**Beverley Cougars 81 – 20 Hornsea Lightning**

The Beverley Cougars hoped to regain some momentum against bottom of the table team, Hornsea Lightning. The Cougars, who were returning after a long winter break, were confident that they could win, as they had defeated the Lightning in the reverse fixture.

Despite having not played for over a month, the Cougars showed no signs of rustiness. Rob Brown was as sharp as ever, capitalising on Hornsea’s mistakes and scoring some easy baskets. He also set up some shooting opportunities, allowing Andrew Ladwiniec and captain, Chris Roberts to add their names to the score sheet. At the other end of the court, some tight defence resulted in the Lightning only scoring one basket in the whole quarter. This allowed the Cougars to stretch to a 19-3 lead.

This form carried on into the second quarter. Brown and Roberts were at their very best again, which seemed to lift the whole team. Mark Leason led by example at the back, blocking Hornsea’s shots, not allowing them to get back into the game. The second quarter looked like it was going to end scoreless for the Lightning, but they managed to claw back two points in the last few seconds. It didn’t make much difference to the half-time score line, as the Cougars led 41-5.

With such a strong lead, you could forgive the Cougars for sitting back in the second half. However, they didn’t. In fact, they ramped up the pressure. Antony Barton netted a couple, thanks to passes from Chris Cummings. Matt Haughan stepped up to play a role that is unfamiliar to him, and he coped admirably. The Lightning were again limited in points scored, thanks to the rebounding efforts of Ciaran Mills.

At the beginning of the fourth quarter, the Cougars were pretty much certain of a winning start to 2013, as they led 58 – 8. Quick baskets from Justin Robinson and Simon Schofield confirmed that prediction. Rob Brown finished as he started, by scoring 25 points overall (a season best for him). Although, the Lightning had their best quarter, scoring 12 points, it was too little, too late. The Cougars were the eventual winners, by a margin of 81 – 20, their biggest victory so far.

After the game coach, Steven Lindsey, was absolutely ecstatic with the Cougars’ performance. “I expected the team to be a bit unresponsive after such a long break, but they were the complete opposite,” he said after the match. “The defensive tactics we’ve worked on, in training really paid off today. Conceding only 20 points is a phenomenal achievement. I know this will be the first win of many for the Cougars this year.”

By Ciaran Mills