

Sunday 3 October

An early start for the boys was made all the less desirable due to 1 less hour sleep due to the start of daylight savings in Australia. The team's 5<sup>th</sup> and final game was to begin at 9am. Before the game, the team talked about how this would be the last game this team would ever play together, and the team was reminded to play for each other and to have fun.

It was not an ideal start for the team, with NSW scoring from a quick break in the first shift. However, NZ quickly responded, with Scott Randell again coming up big when put away on a breakaway after a smart pass from defenseman Richard Dawson. Unfortunately, a bit of sustained pressure from the NSW team gave them two quick goals, and the 1<sup>st</sup> period ended with NSW holding a 3-1 lead.

The coaches stressed to the team to remain calm and to keep their discipline. NSW's lead was halved after a beautiful feed from Ben Roth put captain Taylor Kennedy alone on a breakaway, the goal scored after a cannon shot over the goalie's glove. The period ended 3-2, NZ with all the momentum and certainly stepping up big time in the face of adversity, the first time they had been behind on the score board all tour.

NZ were able to level the scores at 3 a piece half way through the final period, Frazer Ellis combining beautifully with line mate Scott Randell. A pretty cycling play in the corner allowed Callum Burns to feather a puck between the goalie's 5 hole after a precision pass from the corner from Max Macharg. NZ were able to hold on to the lead for the remainder of the game, thus securing their fifth win from as many games. Daniel Lee played spectacularly well in net for the kiwis. Aaron Henderson also played his best game of the tour, continuously able to shut the NSW offence down at the blue line every time. Also of note is NZ's winning streak, now at 22 games and over four years.

The team then headed back to the accommodation, shortly after driving to the train station and catching the train to the Sydney CBD. From there they walked to the Sydney Opera House, where several photos were taken. Punishment was then dished out to the players who had committed various transgressions during the tour i.e. forgetting equipment, clothing etc. The players seemed to quite enjoy running up and down the stairs, much to the amusement of many passers by!

After this, the team headed to the famous Paddy Markets, where many bargains were had by the team. Some of the team headed back to the accommodation a bit earlier so they could watch the NRL Grand Final, although they missed most of the first half, no thanks to Assistant Coach Stephen Reid's navigational skills!

The team then had their final dinner together, followed by a meeting in the managers' room, where the team reflected on the successful tour that was. After not too many shenanigans, the kids settled into their rooms. There was an early wake up call, the team headed to the airport, and went their separate ways on two separate flights to Auckland and Christchurch.

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