. Australia scored an emphatic 99 – 62 victory over Brazil on Monday night in Wollongong. The Opals were lead by Captain Lauren Jackson who finished with the impressive stat line of 19 points (game high), 7 rebounds, 3 steals and one block in 22 minutes. Not to be outdone 2006 World Championships MVP Penny Taylor finished with 17 points, 7 rebounds, 6 assists, 2 blocks and 1 steal.

In second match of their two game series the Opals had to overcome their rivals minus their Captain. With Lauren Jackson sitting out the game after pulling up with soreness in her right ankle. After undergoing a precautionary MRI she was diagnosed with an anterior impingement. Suzy Batkovic stepped up to fill the void with 17 points, 6 rebounds and 6 steals, guiding the team to a 85 – 62 victory. She was supported by Belinda Snell who chipped in with 13 points, Snell was rewarded with the series MVP after also having a solid game in the first match.

Jackson is expected to be fit for the teams final preparation before the Olympics, the FIBA Diamond Ball Tournament in Haining, China starting on August 3<sup>rd</sup>.

The Boomers also started their Olympic warm up campaign in style with a 67 -55 victory over host nation China in the FIBA Men's Diamond Ball held in Nanjing. The Boomers were able to limit China's NBA triumvirate of Yao Ming, Yi Jianlian and Wang Zhizhi to a combined 18 points and 14 rebounds. Yao Ming the 7'5 NBA Superstar and one of the faces of the upcoming Games was limited to 14 points. Australia's relentless defence forces China into 23 turnovers. Chris Anstey topped the scoring for Australia with 11 points and was well supported by fellow big men Andrew Bogut, Matt Nielson and David Anderson. Australia plays Angola tonight with a victory setting up a likely playoff against reigning Olympic champions Argentina, who boast a number of NBA players.

### Australian OPALS Olympic Schedule (Group A)

August 9, 2008	Australia v Belarus
August 11, 2008	Australia v Brazil
August 13, 2008	Australia v Korea
August 15, 2008	Australia v Latvia
August 17, 2008	Australia v Russia

#### Quarter Finals

August 19, 2008 Times and positions TBD

#### Semi-Finals

August 21, 2008 Times and Positions TBD

#### Finals

August 23, 2008	Bronze Medal Game
August 23, 2008	Gold Medal Game

### Australian Boomers Olympic Schedule (Group A)

August 10, 2008	Australia v Croatia
August 12, 2008	Australia v Argentina
August 14, 2008	Australia v Iran
August 16, 2008	Australia v Russia
August 18, 2008	Australia v Lithuania

#### Quarter Finals

August 20, 2008 Times and positions TBD

#### Semi-Finals

August 22, 2008 Times and Positions TBD

#### Finals

August 24, 2008	Bronze Medal Game
August 24, 2008	Gold Medal Game

#### **BASKETBALL NSW PRESS RELEASE**

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