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Firebirds finals bid closer

IT was another must-win match for the Mission Queensland Firebirds when they took on the Haier Central Pulse at home on Saturday.

And the pressure was on. Missing stalwart Wing Attack Sarah Wall, the team experienced a slow start, going goal for goal with the Pulse for much of the first quarter.

The Firebirds were quick on their feet in a fast paced game and Alissa Castrisos who started in the wing, slotted in well with the team on court.

But the Pulse were quick to take advantage of the Firebirds new line-up and quickly took the lead.

Firebirds shooters Romelda Aiken and Natalie Medhurst faced immense pressure from the Pulse defenders Rachel Rasmussen and Katrina Grant, who did well to stem the flow into the circle.

And at the other end of the court, despite a strong presence from defenders Amy Steel and Laura Geitz, the Pulse shooters could do no wrong, shooting at 100 per cent.

The first quarter ended with the Firebirds down five goals.

In the second quarter Aiken and Medhurst found their rhythm and shot at more than 80 per cent for the rest of the game.

Jacqui Russell was brought on at Centre and Captain Lauren Nourse was moved to WA.

Clare McMeniman, who was playing her 50th game for the Firebirds, showed her match experience, with an outstanding game in the centre court.

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This new combination in the centre court proved fruitful and gave the Firebirds the edge they needed to end the first half ahead.

Pulse looking to shake up the new winning combination of the Firebirds made a host of changes in the second half, but it was to no avail.

But it was in the final quarter that the Firebirds stormed ahead, quickly taking the lead to five in the first five minutes.

This outstanding play continued throughout the fourth and the Firebirds powered home to finish ahead 52-42.

The Mission Queensland Firebirds will be looking to continue this winning streak against the New Zealand teams when they take on the Canterbury Tactix at home on Monday, June 14.

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