

**2016/17 Game Report**

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| **Team** | Newcastle Eagles Under 18 Men |
| **Opposition** | Team Birmingham Elite |
| **Home/Away** | A |
| **Competition** | EBL Under 18 Men Premier North |
| **Date** | 23rd October 2016 |
| **Score** | Newcastle Eagles | **78** | **V** | **68** | Team Birmingham Elite |

Report

It was a 6am start for the U18 School of Excellence squad and supporters, in order to get them to the Doug Ellis Campus in Birmingham for a 12.30pm tip against Team Birmingham Elite in their latest fixture in the North Premier division.

After their encouraging display the previous week and victory against QE Knights of York in the cup, Newcastle went into the tie confident of breaking their duck in the league.

But it was the Birmingham outfit that made the early running in the game and quickly stretched into a 15 to 3 lead over the Eagles, who with a combination of sloppy passing and slack defence failed to get a foothold in the game until the end of the period, when some Eagles pressure brought the game to within 8 points, before Birmingham drained a 3 to end the period ahead 26 points to 15.

A quiet word from Coach Heath at the interval, instructing them to manage the boards better, appeared to have the desired effect and a strong fight back from the Eagles side, saw the deficit reduced to only 1 point after a 12 points to 2 swing in favour of Newcastle and heading into the final 4 minutes of the half the score was 27 to 28. Birmingham then themselves dug deep to finish the stronger of the two sides and again opened up the lead before a buzzer beater 2 from the Eagles ended the half 39 to 33, the home side holding the advantage.

Having been using a card method of scoring, the introduction of the visible digital clock, made the pace of the game easier to follow. Our Eagles started the brighter of the two sides after the break and with 7 minutes to go in the quarter found themselves ahead, but had Gabe Evans in foul trouble on 4. As the clock wound down, we saw the lead to and fro, Birmingham still ahead, 52 points to 51, but the U18 SOE side taking the spoils in a 19 points to 12 quarter.

Quarter 4 began, but only a minute into the period saw Gabe Evans foul out, leaving the Eagles down to only 8 players until the end of the tie. Both sides pressed, looking for the win and with 4.10 on the clock Birmingham call a time out with Newcastle ahead 63 points to 61, but going down the stretch it was the visitors who held their nerve, and ended it with a 15 points to 7 lead and finish the game with a comfortable 10 point margin, 78 to 68.

The long, early trip had clearly affected the Eagles side; however, they adapted and won their first league game of the season.