**Beverley Cougars 51 – 56 Hull Stingers**

The last time these teams met, the Stingers ran away with the victory, winning the game by more than forty points. However, they had not played a league game for nearly a month, and they faced a much improved Cougars squad.

In the first quarter, the Stingers showed some sluggishness, allowing the Cougars to get an unexpected good start. James Moore and Steven Lindsey combined to pose a dangerous attacking threat. The Cougars were solid on the defensive end of things as well. Justin Robinson was confident in getting rebounds, and then setting up fast breaks. The first quarter lead, 20-8, was more than enough to satisfy the Cougars.

As the second quarter began, the Stingers started to show why they are contenders to win the league this season. They punished the Cougars with some slick attacking play and converted their free throw chances, which were plentiful in the second quarter. The Stingers defence also tightened up, but that didn’t stop the Cougars from trying. They managed to score enough to keep their lead going into the half time break, a three pointer by Andrew Jamieson was an important play, but it had been cut dramatically to 32 – 30.

It was clear that this encounter was going to be much closer than originally intended, and the third quarter carried on that trend. Neither team attacked too much, in fear that they would get hit on the counter attack. The Stingers were the first team to mount a real attacking threat, and it worked, as they took the lead for the first time in the match, and kept it for the rest of the quarter. The score going into the final quarter was 41-40.

It was all to play for in the final quarter, both teams confident that they could get the win. Jamieson carried on his dominance, in his Cougars debut, scoring at one end of the court, and blocking shots at the other. Antony Barton also caught some rebounds and capitalised in them. However, injuries and foul trouble for the Cougars allowed the Stingers to hold onto their lead. As when the Stingers made a basket to go five points ahead, the Cougars couldn’t pull it back. The final score was tight, 56-51.

Coach Steven Lindsey was optimistic after the game saying, “We did ourselves proud today. You can see how much we’ve improved by today’s result. It was disappointing to lose, after dominating the game for long periods of time, but we’ll carry on regardless.”