

Hawks at Perth Preview

Wollongong Hawks Basketball

Basketball Clubs

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Following the heartbreaking loss in Cairns a week ago, the Illawarra Hawks will look to bounce back when they face defending champions the Perth Wildcats on Friday night.

The Hawks looked promising for much of their round one contest, but ultimately fell one point short of a win.

Normally a road trip to Perth needs no added incentive, but for the Hawks, an opportunity to snatch a big road scalp so early in the season is extra motivation. With much of the returning squad a part of the breaking of the curse last season, the boys are confident of returning home with a win.

Illawarra's new imports, who are yet to experience the Perth atmosphere, have already shown they are capable of producing on the NBL stage. Demetrius Conger was sensational against the Taipans, scoring 17 points and adding 3 assists on debut, with Delvon Johnson stepping in proficiently at centre when required, grabbing 9 important rebounds. Look for both men to improve on their debut outings as they further fit into the Hawks system.

Offensively, Rotnei Clarke was hot from deep last week, sinking 6-8 behind the arc. With Perth no doubt doing their homework and looking to shut Clarke down, look for fellow sharp shooters Tim Coenraad and Oscar Forman to get their season scoring underway when good looks come their way. Both men played a combined 23 minutes off the bench last week and will no doubt play crucial roles in this one.

Don't be surprised to see AJ Ogilvy again leading from the front. The trim, fit and already firing big man is coming off a 22 point, 11 rebound, 3 assist night, and will do battle with old foes Angus Brandt and Matt Knight (if fit). The focus here will again be on rebounding, limiting the Wildcats second chance points. The Wildcats out rebounded the Bullets in their season opener 35-28, with the Hawks doing a similarly dominant job over Cairns, leading the category 40-30.

Also, keep an eye on the points in the paint. The Wildcats leaked points here in their opener, somewhere Illawarra could look to exploit with the rotation of Kay, Ogilvy and Johnson.

Defensively, an important job falls to the guards, with last years grand final MVP Bryce Cotton the danger weapon in Red. Cotton started the season the way he finished the last, scoring 24 points in the Wildcats season opener. Limiting his scoring opportunities could go a long way to the Hawks winning this one.

With day light savings underway, tip off is 9:30pm AEDT, live on Foxsports. As always the Hawks social pages will also be following the game live. The game will also be on delay on ABC from 11pm.