**Beverley Cougars 60 -62 Hull Stingers**

The Beverley Cougars faced their toughest cup tie yet against the Hull Stingers. With the Development North league title already in the bag, the Stingers could concentrate fully on the Jones’ Cup. Many expected the Stingers to sweep the Cougars aside, after a dominant season.

However, the Cougars started the stronger team. Justin Robinson impressed early with some driving runs that allowed him to score and some slick passing that set up others. A Chris Roberts three-pointer allowed the Cougars to take an unexpected first-quarter lead of 15-11.

The second quarter continued in pretty much the same fashion. Chris Cummings was dominant for the Cougars scoring all but two of their points. Andrew Ladwiniec scored the only other basket of the quarter. He also provided some rebounds, an area that the Cougars struggled in during the quarter. His control of the game allowed the Cougars to stretch their lead to 24-17 going into half time.

The Stingers weren’t looking like a title winning side in the first half, but then their big scorers came into form. Miles Baldwin started to hit his renowned three-point shot consistently. These efforts, combined with some poor Cougars defending, allowed the Stingers to not only draw level with the Cougars, but overtake them and take the lead.

With only three points separating the sides going into the final quarter, the Cougars had done much better than originally thought. But, they were still hungry for the win. Rob Brown continued his fine game, adding a few baskets to the Cougars total, but the main battle was between Cummings and Baldwin. They matched each other in every aspect in the final quarter, neither of them letting their team slip too far behind. But, in the end, a great game of basketball was to be decided by some silly mistakes from the Cougars. They allowed the Stingers to take a five point lead late in the game. Cummings got three late free throws to edge the Cougars closer, but it was too little, too late. The Stingers progressed to the final, thanks to a score line of 62-60.

After the game, Coach Steven Lindsey was happy about his team’s performance. He said “They played well today, but unfortunately some minor slip-ups have cost us dearly”. When asked about the Stingers he replied “They’re not league champions by luck. We got the upper hand if in the first half, but they showed the resilience that has made them the great team they are today.”