

Monday 27 September

Game day today! The boys woke up around 7am for a delicious breakfast consisting of cereal, toast, fruit and yoghurt. The vans were packed up and the team headed off to the rink for their morning skate. The focus for this training was to work on various breakouts, regroupings, forechecks and defensive zone coverage. The practice went well and the coaches were happy with their line combinations heading into the game that evening.

The team then headed back to the motel. Shortly after, the vans were loaded again and the team headed to Glenelg beach, a short drive from the accommodation (we could well have walked!) The boys spent a couple of hours strolling along the main strip and along the beachfront. The boys were delighted to discover a group of Coke Zero machines, which were spitting out free cans as a promotion. Josh Williams and Richard Dawson certainly took advantage of this!

After resting up at the hotel, the team then headed for their pre-game meal at the Glenelg Pizza House. Although not much can be said about the service from this restaurant, the food was certainly plentiful! Congratulations must go to James Cook, who managed to refrain from ordering a pizza, instead opting for a much more "sensible" option instead!

After a brief stint at the motel, the team then dressed into their number ones, packed up the vans, and headed to the rink for their first game, against South Australia. After various pleasantries were exchanged before the game started i.e. pins were swapped, hands were shook etc. the boys then performed a rousing rendition of the haka.

It would be difficult to tell that this was in fact the teams first ever game together. All three lines came out firing, turning over plenty of puck and forechecking very spiritedly. This hard work paid off after 14 minutes of the 1st period, when Richard Dawson turned the puck over at the half-way line, drove wide on the 2 on 1 and threw a beautiful pass to Max Macharg, who had no hesitation burying the puck for the team's first goal. 3 minutes later, some fantastic pressure by Liam Dallimore forced a turnover in the opposition's corner. Liam then hit James Cook wide open in the slot who buried the puck for his first ever goal for New Zealand.

The second period started similar to the first. 8 minutes in, a turnover in the neutral zone by Ben Roth resulted in a quick cross-ice pass to the flying Callum Burns, who ripped a cannon of a shot through the goalies five-hole. 3-0 to NZ. South Australia was then able to mount some pressure, scoring a nice rebound goal to bring the score back to 3-1. NZ were able to quickly respond thanks to some good work in front of the net by Ben Roth resulting in a goal, his first ever in an NZ jersey. The period ended 4-1 to NZ.

Ben then scored his second of the night thanks to some nice passing play between him and his line mates, Callum Burns and Max Macharg, 12 minutes into the 3rd period. A turnover in the neutral zone allowed captain Tayler Kennedy to walk in all alone and bury the puck over the goalie's blocker. The score finished 6-1 to NZ. Goalie Max Hotchin had a strong game in his first start in a New Zealand jersey. Total shots were 39-14 in favour of NZ. The coaches were particularly pleased with the team's effort considering the game didn't finish until 2.30am NZ time!!!

A similar day is ahead for the boys tomorrow, with a skate in the morning, followed by Game 2 vs. South Australia, at a much more pleasant time of 5.15pm.

Andrew Hay
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