

IIHF World Championships Div III – Round 3

NZ Beats Greece in Ice Hockey Thriller

Hockey fans were treated to an incredible game that left everyone riding high on emotion after the NZ Ice Blacks defeated Greece 4-3 in overtime.

The first period did not go as the Ice Blacks had planned. Although they dominated play and outshot the Greek team 15 – 6 in the period, they went into the break down 2 -0 after Greece scored twice on the powerplay.

NZ continued its domination in the second period, carrying the play and continually pouring on the pressure. The Ice Blacks finally broke through to score five minutes into the period when Mitchell Oak came streaking in from the point and buried it after a nice feed from Braden Lee on the power play. Ten minutes later Brett Speirs scored on a great individual effort off a face-off when he put the puck between the goalie's legs with a backhand shot.

The teams came into the third period locked up at 2 – 2. Although NZ continued to dominate, it was Greece that scored on a tipped shot seven minutes into the period and NZ hammered at the Greek goal but could not find a way to beat the goaltender.

The NZ fans seemed to be giving up hope, but the Ice Blacks never gave up and after some tremendous hard work Adam Soffer put home a rebound on the power play with only three minutes left in the game, sending the crowd into a frenzy.

The game ended deadlocked 3 – 3, sending the teams into sudden-death overtime. The atmosphere was electric as everyone sat on the edge of their seats, anticipating what was to come.

One minute and seven seconds into overtime, Brett Speirs made an incredible past to Chris Eaden, who split the defensemen and put the puck past the Greek netminder with a great move. The crowd erupted into hysterics and the NZ national anthem, played shortly after the game, sounded more like a rock concert with everyone in the building singing along.

“Outstanding game,” said Charlie Reid, manager of the Iceblacks, while shaking his head. “Incredible that it came down to overtime after we dominated the play – but give credit to both teams. They battled hard and never gave up. I was proud of the boys and the character they showed coming from behind to win.”

The destiny of the Ice Blacks is still in their own hands. With a win against Ireland, NZ will win the gold medal and promotion to Division II.