

Pigs just pipped at post

Lithuanians snatch win

By TIM KEEBLE

A new-look West Sydney showed off their revamped line-up, but BC Lietuvos Rytas took the spoils in a thrilling start to last night's World Basketball Challenge at WIN Entertainment Centre.

The Razorbacks led for almost the entire game before the Lithuanian club champions fought back to steal a 121-117 overtime victory.

The tourists were led by national team member Arbydas Macijausks' 32 points and Aleksandr Okunsky's 23 points and eight rebounds.

Two-time Olympian Sam Mackinnon played 24 minutes for West Sydney in his second appearance after an 18-month stint on the sidelines with a knee injury, racking up 11 points and two steals. The clash also marked the debut of former Adelaide ace Willie Farley in a West Sydney uniform, while fellow off-season recruit Aaron Trahair is fitting in well with his fourth club.

Farley, who shot down the Pigs in last season's NBL finals series, joined Mackinnon in the starting line-up and finished with a

team-high 23 points, six assists and three steals.

Trahair had 17 points by half-time, while Macijausks led all scorers with 21, which included 4/6 threes.

The Pigs made 55 per cent of their shots in the first half compared to 45 per cent for the tourists.

In the later game, the Wollongong Hawks wasted little time asserting themselves against a New Zealand Koru side badly out of its depth.

With coach Brendan Joyce running his entire bench in the first 10 minutes, the Hawks ran out 124-91 winners after building a commanding 41-20 lead after one quarter. The margin swelled to 29 less than three minutes into the second period and the home side left the Kiwis plenty of work to do heading into tonight's duel with West Sydney.

As the game quickly became a blow-out, the small crowd needed something to stir their interest. New Wollongong import Cortez Groves got the audience oohing and ahing with two spectacular alley-oop slam dunks and set forward Glen Saville up perfectly for a similar sequence.