

Kings Shoot Down Hawks

Wollongong Hawks Basketball

Basketball Clubs

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American import Perry Ellis put on a show to spark the Sydney Kings to a pressure-relieving 103-87 victory over New South Wales rivals Illawarra at Qudos Bank Arena on Sunday.

Missing just four of his 15 shots, Ellis destroyed the Hawks with a game-high 33 points in Sydney's first win of the season.

On the downside, the Kings face a nervous wait on inspirational captain Kevin Lisch, who left the game in the third quarter with a potentially serious calf injury. Lisch had to be assisted to the locker room.

"It's just one of those things where he pushed off and unfortunately it sounds like a nasty one; and by sounds, I mean literally, because I was a metre away," Sydney coach Andrew Gaze said of Lisch post-game.

"Until they get a scan, but the initial diagnosis from the physios is a grade two tear. They're saying the best-case scenario is probably 3-4 weeks and the worst case scenario is one we don't even want to contemplate.

"Until we know, we hope that he's okay. Clearly it dampens our celebrations when our leader and a legend of the competition is going to be out.

"We have an import spot available, so a judgement will be made once we get the medical diagnosis."

Surprisingly, the home team didn't skip a beat without Lisch down the stretch, as Ellis, Jason Cadee (17 points, all in the second half) and Brad Newley (14) picked up the slack.

Guard Travis Leslie finished with 14 points, all in the first half, and rookie centre Isaac Humphries had the best game of his brief pro career with 11 points and eight rebounds.

Demitrius Conger was Illawarra's best with 21 points, while Rotnei Clarke and AJ Ogilvy combined for 29.

The Kings were coming off Friday's last-second road loss to New Zealand and looked like they wanted their maiden triumph more than the Hawks, who sit at the bottom of the ladder with a 0-3 record.

Ogilvy got the Hawks off on the right foot with a slick baseline move in the opening seconds, but followed it with sloppy turnovers on their next three possessions.

The Kings didn't immediately take advantage, allowing the lead to change hands 10 times before surging ahead 30-23 at quarter-time.

Illawarra had racked up five turnovers and given up six offensive boards, while Sydney coach Andrew Gaze would've been delighted with the collective 21-point output of Ellis and Leslie.

Gaze was particularly animated on the sideline, constantly screaming for effort and concentration at the defensive end as the margin swelled to 15 early in the second period.

Hawks coach Rob Beveridge had seen enough and burned a much-needed time-out. His players responded by cutting the deficit to four, but Leslie and Ellis kept stoking the fire with timely buckets and the Kings took a 55-47 lead into the locker room.

Ellis had 19 points and Leslie 14, while Conger (13) and Ogilvy (11) led the visitors.

The third period essentially mirrored the first two, as the Kings repelled every challenge and pushed the lead up to 85-70 with 10 minutes to play.

Cadee erupted for 13 points (3/4 threes) in the quarter, Newley had nine and Ellis added seven to his tally.

Illawarra never got close in the final period and Beveridge will be working hard this week to turn around his team's form and focus.

The Kings return to the road in Round 3 with games against New Zealand (Thursday) and Adelaide (Saturday), while Illawarra have a full week to prepare for Sunday's home clash with Brisbane.

"We're in a bit of a hole but I know we've got enough talent and character in our team to weather this storm," Beveridge said.

"We're not going to implode. I know they're going to get in and fight their arses off.

"There's going to be a lot of critics out there writing us off. It happens every year. We're disappointed. We've shown glimpses but we're not putting it together.

"We're not giving up. We're going to move ahead real quick. You're going to see a pretty desperate team on Sunday."