

30th July, 2009

WOLLONGONG ROLLERHAWKS STAR KNOWLES HELPS ROLLERS ROUT JAPAN

Australia's Men's Wheelchair Basketball team, the Rollers, put on an exhibition to smash Japan 83-41 at the Rollers World Challenge at Sydney Olympic Park Sports Centre today.

Rollers Captain Brad Ness led the Paralympic Champions with 17 points, Wollongong resident and Rollerhawks player, Tristan Knowles, added 15 points and Justin Eveson bagged a double-double with 14 points and 13 rebounds.

Rollers Head Coach Ben Ettridge said the Rollers had prepared for a tough game.

"We prepare for every contest as if we are second best so that's why we were able to win by a large margin today," Ettridge said.

"The one-pointers are doing a great job defensively, and a great job offensively, working with the bigs. What we now want out of them is four to six points each; we need them to contribute on the scoreboard as well. So they need to just concentrate, get a bit of composure and they're getting the opportunities, they've just got to take them."

The size of the Australians was too much for the Japanese as the Rollers dominated in all areas of the game. Ettridge praised his big men who led on the scoreboard and in rebounding.

"I think Bill Latham was outstanding; we gave him a little bit of a rev up and he responded which is what we want. They're all world class big men and it's a luxury to be rolling out the equivalent of Andrew Bogut five times off the bench so it's great."

The Japanese were making all the right moves but none of their shots were dropping and when Rollers forward Eveson pulled off a behind-the-back trick shot and nailed the bonus point Australia was out by eight points. Eveson and Captain Brad Ness combined to lead the Rollers to a 25-9 advantage at the first break.

Shingo Fujii came on to lift the Japanese in the second quarter, posting four points, but their defensive pressure did little to trouble the Aussies.

As Rollers Head Coach Ben Ettridge rang in the changes the Australians carried on their momentum and spread around the scoring.

When five-time Paralympian Troy Sachs came back on in the second quarter, so did the heavy clashes. Sachs, Shaun Norris and Rollers Captain Brad Ness all hit the floor but nothing could stop the Aussie onslaught and they pushed the lead out to 21 points at halftime.

Knowles controlled the game late in the third quarter, directing his teammates and pouring on eight points to take Australia to the final break 30 points ahead.

The Rollers performed for the crowd in the final quarter, shutting down the Japanese for a 42 point win.

Canada and Great Britain contest the second game from 1.00pm today.

The Rollers play their own Ashes test against Great Britain tomorrow night at 6.00pm AEST while Japan will face Canada at 8.00pm.

Ettridge said he expected Great Britain to put up a good fight.

"They're a great team, well-drilled. Jon Pollock has been on fire, we played him twice in the NWBL (National Wheelchair Basketball League) this weekend and he got 39 and 30 points on us in each game so he's shooting really well. Jo Bestwick has improved out of sight and Abdi Jama, a one-pointer that plays for the Perth Wheelcats, he's one we've got to watch as well," Ettridge said.

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

Quarter by quarter:

1: AUS 25 JPN 9
H: AUS 43 JPN 22 (18-13)
3: AUS 63 JPN 33 (20-11)
F: AUS 83 JPN 41 (20-8)

AUSTRALIA 83 (Brad Ness 17, Tristan Knowles 15, Justin Eveson 14) bt
JAPAN 41 (Reo Fujimoto 12, Hiroaki Kozai 7, Naoki Yaku 6)
At Sydney Olympic Park Sports Centre

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