

8<sup>th</sup> July, 2009

## **PERFECT EMUS CRUNCH CROATIA AT WORLDS**

**This article is courtesy of Kimberly Lewis, Basketball Australia.**

Australia's Under-19 Men's team, the Emus, will enter the Quarter Finals of the FIBA Under-19 World Championship for Men as the top seed from their group after recording their most significant victory of the tournament, a 79-74 triumph over previously undefeated Croatia.

Assuming the undefeated USA continues their winning streak tonight the Emus will play either France or Lithuania in the Quarter Finals on Friday.

Emus Captain Matthew Dellavedova lived up to his title by leading all scorers with 17 points. The 190cm guard scored 15 points in the final quarter to lift Australia to the win. Cody Ellis posted 14 points in support.

Emus Head Coach Marty Clarke said their dominance on the boards and bench depth helped them pull out the gritty win.

"It was definitely the toughest game so far," Clarke said. "We really wanted to make sure that people were fresh for the Quarter Finals so we didn't want to overplay anyone. It was an enjoyable game to coach against real quality opposition."

"Dellavedova defended well and distributed the ball well early on and when someone had to make a shot he's not afraid to put his hand up."

With both teams coming into today's contest with unblemished records they were already guaranteed a place in the Quarter Finals, but each was fighting to advance as the top seed from the group.

The Emus hit the ground running for a 7-2 lead but it was clear this game was not going to be as easily won as previous fixtures when Croatia came roaring back to open up a five point lead at the first break 24-19.

Australia clawed back within two points midway through the second term but Clarke was forced to call a timeout with four minutes remaining in the second quarter as the Emus were soon looking at a nine point deficit.

Not to be outdone Australia's tenacious defence kicked in as the Emus crashed the boards to produce a 7-1 run and finish the half only three points behind, 37-34.

A refreshed Australian team emerged from the change-rooms as they went on a blistering 12-0 run to start the second half and establish a nine point lead. An avalanche of turnovers forced a Croatian timeout before they eventually got on the scoreboard three minutes into the term.

But just as in the first quarter the Croatians made a comeback, causing Clarke to call his team to the bench with 1:18 on the clock and just a two point lead.

The break did little to halt Croatia but Australia still held on for a one-point lead heading into the final term, 55-54.

The Emus started the better of the two in the fourth but the lead swung back and forth before Croatia's Mario Delas levelled at 63-all with five minutes remaining.

Croatia nailed two clutch threes to stay in touch but two more failed to drop in the final plays as Australia's Dellavedova shouldered his responsibility to score six points in the final 34 seconds and secure the momentous victory.

In other games Spain crushed Kazakhstan 101-71, Puerto Rico bounced back from a loss to the USA by defeating Egypt 99-71, Canada upset Argentina 67-57 and Greece held off France 76-72. Lithuania and the USA play at 5.30pm tonight AEST to decide the final seedings heading into the Quarter Finals.

Clarke said keeping the team focussed before the next phase of the tournament is important now.

"We're going to make sure our young guys keep their feet on the ground and heads clear and we can come out and play to their potential in two days time," Clarke said.

All teams have a rest day tomorrow before the Quarter Finals get underway on Friday. The Emus will face either Lithuania or France at 6.30pm on Friday AEST. All Quarter Finals will be broadcast live on [FIBATV](#) and can be followed with [LIVE STATS](#).

Quarter by quarter:

1: CRO 24 AUST 19  
H: CRO 37 AUST 34 (13-15)  
3: AUST 55 CRO 54 (21-17)  
F: AUST 79 CRO 74 (24-20)

**AUSTRALIA 79** (Matthew Dellavedova 17, Cody Ellis 14, Mitchell Young 10, Brock Motum 10) bt

**CROATIA 74** (Toni Prostran 14, Tomislav Zubcic 14, Ivan Batur 12)  
At North Shore Events Centre, Auckland, New Zealand

For more information please contact:  
Andrew Tilley  
Marketing & Communications Manager  
Basketball New South Wales  
T: 8765 8555  
E: [andrew\\_tilley@nswbasketball.net.au](mailto:andrew_tilley@nswbasketball.net.au)

