

Bellingham Slam claim 2008 International Basketball League Championship with 118-111 upset over Elkhart Express

BELLINGHAM, Wash. – The Bellingham Slam shook off a poor start to upset the Elkhart Express, 118-111, in the IBL 2008 championship game in front of a sold-out Whatcom Pavilion on Friday.

It appeared as if the two-time defending champion Elkhart Express were going to easily cruise to a third IBL title, as they jumped out to 9-0 and 22-8 leads early in the first quarter; Elkhart opened up the quarter with those 22 points coming in the first six minutes to build their early lead, but Slam reserves Tyler Amaya and Paul Hafford checked in to the game and immediately kick started a Slam defense that held Elkhart to just six points in the last six minutes of the quarter; meanwhile the Slam offense mounted a comeback; Paul Hafford provided a much-needed spark, hitting a trio of three-pointers late in the first quarter, with his third coming with 13 seconds left to give the Slam a 30-28 lead at the end of one.

Their early jitters over with—the Slam continued to get solid all-around play from Paul Hafford and Tyler Amaya as they built on their lead in the second quarter. Bellingham went into halftime with a nine-point lead, 62-53, after Brian Dennis converted a put-back as time expired for his only points in the game.

In the third quarter, the Slam's lead reached as high as 11 with 2:03 gone before Elkhart scored 13 of the game's next 16 points to re-take the lead at 72-71 with under four minutes left in the third period. Ryan Diggs stopped the Express run by scoring Bellingham's next seven points and the Slam maintained a two-point lead, at 83-81, going into the final quarter.

The Slam knew that the Express were fully capable of mounting a fourth-quarter comeback, and Bellingham was intent to protect their lead and the Slam came through by playing some of their best basketball of the season. Lukas Henne opened the quarter with step-back three-pointers and the Slam did not look back after that. The Slam held the Express to 33 percent field goal shooting in the fourth quarter to stymie the Express comeback attempt. A Ryan Diggs jumper off of a Paul Hafford pass gave the Slam their biggest lead of the game at twelve with 5:27 left to play, but Elkhart was able to trim the lead down to five, at 110-105, with 1:19 left in the game on a Lincoln Glass three-pointer. The Slam used perfect free-throw shooting in the final minute to preserve the victory and send the Whatcom Pavilion fans into a confetti-launching frenzy as time expired.

Hafford and Amaya shared the game's Most Valuable Player honors thanks to their gritty efforts. Hafford finished with 30 points and 10 rebounds while Amaya contributed 20 points, 13 boards and a noticeable effort on defense. Jacob Stevenson also had a strong title game for the Slam, scoring 24 points.

The Express were led by Cedric Moodie, who scored 20 points despite a 2-for-14 performance from beyond the arc. Coleco Buie scored 17 points while Glass added 15. Despite their size advantage, Elkhart lost the battle of the boards to Bellingham, 59-48.

The championship is Bellingham's first in professional basketball since the Fircrests won the Pacific Coast Professional Basketball League title in 1947.

For more information, contact the Slam at (360) 734-SLAM or visit their website at www.bellinghamslam.com.

July 18th IBL Championship Game- box score on following page:

	Qtr 1	Qtr 2	Qtr 3	Qtr 4	Total
Elkhart Express	28	25	28	30	111
Bellingham Slam	30	32	21	35	118

Bellingham Slam vs. Elkhart Express Official Game Box Score
Site: Whatcom Pavilion - Bellingham, WA Attendance: 1,100

Visitors: Elkhart Express

##	Name	P	FG	3 Pt	FT	PTS	ORB	DRB	TR	PF	AST	TO	BS	ST	MIN
1	Lincoln Glass	G	6/15	2/8	1/2	15	2	2	4	4	2	1	0	4	26
2	Ron Timus	G	3/4	0/0	0/0	6	1	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	12
3	* Tim Pledger	G	3/8	1/4	3/5	10	1	6	7	3	2	2	0	1	28
5	* Cedric Moodie	G	7/24	2/14	4/4	20	0	6	6	3	1	3	1	3	39
11	Prentice McGruder	G	1/3	0/1	4/4	6	2	2	4	1	6	2	0	0	27
15	* Coleco Buie	G	6/14	4/10	1/1	17	1	2	3	1	2	2	0	1	33
23	Mike Brownlee	G	2/5	2/5	2/5	8	1	1	2	1	0	0	0	0	12
32	* Chris Charles	C	3/7	0/0	5/8	11	4	4	8	2	1	1	1	1	26
33	Marques Lewis	F	2/3	0/0	2/2	6	0	4	4	2	1	1	0	1	16
43	Byron Allen	F	0/1	0/0	0/0	0	1	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	5
45	* Jarrod Lovette	C	5/11	0/1	2/2	12	2	3	5	4	1	1	0	0	18
55	James Tyler	C	0/0	0/0	0/0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	DNP
	Team						1	1	2						
	Totals		38/95	11/43	24/33	111	16	32	48	22	16	14	2	11	240
Total FG	1st Half		21/49	42.9%	2nd Half		17/46	37.0%	Game		38/95	40.0%			
3 PT FG	1st Half		8/24	33.3%	2nd Half		3/19	15.8%	Game		11/43	25.6%			
Free Throws	1st Half		3/3	100%	2nd Half		21/30	70.0%	Game		24/33	72.7%			

Home: Bellingham Slam

##	Name	P	FG	3 Pt	FT	PTS	ORB	DRB	TR	PF	AST	TO	BS	ST	MIN
7	Paul Hafford	G	8/15	6/12	8/8	30	2	8	10	2	2	3	0	2	34
8	Charlie Van	G	0/0	0/0	0/0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	DNP
11	Chris Ferguson	G	0/0	0/0	0/0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	DNP
15	Brandon Hartley	G	2/6	0/1	2/2	6	1	1	2	1	2	2	1	0	25
20	* Jared Stevenson	G	4/7	1/4	0/0	9	1	2	3	5	1	0	0	1	22
21	Tyler Amaya	F	7/15	1/5	5/6	20	6	7	13	5	6	4	1	3	37
22	* Jacob Stevenson	G	9/16	0/0	6/10	24	4	5	9	2	4	6	0	0	30
23	* Ryan Diggs	G	8/17	1/5	2/2	19	1	6	7	0	7	6	0	2	45
34	* Lukas Henne	F	3/10	2/4	0/0	8	0	5	5	1	0	1	1	0	26
44	Kyle Dalvit	C	0/0	0/0	0/0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	DNP
55	* Brian Dennis	C	1/1	0/0	0/0	2	1	1	2	5	0	1	0	0	22
	Team						0	8	8						
	Totals		42/87	11/31	23/28	118	16	43	59	21	22	23	3	8	240
Total FG	1st Half		24/45	53.3%	2nd Half		18/42	42.9%	Game		42/87	48.3%			
3 PT FG	1st Half		7/17	41.2%	2nd Half		4/14	28.6%	Game		11/31	35.5%			
Free Throws	1st Half		7/9	77.8%	2nd Half		16/19	84.2%	Game		23/28	82.1%			

	ELK	BLI		ELK	BLI		ELK	BLI
Free Throw Pts	24	23	3Pt Points	33	33	Pts/Possession	1.03	1.09
Pts off Turnovers	31	16	2nd Chance Points	17	17	Pts off Bench	41	56
Total Rebounds	48	59	Team Rebounds	2	8	Dead Ball Reb	7	2
Off Rebound %	27.1	33.3	Def Rebound %	66.7	72.9	Total Rebound %	44.9	55.1
3Pt Efficiency	-9.0	-1.4	Def. Stops	55	57	Pts/Shot	1.00	1.17
Technical Fouls	ELK		C Buie, M Lewis (2)					