**Beverley Cougars 50 – 59 Hull Stingers**

The Beverley Cougars continued their pre season preparation with a tough friendly against reigning champions Hull Stingers. The Cougars hoped to score a victory against the only team in the league they haven’t defeated yet. The Stingers were trying a new look squad, with many of their championship winning side being signed by Premier and National league sides.

Despite the Stingers’ reputation, the Cougars weren’t afraid to attack. New signing Sam Dewsbury scored some fantastic shots, including a couple of floaters, a difficult shot where the player has to shoot higher than he normally would, meaning that the teams were level, 10-10, after the first quarter.

The second quarter was a much higher scoring affair. Chris Cummings was as reliable as ever, controlling the tempo and leading his team at both ends of the floor. His assists gave Dewsbury a chance to continue his impressive debut, before adding some points himself. However, Matteo Murriero went basket for basket with Dewsbury to keep his side in the game. With the Cougars having a lack of big men, they struggled to get rebounds, which allowed the Stingers to score some easy baskets underneath the basket. The two teams stayed close throughout the quarter and were inseparable at half time, the score being 33-33.

The halftime score was an indicator of the Cougars' progress. Nine months ago, the Stingers had beaten the Cougars by over 40 points, and this improvement was visible on court. Andrew Ladwiniec was solid defensively, like he had been last season, blocking shots and preventing the Stingers from pulling too far ahead. His defensive efforts mixed with a few good baskets from Antony Barton meant that the two teams were still tied after the third quarter 43-43.

In the fourth quarter, Sergeiev really stepped up his game for the Stingers. He seemed to be unstoppable as he capitalised on some sloppy Cougars defending. Jonny Berriman completed his solid debut by scoring a couple of points, to add to his strong rebounding effort. However, it wasn't enough to deny the Stingers another win over the Cougars as the game ended 59-50 in their favour.

Coach Steven Lindsey was optimistic after his team’s defeat. He said “Today’s game revealed our strengths, especially our offense, but it also highlighted some key areas that we need to improve on. Overall, it was a steady performance and I feel we’re heading back on track”