

International Basketball League Weekend Wrap for May 14-17

With the 2009 International Basketball League season in full swing, the league put most of its top stars on display in a weekend slate of 14 games that saw some blowouts, some tightly fought affairs, and a renewal of one of the IBL's newest, and best, rivalries.

East division:

The **Nippon Tornadoes** ventured out on a four game swing through the Eastern Division and had their struggles with the **Holland Blast** (10-2) and **Grand Rapids Flight** (6-4), dropping all four contests as they battled four straight nights and remained winless on the season at 0-9. The Tornadoes were led each night by their outstanding stars **Masaharu Kataoka** and **Daisuke Tamura** who is currently fifth in the league in scoring. For the **Holland Blast**, **Rachmin Dillard** was the star on Thursday night (150-92) as he went off for 40 points and led six other Holland players who scored in double digits. Kataoka's 19 was the high mark for the visitors with four others scoring better than 10 points in the contest. Game two (148-93), which went Sunday the 17th, was another lopsided finish for Holland as they were paced by **Eddie Spencer** who recorded a double-double, scoring 25 points and adding 11 rebounds. The home side also got solid contributions from **Kevin Ludwig**, who scored 20 points and **Jeremy File**, who rebounded from a difficult game on Thursday to hand out a team-high 7 assists to go with 16 points. The Tornadoes would also play at **Grand Rapids** on Friday and Saturday with their best showing on the 16th when they dropped a 110-87 decision. Saturday's game was not nearly that close as the Flight used a balanced attack to secure the win. In the 153-92 win, the host club had an astounding 10 players in double figures led by **DeMarcus Berry's** 19 and **Phillip Hillstock's** 15 points and 15 rebounds. They were joined atop the stat sheet by **Maurice Benson** who recorded six helpers in the game. The Tornadoes went the other route with Kataoka, Tamura, and **Yuuto Okumoto** combining for 72 of the club's 92 points, with Kataoka leading the way with a game-high 32 points.

South division:

The South Division also hosted four games this past weekend, including the **Yamhill HighFlyers** playing a two-game series at the **Central Oregon Hotshots** (3-1), as well as featuring the **Snohomish Co. Explosion** (5-4) visiting the **Vancouver WA Volcanoes** (7-2) and then on Sunday the **Vancouver BC Titans** (3-8) travelling to Beaverton, OR to face the **Oregon Waves** (2-1). The Hotshots managed a sweep against the HighFlyers winning by an average of more than 20 points each night. League Head Mikal Duilio's club used all eight of their players, all but one who finished in double digits in the scoring column, but showed even greater balance in the other stats, rebounds and assists, without one guy being shutout in either. For the **Hotshots**, **Harry Good** was the top scorer, for the game as well, with 33 and a team-high 15 boards, while **Terrence Hundley** (2nd in IBL scoring) contributed 25, and he tied for the team best in assists, 11, with **Terry Jeffries**, more than half the team's total of 38. For the HighFlyers, **Jason Hartford** was the top man draining 29 points, just ahead of **Chris Hunt's** 24 points; he added 12 rebounds which was the most for Yamhill. Things were not as close in the Saturday game as the Highflyers fell for the second straight night to the Hotshots, by a score of 175-144. With Good out of the line-up **Terrence Hundley** took over the top spot as he went crazy and scored 40, the best among the eight Central Oregon players with 12+ points in the game, however both teams were able to fill the stat sheet with all 19 players notching at least one point, one rebound, and one assist. **Dean Browne** and **Damian Brown** led the Hotshots with 14 boards each while **Jadae Bonds** added another 10. **Terry Jeffries** put on another great performance as he recorded a game-high 11 assists for the second straight night, to go with his 31 points. **David Kay** was the leading scorer for Yamhill as he filled it up for 34 and was backed by **Jason Hartford's** double-double of 27 points and 11 rebounds, and another good showing from **Chris Hunt** who recorded a double-double of his own collecting 22 points and 10 rebounds. In one of the closest games of the weekend, the **Snohomish Co. Explosion** traveled to Vancouver to take on the **Volcanoes** and earned a hard fought road win, 115-109, to improve their record to 5-4 while Vancouver lost for just the second time in 2009. The visitors were led by **Devon Greene** who returned to the Explosion to lead all scorers, and tie for the team lead in boards, with 43 and 13 respectively while making six three-pointers and assuming the lead in the IBL scoring race. Three other Snohomish players amassed double digit boards led by **Richard Ford's** double-double of 27 points and 13 rebounds. For the Volcanoes, who lost their first home game all season, they have had a great start after winning 18 games in '08 and look to improve their win total for the fourth straight year. **Bryson McKenzie**, who is the league's leading rebounder, was the star for the home team with a stellar 23 point and 18 rebounds in the loss. The Volcanoes received solid games from their vets, including **Kevin Tyner** who had 21 points to go

with his team-high eight assists as well as 19 from the high-flying **Alex Hartman**. In the division's fourth game it looked like another upset in the works when the visiting **Vancouver, BC Titans** took a 63-58 lead into the half-time locker room against the **Oregon Waves**. The league's #4 rebounder **Jessan Gray** continued his solid play this season as he led the Titans in scoring with 22, and on the boards with 19. He was backed by **Emmanuel Unaegbu's** 15 points and 18 rebounds and **Kyle Keyes'** game-high 10 assists, to go with his 19 points. Oregon, however was able to tighten the defense and hold Vancouver to just 41 second half points in securing a 117-104 win. The Waves two leading scorers for the season led the way on Sunday as well as **Robert Day** who poured in a game best 36 points and **Jeremiah Dominguez** was next with 25 of his own. **Brad Kanis** brought his season rebounding average to 10 (#8 in IBL) as he led Oregon with a dozen boards, and 15 points, while controlling the glass along with **Irvin Sims** who collected 10 rebounds as well.

West division:

The West Division featured a pair of two-game series with the **Kankakee Soldiers** (6-6) on the coast playing the **LA Lightning** (6-1) and the defending **IBL Champion Bellingham Slam** (9-3) traveling north to play the **Edmonton Energy** (4-2). The division's fifth game of the weekend was game one of the **Vancouver, BC Titans'** road trip as they visited the **Tacoma Tide** (3-0). The Soldiers struggled to keep pace in Saturday's game one and fell 120-108 to the Lightning who were buoyed by former NBA vet **Lamond Murray** who recorded a double-double with 30 points (#7 in IBL Scoring) and 10 rebounds, and **Kamran Sufi's** 10 assists, which helped him move to second in the league in assists per game (12.1). Another player with NBA experience, **Fred Vinson**, contributed with 26 points in the win. The Soldiers were playing with 2008 All-Star **Erik Rhinehart** for just the second time this year saw him find his stroke as he went off for 29 points and 13 rebounds, both team highs for Kankakee, while five others topped 13 points for the game and **Lawrence Burnett** (13 points) collected a dozen boards, the second highest total for the night. In the Mother's Day Sunday special, the fans were treated to a closer battle with the Lightning sending the fans home happy with a 120-116 win to sweep the weekend set. Another former NBA star, **Bryon Russell**, was the lead man as he more than doubled his season average of 12.7 points/game with 26 in leading LA's seven shooters who reached double figures. **Juaquin Hawkins'** seven rebounds were the best total for the home squad and **Kamran Sufi** was again able to hand out better than 10 dimes. The Soldiers brought their balanced attack to the second game as six players again scored in double digits and they upped their rebound total from 49 in game one to 53 in game two and held a +16 advantage on the glass over the weekend's games. **DeMarcus Bolton** corralled a game-high nine boards and his 19 points was second on the team behind only Erik Rhinehart who looks headed for a second straight All-Star selection and led the visitors with 23. The Soldiers also got a terrific all-around game from their standout veteran **Barry Bradford** who chipped in 13 points, 11 assists, and 7 rebounds. In other action the 2008 Champs headed to Canada to face the Edmonton Energy who was looking to settle an old debt. The Slam were the only visiting team to win at Edmonton's Grant MacEwan Gym in 2008, and knocked them out of the playoffs in round two of the tournament last July. The Energy exacted a small measure of revenge winning Saturday night 144-134 despite a 51-point opening quarter from the defending champions. Energy guard **William Funn** (3rd in IBL assists) recorded a 16's triple-double in scoring, rebounds, and assists while two-time All-Star **JR Patrick** led all home scorers with 30 while five others reached double figures. **Skouson Harker** and **Antwon Mills** both contributed double-doubles in the win. Playing without Ryan Diggs and Paul Hafford the scoring load fell to **Tyler Amaya** (6th in IBL scoring) and **Jacob Stevenson**, both 2008 All-Stars who answered the bell and scored 31 points apiece. Amaya, in fact, recorded the game's other triple-double as he added 11 points and 10 assists to his line. With a good night's sleep under them the Slam were able to come back and win game two 141-121 as **Ira Graham** exploded for a 40 point and 10 assist performance to lead the visitors. Once again, Stevenson and Amaya registered double digits in points and rebounds and the Slam received further support from **Jake Linton** who put 29 to go with five boards and five helpers. Energy team captain JR Patrick was again the top scorer for the Energy and Harker went double-double again. Former Georgetown Hoya **Lee Scruggs** had another fine game with a 15 point and 10 rebound showing. This game seems to have stoked one of the IBL's better rivalries as the teams combined for 58 fouls and shot 84 free-throws in the hard fought battle. For Tacoma, their 112-102 win against the visiting Vancouver BC Titans was only their third game of the 2009 season, but also their third win. 2008 All-Star **Lorenzo Rollins** continued his hot start as he tied the game's scoring mark with 22; **Jessan Gray** scored 22 for the Titans as well. The Tacoma team, as Tacoma has done for years, leaned heavily on **Dontay Harris** (an All-Star in '05, '07 and '08) and he responded with 13 points, 11 rebounds and 4 assists to go with **Quentin Nolen's** 10 points and 10 rebounds. For the Titans, who were swept in their weekend roadie, Gray was followed on

the score sheet by four teammates who surpassed the 10-point mark, **Emmanuel Unaegbu** (16), **Kyle Keyes** (16), **Josh Washington** (13), and **James Hudson** (13).

For any league questions contact Commissioner Mikal Duilio at 1-866-IBLGAME or at mikal@ibllhoopsonline.com, Media Director Nick Padow at 780-710-6425 or at np2131@shaw.ca, or to contact individual teams—check for contact information at www.ibllhoopsonline.com. The author of this document (Nick Padow) and the International Basketball League give permission to reprint this, with a writer’s credit to Mr. Padow, at no charge. **League leaders for points, rebounds and assists can be found on the IBL web site www.ibllhoopsonline.com**



ABOUT THE INTERNATIONAL BASKETBALL LEAGUE

Portland, OR—the 2009 International Basketball League season is the league’s fifth season. Two unique features have distinguished the International Basketball League from other professional basketball leagues-

Feature #1: an entertaining fast paced game: two rules were and are the following: **1)** the basketball being immediately inbounded and **2)** teams only allowed one timeout per twelve-minute quarter.

Feature #2: extremely low travel costs: a basketball team has to make financial sense for an owner, so the IBL created the ‘one flight guarantee’ to reduce costs. The IBL recruits teams in geographical clusters; a ‘cluster’ is defined as two to three teams within driving distance—with the result of these clusters being a schedule with tremendous variety—opponents from all over the nation (and world) but with owners only having to fly one time per year.

Additional feature: Asian expansion: the International Basketball league began its campaign in 2007 to expand into several Asian markets including China, Japan, South Korea, and the Philippines. In the two years following the stated goal, four IBL teams went to China and multiple Asian teams have played in America; one team (Shanxi Zhongyu) even played a regular season within the IBL 2008 season... and in 2009 a team from Japan (Nippon Tornadoes) will play an official season in the IBL as well. The IBL is uniquely able to accommodate a team from Asia—because the IBL has ten teams all within a driving distance of Portland, Oregon.

Additional feature: Player development: the fast paced play of the IBL produced great players who would then leave the IBL to go overseas after the season expired. IBL players are international in their destinations; after the 2007 IBL season, **102** IBL players went on to play overseas; the ‘07 season established the IBL as the league to play in—to get or maintain an overseas job.

Other highlights from the IBL: ten Asian teams have exchanged games with the International Basketball League. Nineteen former NBA players have appeared in the IBL including former NBA All Stars Tim Hardaway, Dennis Rodman and Shawn Kemp. Two former NBA all stars have coached in the IBL—Terry Mills (full season) and Slick Watts (All Star game). An impressive attendance was garnered at an IBL game played in 2006 in Portland Oregon (at the Rose Garden) where 4,400 fans watched the Portland Chinooks beat the Vancouver Volcanoes—video available on the IBL web site; a year later, that attendance record was eclipsed when 6,000 fans saw the Elkhart Express (IN) beat the Grand Rapids Flight (MI)—that video can be found at (<http://www.ibllhoopsonline.com/teamGrandRapids.asp>). For more info, visit www.ibllhoopsonline.com