



WE UNITE

GAME DAY PROGRAM

PLAYOFFS GAME 1

VS ILLAWARRA HAWKS



GAME DAY INFORMATION



TIMES

Doors open: 6:00pm

Tip off: 7:30pm

GETTING TO THE GAME

John Cain Arena is located on Olympic Blvd. Parking at John Cain Arena is available until sold out. Please seek alternate parking locations or use public transport to get to the game if/when parking sells out. The closest tram stop is via tram 70 or 75. Richmond station is a 12 minute walk.

VENUE INFORMATION

John Cain Arena is a smoke-free venue. Smoking is not permitted within the arena or external concourses. Pass-outs will not be issued. John Cain Arena is cashless. There will be a cloaking service available at the window to the left of Gate 6. Any bag or item that is too large to fit under a seat must not be brought into the venue and there is a limit of one bag per person. Prams are not permitted at the arena.

TICKETS

Tickets are available for purchase via Ticketek, unless sold out. Get in quick to secure the best seats.

Alternatively, you can visit the Box Office on game day. The Box Office is located next to the Gate 6 entrance and is open 1.5 hours before tip off. Tickets are subject to availability and may sell out prior to game day.

If you or someone in your group has accessibility requirements please contact the Ticketek Accessible Booking Hotline (1300 665 915) or submit a request to be contacted.

If you are no longer able to attend or need to sell your ticket, selling on Ticketek Marketplace is the recommended secure option.

Please do not purchase Melbourne United tickets from third party platforms other than Ticketek or Ticketek Marketplace.

MERCHANDISE

You can purchase merchandise from our merchandise stores located around the concourse. NBL24 Members can redeem 10% off merchandise by showing their digital (App) or physical Membership. Premium Members have a \$50 voucher to spend at Game Day stores, simply show your Membership to redeem.

FOOD & BEVERAGES

There will be food & beverage outlets open throughout the venue. Please note, these outlets will be cashless. You are welcome to bring a water bottle provided it is 600ml or less and a small amount of homemade food. No BYO alcohol is permitted as the arena is a licensed venue.

BEHAVIOUR & SECURITY

Melbourne United expect all members, fans and first time attendees to act in accordance with our family friendly culture & abide by a Code of Conduct at all times. Anti-social behaviour, inclusive of excessive consumption of alcohol, racial taunts, violent behaviours, bad language or continued inappropriate behaviours/gestures will not be tolerated at any time during Melbourne United home games.

Melbourne United reserve the right to terminate memberships without a refund should members display anti-social behaviour.

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MATCH PREVIEW

After 18 long days, the wait is finally over for Melbourne United, who are set to take the floor for Game 1 of their Playoff series against the Illawarra Hawks on Thursday evening.

Despite the long layoff, Melbourne come into the game full of confidence, having swept their season series against the Hawks.

Playing in front of their passionate fans, United will look to continue their league-best home form, having won their past seven games inside John Cain Arena.

PLAYER TO WATCH

If there's one player that loves to rise to the occasion when the lights are the brightest, it's MU captain Chris Goulding.

A three-time NBL championship winner, Goulding is capable of breaking open any game with his otherworldly shooting ability.

CG43 has thrived against Illawarra this season, averaging 21.7 points per game, while knocking down 15 triples across his three games against the Hawks.

Look for Goulding to play off his teammates, cashing in on his opportunities in big moments.

KEY MATCHUP

As Tyler Harvey comes into John Cain Arena with the intention of putting up

huge numbers, Shea Ili will do all he can to slow down the dynamite scorer.

The winner of the NBL's Defensive Player of the Year Award, Ili has thrived all season at shutting down opposing stars.

This includes Harvey, who is averaging just 14 points per game against United on below 40% shooting from the field.

If Ili can limit the import guard once again, Melbourne will be poised to come away from Game 1 with the victory.

THE OTHER GUYS

Surrounding Harvey is a combination of talent that can get it done inside and out.

Justin Robinson is coming off one of his best NBL outings (26 points), while Gary Clark is a proven All-NBL contributor.

Inside the arc, Sam Froling has shown an ability to go head-to-head with United's big-men, using his size to carve out space for good looks.

Perhaps the biggest X-factor will be the impact of former Melbourne Development Player, Davo Hickey.

The athletic wing has been a revelation this season, using his high-energy style to create extra opportunities for himself and his teammates.

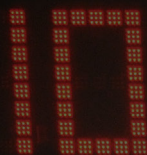
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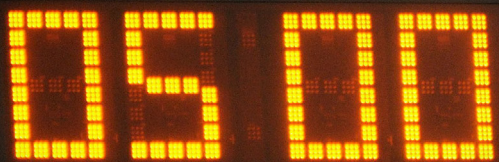


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POINTS

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TIME-OUT

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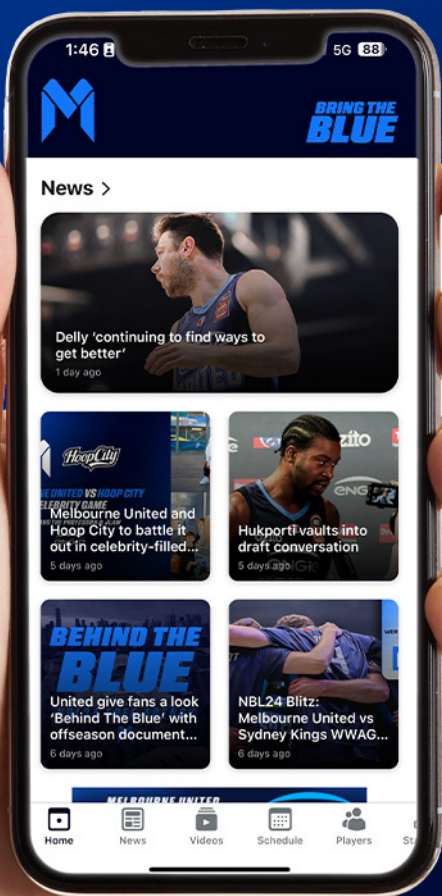
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GUARD #11



IAN CLARK
GUARD #21



MATTHEW DELLAVEDOVA
GUARD #8



CHRIS GOULDING
GUARD #43



ARIEL HUKPORTII
CENTER #15



SHEA ILI
GUARD #51



TOM KOPPENS
FORWARD #30



TANNER KREBS
FORWARD #13



ROB LOE
CENTER #2



JO LUAL-ACUIL JR.
CENTER #0



MALITH MACHAR
FORWARD #9



BRAD NEWLEY
FORWARD #4



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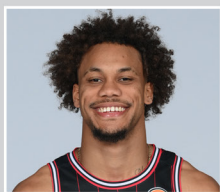
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ILLAWARRA HAWKS

HEAD COACH: JUSTIN TATUM



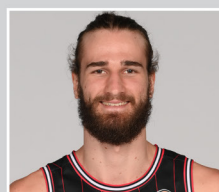
BIWALI BAYLES
GUARD #14



TODD BLANCHFIELD
FORWARD #21



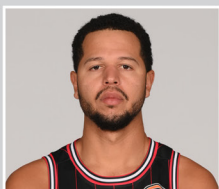
GARY CLARK
FORWARD #8



SAM FROLING
FORWARD #13



DANIEL GRIDA
FORWARD #11



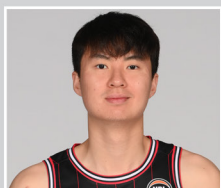
TYLER HARVEY
GUARD #1



WILLIAM HICKEY
GUARD #6



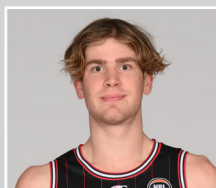
AJ JOHNSON
GUARD #7



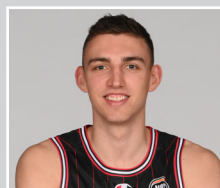
HYUN-JUNG LEE
GUARD #2



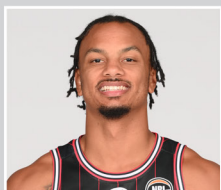
HARRY MORRIS
FORWARD #28



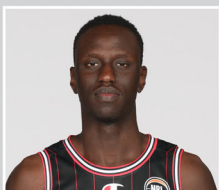
LACHLAN OLBRICH
CENTER #30



MASON PEATLING
FORWARD #22



JUSTIN ROBINSON
GUARD #3



WANI SWAKA LO BULUK
FORWARD #9



LUCA YATES
FORWARD #19

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‘THIS IS WHAT YOU PLAY FOR’ SAYS CLARK AHEAD OF PLAYOFFS

Throughout the entire season, Ian Clark has only had one thing on his mind: winning another championship.

The American guard has tasted ultimate success both in the NBL and the NBA, and now with Game 1 of United Playoff series just two sleeps away, the sharpshooter couldn't be more excited.

“This is what you play for,” he told media on Tuesday.

“You want to be playing at this time of the year and be able to compete for something, not for yourself, but for the whole team and the organisation.”

At the back end of an 18-day break between their last regular season game and the start of their Finals campaign, Clark believes the time off has allowed the team to iron out any areas of concern.

“The session was good... now that we've got something to look forward to and get ready for Thursday,” he continued.

“There have been a few things that we've been matching film of, trying to tidy up our offence and defence but now being able to look forward to playing Illawarra, we're focussing on their key guys and key plays and making sure we're ready for Thursday.”

One major advantage that United will carry with them across the Finals is home-court advantage. Having gone 13-3 inside of John Cain Arena (including SEM home games), Clark knows home much of a boost the MU faithful will provide come their Playoff series.

“I'm really excited... We've got the best fans in the league. I know they're going to come out and support us on Thursday. We're excited to get back in front of them and show what we're ready to do.”

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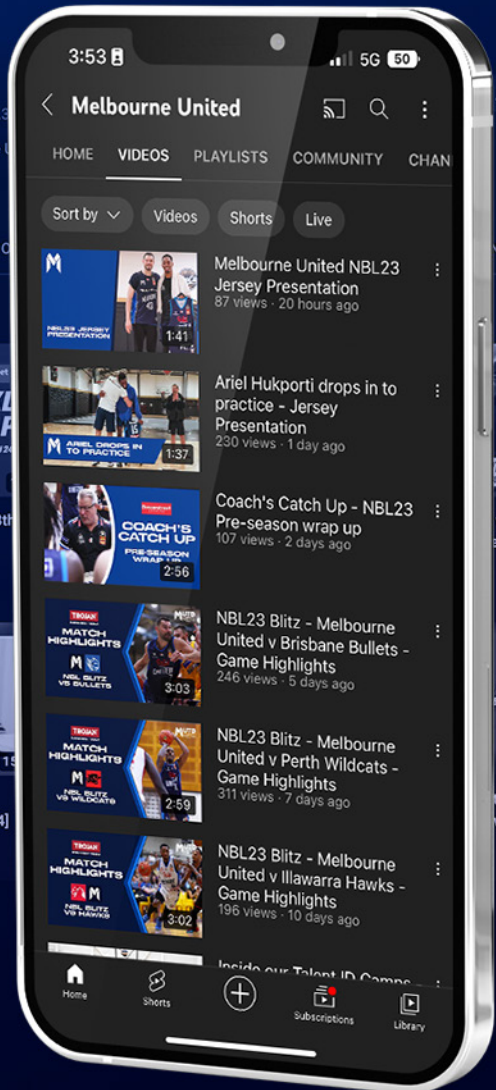
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MUTD
MEDIA





Episode 32

HUKPORTI 'SHOULD BE DRAFTED' SAYS NBA DRAFT EXPERT

Despite his age, Ariel Hukporti has established himself as one of the most physically imposing players across his time in the NBL.

After leading the entire league in defensive rating as a teenager in NBL22 and sitting out all of NBL23 with a torn achilles, Hukporti has come back stronger than ever this season.

Having been on NBA radars since he was 16, the prospects of being drafted into the league loom large as the big-man approaches United's upcoming Finals campaign.

Speaking on The Extra Pass podcast, senior writer at The Athletic and host of the Game Theory Podcast, Sam Vecenie, gave his thoughts on Hukporti and how he can make an impact in the NBA.

"I like him as a second rounder, I think he should be drafted," he said.

"He has real NBA size, he has real NBA length, pretty real NBA athleticism... he runs the court, plays incredibly hard, plays more of a drop-coverage big style which a lot of teams will be very comfortable with in the NBA.

"He blocks shots, is a real physical defensive force on the interior, he's willing to throw his weight around. You can get away with a lot as long as you have that and you have real NBA size and real NBA athleticism."

Vecenie, who has attended a number of Melbourne United games across the past few years, has watched Hukporti's journey back to the court closely.

He believes the ups and downs that the Next Star has been through while playing in Australia will go a long way in helping him fit into any NBA environment.



"The thing I've been most impressed with that I think is translatable to any level is work ethic and resilience," he explained.

"On a real level with Ariel, that dude deserves an immense amount of credit for coming in and being willing to put in the work to the point where I heard about the Hoop City runs last summer against the Boomers and heard that he looked amazing in those.

"For him to bounce back the way that he did, that is the biggest, most important tick that you can make for somebody."

Vecenie has Hukporti projected to be drafted at Pick 54 in the 2024 NBA Draft.



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